



Grammaticalization of Persian Suffixes: From Ancient Roots to Modern Usage

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ABSTRACT

This study employs a descriptive framework to explore the evolution of several suffixes in contemporary Persian. The primary focus is to determine whether these suffixes were recognized as such in ancient Iranian languages or if they functioned as independent morphemes that gradually evolved into grammatical elements. Grammaticalization is examined as the process through which lexical components acquire grammatical roles, or how elements with existing grammatical features become increasingly grammaticalized. A critical question arises regarding independent morphemes that have transitioned into suffixes: Have they entirely lost their original meanings and become purely grammatical tools for word formation, or do they retain independent functions in certain contexts? An analysis of the suffixes *-(e)stān*, *-bār*, *-bān*, *-dān*, *-pād*, *-zār*, *-gār/-ger*, *-kade*, and *-gāh*, along with their meanings and usages in contemporary Persian, indicates that these suffixes were once free morphemes in the ancient Iranian period. Over time, due to linguistic changes, they have diminished in lexical independence and are now primarily used as adjectival or locative suffixes in modern Persian. The necessity to generate new vocabulary for various phenomena has significantly influenced the grammaticalization of many independent morphemes.

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1. Introduction

The evolution of language is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by a myriad of historical, cultural, and social factors. One of the key aspects of this evolution is the study of morphological structures, particularly suffixes, which play a crucial role in understanding how languages adapt and transform over time. Morphological analysis allows linguists to trace the development of a language, revealing how certain elements evolve and acquire new grammatical functions. Suffixes, as integral components of word formation, are particularly significant in this respect. They not only contribute to the expansion and enrichment of a language's vocabulary but also reflect the dynamic nature of linguistic change (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010). In particular, suffixes offer insight into the processes of *grammaticalization*, where lexical items shift to fulfill grammatical roles. This process can be observed in languages across different time periods and geographical locations, including the Persian language.

The Persian language, with its rich historical background, offers a unique lens through which to explore these morphological changes. Persian, an Indo-European language, has undergone significant transformations over its long history, transitioning from Old Persian to Middle Persian and, eventually, to Modern Persian. A key feature of this evolution is the development and transformation of suffixes. Notably, the shift of certain suffixes from free morphemes in ancient Iranian languages to bound morphemes in Modern Persian has significant implications for our understanding of grammaticalization and semantic evolution in the language. This shift raises critical questions about how these morphemes underwent such a transformation, how their meaning changed over time, and whether their grammaticalization has led to a complete loss of their original lexical function.

The concept of *grammaticalization*, as defined by Brinton and Traugott (2005), is central to understanding this process. Grammaticalization refers to the phenomenon in which lexical elements, often with a concrete meaning, evolve into more abstract, grammatical units. Over time, these components may acquire additional grammatical roles, such as tense, aspect, or mood markers, or they may become markers of syntactic relationships between words. As morphemes grammaticalize, they tend to lose their independence both formally and semantically. The grammaticalization process is often gradual and typically lacks clear-cut boundaries (Heine & Kuteva, 2002). A useful way to conceptualize this transformation is as a continuum, where free morphemes, which can stand alone as full words, evolve into bound morphemes that must attach to other morphemes in order to convey meaning. The more grammaticalized a morpheme becomes, the more it moves toward the bound end of the continuum, shedding its original lexical meaning and assuming a new grammatical function (Naghzguay Kohan, 2010).

In the context of Persian, this study focuses on several *derivational suffixes*, including *-stān*, *-bār*, *-bān*, *-pād*, *-dān*, *-zār*, and *-gār/-gar*. These suffixes offer compelling examples of how morphological elements have evolved within the language. The primary objective of this study is to explore whether these suffixes functioned as free morphemes during the ancient Iranian period or whether they were always bound morphemes. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate whether these morphemes started as independent words and gradually grammaticalized into suffixes used for word formation in Modern Persian. By examining the history of these suffixes, the research aims to trace the paths they followed from free morphemes to bound morphemes, shedding light on the dynamics of grammaticalization.

Furthermore, if these suffixes did originate as free morphemes, this study will explore

whether they have lost their original meanings entirely and ceased to function as lexical units. Alternatively, it will investigate whether these morphemes still maintain any independent usage outside of their function as suffixes. This distinction is important in understanding the degree to which the grammaticalization process has been completed. For example, the suffix *-gāh* in Persian is an intriguing case because it functions both as a locative and as a temporal suffix while also maintaining its independent status in certain contexts, where it retains its original meaning as a noun denoting "time." This dual role exemplifies the phenomenon of *affixation*, where a morpheme can serve both as a free lexical unit and as a bound grammatical element, depending on the context.

By addressing these questions and examining how each suffix evolved from ancient Iranian languages to its contemporary uses in Modern Persian, this study seeks to enhance our understanding of the broader processes of *morphological and grammatical transformation* within the Persian language. Each suffix will be analyzed in detail, with a particular focus on the processes of grammaticalization, to understand whether and how it transitioned from a free to a bound morpheme. Furthermore, the research will provide a discussion on the extent of grammaticalization for suffixes, offering a nuanced view of the linguistic changes that have shaped Persian over the centuries.

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have explored the historical evolution of Persian morphemes and their grammaticalization, contributing to our understanding of Persian linguistic history and its connections to other Indo-European languages. These investigations cover a wide range of affixes, derivational processes, and the functional transformation of linguistic elements.

Ali-Askarova (1991) focuses on the historical evolution of the suffix *-bān/-vān*, which plays a significant role in forming nouns and adjectives related to place, function, or profession. Likely rooted in the Indo-European language family, *-bān/-vān* emerged systematically during the Middle Persian period, denoting custodial or guardian-related functions. Tracing its connections to Old Persian, Ali-Askarova identifies parallels with Sanskrit and Avestan, where similar morphological constructs signify agents, places, or instruments of action. However, her work does not address broader grammaticalization processes or the transition from free to bound morphemes in Persian.

Sadeghi (1991) investigates derivation in contemporary Persian, analyzing compound verb formations with suffixes like *-gar* ("doer/agent"), *-kar* ("worker/profession"), and *-chi* ("diminutive/agentive"). His later studies (1992a, 1992b) examine locative suffixes such as *-gāh*, *-estān*, *-kade*, and *-ābād*, which generate place names, and affixes related to protection, possession, and profession, including *-bān*, *-dar*, and *-yār*. Sadeghi also categorizes adjectival suffixes semantically, analyzing morphemes like *-mand* ("having/possessing") and *-var* ("like, resembling"). Despite his detailed analyses, he does not trace the historical development or grammaticalization of these suffixes, leaving a gap in understanding their evolutionary trajectories.

De Blois (1996) examines the dual meanings of *-gāh* ("place, time") in Persian, while Hajari (1998) offers a comprehensive analysis of Persian affixes, including their etymology and applications. Hasandoust's (2004) etymological dictionary delves into Persian word roots and affixes. Tripp (2009) expands the scope by studying the evolution of English affixes *-hood*, *-dom*, and *-ship*, highlighting cross-linguistic morphological changes.

Lenepveu-Hotz (2014) explores the transition from the aspecto-modal suffix *-ē* in New Persian, which initially marked counterfactuality and past habitual actions, to the prefix *mē-* by the 15th century. This morphological shift reorganized aspectual and modal markers in New Persian, leading to the loss of *-ē*'s original meaning. Lenepveu-Hotz (2018) further investigates the subjunctive mood, highlighting the transition from the Middle Persian *-ā-* suffix to the Contemporary Persian *be-* prefix, originally a marker of rhematicity before becoming a modal marker. These studies demonstrate how morphological changes in Persian align with similar processes in unrelated languages.

Taheri (2021) examines the development of the plural marker *-gal* in several New Western Iranian languages. Initially a collective noun meaning "group," *-gal* underwent grammaticalization, becoming an obligatory plural suffix in languages like Boirahmadi and Southern Kurdish. The study reconstructs its historical evolution, showcasing the interplay between lexical meaning and grammatical function.

Tasalli Bakhsh and Changizi (2021) trace the grammaticalization of the Persian adverbs *engâr* and *engâri*, which express hypothetical or doubtful situations. Evolving from the Middle Persian verb *hangâr-* ("to consider"), these adverbs underwent semantic and phonological changes, leading to their reinterpretation as adverbs. Yousefi et al. (2021) analyze the evolution of the Persian prefix *mi-*, tracing its origins from the Old Persian adverb *ham-aiwa* to the Contemporary Persian inflectional prefix. Initially serving as a flexible modifier, *mi* became fixed and grammaticalized, marking durative or habitual aspects and acquiring modal functions in Modern Persian. This transformation highlights how Persian shifted from a generative to a more analytic structure.

These studies collectively shed light on the historical evolution and grammaticalization of Persian morphemes, illustrating their functional transformations over time. By comparing Persian with other languages and tracing linguistic shifts across centuries, these works contribute valuable insights into broader mechanisms of morphological change and grammatical development. Despite their contributions, further research is needed to fully understand the transition from free to bound morphemes and the complex dynamics underlying grammaticalization in Persian.

3. Grammaticalization

The concept of grammaticalization was first introduced by Meillet (1912, as cited in Wischer, 2006), referring to the development of grammatical elements (such as function words and affixes) from earlier lexical items. Grammaticalization is a fundamental linguistic phenomenon that describes how lexical items, such as full words or free morphemes, evolve into grammatical elements—typically bound morphemes, like affixes or auxiliary verbs—over time (Tripp, 2009). This process involves the transformation of words with concrete meanings into forms that serve grammatical functions, such as marking tense, aspect, mood, case, or plurality (Tripp, 2009). In the case of Persian suffixes, this transformation can be observed as these morphemes shift from independent lexical items in Ancient Iranian languages to their current grammaticalized forms in Modern Persian. The following section outlines the key principles and stages of grammaticalization, drawing on relevant examples from Persian morphology.

3.1 Process of Grammaticalization

Grammaticalization, as outlined in various studies (Brinton & Traugott, 2005; Tripp, 2009), is a gradual and dynamic process that progresses through several interrelated stages. One of the initial stages in this process is *semantic bleaching*. This refers to the weakening of the original, often concrete meaning of a morpheme as it evolves into a more abstract grammatical function (Lehmann, 2015). For example, the Persian suffix *-gāh* originally meant "place" or "site," but over time, it shifted to denote location or time. This transition from a specific spatial noun to a grammatical marker demonstrates the semantic bleaching that typically accompanies grammaticalization.

A key feature of grammaticalization is *syntactic reanalysis*, in which morphemes undergo repositioning within syntactic structures. Independent morphemes, such as nouns or verbs, gradually become bound forms that are attached to other lexical elements. This reanalysis involves the morpheme losing its ability to stand alone as a full word and being integrated into larger syntactic structures (Lehmann, 2015). Persian suffixes like *-bān* (meaning "worker" or "doer") and *-gār* (indicating an "agent" or "doer") are examples of such syntactic reanalysis, as these forms evolved from free-standing words to integral bound morphemes in the process of word formation.

Finally, *obligatorification* occurs once a morpheme has undergone grammaticalization. In this stage, morphemes become obligatory elements in certain syntactic contexts, meaning they are no longer optional but required to fulfill specific grammatical functions (Lehmann, 2015). An example of this is the Persian *-bar* suffix, which initially meant "carrier" or "bearer." Over time, it became a necessary part of word formation, now typically used in constructing nouns that describe things carried or tools associated with specific activities, no longer functioning as an optional lexical item.

3.2 Principles of Grammaticalization

Grammaticalization is guided by key principles that explain the historical development of Persian suffixes. One fundamental principle is *the lexical to grammatical shift*, where morphemes evolve from carrying concrete meanings to serving abstract grammatical functions (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). A notable example is the Persian suffix *-dān*, which originally meant "to give" or "to hold." Over time, it lost its original meaning and became a grammatical suffix indicating possession or agentive relationships.

Semantic narrowing is another crucial principle, where morphemes become more specialized in meaning as they undergo grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). This is evident in the Persian suffix *-zār*, which initially had the broad meaning "to make" or "to create" but now primarily denotes a location associated with specific actions.

Grammaticalization also follows *clines*, a continuum from free to bound morphemes (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). Persian suffixes like *-gar* ("doer/agent") and *-kade* ("house") illustrate this cline by retaining some original lexical aspects while adopting grammatical roles. For example, *-kade* remains a productive morpheme in word formation, whereas *-gar* has become more purely grammatical, primarily forming agentive nouns.

Lastly, *unidirectionality* is a defining feature of grammaticalization, where morphemes typically do not revert to their original lexical forms once grammaticalized (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). The Persian suffix *-pād*, once meaning "to hold," now functions as a marker for professions or tools, as in "captain" or "master." These changes highlight how grammatical morphemes become increasingly embedded in syntactic structures, with their shifts rarely reversing over time.

4. Evolution of Some Modern Persian Suffixes

The methodology of this study employs a descriptive diachronic analysis to trace the grammaticalization of Persian suffixes. The study focuses on a selected group of locative, protective/guarding, and action/operation suffixes. Key texts include historical dictionaries, such as Dehkhoda (1994) and Hajari (1998), which provide both contemporary and classical examples of the suffixes in question. The data corpus is complemented by linguistic studies and previous scholarship, particularly those of De Blois (1996) and other experts in Persian historical linguistics. A key component of the methodology is the analysis of the semantic evolution and morphological reanalysis of the suffixes. Initially, each suffix is treated as an independent lexical item in Old Iranian, with multiple meanings. Over time, these words undergo grammaticalization processes, where their original, concrete meanings become abstracted or narrowed, and they are incorporated into new syntactic structures as bound morphemes.

4.1 Locative Suffixes

Among the suffixes analyzed, the following are classified as locative suffixes: *-kade*, *-gāh*, *-zār*, *-stān*, *-bār*, and *-dān*. These locative suffixes can be traced back to independent lexical forms in Old Iranian languages. Over time, these forms have been grammaticalized into bound morphemes, primarily used for creating place names or indicating location.

4.1.1 - kade

Table 1. Suffix -kade

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
kakaf- (meaning "room, house")	*kada-	Katak

According to Hajari (1998), "the term *kade* or *kete* in Pahlavi means 'house,' with *kade xodai* denoting the 'master of the house' or 'housekeeper'" (p. 190). In the Avesta, *kete* also signifies "house." The root of this word traces back to the Sanskrit *kakkha*, which means "room." Additionally, *kade* can refer to a village, town, locality, place, residence, cellar, or underground space. Historically, various compound words have been formed using this term, such as *āteshkade* ("fire temple") and *adamkade* ("human dwelling"). This extensive usage in compound words appears to have transitioned the term from an independent morpheme to a suffix over time, as it is no longer commonly used as a standalone word today. However, in some regions of Iran, such as Badroud near Kashan, *kade* still retains the meaning of "house," as evidenced by the phrase *āshun kade*, meaning "I am going home."

In Pahlavi, the suffix *-kade* was *katak*, which in its nominative form meant "house," "abode," or "a wooden barrier placed behind a door to prevent it from opening." Today, it functions as a suffix (locative suffix), added to nouns to form place names—*botkade* ("temple"), *dehkade* ("village"), *mikade* ("tavern"), *honarkade* ("art center"), etc. (Hajari, 1998, P. 191). Dehkhoda (1994) notes that *kade* means "house," and that *kat* is an alternative reading, where *tā* has been replaced by *dal*.

4.1.2 – gāh

Table 2. Suffix -gāh

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
gua- (meaning "to go")	*gāu-	Gāh

The suffix *-gāh* holds multifaceted meanings in Persian, functioning in various contexts such as time, place, location, and even throne. It is derived from Pahlavi *gāth*, Avesta *gātu*, and Old Persian *gāthū*, which initially denoted "place," "time," "dwelling," "throne," or "rank" (Hajari, 1998). In Persian, *-gāh* serves both as an independent word and as a suffix, forming nouns related to time and location, with its precise meaning depending on the base word.

Hajari (1998) explores how *-gāh* independently functions as an adverb of time but becomes primarily locative when used as a suffix. The suffix takes on temporal meanings in combinations such as *sahar-gāh* ("dawn") and *shām-gāh* ("evening"), while its locative function appears in terms like *ābgāh* ("water source"), *dāmgāh* ("pasture"), and *namāzgāh* ("prayer place"). Interestingly, words like *garm-gāh* ("the hot hour") and *chāsht-gāh* ("late morning") blur the distinction between place and time.

De Blois (1996) provides an in-depth analysis of the term's evolution, tracing *-gāh* as "place" back to Old Persian **gāθu-*, originally meaning "passage." Over time, it came to signify "abode (royal)" and eventually a broader notion of "place." Additionally, *-gāh* as "throne" likely stems from the Elamite word *gāt*, which influenced its association with a "royal seat." Despite its absence in Achaemenid inscriptions, this term gained prominence over time. De Blois also examines *-gāh* as "time," related to the Avestan **gāθu-*, initially meaning "song" or "melody." This evolved to signify "the time of reciting hymns (*gāhān*)" and eventually generalized to "time." This connection to music persists in modern terms like *se-gāh* ("trio") and *chahār-gāh* ("quartet").

Interestingly, while *-gāh* maintained its independent usage as "place" and "throne" in Dari Persian, it has largely become a suffix in modern Persian, as exemplified by terms like *āteshgāh* ("fire temple") (De Blois, 1996). These studies highlight *-gāh* as a crucial morpheme, evolving through various semantic and functional shifts across Persian's linguistic history.

4.1.3 – zār

Abolghasemi (2008) notes that the term **cārna-* in Old Iranian functioned as a noun before evolving into the locative suffix *-zār* during the Middle Iranian period. In Pahlavi, this locative form is recorded as *-zār* (p. 331).

Table 3. Suffix *-zār*

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
kār-	* <i>χārnā-</i> (noun: meaning "place of movement")	Zār

Sadeghi (1992a) argues that the suffix *-zār* is added to nouns to form place names. It specifically denotes a location where the base concept is abundantly found, as seen in terms like *sabze-zār* ("greenery") and *kesht-zār* ("cultivated land"). In contemporary Persian, no new words have been created using this suffix.

The term *zār* appears in Pahlavi as *chār* or *jār*, signifying "abundance" or "a multitude." It is believed to have originated from Old Persian *chār*, meaning "to go" or "to walk." As a locative suffix, it is appended to nouns, producing new place names that convey a sense of a location teeming with people or plants, such as *sabze-zār*. Occasionally, it is also found in the form *-jār*, as in *berenjār* ("rice field"). This suffix is predominantly used for naming places where a specific plant or vegetation is plentiful, like *lāle-zār* ("tulip field"). Sometimes, the word is also used adjectivally to describe something as ruined, wilted, or unpleasant (Hajari, 1998, p. 150).

The suffix *-zār*, as defined by several authoritative dictionaries, carries significant implications regarding place and abundance in the Persian language. Dehkhoda (1994) describes *-zār* as a suffix that signifies a location conducive to growth, embodying the concepts of abundance and multitude, thus indicating a space where a variety of items can flourish. Similarly, Mo'in (n.d.) emphasizes that this suffix indicates a place while also conveying notions of plentifulness, illustrated through examples such as *berenj-zār* ("rice field") and *banafshe-zār* ("violet field"), which explicitly denote areas characterized by the cultivation of specific crops. Furthermore, Amid (n.d.) elaborates on the suffix *-zār*, indicating that it denotes not only abundance and multitude but also a space of plenty when combined with other words, as seen in terms like *banafshe-zār* and *chaman-zār* ("meadow"). Collectively, these definitions underscore *-zār* as a formative element in Persian morphology that encapsulates both spatial and quantitative dimensions, reflecting cultural values related to fertility and richness in the landscape.

The evidence suggests that *zār*, originally **čarna* in ancient times, was an independent word. By the Middle Iranian period, it had transitioned into a suffix, a trend that continues in both Dari and Modern Persian, where it actively participates in word formation. Consequently, *zār* has become entirely grammaticalized, transforming into a tool for creating new words and losing its identity as an independent term.

4.1.4 - (e)stān/-(i)stān

Hasandoust (2004) presents the root of the suffix *-(e)stān*, along with its forms in Middle Iranian and Old Persian, as follows (p. 90):

Table 4. Suffix *-(e)stān/-(i)stān*

Root	Old Persian	Middle Persian
sta-	*stana- (noun: meaning "place" and "location")	-(i)stān (suffix of place and time)

Hajari (1998) explores the versatile functions of the Persian suffix *-stān*, categorizing it into various semantic roles. Primarily, it serves as a temporal suffix in words like *tābestān* ("summer") and *zimestān* ("winter"), indicating seasonal periods. Secondly, it functions as a locative suffix with several applications. When attached to nouns denoting entities, it indicates a place of abundance, as seen in *tākestān* ("vineyard") and *golestān* ("rose garden"), which suggest fertile or flourishing environments. When added to nouns that inherently mean "place," it defines specific locations, as exemplified by *farhangestān* ("academy") and *dādestān* ("court"). The suffix also appears in proper nouns like *Lorestān* (the region of Lurs) and *Hindustān* (India), anchoring them to specific geographical and cultural identities. Additionally, in terms such as *bīmārestān* ("hospital"), the suffix signals spaces associated with particular activities or services. Hajari highlights the suffix's capacity to convey both spatial and temporal meanings in Persian.

The root of *-stān* is the word *stān*, which fundamentally means "place" or "location." This root also appears independently in different contexts. It can denote a person lying flat, suggesting a position, or refer to a doorstep or threshold, indicating an entry point. The term *stān* can also imply a place of abundance, reinforcing ideas of fertility and richness. Furthermore, it may be an abbreviation of *āstān*, meaning "threshold." In imperative forms like *setān*, derived from *setudan* ("to place"), it can suggest an action related to positioning. Additionally, when combined with other words, *stān* forms participles, as seen in *jān-setān*

("soul-taker"). In the word *dādsetān* ("a place of justice"), the suffix carries a meaning similar to that in *jān-setān*, referring to the receiver of justice, rather than a locative meaning.

Sadeghi (1992b) notes that when attached to nouns, *-stān* indicates a place of abundance, as in *bīmārestān* ("hospital"). It is also used in naming regions, provinces, and countries, like *Afghanistan*. In some instances, he observes that the suffix may be redundant, as in *Lārestān* (a region and a city in the southern Fars Province of Iran) and *Zābolstān* (a historical region that straddled the modern-day borders of Iran [eastern part]) and Afghanistan (southwestern part, around the city of Zabol), where the base term could convey the same meaning without it. The suffix in *Hindustān* (India) combines *Hindu* with *-stān* to form a new meaning related to the people of the region. Sadeghi also discusses cases where the base word does not stand alone, such as *dabestān* ("primary school") and *dabiristān* ("high school").

Both Mo'in (n.d.) and Amid (n.d.) agree that *-stān* primarily indicates a place. It signifies a place of abundance when attached to entities, as in *būstān* ("garden"), or a specific location when affixed to place-related nouns, as in *farhangestān* ("academy").

4.1.5 – bār

Hasandoust (2004) identifies *-bār* as a locative suffix meaning "edge" or "bank," as in *Rudbār* ("river bank," name of a city), *Zangbār* (Zanzibar), and *daryābār* ("sea bank") (p. 161).

Table 5. The Suffix -bār (Meaning Edge/Bank)

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
par- (meaning to "pass, cross")	*para- (meaning "edge, bank, border")	bār (meaning "edge, bank")

Hajari (1998) enumerates the various meanings of the suffix *-bār*, highlighting its diverse functions in the Persian language. First, it denotes that which is carried by a person or an animal, exemplified by *kharvār*, meaning "a load" or "burden," which emphasizes the physical aspect of transportation. Second, it relates to fruit and produce, as seen in terms like *khārobār* ("food supplies") and *bārdār* ("bearing fruit"); see Table 6 for illustration, which shows how the suffix encompasses notions of fertility and sustenance. Additionally, *-bār* conveys the idea of occasion, instance, or time, demonstrated in expressions such as *yekbāre* ("once") and *dobāre* ("twice"), where it signifies frequency or recurrence (Table 7). This multifunctionality underscores the suffix's versatility in the Persian lexicon, allowing it to express both concrete and abstract concepts, from physical loads to temporal occurrences, thereby enriching the language's descriptive capacity (Hajari, 1998).

Table 6. The Suffix -bār (Meaning Fruit/Produce)

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
bar- (meaning "to carry" or "to bear")	*bara-	Bār

Table 7. The Suffix -bār [-bār] (Meaning Occasion/Instance)

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
var- (meaning "to choose, select")	*vara-	Bār

Hajari (1998) states that the suffix *-bār* is sometimes redundant, as seen in words like *juybār* from *juy* meaning "stream" and *rudbār* from *rud* meaning "river" (p.92). He further discusses another application of the suffix *-bār*, noting that it can occasionally function as a

bound morpheme combined with a word derived from the root *bāridan* ("to rain") to form an agent noun, as exemplified in *goharbār* ("precious") and *ashk-bār* ("tearful").

Mo'in (n.d.) expands on the meanings associated with the suffix *-bār* by including definitions such as "bank," "edge," and "abundance," which can be applied to specific words like *juybār* ("riverbank") and *Zangbār*. Similarly, Amid (n.d.), referencing the Pahlavi term [bār], reinforces these meanings by indicating "edge," "bank," and "a place of abundance," with examples including *juybār*, *Rudbār*, and *Zangbār*. This nuanced understanding highlights how *-bār* serves to enrich the lexicon by conveying both spatial dimensions and the concept of fertility or richness associated with these locations. The consistent use of the suffix in various contexts underscores its versatility and importance in conveying geographical and qualitative attributes within the Persian language.

4.1.6 – dān

Abolghasemi (2008) asserts that *dānā-* in Old Iranian functioned as an adjective meaning "encompassing." Over time, this adjective evolved into the form *-dān*, which served as a suffix denoting a place in Middle Persian.

Table 8. The Suffix *-dān* [-dān]

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
---	*dānā- (adjective: meaning "encompassing")	dān (place suffix)

Sadeghi (1992a) explores the usage of the suffix *-dān* in Modern Persian, highlighting its functional significance in word formation. First, he notes that the suffix is added to nouns to indicate capacity, conveying the idea of containment in words such as *ātaš-dān* ("fire holder") and *rūgān-dān* ("oil container"), which reflect the utility of these items in everyday life. Sadeghi further points out that certain words formed with this suffix have become simple in modern usage, as exemplified by *xān-dān* ("family") and *nāv-dān* ("drain"), suggesting a shift toward more common, everyday meanings. Furthermore, he observes that when the suffix *-y* follows *-dān*, it denotes "fixed and immobile" locations, as seen in terms like *nān-dān* ("bread holder") and *morgh-dān* ("poultry holder"), thereby emphasizing stability and permanence in these contexts. Collectively, Sadeghi's analysis illustrates the versatility and functional dimensions of *-dān* within the modern Persian lexicon, demonstrating how it shapes meanings related to capacity, common usage, and physical stability.

Various Persian dictionaries provide insights into the suffix *-dān* and its meanings. Dehkhoda (1994) explains that *-dān* at the end of a word signifies capacity or a place for something, indicating that the element it modifies represents a container for the specified item. Similarly, Amid (n.d.) defines the suffix [dān] as denoting a place or container when combined with another word, with examples such as *āb-dān* ("water container") and *ātaš-dān* ("fire container"). These definitions collectively underscore the functional aspect of *-dān* in the Persian language, illustrating its role in forming terms that convey notions of containment and utility, thereby enriching the lexicon with practical meanings related to everyday objects.

4.2 Suffixes of Protective/Guarding

In this section, the suffixes *-bān* and *-pād* are examined. The suffix *pād* functions both as a suffix and a prefix, but in the present discussion, it is primarily discussed in its suffix form.

4.2.1 – bān

Abolghasemi (2008) states that the suffix *-bān* originated as a noun in Old Iranian and transformed into an adjectival suffix during the Middle Iranian period. When added to a noun, it creates an adjective (p. 330).

Table 9. The Suffix -bān

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
pāna-	*pāna-	bān (noun: meaning "protector, custodian")
		bān (adjectival suffix: meaning "protector, guardian")

The Persian suffix *-bān* has historically conveyed meanings related to guardianship, roles, and occupations. Sadeghi (1992a) identifies two primary uses. When attached to nouns denoting places, animals, or objects, it signifies a protector or keeper, as in *āsiābān* ("mill keeper") and *marzbān* ("border guard"). When combined with action-related or possession-based nouns, *-bān* denotes individuals performing specific roles, such as *mehrbān* ("kind") and *negahbān* ("guardian"). This versatility highlights the suffix's role in denoting both occupational and moral attributes.

In contemporary Persian, the suffix *-bān* appears in specialized terms like military ranks, including *goruhbān* ("sergeant") and *daryābān* ("naval officer"). Everyday terms such as *sārebān* ("caravan driver") and *shabān* ("shepherd") remain familiar, though the suffix *-bān* is less common than *-dār* for forming modern words.

Ali-Askarova (1991) traces the etymology of *-bān* to ancient Iranian languages and Sanskrit, where it conveyed meanings like "lord," "master," and "guardian." Its roots, found in Avestan *pāna* and *vāna*, connect with similar forms in Indo-European languages, such as the Czech *pán* ("lord"). Historically, *-bān* only appeared in compound words in ancient Iranian languages, gaining its current meaning in Middle Persian, as seen in *manpān* ("house owner"). Remnants of these ancient forms persist in modern Persian, with *pān* in *choupān* ("shepherd") and *vān* in *dīd-vān* ("watchman").

The suffix *-bān* also bears cultural significance, as seen in the gendered term *bānū* ("lady"), derived from *pān* combined with the feminine suffix *-ū*. Dehkhoda (1994) and Mo'in (n.d.) emphasize that *-bān* denotes protection and possession, with examples such as *bāghbān* ("gardener") and *darbān* ("doorkeeper"). This historical and linguistic evolution underscores *-bān* as a marker of both practical roles and cultural identity in Persian language history.

4.2.2 – pād

The term *pati* in Old Iranian was an independent word, a noun meaning "owner" or "possessor." This term evolved in Middle Persian, appearing as *bid* in Parthian and as *bad* in Zoroastrian Middle Persian. During this period, *bid* and *bad*, both meaning "owner," were used as suffixes to form adjectives from nouns. Examples from Parthian and Middle Persian include *mān-bid* ("house owner") and in Zoroastrian Middle Persian, *mān-bad* ("house owner") and *sepāh-bad* ("commander") (Abolghasemi, 2008, p. 331).

Table 10. The Suffix -pād [-pād]

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
----	*pati-	bid
(noun: meaning "owner, protector, guardian, possessor")	(suffix for forming adjectives: meaning "holder" and "protector")	

The suffix *-pād* originates from the Old Iranian root **pati-*, meaning "ownership" and "protection," evolving into *bid* in Middle Persian to form adjectives related to guardianship and possession. The Old Persian *pati* meaning "to come forward" appears in modern Persian in various forms such as *pād*, *paz*, *pež*, *pash*, and *pey*, as seen in *pādshāh* ("king"), *pazirftan* ("to accept"), and *pashimān* ("regretful"). The form *Pād* conveys meanings like "against" (e.g., *pādzahr* meaning "antidote") and "guardian" (e.g., *pādshāh* meaning "king").

In Middle Western Iranian, suffixes like *-bad* and *-bid* evolved into *-bād* in Modern Persian. While *sepahbad* ("commander") retains a living form of this suffix, terms like *mobad* are considered archaic. Recent formations such as *arteshbad* ("military general") and *daryābad* ("naval commander") mimic the structure of *sepahbad* (Aboulghasemi, 2008).

Dehkhoda (1994) traces *-pād* to the Avesta term *paiti* and Old Persian *pāta*, both meaning "protector" or "possessor," exemplified in *pādshāh* ("king"), derived from *pāyidan* meaning "to protect." Similarly, Mo'in (n.d.) emphasizes its role in expressing possession and guardianship, as seen in *āzar-pād* ("protected by fire"). Over time, *-pād* has become a bound morpheme, losing its independent lexical status.

As a prefix, *pād-* is rare in Persian, with examples such as *pādzahr* ("antidote"), *pāshakh* ("counter-weight"), and *pādāsh* ("reward"). Despite its diminished usage, the term retains historical significance as a marker of protection and guardianship across the Persian lexicon (Shaghghi, 2002).

4.3 Suffix of Action/Operation: *-gār/-gar*

Abolghasemi (2008) asserts that **kāra-* in Old Iranian was a noun meaning "work" or "action," which transformed into the suffix *-gār* in Middle Persian, a suffix that formed adjectives by attaching to nouns. The term **kara-* in Old Iranian was an adjective denoting an agent, which evolved in Middle Persian into the suffixes *-gar* and *-i-gar*, and in Pahlavi, into *-gar*, *-i-gar*, and *-a-gar*. This suffix, when added to a noun, also formed adjectives.

Table 11. Suffix *-gār [-gaor]*

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
*kaora-	(Noun: meaning "work" and "action")	Gār
(Adjective-forming suffix: meaning "work" and "action")		

Table 12. Suffix *-gar*

Root	Old Iranian	Middle Persian
*kara-	(Adjective: meaning "agent")	gar, i-gar
(Adjective-forming suffix: meaning "agent")		

The Persian suffix *-gār* originates from the Old Iranian noun *kāra*, meaning "work" or "action." It evolved into *gār* in Western Middle Iranian, transitioning from an independent word to a grammatical morpheme for forming agent nouns and adjectives. In Middle Persian, *-gār* was used to denote individuals based on their actions or roles, as seen in terms like *wizind-gār* ("one who causes harm") and *kām-gār* ("successful") (Abolghasemi, 2008).

In New Persian, *-gār* continues to create terms by attaching to noun stems like *khedmat-gār* ("servant") and *āfrid-gār* ("creator") and to verb stems like *āmuz-gār* ("teacher"). Adjectives such as *sāzgār* ("compatible") and *māndgār* ("lasting") further demonstrate its versatility. Hajari (1998) notes that *-gār* can indicate both intensity and occupation, forming

agentive adjectives like *paziroft-gār* ("one who accepts") and passive participles like *āfrid-gār* ("created").

Persian dictionaries reinforce *-gār's* role in marking agency and professions. Dehkhoda (1994) defines it as a marker of agency or intensity, while Mo'in (n.d.) and Amid (n.d.) emphasize its function in forming occupational titles like *āhangar* ("metalworker") and *dorudgar* ("carpenter").

Sadeghi (1993b) highlights *-gār's* multifunctionality, forming agentive adjectives like *māndgār* ("lasting") and evolving into simple nouns like *parvardgār* ("nurturer"). He notes the insertion of the vowel *-e-* in some forms such as *parvardegār* to avoid consonant clusters. The variant form *-gar* also denotes creators or makers, as seen in *mesgar* ("coppersmith") and *āhangar* ("metalworker"). Although *-gar* has declined in productivity, it remains common in compound verbs, forming terms like *ghārat-gar* ("plunderer") and *gozāresh-gar* ("reporter"). Despite changes over time, *-gār* remains a vital part of Persian morphology.

5. Discussion

5.1 Grammaticalization of Locative Suffixes

The locative suffixes in Persian, such as *-kade*, *-gāh*, *-zār*, *-(e)stān*, *-bār*, and *-dān*, offer clear examples of the process of grammaticalization, wherein originally free morphemes evolve into bound morphemes that serve grammatical functions. Each suffix traces a path from a concrete lexical meaning to a more abstract syntactic role, reflecting phenomena such as semantic bleaching, syntactic reanalysis, and obligatorification.

A central feature of grammaticalization is semantic bleaching, where a morpheme's original concrete meaning weakens over time to take on a more abstract or functional role. For example, the suffix *-kade*, originally meaning "house" or "room" (Old Iranian *kada*), gradually shifted to denote various place names in Middle and Modern Persian, such as *dehkade* ("village") and *botkade* ("temple"). Similarly, *-gāh* evolved from a word meaning "place" or "rank" in Old Persian (*gāthū*) to a bound morpheme indicating a place of activity or a temporal marker in Modern Persian, as seen in terms like *ābgāh* ("water source") and *shām-gāh* ("evening"). This weakening of meaning is also evident in *-zār*, which began as *χārṇā* ("place of movement") and became a suffix used to form place names, often implying abundance, such as *sabze-zār* ("greenery") or *kesht-zār* ("cultivated land").

This shift towards abstraction is closely tied to syntactic reanalysis, as these suffixes transition from independent nouns or adjectives to bound morphemes. For instance, *-bār*, originally derived from Old Iranian *para* meaning "edge" or "border," became part of compounds denoting various types of banks or edges, such as *rudbār* ("riverbank"). Over time, *-bār* ceased to function as a free-standing noun and became an obligatory component of compound words.

Another hallmark of grammaticalization is unidirectionality, the principle that grammaticalization processes typically proceed in one direction, from lexical to grammatical. The suffix *-(e)stān*, for example, originally meant "place" in Old Persian (*stana*) and gradually became a bound morpheme forming place names such as *Lorestān* (the region of Lurs) or *Hindustān* (India). This shift from a concrete noun to a grammatical marker is irreversible, as evidenced by the fact that in Modern Persian, *-(e)stān* can no longer function as an independent lexical item. Similarly, *-dān* evolved from the Old Iranian adjective *dānā* meaning "encompassing" into a suffix indicating a container or place for something, as seen

in words like *ātaš-dān* ("fireplace") or *xān-dān* ("household"). This transformation illustrates the process of obligatorification, where the suffix becomes an obligatory part of compound words, losing its status as an independent element.

Collectively, these suffixes reflect several key principles of grammaticalization. In all cases, we observe semantic narrowing, where the original concrete meanings of the suffixes become more specialized (e.g., *-kade* narrowing from "house" to a place name suffix), and syntactic reanalysis, where independent morphemes are reanalyzed as bound grammatical markers. Additionally, the unidirectional nature of grammaticalization is evident, as these suffixes have progressed irreversibly from free morphemes to bound morphemes. Finally, obligatorification is apparent in the way these suffixes have become fixed components of place names and locative expressions in Modern Persian.

5.2 Grammaticalization of Protection/Guarding Suffixes

The suffixes *-bān* and *-pād* have evolved from independent lexical items into bound grammatical morphemes in Persian. Their development offers a clear illustration of grammaticalization, a process in which lexical items lose their independent meaning and function and become grammatical markers through semantic narrowing and morphological reduction. Both *-bān* and *-pād* share common developmental paths in that they both originated as nouns in Old Iranian, denoting ideas related to guardianship, possession, and leadership. Over time, however, these terms underwent semantic bleaching, losing their full lexical meaning and transforming into grammatical markers attached to other words to convey specific roles or attributes related to guardianship and protection. Both suffixes underwent semantic narrowing, where their meanings shifted from full-fledged lexical nouns to more specific, often abstract, grammatical markers that are no longer used independently in modern Persian. The shift from noun to suffix also reflects obligatorification where these elements became fixed components of compound words, and their use became more rigid.

A key feature of grammaticalization is the shift in the syntactic role of a morpheme. Both *-bān* and *-pād* originally operated as free-standing nouns in Old Persian (i.e., "protector" and "owner") and later transformed into bound morphemes that attach to other roots. This syntactic shift illustrates reanalysis, where the suffixes' original meanings were reinterpreted as part of the grammatical structure of a word, contributing to the development of specific word forms related to protection, guardianship, and leadership. This development can be observed more clearly in the cases of *-bān* and *-pād*:

- In the case of *-bān*, its use to denote specific roles such as a *pāsbān* ("watchman") or *marzbān* ("border guard") shows how its meaning expanded to cover both occupational roles and moral attributes. These examples indicate that, as a grammatical morpheme, *-bān* became capable of encoding both specific actions ("watching" and "guarding") and qualities ("kindness" and "responsibility"), reflecting semantic bleaching where the morpheme's meaning became less concrete and more functional.
- In the case of *-pād*, its transition from *pati* ("owner" and "guardian") to *-pād* as in *pādshāh* ("king") reflects a similar process, where a noun originally denoting ownership and control underwent a shift to a more abstract leadership function. This shift exemplifies morphological reduction, as the original sense of "ownership" or "possession" became generalized to denote roles related to guardianship or leadership without retaining the full richness of the original noun.

The historical development of *-bān* and *-pād* also demonstrates the influence of cross-linguistic processes. Both suffixes have etymological roots in Indo-European languages. The suffix *-bān* traces back to Avestan *pāna* and Old Persian *vān*, while *-pād* stems from the Old Iranian *pati*. These connections suggest a shared Indo-European linguistic evolution where grammaticalization occurred across multiple languages. Similar forms appear in languages like Hungarian (e.g., *pán* meaning "lord") and Czech (where *pán* also signifies "lord" or "master"), reflecting a wider Indo-European pattern of grammaticalization in terms related to possession and guardianship. In contemporary Persian, both *-bān* and *-pād* continue to be used in compound forms, but their functional significance has evolved. Although *-bān* is still productive in forming occupational titles (e.g., *daryābān* for "naval officer" and *āsiābān* for "mill keeper"), *-pād* is mostly seen in more formal or historical contexts (e.g., *pādshāh* for "king"). The fact that *-bān* is more commonly used today reflects a shift in language dynamics, with *-dār* replacing *-bān* in many modern formations (e.g., *pāsbān* vs. *pāsdār* for "guard"), while *-pād* remains a rare suffix in comparison to its more prominent historical role.

5.3 Grammaticalization of Action/Operation Suffixes

The Persian suffixes *-gār* and *-gar* illustrate key aspects of grammaticalization, a process in which lexical items lose their independent meaning and transform into grammatical markers. These suffixes evolved from independent nouns in Old Iranian, which conveyed notions of "work" and "action," into bound morphemes that attach to roots to form agent nouns, adjectives, and occupations. This transformation reflects the fundamental linguistic processes of semantic bleaching, syntactic reanalysis, and morphological reduction, which characterize grammaticalization.

Both *-gār* and *-gar* share common roots in Old Iranian. The suffix *-gār* comes from *kāra-*, meaning "work" or "action," while *-gar* is derived from *kara-*, an adjective meaning "agent" or "doer." Initially, these were free-standing nouns or adjectives, but as Persian evolved, they underwent grammaticalization and became suffixes in Middle Persian. Their original meanings, which were relatively concrete (i.e., "work" or "action"), gradually narrowed and became more abstract, focusing on specific roles or professions. In Middle Persian, *-gār* and *-gar* became productive suffixes, attaching to both noun and verb stems to create words related to occupation and action. For example, *-gār* produced words like *khedmat-gār* ("servant") and *āmuz-gār* ("teacher"), while *-gar* formed agentive nouns like *āhangar* ("metalworker") and *mesgar* ("coppersmith"). These transformations exemplify the shift from lexical independence to grammatical dependence, where these morphemes no longer function as standalone words but as bound elements forming new words.

The evolution of *-gār* and *-gar* clearly demonstrates the process of semantic bleaching—the loss of the original, concrete meaning of "work" and "action," which was progressively replaced by a more abstract grammatical function. As these suffixes were used more frequently to form agent nouns and adjectives, their meanings narrowed and became more specialized, ultimately marking roles, professions, and actions (e.g., *āmuz-gār* for "teacher" and *wizind-gār* for "harm-doer"). Additionally, syntactic reanalysis played a crucial role in their grammaticalization. Initially, *kāra-* and *kara-* were full-fledged nouns or adjectives that could stand independently. Over time, these roots became bound morphemes that could only appear as part of a larger word. For instance, while *kāra-* in Old Persian could stand alone to mean "work," in Middle Persian, it was reinterpreted as a suffix that attached to other words to form compound nouns or adjectives. This shift in syntactic function marks a key stage in

the grammaticalization of these elements.

Both *-gār* and *-gar* have also followed the principle of functional specialization, where they evolved to serve a specific grammatical function, primarily denoting occupation, agentive roles, or action-related qualities. In modern Persian, *-gār* continues to form agent nouns and occupational terms (e.g., *āhangar* for "metalworker" or *khedmat-gār* for "servant"). It has largely been preserved in specialized contexts, but it has become less productive in everyday word formation. The development of these suffixes exemplifies the principle of unidirectionality in grammaticalization: once *-gār* and *-gar* had become grammatical markers, they did not revert to their earlier lexical forms. This irreversible shift is a hallmark of grammaticalization, where the morpheme loses its full lexical meaning and becomes fixed in its grammatical role.

In contemporary Persian, both suffixes have become highly specialized. The suffix *-gār* remains relatively productive, forming agentive nouns like *āmuz-gār* ("teacher") or *parvard-gār* ("nurturer"), but its role has become more restricted compared to its earlier, broader use. Similarly, *-gar* continues to appear in compound forms, particularly in occupational terms such as *āhangar* ("metalworker") or *mesgar* ("coppersmith"). However, many modern Persian words that once used *-gar* now use other suffixes or verb stems (e.g., *charm-sāz* for "leatherworker" instead of *charm-gar*), highlighting a process of morphological reduction in the frequency of its use.

6. Conclusion

In this study, the evolution of the suffixes *-(e)stān*, *-bār*, *-bān*, *-pād*, *-dān*, *-zār*, and *-gār/-gar* has been thoroughly explored across different stages of the Persian language, tracing their journey from Ancient Iranian and Middle Persian to Modern Persian. The paper examined the usage and meanings of each of these suffixes in contemporary Persian, shedding light on their functional roles within the language.

It was observed that all these suffixes originated as free morphemes, functioning as independent words in Ancient Iranian. Over time, they transitioned into dependent morphemes, a process indicative of grammaticalization. Grammaticalization involves the semantic bleaching of lexical meanings, and the reanalysis of morphemes as essential parts of word formation. This process reflects the broader principles of grammaticalization, where once-independent morphemes become more grammaticalized over time, losing their original lexical meaning and gaining specialized functions within the syntactic system of Persian.

Within the continuum of grammaticalization, affixes can be placed at different stages. Some remain at the initial phase, meaning they have not fully transformed into grammatical units and are still predominantly used as lexical items. Others occupy a transitional stage, where they serve dual purposes as both grammatical morphemes for word formation and independent words. Additionally, some suffixes have completely transitioned into grammatical tools, losing their status as independent words.

The historical evolution of these suffixes underscores their adaptability and significance in the Persian language. Although some may retain certain independent usages, they have predominantly developed into suffixes that create adjectives or denote locations. This transformation reflects a broader linguistic trend, wherein the necessity for forming new words to encapsulate various phenomena has driven the grammaticalization of many formerly independent morphemes.

Ultimately, this study highlights the dynamic nature of language and the ongoing processes of change that continue to shape Persian, illustrating how historical context and communicative needs inform the evolution of grammatical structures. Through this analysis, the intricate relationship between form and function in language is further illuminated, emphasizing the importance of understanding linguistic evolution in the context of cultural and social development.

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