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Verbal nouns and word order

This paper will consider the use of infinitive verbs in Persian which have long been recognized to be nominal in the literature (Chodzko 1852, Hashemipour 1989, Lazard 1992). Of interest is the relationship between these verbal nouns and their arguments. Verbs generally follow direct objects in Persian yielding SOV word order. Verbal nouns, however, may either be followed by their objects to which they are linked by the Ezafe vowel, or may be preceded by their objects in which case there is no Ezafe. I will argue that this difference in word order corresponds to a difference in the scope of nominalization and that in the latter case it is a phrase rather than a word that is undergoing the category shift that we understand as nominalization.