



ISSN: 2308-5460

International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies

Journal homepage:

<http://www.eltsjournal.org>



English and Persian Cognates/Pseudo Cognates-A Cross-Linguistic Investigation

[PP: 21-34]

Amin Marzban

Department of Foreign Languages,
Sepidan Branch, Islamic Azad University,
Sepidan, **Iran**

Shahrzad Chahardahcherik

Department of Foreign Languages,
Sepidan Branch, Islamic Azad University,
Sepidan, **Iran**

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

The paper received on:

15/01/2015

Accepted after peer-
review on:

28/02/2015

Published on:

07/03/2015

Keywords:

Back borrowing,
Borrowing,
Cross-linguistic
investigation
False cognates,
True cognates,

ABSTRACT

Different world languages have a lot of contact with each other and have had different influences on one another. Cognates, words which are similar across two or more languages in some aspects, especially with regard to pronunciation, portray an interesting and relevant aspect of foreign/second language translation and research. This study intended to identify a type of cognate words called false cognates in Persian and English, words which have the same form in two languages but represent different meanings, and tried to study and determine the historical relations between English and Persian words. It also aimed to trace their route back from Proto Indo-European languages to the modern languages. To this end, the related literature was gone through and a sufficient corpus of information has been revealed. Afterwards, authentic monolingual dictionaries in both Farsi and English languages were consulted to provide definitions for the cognates and allow for their cross-linguistic comparison. The findings revealed that most of such problematic cognates with different meanings in Farsi and English as found through this study are likely to be confusing and deceptive for Farsi-speaking EFL learners. The findings also pointed to the need for this line of research to receive more scholarly attention. The study of true and false cognates has some implications for contrastive analysts, error analysts, translators, translation theorists, foreign language teachers, curriculum designers, as well as lexicographers and lexicologists.

Suggested Citation:

Marzban, A. & Chahardahcherik, S. (2015). English and Persian Cognates/Pseudo Cognates-A Cross-Linguistic Investigation. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 3(1), 21-34. Retrieved from <http://www.eltsjournal.org>



1. Introduction

1.1 Linguistic Evidence in the Indo European Family

A staggering consequence of linguistic research in the 19th century was the recognition that some languages show correspondences of form that cannot be because of chance convergences, borrowing among the languages, or the global characteristics of human language. Such similarities; therefore, can only be the result of the languages in question having sprung from a common source language in the past; these languages are said to be related and belong to one language family. It can therefore be easy to model such linguistic genetic relationships via 'family tree', showing the genealogy of the languages claimed to be related.

Many such language families can be identified. The languages within each family exhibit interesting formal correspondences in their phonology, overall structure, and vocabulary that link them together. The source language, generally called 'Proto-Indo-European' was spoken 6500 years ago and has provoked hundred languages, in ten major branches. It includes the Romance languages (Spanish, French, Latin, Italian, Portuguese), the Slavic languages (Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Illyrian), the Germanic languages (English, German, Swedish, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, etc.), the Celtic languages (Welsh, Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic), Baltic languages (Lithuanian, Latvian), Greek, Armenian, and Albanian.

1.2 Adventures of Persian

The great historian James Darmesteter (1883) in his 'Etudes Iraniennes', demonstrated that New Persian is the medieval and modern continuation of the old Persian language of Darius and Xerxes, just as Italian or French are modern

continuation of Latin. Old Persian was used by Achaemenian kings for official inscriptions engraved on imperial monuments or high on rock cliffs, in a cuneiform script which practically nobody could read. The administrative language was Aramaic. As to the possible oral literary use of Old Persian, we know nothing.

After the Greek rule and the subsequent period of Parthian domination, it reappears in the shape of middle Persian as the dominant language in the South of Iran. In the third century A.D, the inscriptions of the first Sasanian kings were written in three languages; Middle Parthian, Middle Persian, and Greek. Parthian was the language of the Parthian rulers, who had progressively extended their empire from northern Khorasan throughout the whole country of Persia (i.e. Iran) and eventually settled their capital in Ctesiphon in Mesopotamia. Middle Persian was the language of the new Sasanid rulers, who had risen in Pars, overcome the Parthian king. Both Parthian and Middle Persian were official languages and they were the most wide spread colloquial languages as well.

During the four centuries of Sasanian rule, there happened considerable changes in the language situation of Iran. Parthian dialect was soon removed from official use. From the fourth century on-wards, all inscriptions appear in Sasanid Persian only. There are still many Parthian-like dialects in the North-Western provinces of Iran. It is obvious that in the Sasanid period, Persian as a spoken language spread widely outside southern Iran, towards the North and the East, it completely replaced the Parthian original dialect. After the Arab conquest, the colloquial use of Persian was extended till further East by Muslim soldiers and merchants. Eventually, it superseded the original local languages. Literary middle



Persian, however, was not yet out of use. It was practically restricted to the Zoroastrian communities and their religious writings. Nearly, at the same time, a new literary instrument was created in the East on the basis of the colloquial language of those regions. Thus, Modern Persian is originally an Iranian dialect of South-West which, as a spoken language, progressively spread from the South to the North and the East, until in the extreme North-East it became a literary language, which in turn spread out to the West and South and ultimately was cultivated in a large part of Asia.

1.3 English Language History

Today, the extensive advances in linguistics and in ELT and EFL require us, teachers of English, to know well not only the language itself but also about the language. The same is true for the English vocabulary. Here, the reasons for the percentage of borrowings in the English language are explained. Explanations for this should be sought in the momentous history of England. If the origin of the English vocabulary is to be summarized, it can be approximately called Anglo-Saxon, Norman, Scandinavian and French. However, the borrowings are not confined only to these languages. There are borrowings from Arabic, Turkish, Indian and many others. Some of the borrowings have been fully adapted to the phonetic system of the English language, while others look and sound as loan words.

The English language can be regarded as the most hospitable language in the world. Explanations for this should be sought in the history of the nation speaking the language. A brief overview of some historical facts is necessary here. In the first century B.C., most of the territory, now known to us as Europe, was occupied by the Roman Empire. Among the inhabitants of

the continent were Germanic tribes, called 'barbarians' by arrogant Romans. Theirs was really a rather primitive stage of development, compared with the high civilization of Rome. They were primitive cattle-breeders and knew nothing about land cultivation. Their language contained only Indo-European and Germanic elements.

Over the fifth century A.D., several of the Germanic tribes (the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes) migrated across the sea now known as the English Channel to the British Isles. There they were confronted by the Celts, the original inhabitants of the Isles. The Celts violently defended their land against the invaders, but they were no match for the military-minded Teutons and gradually yielded most of their territory. Through their numerous contacts with the defeated Celts, the Germanic tribes absorbed a number of Celtic words, such as bald, down, bard, and cradle. Especially, numerous among the Celtic borrowings were place names, names of rivers and hills.

The Germanic tribes occupied the land, but the names of many parts and features of their territory remained Celtic. The seventh century A.D. was significant for the Christianisation of England. Latin was the official language of the Christian Church, and consequently, the spread of Christianity was accompanied by a new period of Latin borrowings. From the end of the 8th century to the middle of the 11th century England underwent several Scandinavian invasions which inevitably left their trace on English vocabulary. Here are some examples of early Scandinavian borrowings: call, take, cast, die, law. In 1066, with the famous Battle of Hastings, when the English were defeated by the Normans, we come to the eventful epoch of the Norman Conquest. The native language was not completely driven out, leaving little



impression on the language of the conquerors as had happened when the Angles and Saxons conquered the Britons, nor modified by a related language, but instead a second language was established in the country, in use side by side with the native language.

England, then, became a bilingual country, and the impact of the French language on the English vocabulary has been huge. French words penetrated every aspect of social life. In the Renaissance Period in England, as in all European countries, this period was marked by significant developments in science, art, and culture and, also, by a revival of interest in the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome and their languages. Hence, there occurred considerable number of Latin and Greek borrowings. Therefore, it was only natural that new words also entered the English vocabulary from other European languages. The most significant ones were French borrowings. This time they came from the Parisian dialect of French and are known as Parisian borrowings. Examples include: regime, routine, police, ballet, scene, etc.

1.4 Back-Borrowing

In this type of borrowing, a word, which has been already borrowed, may again be the source of a new type of borrowing which is sent back to the source language from which the borrowing had previously taken place. Here a change of meaning will be observed throughout the whole derivation. So, for example, the word /Caravan/ was borrowed from Persian to mean 'a group of people with vehicles or animals travelling together for safety' and then underwent some semantic change to mean 'a large vehicle pulled by cars equipped for living and sleeping in'. In turn, the word underwent the process of clipping to become 'Van' with the semantic

broadening to mean 'a covered vehicle with no side windows for transporting goods or people'. Then Persian again borrowed the newly formed word /vānet/. This version of borrowing, where one borrowed word is again the source of a new borrowing into the original source/receptor language is called a back-borrowing.

1.5 Borrowing

English, like many other world languages, is not from a pure language. In fact, it has borrowed numerous items, including words and grammatical structures, from many different languages, including French, Latin, Spanish, Italian, German, Russian, Arabic, and Farsi. The process of borrowing words from other languages by the English language has changed in the modern period and has become slower considerably (Barber, 2000). Farsi, the official language of Iran, has also been influenced by foreign languages. Prior to Arab Invasion of Iran, Farsi was in a relatively closed environment with the least contact with other languages, but Arab invasion in the middle of the seventh century changed the linguistic landscape of Iran forever. Apart from historical influences on Farsi, it has also been affected by new inventions in technology, including mobile phones, computers, social networks and the Internet. As a result, Farsi has been influenced by many other languages, especially English, and has borrowed many lexical items from them. Foreign words, which are borrowed and incorporated into a language, are called loan words (Fromkin, Rodman & Hymas, 2010).

1.6 True Cognates/ False Cognates

In the area of linguistics, cognates are defined as words which have some similarities with each other in different areas such as spelling and pronunciation, but have



different meanings in two languages in which they exist (Mancilla- Martinez, 2010). Cognate words in two or more languages have a common origin because of their developmental relationship through history and as a result they share some sort of formal and/or semantic correspondence. True cognate words can facilitate the foreign language learning process, they have similar meanings. In other words, despite the passing of time, these words have kept their similarities in pronunciation and meaning. A vast majority of cognate words in the languages of the world are normally considered to belong to this category of cognate words. Although various classifications of false friends have been proposed in the past, here we concentrate on two types of false friends: 1- chance false friends; and 2-semantic false friends.

Chance false friends are those words that are equivalent graphically and /or phonetically in two or more given languages, but without there being any semantic or etymological reason for this overlap. In fact, chance false friends could be considered to be equivalents, in two or more languages, of homographic words in a given single natural language. Take for example 'Korea' which is the name of 'a country in the south east Asia'; in Persian, that word is pronounced as 'Kore/کره' with the meaning of 'globe' which is another sense of the word. Semantic false cognates, by contrast, are words that are graphically and/or phonetically similar in various languages, but their meanings have diverged. These types of words have the same etymological origin but different meanings in each of these languages. For that reason, semantic false friends could be considered the equivalents, in two or more given languages, of polysemous words in a given single natural language. Semi-false

cognates are considered when a loan word in the foreign language may generally experience the semantic process of narrowing. In other words, while they may have a variety of meanings in the mother language, these words can bring an extremely limited set of their broader fields of meanings to the foreign language. For example, the English word 'fan' can mean /bādbezan/ and /pankeh/ and /fan/ in Persian there is only the latter as a false cognate shared with English.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Science of Etymology

As Dwight (1859) has stated, in 1786, a British judge in India, Sir William Jones, himself familiar with the Greek and Latin language, declared that there was a strong affinity among Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. He postulated that they all sprang from a common root, which was later referred to as the Indo- European family of languages. His announcement marked the beginning of the modern science of linguistics. (PP.270-274) Etymology is a branch of linguistics describing the origin of words, their change and development. Our modern languages are all derived from those of elder ages; and these are found when subjected to thorough analysis, to have been derived, in their turn, from those anterior to them. However, on a wide and critical survey, all the languages in the civilized world appear to be full of many correspondences and connections. Therefore, world languages like the men who have spoken them, have all been bound together by a regular series of sequences, running link by link in shining beauty from any and every language now spoken upon earth. These links would also relate to the first language in which listening angels, Adam and Eve had discourse with each other; and from that back to God Himself, the great All-in-all, from whose own girdle



the golden chain of human speech divine was dropped lovingly down to man, in order to bind him to him-self and all nations in heavenly sympathy with each other.

The etymological intuition is common to all nations, among the thinking classes. It is as natural and pleasant for those who reason at all; those who think about the origin and connection of words, as about relation and dependence, antecedents and consequents, cause and effect, in any other direction. There is full scope here for the play of all those faculties that demand adventure and enjoy invention. The principles that exist among people at a certain time in respect to the specific etymology of any individual language, under the influence of comparative etymology, are listed as: 1. The origins of words in the given language, and their meaning, must be furnished, whether in the language or out of it. 2. Comparative forms, in other kin languages, must be given, serving to illustrate more fully its place in the great family to which it belongs.

Derived forms have, most of them, analogies in the various Indo-European languages; and a thorough, comprehensive system of etymology and lexicography demands that such equivalents should also be exhibited. In all those derivatives, of whatever class or style, in each language, which have no similarities in other languages, we can best discover the distinctive genius of the specific language in which they occur and these are of great value to us, by way of revealing the inward principles to our view of its own separate home growth. The whole interior logical etymology of each language, in its separate words, must be carefully traced by the lexicographer himself, and as carefully set forth in full detail. Comparative forms in other kin languages must be given, serving

to illustrate more fully its place in the great family to which it belongs.

"Etymology" is the salt or spice of a dictionary, without the addition of which the eating of it would still remain tasteless. Today, the far reaching advances in linguistics and in ELT and EFL require us, teachers of English to know well not only the language itself but about the language as well. Umbach (1985), in the introduction to Webster's Dictionary, has emphasized the importance of etymology which studies the origin and development of words, their forms and meanings. Sometimes this is necessary and expedient. But to do so can be like treating a diamond simply as a material for the cutting of refractory substances. Seen as the product of perhaps three thousand years of human experience, a word may not only have many facets, but many somehow reflect with brilliant intensity the concentrated experience or insights of the generations. It is still true that words can have a mysterious power to conjure up images, or produce visions, or stir up emotions deep-seated in the shared experience of mankind.

Etymology is a strong feature of great dictionaries. Webster's New World Dictionary states that "insights into the current usage of a word can be gained from a full knowledge of the word's history and that a better understanding of language generally can be achieved from knowing how in other Indo-European languages". Different dictionaries and encyclopedias of linguistics provide almost similar definitions of false cognates. For example, a word which has the same or very similar form in two languages but which has a different meaning in each. (Richards, J., J. Platt, & H. Platt, 1992, p.136). Each dictionary provides its own example of false friends cross-linguistically. Apart from dictionaries,



The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language also makes a list of thirty French-English false friends and also from other languages including Danish-English and British-English available. Newmark (1988) has warned about the importance of false friends saying that the translator must never translate any word he has not previously seen without checking it, and this is when cognates are misleading (i.e. they are not true cognates) (p.182). Larson (1984), devoted a chapter to problems in finding lexical equivalents. In one section of this chapter, she brings into focus the topic of false friends. There, she asserts that the translator must be careful not to think that a loan word has the same meaning as it has in the language from which it is borrowed. Mollanazar (1997) also speaks about problems when borrowing loan words.

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) have asserted that "one must remember that many borrowings enter a language through translation. Textbooks on contrastive analysis and error analysis may also recourse to the false cognates"(p.34). As an example, in classifying the sources of errors, inter lingual errors which result from the transfer of phonological, morphological, grammatical, lexico-semantic and stylistic elements of the learners' mother tongue to the learning of the target language are always happening (Keshavarz, 1993). According to Jahanbakhsh (2004), A great number of talented linguists had been educated in India and Turkey; in India, very clear and well-organized encyclopedias have been written such as 'Anendrāj, Jahāngiri, Borhān-e-Qāteé', and the like, which are in the field of the etymology of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish words. The dictionary of Word Origins written by John Ayto also uncovers the interesting connection between words. It shows how modern English has

developed from its Indo-European origins and how diverse influences on the languages have mixed.

3. Present Study

In the present study, the researchers aimed to show that a low percentage of the cognate words in English-Persian and Persian-English examples, exhibit a different meaning in either of the two languages despite their similarity in form. The researchers also tried to study and determine the historical relations between English and Persian words and to trace their route back from Proto Indo-European language to the modern languages. To this end, the related literature was gone through and a sufficient corpus of information had been revealed. Afterwards, authentic monolingual dictionaries in both Farsi and English languages were consulted to provide definitions for the cognates and allow for their cross-linguistic comparison: and the cognate pairs were selected on the basis of their formal similarity while their meanings were contrasted as well. Thus, this piece of research has been completed through document reviewing. Data has been analyzed through descriptive analysis. Different articles, comparing special cognates or false friends, were examined carefully based on some predetermined factors. In this study, analytical and dynamic methodology was used, and the field study tools were not used.

3.1 Aim of the Study

The purpose of the study was to recognize and list the false friends and true cognates of the two Indo-European namely, Persian and English. It also aimed to investigate and specify the historical relations between English and Persian words and tracing their route back from the Proto Indo-European language to the modern



languages. In other words, to make an analogy of Persian words and other Iranian languages with European languages such as Greek, Latin, German, English, and French. Because it is only possible through the representation of the relationship between Iranian words with the words of other Indo-European languages and tracing all of them back to their Indo-European origin. This is done in order to have a thorough picture of Persian and English development. The current study seeks to build upon already-conducted research on the topic and use of highlights of the existing literature to provide another list of false cognates in Farsi and in English, explain how they differ from each other in terms of their meanings and what problems they can present Farsi-speaking learners with. Cognate pairs are introduced as true or false cognates. True cognates are found when those related words have more or less the same meanings as they form may suggest similar senses in the two cognate languages. For example, /Mādar/ and /mother/ are examples of true cognates; they both refer to the female parent.

On the other hand, false cognates disobey such relations. They are defined as terms that denote word pairs from different languages that, in spite of their formal similarities, they may have different meanings cross-linguistically. In other words, they resemble each other in form but express different meanings in each of the two languages. The present study, thus, addresses the following research questions:

1-Are the similarities among some of the Persian and English words, as the result of their common Indo-European origin or they are due to the chance, and/or superficial analogies?

2-Does the number of the English and Persian cognates which are based on kindred relationships of the two languages (i.e. true

cognates) exceed the number of common words of the two languages, which are based on borrowings, and/or structural similarities (false cognate)?

3.2 Procedure and Material

The introduction of European words into Persian has recently taken a particular direction and received the attention of philologists and linguists. This means that it has investigated the historical relations of Persian and English languages through studying the ancient texts of those languages with regard to the linguistic rules and specified these types of words relying upon authentic etymological resources. Furthermore, according to the logic and methodology, deductive logic has been used in the comparison of words and their etymology; and in the field of semantics, inductive logic has been used to study the semantic evolution of words throughout history of Persian and English languages. The Persian words, which were etymologically the same as English words, were arranged alphabetically. Each glossary entry discussed the origin and the development of every single word; and explained the relationship between that word with other words in Persian and English languages as well. However, this article did not include a thorough description of all the words, because it was not to provide a complete list of words with unknown origins. The etymological description of each word was arranged in chronological order, from past to the present era. In other words, the Indo-European origin was first introduced and then listed its derivatives in Farsi and English. The study also identified a type of cognate words, called false cognate In English-Persian data. To do so, the lexicon system of these languages and some pairs of cognate words were contrasted by



referring to etymological dictionaries and other researchers' works.

4. Results and Discussion

Although a cross-linguistic examination of false friends should be interesting in itself to anyone interested in linguistics as an independent discipline, the sociology of language, and the psychology of language, it is commonly thought that such an analysis has wider implications for other fields of language study especially for translation studies. Due to the fact that false cognates are perhaps the main enemy of translators, they must know their enemies thoroughly so as to be able to make them defeated. Comparative linguistics provides the basis for positing an Indo-European family and for relating the various above-mentioned languages and shows a set of unusual and interesting correspondences of form among all these languages. These affinities come at all levels of grammar, involving the sounds, the morphology, the lexicon, and the syntax. A significant aspect of these affinities is that those involving sounds are regular, consistent (in the sense that they generally do conflict with one another), and each have an example by a large number of matching words and morphemes across the various languages, and that the matching words and morphemes show relationships and similarities in meaning and/or grammatical function.

We also suggest that when teaching cognate forms, L2 teachers focus not only on building powerful connections to meanings that are shared across L1 and L2, but also to meanings that are not shared. Vocabulary teachers might first focus on shared semantic merits before introducing values that are not shared. In the case of values that are not shared, learners will be faced with the competing meaning representations of the cognate and will be

forced to accommodate themselves gradually to the need to make a choice, which may be contextually determined. This approach will add depth to the lexical representation and make it possible for the learners to identify the differing contexts that support the shared and non-shared meanings of the partial cognate. The present study suggests that it is easy to recognize a given word and it depends on the word itself, as well as on factors related to the reader and the context. In other words, as learners become exposed to the different contexts in which the two competing meanings are used, they will be able to build links to both meanings, which can be quickly identified and regained from the lexicon. They will, thus, become stronger L2 readers.

In this study, as mentioned earlier, etymological correspondences between Persian and English vocabularies and their diachronic development were investigated and identified. The direction of the study was from past to present; In other words, a typical Indo-European root is introduced and then its counterparts in other related languages are identified. The advantage of this kind of study is that, a cluster of derivatives of a single Indo-European root can be provided in this way. In doing so, the researchers pay special attention to historical and social facts and considerations; because the similarities of some words may be as a result of chance or superficial affinities.

The other point of focus in this study, is to consider the historical and social facts which evoke the changes of meaning in the related languages; for example, the English word 'buck' and the Persian word 'بز/ Boz' which in English denotes 'an animal that has horns on top of its head and long hair under its chin and can climb steep hills and rocks'; both of them have the same Indo-



European root (bhūgōs) but their meanings in two languages are different (Ayto, 1993). The data is collected through reviewing of other scholars' works in the field of etymology. It includes examining written materials that show information regarding the topics to be investigated or a descriptive analysis.

A comprehensive survey has been done of the literature on the historical relations between Persian and English languages through studying the linguistic rules and features of those languages; in doing so, the etymological dictionaries of Iranian scholars such as Aryanpoor, Nourai and scholars from other European countries around the world, like American heritage dictionary of English words, have been referred to and the relevant materials are consulted in those dictionaries, in order to make an analogy of Persian words with other kindred languages like English.

This study also investigates another group of words as false cognates of English and Persian; which are wildly different from each other in terms of their meaning aspect across English and Persian. With this aim in mind, a list of some of false cognates has been offered. The words which have been examined in this study are arranged alphabetically in two tables; in table 1 or the etymological box, the word box has been divided into two parts; the roots (the Left side) and derivatives in Persian and English (the Right side). Persian words are written in Persian alphabet and their English phonetic feature is also accompanied. In tracing the Indo-European roots to their modern derivatives, a detailed discussion of the cognates of these words in other sister languages must be considered, which is beyond the scope of this study. Such etymological counterparts standing in a line in silent array with other words, are so

important characteristics like those of Chemistry, which have embedded in themselves a volume of historical background to the philologist.

The methodology and design of the present study has to some extent concordance to some other Iranian and European scholars and writers; as for example, Nourai and Aryanpoor are among those who have published the etymological dictionaries of Persian and English vocabularies. Knowing the fact that English and Persian are from a language family which have had reciprocal relationship and have impact on one another, it is not unbelievable for these two languages to have false cognates in their lexicon. Table 2 offers a list of false cognate, that despite passing the time, they have kept their affinities in pronunciation and spelling, but their meaning is different in the two languages.

Table 1: True cognates

Indo-European roots	Persian- English meanings
ang/ ank کج کردن □ خ کردن	angusht 'انگشت' / angle
angh/ ange/ anghos باریک □ محدود □ متعصب	āzār 'آزار' / anger
bhelg̃h باد کردن □ متورم شدن	bālish 'بالش □ بالشت' / belly □ bellow □ billow □ bolster
bhereg تلبین □ پرتو افکن	barāz, barāzandegi 'برازندگی' / bright
bhendh بهم بستن □ پیچیدن	bastan 'بستن' / bind □ band □ bend
dent دندان □ دندانچه	dandān 'دندان' / tooth
dhō/ dhē قرار دادن □ گذاشتن	dād 'داد' / do □ deed
dehm/ dom جانور اهلی	dām 'دام' / tame
dhe/ dha دادن	nahādan 'نهادن' / do □ doom
ed خوردن	āsh 'اش' / eat
guel □ gwer □ gel غورت دادن □ بگولیدن	gelu 'گول' / gullet
ghlō/ ghel درخشیدن □ طلایی □ سبز □ آبی	zar 'زر' / gold
gwiwo □ gwe □ gwei زندگی کردن	zī □ zist □ zistan 'زیست □ زیستن' / vivid
gwer □ gwera سنگین □ گران	gerān 'گران' / gravity
geus □ gwou حیوان اهلی □ چهارپا	gāv 'گاو' / cow
geus چشیدن □ لذت بردن	dust, dustdāshan 'داشتن □ دوست داشتن' / choose
gon □ gne □ gen بوجود آوردن □ زبیدن	Zādan 'زادن' / kin □ kind □ king
jugom متصل کردن	jugh □ yugh 'یوغ' / yoke
kwrei خریدن	xarīd □ xarīdan 'خرید □ خریدن' / cheap
māter مادر □ والده □ دایه	mādar 'مادر' / mother
medhu نوشیدنی شیرین	may 'امی' / mead
mor □ mer □ mr مردن, پژمردن, نابود شدن	morde □ mordan □ marg 'مرد □ مردن' / murdur



mūs / موش, آمد بزدل	mush / موش / mouse
nepots / nepot / اولاد منکر	nave / navāde / نوه / نوه / nephew
nū / اکنون / حالا	nūn / اکنون / اکنون / اکنون / now
ostnes / osth / ost / استخوان	ost / ostoxān / استخوان / ossify
pei / pitu / poi / چربی	pēh / په / fat
petēr / پدرانه	pedar / پدر / father
peku / pek / دام اهلی / چندین بنم / وچین کردن درخت	shabān / شبان / pasture / pastor
peu / pew / pū / تمیز / پاک / تمام عیار	pāk / پاک / پاک / pure
regtos / reg / حرکت در خط مستقیم / مستقیم	rāst / راست / right
sau / sāwe / sūlsu / خور / خورشید	xorshid / hur / xor / خورشید / sun
spok / spek / نگاه کردن / معاینه کردن	pās / پاس / spy / inspect / spectator
tend / ten / کش آمدن / تحریف کردن / کش دادن	tār (moy) / تار / thin
teres / ter / به طرف / در / به سوی	farāh / tarā / فرا / through
ters / خشکی / تشنگی	teshneh / teshnegi / تشنه / تشنگی / thirst / thirsty / toast
wedhō / wadh / ازدواج کردن / وصلت کردن	bayūgi / bayūgani / بیوگنی / بیوگنی (عروس) / wedding
webh / بافتن / نساجی کردن	bāftan / بافتن / weave / vibrate
wegel / wog / weg / فعل و با نشاط بودن	bozorg / بزرگ / wake

Table 2: False cognates

False cognate	English equivalence in Persian	Persian equivalence in English
Test / test / تست	آزمایش / آزمون	Multiple choice test
Machine / mashin / ماشین	ماشین	car
Magic / mažik / مازیک	جادویی	marker
Switch / sowich / سویچ	کلید برقی	car key
Jacket / žakat / ژاکت	کت / کاپشن	sweater / pullover
Motor / motor / موتور	هر نمونه موتور	motorcycle
Khaki / khaki / خاکی	قیوه ای متمایل به زرد / خاکی	dusty
Band / bānd / band / باند	نوار / نغمه / بند	runway / gauze

5. Conclusion and Implications

Pursuing the topic of cognates and false cognates is of importance for a few reasons. The main reason is to provide language teachers with extra information. The results of the research may also have good advantages for students as they may become more aware of lexical and/or linguistic differences between English and Persian. Given the fact that such words are deceptive, teachers should raise students' awareness of words looking familiar, and clearly mention that there is a certain number of words that are false cognates that have to be identified; and the mistakes can be avoided by the use of synonyms. However, the equivalent to the best solution, would be teaching the most

commonly met false cognates during the English classes. Thus awareness is ensured. The study promotes a greater understanding of the importance and value of the similarities and variances among different languages and cultures, and develops more appreciation among those people who speak different languages. The discussion of false and true cognates has a lot of pedagogical connotations for error analysts and foreign and second language learners and teachers. Given the importance attached to cognates, on the one hand, and the fact that Farsi and English share a sizeable number of cognates (Lems, Miller & Soro, 2009), there is the need for research attention to be devoted to this area of investigation.

Through the study of such equivalents and false cognates of the two languages, one can best find out the distinctive intelligence of the specific language in which they occur; and these are of great importance, because they reveal the inward principles of those languages. The findings of the study also reveals that, those type of common words of English and Persian which are in the category of false cognates, have the potential to be very confusing and difficult to understand; however, it has been found that, because of the remote relationship between those two languages, the number of false cognates does not exceed that of true cognates in the lexicon of English and Persian.

One limitations of this study was that, the Indo-European is not a written language; however, about two thousands of its root words have been rebuilt by comparing words of similar sound and meaning among its derived languages. Therefore, there was not an easy access to all the roots. Moreover, with few exceptions, Persian and English dictionaries which are written for the information on etymology of the words of



those languages exist only in small amounts, and are scattered in dictionaries written; however, gathering this information is difficult and time consuming. Many of those books, neither make an index of Persian and English words available, nor trace the derivations up to the forms which are in use in modern languages. It took a long time to search different references and discover the word relations presented in this study.

This study has some implications for further researches; first, regarding the lexicography, the history of each root should as far as possible be displayed on the following range of equivalents and in order which is here proposed: the Sanskrit, Old Persian, Avestan, Middle Persian, Modern Persian, Latin, Greek, Old Persian, Middle and Modern Persian, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and other related languages. Second, in other studies a similar list of false cognates, with which Persian and English languages have affinity and kinship relations, can be conducted.

About the Authors:

Amin Marzban holds a Ph.D. degree and is currently an assistant professor in Applied Linguistics. He has been teaching English to major and non-major students of B.A. and M.A. programs in different universities such as Shiraz and Sepidan Branches of IAU along with supervising and consulting ELT and Translation students in their M.A. researches. He has also been working as the president and founder of Shamim Arghavan Language Academy and Shamim Danesh International Student Recruitment Center in Shiraz, Iran. He has also published articles in various international journals.

Shahzad Chahardahcherik holds an MA in TEFL and works as an English instructor with Islamic Azad University and Scientific and Applied University of Gachsaran branch, Iran. Her research interests include translation studies and teaching methodology.

References

- Aryanpur, M.** (1973). *A history of Persian literature*. Tehran: Kayhan Press.
- Ayto, J.** (1993). *Dictionary of word origins*. Arcade Publishing.
- Baldi, P.** (1982). *An introduction to the Indo-European languages*. Illinois, Southern Illinois: University Press.
- Barber, C.L.** (2000). *The English language: A historical introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Bengtson, J.D., & Ruhlen, M.** (2012). *Global Etymologies*. In Nathan Hayhoe (Ed.), *On the origin of the languages* (pp.278-290). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Carroll, S.E.** (1992). *On cognates*: SAGE Journals of *Second Language Research*, 8(2), 93-119.
- Cetina, C.M. C., & Ballester, M.G.** (1994). *A semantic overview of Anglo-Indian borrowing: Linguistic areas and contact effects*. Retrieved from <http://mural.uv.es/mgaba/Anglo-Indian%20borrowing.pdf>
- Chamizo Dominguez, P. J., & Nerlich, B.** (2002). False friends: Their origin and semantics in some selected languages. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 1833-1849.
- Cheung, J.** (2007). *Etymological dictionary of the Iranian verb: Language and linguistics*. In A. Lubotsky (Ed.), Vol. 2. Boston.
- Fortson, B.W.IV.** (2004). *Indo-European language and culture: An introduction*. Massachusetts, Oxford: Victoria.
- Fortson, W.B.** (2002). *The American heritage college dictionary*. Boston, New York: Houghton & Mifflin.
- Fromkin, V. A., Rodman, R., & Hymas, M.** (2010). *An introduction to language*. New York: Heinley.
- Graves, M., August, D., & Mancilla-Martinez, J.** (2012). *Teaching vocabulary to English language learners: Language and literacy series*. Amsterdam: Teachers College Press.
- Hall, C.J.** (2002). *The automatic cognate form assumption: Evidence for the parasitic model of vocabulary development*. *IRAL* 40 (2), 69-88.
- Hall, C. J.** (1992). *Making the right connections: Vocabulary learning and the*



mental lexicon Pueblo: Retrieved from ERIC database.(ED363 128).

Haug, M.(2009).*Essays on the sacred language, Writings and religion of the Parsis: An essay on language of the Parsi scriptures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hill, R. J. (1982). *Dictionary of false friends*. London: Macmillan.

Jahanbakhsh, F. (2004). *The history of Persian languages*. Tehran: Farhang.

Johnson, E.L.(1917). *Historical grammar of the ancient Persian language*. New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: American Book.

Joseph, D.B. (nd). *The Indo-European family: The linguistic evidence*. Ohio State University, Department of linguistics, 43210-1298. Retrieved from Cite Seer^x database.

Kent, R. G. (1953). *Old Persian: Grammar, texts, lexicon*. New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society.

Keshavarz, M.H. (1993). *Contrastive analysis and error analysis: Language and languages-study and teaching- Error analysis*. Tehran: Rahnama Publication .

Lapidus, I.M. (1985). *A history of Islamic societies*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Larson, M. L. (1984). *Meaning-based translation: A guide to cross-language equivalence*. New York: University Press of America.

Lazard, G. (1993). *The origin of literary Persian*. Paris: Foundation for Iranian studies.

Lems, K., Miller, I., & Soro, T.(2009).*Teaching reading to English language learners: Insights from linguistics*. New York: Guilford Press.

Mallory, J.P. (1989). *In search of the Indo-Europeans: language, archaeology and myth*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Mollanazar, H. (1997). *Lexical similarities in Persian and English*. Language and literature, 9-10, 135-141.

Mallory, J. P., & Adams, D.Q.(2006).*The Oxford introduction to Proto-Indo-European world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mifflin, H.(1992). Indo-European etymologies. In C. Watkins (Ed.), *The American heritage dictionary*. Boston: Turtleback.

Newmark, P.(1988). *A textbook of translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Onions, C.T. (2003).*The Oxford dictionary of English etymology*. United States of America: Oxford Press.

Price, A.C. M.A. (1886).*Elements of comparative grammar and philology*. London: George Bell and Sons, Covent Garden.

Quiles, C.C. (2007).*The Indo-European language family*. In F.L, Menchero (Ed.), *A grammar of modern Indo-European* (pp.23-29). Asociación Cultural Dnghu Press.

Rev. W., & Skeat, W.(1912).*The science of etymology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press .

Richards, J., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (1992). *Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. Essex: Longman.

Şekerci, O.(2007).*The eastern origin of English words*. Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 3(1), 150-167.

Shipely, J. T. (1984). *The origin of English words: A discursive dictionary of Indo-European roots*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Soltani, A. (1993). *Vazheganefarsidarzabanhaye Oropayi: Persian vocabulary in European languages*. Tehran: Avaye- Noor Publication.

Thornley, G. C., & Gmyneth, R. (1985).*An outline of English literature*. Addison Wesley.

Viney, B. (2003).*The history of the English language: Foreign language study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vinay, J. P., & Darbelnet, J.(1995). *Stylistique compare du française et de l'anglais: Méthode de traduction*. Paris: Didier. Translated and edited by J.C.Sager and M.J. Hamel (1995) as *Comparative stylistics of FD French and English: A methodology for translation*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Whitney, D.W. (1873). *The veda, the avesta, the science of language: Oriental and linguistic studies*. New York: Books for Libraries Press.

Wood, F. (1961). *An outline history of the English language*. London: Macmillan & Co Lot.



Woodard, R. D. (Ed.).(2008).*The Ancient languages of Asia and the Americas*. Cambridge University Press.

(1969). *The essential American heritage dictionary of the English language*.

(1985). *Webster's new world dictionary*. (2nd College Edition). USA: New Prentice Hall.

(1992). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*.

(2004). *Concise Oxford English dictionary*. London: Oxford press.

(2007). *Proto- Indo- European etymological dictionary: A revised edition of Julius Pokorny's dictionary*.