

Parsadanian's Persian-Dari, Dari-Persian Dictionary, A Statistical Review

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ABSTRACT

After hearing the phrase: "Deutsch Sprache, schwere Sprache."¹, Iranians and Afghans have both heard from their German language teachers with a consolidating tone that: "But if you get to learn it, then you can easily learn four or five other languages: Dutch, Finish, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish." They probably see the same relatedness between their mother tongue and the other branch of Persian language. At least in the last one-hundred years, the different political and geo-climatic situations, different educational systems, dissimilar ethnicities of the two nations, distant neighboring countries of these two lands have caused their languages to undergo nonidentical evolutions, despite the fact that the two languages of Persian and Dari are branches of a single tree and the people have inherited it from the same root. Dari words seem like a blend of French, English, Arabic, Indian, Russian and of course some comic/surprising words to Persian ears. This article aims to investigate into Dari words from the perspective of their meaning and signification in Persian and for Persian speakers. It chooses one index of the dictionary of Persian-Dari, Dari-Persian by Varezeh Parsadanian and tries accordingly to present a statistical view of how these words mean in Persian. In a world ladies talk about crocheting *Afghan* shawls on YouTube and some gentlemen trade *Persian* and *Afghan* carpets, it is nice to have a comparative look at the languages of the two countries.

Keywords: Comparative Lexicology, Lexicography, Lexical Signification, Word Interchanges, Lingual Evolution, Dari, Persian.

Introduction

PARSADANIAN, Khachaturi Varezeh (ca. 2010). *Farhang Farsi-Dari, Dari – Farsi* (Persian– Dari, Dari– Persian Dictionary). *Farhang-e-Mo'aser*, Teheran.

With more than 3500 words and compounds, this book is not a voluminous one by any measure. This two-sided dictionary mostly includes the words that differ in the two languages. Yet, there are some exceptions. The author has marked the words that the two languages share (but with different pronunciations) with a star. It is not clear why he has done so, while he has missed out some words that do differ in Dari and Persian.

In this article, Dari words are checked against first, the linguistic common sense of an educated native Persian speaker living in an urban region (because some Dari

words might be found in some dialects of Persian, for example in Khorasan province, you might hear *mâdarandar* (stepmother)) and second, against Mo'in Persian dictionary (in this case the word *mâdarandar* is also found in Mo'in dictionary, while Parsadanian has assumed otherwise).

Despite the disputes about Dari being something political, nowadays, this branch of Persian language seems to be a factual reality. Whether we call it Afghan Persian or Eastern Persian, Dari shares lexical similarities with Persian and has got its own distinctive differences. Having all those challenges with Russia, Afghanistan being occupied by Russia in December 1979, being an ethnic nation (mostly including: Pashtuns, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Tajiks) have led their language to have words like

¹ A German phrase meaning: "German language, complicated language."

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lisa (from the French word *lycée*) alongside words like *patra*.

Soheil Afnan among other topics, has explained the morphology, vocabulary and phonetics of Dari Persian and its differences with modern Persian in his book 'Persian Studies Concerning Dari Persian, 1973'. And as he has stated there: "To determine the peculiarities of Dari is not easy."

However, it is important to get an overview of its signification to Persian speakers. For this purpose, one index of this dictionary (the first index of the second part which is Dari-Persian) was chosen randomly by opening the book and each word of this index was put into one of the following categories:

1. Cognates. Words that the two languages share. Yet, in the sense they are used in one, their meaning is different and possibly unguessable for the speakers of the other language. For instance, *sawâneh* means happenings in contemporary Persian and it seems unlikely to Persians that this word could mean biography.² The words of this category make sense to Persians, but the meanings they have got in Dari are very different. These words include Persian, Arabic, etc. words. They are sometimes simple and sometimes compound words. Some of these were common in previous centuries and sound sort of archaic to the Persians and can now be found in Persian dictionaries. Beside their difference in meaning, some of them also differ in one phoneme with their counterpart, like the Dari word *fâbraw*.

2. Foreign Words. Words that are not common in Persian, yet might sound familiar to Persian ears as English, German or French words. The meaning of these words is probably guessable to the educated Persians. However, they have got another equivalent in Persian language. For instance, *en'înar* meaning engineer. The pronunciation of these words in Dari might differ with the original one due to phonological adjustments normally done on the borrowed words, therefore it cannot be said for certain that they do make sense to the Persians, even to the educated ones.

3. Complex/compound words whose parts make sense to the Persians. Yet, in the present way which they have come together in Dari and make one word they would be weird for Persians. These words in their present combinations don't exist in Persian. If a Persian-speaker is asked about the meaning of these words, especially if it is out of context, he may or may not be able to guess the right meaning of them in Dari. These words are close to cognates. Sometimes one sub-category can be considered for this category when one part of the compound is the

same as the Persian equivalent. For instance, the word *fâbmeywakaši* shares the part '*fâbmeywa*' with the Persian equivalent (with a slight difference in pronunciation), and the other part of it is sort of a synonym or very close to meaning to what is used in the Persian compound to call the same thing. *fâyinabor* and *fâftâb gereftagi* are two other examples of this sub-category. *Xastaxâna* meaning hospital and *širyax* meaning ice-cream are two other examples of the main category.

4. Complex/compound words in which one part is meaningful for the Persians and the other part doesn't make any sense. In some cases, the unfamiliar part is a foreign word that has been adopted to both Dari and Persian with different pronunciations. And, in some other cases it is a compound verb (for instance, *kardan* is used in both languages). If the parts of these Dari words get checked against more voluminous Persian dictionaries, like Allame-ye-Dehkhoda's, in some cases it is probable to find that unfamiliar part as a Persian word.

5. Unknown words for the Persians. For instance, *pohana* meaning knowledge. These words might root in Mongolian, Indian, Russian, etc. languages.

6. Loan words that the two languages share, yet with different pronunciations/spellings. This case is somewhat similar with Quebec, Swiss and Belgian French, with the difference that all of them are loan words here.

7. Words that have the same spelling, but different pronunciations. In this dictionary they have been marked with a star. In most cases the words of this category also belong to another category.

8. Words that Persian has got. Considering the small volume of this dictionary, it could be taken fore-granted that the author has only included Dari words that differ with their Persian equivalents. The difference could be just one phoneme. He hasn't indicated in the preface that on what resources he relies. The result is that he has considered some words, for example *fâpârtomân* as one which needs a Persian equivalent. Off Course, the equivalent only differs in one phoneme. But the point is that for the same entry besides the common pronunciation in Persian, Mo'in has also given another Persian pronunciation that is exactly the same as the Dari one, even though it is not common in today's Persian. In this case, this problem might be due to the fact that Persian spelling doesn't use diacritics for the short vowels. But this justification can't be true in cases such as *fâbbâzi*, *tahsildâr*, etc. The Persian equivalents presented in this dictionary are more common and more contemporary, yet it can't be denied that Mo'in dictionary holds some exact Dari words as Persian words.

². *sawâneh* is an example of the words that the two languages share, and in Persian it has got the connotation of an 'event', but in Dari it refers to a 'thing'. The word '*grim*' meaning

'face powder' in Dari and 'doing make up' in Persian is another example. Unfortunately, this word (among some others) has not appeared in this dictionary.

9. Words that differ in one or some phonemes. This article has differentiated this category with the category of loan words the two languages share with different pronunciations/spellings.

It should be noted that not all words fall neatly into one of these categories. Some can claim a space in two different ones.

WORDS	Cognates	Foreign Words	Complex/compound words with familiar parts	Complex/Compound words with one familiar & one unfamiliar part	Unknown Words	Loan words with different Pronunciation (And sometimes different spellings)	Words with the same spelling, but different pronunciation	Words that Persian has got	One Or some different Phonemes
jābbāzi			*					*	
jābbāzi kardan			*					*	
jābtarāzu			*						
jābedāt					*				
jābedāte bāstāni				*					
jābedāte tāixi				*					
jābrasāni								*	
borje jābrasāni			*						
mutare jābrasāni			*						
nale jābrasāni				*					
jābraw	*								*
jābriza								*	*
jābaki								*	
māste jābaki								*	
jābgarmi			*						
jābgin	*							*	
čāye jābgin				*				*	
šire jābgin				*				*	
jābmeywakaši			*						
māšine			*						
jābmeywakaši									
jāpārtomān*						*	*	*	*
jāpandeks						*		*	*
jāpendisit						*		*	*
jāpa					*				
jātāše						*		*	
jātašparča			*						
jātaškār			*						
jātašgolkon			*						
jāsuri									*
jāJandā		*							
jāxeza									*
dastgāhe			*						
jāxezaye rādiyai									
jāxerdast								*	
jādamčehra			*						
jādame zāq			*						
fu xayli zāq jast	*								
jārāmi								*	
jārt		*							
jārdbez									*
jārde suji				*					
jārde mayda								*	
jāršif								*	*
jārqañ					*				
jārqañi					*				
jārkestrā									*
jārmčawki					*				
jāran, hāran		*			*				
jāran kardan,				*					
hāran kardan									
jārang, hārang					*				
jāšperānt		*							
jāšperānturi		*							
jāswālā,			*		*				
jāspwālā									
jāštixorānak									*
jāškadu			*						
jāftābparast	*		*						
jāftābrox									*
jāftābsuxta								*	*
jāftāb gereftan								*	
jāftābgereftagi			*						
jāftābnešast			*						
jāfar		*							
jāfar gereftan				*					
jāfseyt									*
jākādemi,	*				*				
toulana									
jāksijān								*	*
jākka					*				

jāgast					*	*
jālārm		*			*	*
jāleš	*					
jāleš kardan			*			
jālmoniyam						*
jālubālu						*
jāleš				*		
jāmer					*	
jāmerkār			*			
jānjīn,						*
golundardi						
jāhen*					*	*
jāhenbāb			*			
jāhenpāra					*	*
jāhenpoš	*		*			
zire jāhenpoš			*			
jāhentaxta			*			
jāhenčādor			*			
jāhengādar				*		
jāhengul,				*		
sixegul						
jāyskrim, širyax		*	*			
jāyil				*		
jāyinabor			*			
qalame			*			
jāyinabori						

Background and Literature Review

This article doesn't aim to evaluate the work of the author of this dictionary. Mohammad Kazem Kazemi has written an article in BBC Persian web-site (27 September 2007) to do so. Despite the fact that he might have a point when he says the words of this dictionary are not necessarily the most common equivalents, the flaws and shortcomings that he mentions against this book are mainly too superficial and unworthy of any further discussions. He tries to ignore the adoption of western words into Dari and thus tries to ignore/underestimate the evolution of thought, culture, social life and language in his own country and to reduce everything to tradition and something like pure (straightforward or special absolute) Persian. It seems that he is trying to erase the eras such as that of people's democratic Party of Afghanistan or any other modern/western trend in his own country from his mind. For example, Amanollah shah was anyway seeking progress and modernity. In his time many foreign words were adopted into his mother tongue. The gap between west and Afghanistan was so huge that adopting the words was just inevitable.

In a thesis, titled "Persisch als Plurizentrische Sprache?" Heinz Strobl (Vienna, 2013) has evaluated the idea of whether Persian is multi-centered and has compared different branches of this language in Syntax and Lexicon.

Discussion

Some Persian words have more than one equivalent in Dari. This caused the total number of the pairs to get to 118, rather than 78 main and 11 sub-entries (total of 89) that this index has actually got. Some words like *jābrasāni* fall into some certain category, while when they appear in

a combination like *mutare jābrasāni*, that combination belongs to another category.

In this entry no false cognates (Words that sound and look similar, yet do not come from a common root, i.e. similar words with different meanings which are not etymologically related) were found. Nonetheless, for some entries like *jābgin*, if we consider the other meanings that this word has in Persian, this word entry could be considered as a non-cognate, too.

Nine categories have been considered for this entry. Yet, if we go further with Dari and Persian words, the need for defining some other categories might arise. For instance, as I indicated in a previous footnote, *grim* (the Dari word for 'face powder') in Persian combines with a verb to make an infinitive: *grim kardan* (to make up one's face cinematically/theatrically) and its meaning extends from the normal make up to cinematic makeup and off course doesn't refer to powder (a thing, an object) but to making up one's face (an act or event). Unfortunately, these two words are not included in this dictionary.

Some other words share a scope of meaning, *sikh* means kebab skewer in Persian, while it means knitting needle in Dari.

What Jürgen Habermas calls "*the Unfinished Project of Modernity*" is true about Afghanistan. In Amaniye era they tried to become western and modern. They have also had the experience of a namely communist government or governments with communist (as they say *Khalghi va Parchami*³) tendencies. They have had a state-nation. They have had figures like, Nur Muhammad Taraki, Hafizullah Amin, Mohammed Davoud Khan, Ghazi

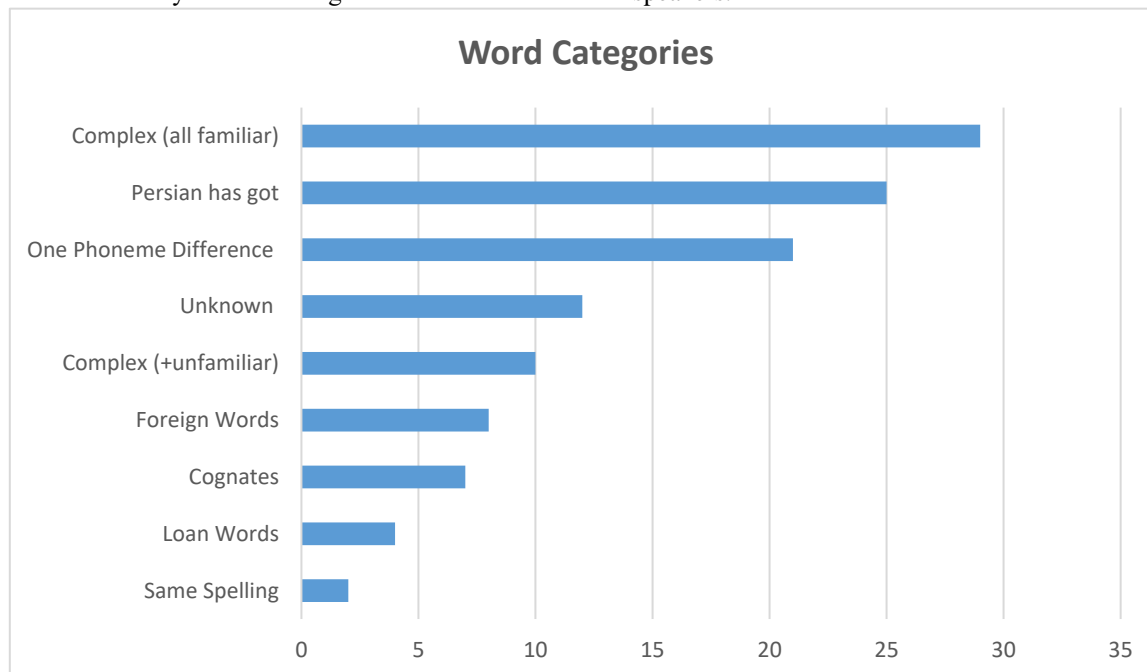
³. It means attributed to the masses and belonging to the flag.

Amanullah Khan, Babrak Karmal, Mohammed Zahir Shah, Mohammad Najibullah Ahmadzai (Dr. Najib). They have an unfinished half-defeated want for democracy.

Mohammed Zahir Shah took his wealth to Europe. What was *Babaye mellat* (The Father of the Nation) doing in Italy?!

It can be said that at the time of Mo'in these languages were closer. Some Dari entries exactly match those of Mo'in Persian dictionary. This fact is ignored that Persian

has undergone different socio-political changes and various trends in every time and era, and has experienced different policies regarding the bureaucratic language and different policies in the academies of the two countries. Persian differs a lot in each of these eras: late Qajar era, Reza Shah era, and Pahlavi era. Even in the Pahlavi era, the beginning, the middle and the late part of it differed hugely. That is why a word like *ġātāše* could once be considered Persian. Yet, as of now it's alien to the Persian speakers.



Summary

The total pairs add up to 118 sets. Here is the frequency of each category:

Cognates: 7. Foreign words: 8. Complex/compound words with familiar parts: 29. Complex/compound words with one familiar and one unfamiliar part: 10. Unknown words: 12. Loan Words with different pronunciations (and sometimes different spellings): 4. Words with the same spelling, but different pronunciations: 2. Words that Persian has got: 25. One or more different phonemes: 21. The highest frequency belongs to the complex/compound words with familiar parts with 29 times repetition and the least frequency goes to the category of the words with the same spellings, but different pronunciations, with two times repetition.

Suggestion

Obviously, another review can be made on all of the indexes of this dictionary. Also, some investigations can be done in the etymology of the words of it, especially those who fall into the category of "Unknown Words" in this article. Since Afghanistan shares a border with India, they have adopted some words from them. At the time of "the academy", they have chosen some French and

English words for which Persian academy has forged words with Persian components or have done some meaning extensions with the already-existing words. Thus, more detailed research can be done on the history of this constitution in the two countries through this perspective. The study of the history of academy in both countries and the decisions they have made and the policies they have practiced seems necessary.

Acknowledgments: : Sincere gratitudes to my dear brother, Hossein Yaseri.

Conflict of Interest: None

Financial Support: None

Ethics Statement: None

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