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## A Contrastive Analysis of Word-Formation Processes in English and Persian: Focus on Conversion

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### ABSTRACT

One of the productive word-formation processes in English and Persian that involve category change is conversion. The present study aims to compare and contrast conversion in English and Persian in terms of its productivity, the word classes that undergo this process, as well as its directionality. The research method is descriptive-analytical in order to carry out a contrastive analysis of conversion in English and Persian. To this end, various cases of conversion are investigated in both languages separately to identify the most frequent types of conversion in either language with regard to the parts of speech that are the input and output of the conversion process. The samples are taken from monolingual dictionaries, printed material, and online journalistic texts. Based on the results, it can be concluded that while conversion is a productive word-formation process in Persian, it acts differently compared with the English language in variety, frequency, and its target of application. Modern English has only word-to-word conversion; however, in Modern Persian, there are three types of conversion: word-to-word conversion, stem-to-word conversion, and word-to-stem conversion. Regarding rank-based conversion, in both English and Persian phrase-to-word and sentence-to-word conversions were found. In both languages, the class-based conversion process is quite productive but differences can be observed in the input and output of the conversion process.

**Keywords:** Conversion; Contrastive Analysis; English Morphology; Persian Morphology; Word-Formation

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### INTRODUCTION

In the modern world of multidimensional progress and development, especially in the fields of technology and science, where a “brave new world” has been emerging in the last decades, “humans are continually creating new expressions by manipulating their linguistic resources to describe new objects and situations” (Yule, 2020, p. 17). Since new inventions are introduced every day, whether in the real or the virtual world, “the creation of new words in a language never stops” (Yule, 2020, p. 58). Native speakers of a language have this opportunity and are creative enough

to produce and understand new forms in their language thanks to the property of human language described as productivity (or “creativity” or “open-mindedness”) (Yule, 2020, p. 17) which is considered to be a species-specific property” (Crystal, 2008). One of the instances of the property of productivity is that language users can both constitute and understand new words in their language making use of word-formation processes and rules.

Word formation is such a confusing area of study that it would not be possible to give a precise and uncontroversial definition of the subject. “In its most general sense, the term refers to the whole process of morphological variation in the constitution of words, i.e.

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including the two main divisions of inflection and derivation (Marchand, 1969). In a more restricted sense, “word-formation refers to the latter processes only, these being subclassified into such types as ‘compositional’ or ‘compound’ (e.g. blackbird from the free elements black + bird), and ‘derivational’ (e.g. national, nationalize, etc., from the addition of the bound elements -al, -ize, etc.)” (Crystal, 2008, p. 524). According to (Marchand, 1969, p. 2), word-formation “studies the patterns on which language forms new lexical units i.e. words. Word-formation can only treat of campsites which are analyzable both formally and semantically.”

Word formation processes play a significant role in expanding the vocabulary of a language to help language users form new lexemes. The main objectives of some of the word-formation processes are to form new words with the same root. That is, language users productively make use of category change to create new lexical items, manipulating the existing roots based on category change, an umbrella term for four processes, namely, affixal derivation, conversion, transposition, and reanalysis (Goethem, 2017). Conversion, a word-formation process that involves category change is a productive process in English and Persian. It is unusually prominent as a word-formation process, through both the variety of conversion rules and their productivity (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1987).

Although the term conversion entered linguistics as far back as 1891, when the first scholarly discussion of English conversion was given by Henry Sweet in the first volume of *A New English Grammar* (Martsa, 2013, p. 2), its definition has remained unclear (Manova & Dressler, 2005, p. 68).

Conversion is defined by Quirk et al (1987, p. 441) as the derivational process whereby an item changes its word class without the addition of an affix. In line with it, (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002, p. 48) defines conversion “as a process whereby a lexeme belonging to one class can simply be ‘converted’ to another, without any overt change in shape”. Lieber (2004, p. 2), focusing on the semantic aspect of conversion, writes, “conversion is word formation in which

there is semantic change without any concomitant formal change”. She considers conversion, along with derivation and compounding, noninflectional word-formation serving to create lexemes and to extend the simplex lexicon (Lieber, 2004, p. 9). According to Crystal (2008), in the study of word formation, conversion “refers to the derivational process whereby an item comes to belong to a new word class without the addition of an affix”. For example, verbs become nouns: to bottle<sub>V</sub> → bottle<sub>N</sub>; adjectives become verbs: empty<sub>Adj</sub> → to empty<sub>V</sub> .... Other terms used for this common phenomenon in English, include ‘zero derivation’ and ‘functional shift’. The term zero derivation seems to have emerged from the argument that in most instances where there is a change in the part of speech, there is an affix to mark that change. The argument is based on the perception of cases such as position<sub>N</sub> and position<sub>V</sub> as parallel or analogous to derivations with overt affixes such as computer<sub>N</sub> and computerize<sub>V</sub>. In “computerize”, the fact that a noun has been turned into a verb is marked by the suffix -ize. In “to position”, on the other hand, there is no overt affix. In order to treat both of these the same way, a zero morph is postulated on the end of position-Ø, marking its status as a verb (Bauer, 2003, p. 37) (Marchand, 1969, p. 360).

The conversion process involves *reusing* an existing lexical item for another semantic and syntactic purpose. Using conversion helps language users “to form new lexemes merely by shifting the category or part of speech of an already existing lexeme without adding an affix” (Lieber, *Introducing Morphology*, 2022, p. 56). That is, when “butter<sub>N</sub>” changes into “to butter<sub>V</sub>”, no prefix or suffix is needed and the same item is used again to refer to the activity of “spread (something) with butter”.

Although conversion has received a great deal of attention in studies on English morphology and word-formation since the publication of Sweet’s work in 1891. Research on conversion has repeatedly set itself the task to find answers to the following questions sufficiently; however, so far no real agreement has been reached in answering any of these questions (Martsa, 2013, pp. 2-3):

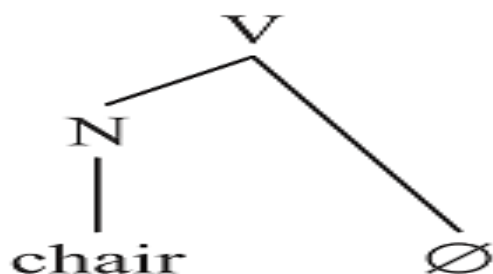
1. Which field of grammar does conversion belong to? More specifically, is conversion a morphological or a syntactic (i.e. derivational and/or inflectional) or a semantic/pragmatic process or some combination thereof?

2. How can conversions proper or true conversions and less typical, marginal cases and cases of non-conversion be told apart?

3. While the formal (orthographic + phonological) identity of items involved in conversion is taken to be a necessary condition, what kinds of formal discrepancies are still permissible?

4. If conversion is a derivational process (whether in the morphological or syntactic or semantic sense), how can its direction be determined synchronically?

Valera (2004, p. 22) points out that there is a “lack of agreement on the word pairs on which it can be used, where the limits of conversion lie, and how they can be defined”. Lieber (2022, p. 57) (2004, p. 90) also notes that there has always been a long-term debate among morphologists on how to analyze conversion properly, whether conversion is best analyzed as zero-affixation (Marchand, 1969), (Allen, 1978), (Kiparsky, 1982), or the addition of some other phonologically null affixal element (Don J., 1993) (Hale & Keyser, 2002), as relisting of items in the lexicon (Lieber, 1992), or innovative coinage (Clark & Clark, 1979). If conversion is viewed like affixation, with a phonologically null, i.e. unpronounced, affix, it is called zero-affixation represented structurally as in (1) (Lieber, 2022, p. 57):



(1)

Analyzed as different from affixation, conversion is a change of category with no accompanying change of form. With this analysis, converted verbs like “to chair” would

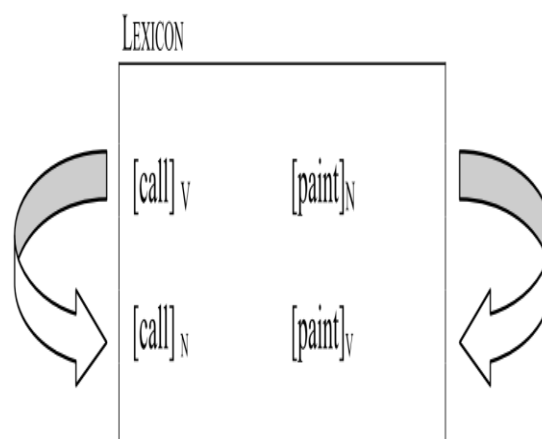
not have any internal structure, but would be regarded as having been *relisted* or *reategorized* in our mental lexicons.

Lieber (Lieber, 1992, p. 59) stated the relisting analysis as follows:

Relisting

- i. The lexicon allows for the addition of new entries.
- ii. Conversion occurs when an item already listed in the lexicon is re-entered as an item of a different category.

Don (2005, p. 2) has tried to catch the idea in the following picture:



(2)

As far as the researchers know, no prior research has addressed conversion in English and Persian to conduct a contrastive analysis. In what follows, both Martsa’s (2013) and Balteiro’s (2001) analyses are presented to provide the basis for our analysis of English conversion types, because they have given a somewhat comprehensive account of conversion and dealt with the literature on the process in English. Table 1, compiled by Martsa (2013, pp. 78-79), depicts the wide range of views about conversion in English, its limits and the scope of the process. In Table 1, Martsa has compared Quirk et al.’s (1985: 1558-1567) taxonomy of conversion processes, probably the most comprehensive ever to be made, with those found in the monographs of Biese (1941), Jespersen (1954), Marchand (1969), Stein (1977), Bauer (1983) and Plag (2003) and the recent monographs on English conversion written by Štekauer (1996), Twardzisz (1997) and Balt.

**Table 1**

Types of English conversion (Q=Quirk, Bi=Biese, J=Jespersen, M=Marchand, S=Stein, Bau=Bauer, Š=Štekauer, T=Twardzisz, P=Plag, Bal=Balteiro) (Martsa, 2013, p. 78)

Authors Types à la Quirk	Q (1985)	Bi (1941)	J (1954)	M (1969)	S (1977)	Bau (1983)	Š (1996)	T (1997)	P (2003)	Bal (2007)
<b>Partial conversion</b>										
A > N	-	+	+/-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
A > ADV	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Major types V &gt; N</b>										
A > N	+/-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
N > V	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
A > V	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
N > A	+/-	+	+	-	+	+/-	+	+	-	-
<b>Minor types</b>										
Closed class > N	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Affix > N	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Phrase > N	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+
Closed class > V	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+
Phrase > A	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
ADV/Interj. > N*	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Interj. > V*	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	+
V > ADV*	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADV > V*	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
ADV > A*	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Change of secondary class</b>										
N <sub>noncount</sub> > N <sub>count</sub>	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
N <sub>count</sub> > N <sub>noncount</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
N <sub>proper</sub> > N <sub>common</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N <sub>stative</sub> > N <sub>dynamic</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
V <sub>intrans</sub> > V <sub>transitive</sub>	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-
V <sub>transitive</sub> > V <sub>intrans</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
V <sub>intransitive</sub> > V <sub>copular</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
V <sub>copular</sub> > V <sub>intransitive</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
V <sub>monotr.</sub> > V <sub>compl. tr.</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A <sub>nongrad.</sub> > A <sub>gradable</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
A <sub>stative</sub> > A <sub>dynamic</sub>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Semantic conversion</b>	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-

In her study, Balteiro (2001) compiled a 300.000-word corpus from the journalistic, literary, legal, and technical-scientific genres of written American-English of the period 1997-1999. The study revealed that conversion is a “prolific source of new items in American English nowadays”. The corpus contains 5329

instances of total conversion, distributed in 3046 verbs, 2279 nouns, and 4 adverbs. All these cases correspond to ten types of total conversion. Her classification will be used as the basis of our analysis in this study:

- a) noun to verb,
- b) adjective to verb,

- c) adverb to verb,
- d) interjection to verb,
- e) verb to noun,
- f) adjective to noun,
- g) adverb to noun,
- h) interjection to noun,
- i) conjunction to noun
- j) adjective to adverb.

Balteiro (2001) identified only four examples of conversion to adverb: pretty (1), right (1), round (2). These four words were converted from adjectives suggesting that conversion to adverbs is rare because “conversion to adverbs does not contribute a great amount to the increase of lexical items in the language”.

Studies on conversion in Persian are not as abundant as those in English, probably due to a lack of attention to the process in this language.

Zaker’s (2013) study, entitled “Conversion in Persian: a Functional Discourse Approach” has addressed this word-formation machine somehow extensively, providing the literature of the previous works on conversion in both English and Persian.

Tabatabaee (2006) distinguishes between historical conversion and productive conversion. Historical conversion, a dead process, happens in the course of history when a word takes another function. For example, present stems like “foruš” (purchase), “awiz” (hang), and “ašub” (riot) have been used as nouns. This process involves Verb to Noun conversion and Noun to Adjective conversion. On the other hand, a word undergoes a productive conversion process, thus forming a new word categorized under another word class. He enumerates four types of conversion in Persian:

1. Adjective → Noun  
honærmænd<sub>adj</sub> → honærmænd<sub>N</sub>
2. Adjective → Adverb  
mostæqim<sub>adj</sub> → mostæqim<sub>adv</sub>
3. Noun → Verb  
fæhm<sub>N</sub> → befæhm; mifæhmæm
4. Adjective → Verb  
xošk → mixoškæd

This categorization can be summarized in Table 2. Following Tabatabaee (2006), Eslami

and Alizadeh (2010, p. 9) have addressed the conversion of adjectives to nouns, calling it *zero derivation*:

- (1) pesær<sub>N</sub>-e bozorg<sub>Adj</sub>
- (2) bozorg-ha<sub>N</sub> (bozorg-ha ra joda nakon)
- (3) bozorg-tær-ha<sub>N</sub> (bozorg-tær-ha-yešan amæde budand)
- (4) bozorg-tærin-ha<sub>N</sub> (bozorg-tærin-ha-ye majles)

They argue that *bozorg* is an adjective in Persian, but the zero-derivation process changes it into a noun, then it can take *ha* (Plural maker). Moreover, inflectional affixes change *bozorg* into the comparative form, *bozorg-tær*, and the superlative form, *bozorg-tærin*. Next, both are converted into nouns through the zero-derivation process. They also claim that in Persian, all adjectives have the potential to be converted into nouns:

$$X_{Adj} + \emptyset = Y_N$$

According to Zaker (2013), in Modern Persian, there are two types of conversion in morphological terms: *word-to-word conversion* and *stem-to-word/word-to-stem conversion*. In terms of word classes and the direction of conversion in Persian Zaker (2013, pp. 114-160) argues that the following cases of conversion can be identified:

- a) Noun/Adjective → Verb
- b) Verb → Noun/Adjective
- c) Noun → Adjective
- d) Adjective → Noun

Bahmanyar & Rafiee (2014) argue that there are three types of conversion in Persian, namely Adjective-to-Noun conversion, Adjective-to-Adverb conversion, and Verb-to-Noun conversion. In this study, we have cast the net wide, and conversion is defined as follows:

Conversion is the process of changing or converting a linguistic item to form a new lexical item, whereby the input may be a stem or a word, a phrase or a clause structure, and the output is always a lexical item. Conversion may be of two main types, *rank-based conversion* where the input is at the sentence/phrase level, and *class-based conversion* in which the input and the output of the process are both at the word level, but they belong to different word classes.



**Table 2***Historical conversion Versus Productive Conversion in Persian (Tabatabaee, 2006)*

<b>Historical conversion</b>	
Verb → Noun	Present Stem → Noun e.g. foruš, gozær, gir
	Past Stem → Noun xærid, saxt, poxt
Noun → Adjective	tækmil, sælamæt, rahæt
<b>Productive Conversion</b>	
X <sub>Adj</sub> → X <sub>N/Adv/V</sub>	Adjective → Noun Honærmænd <sub>Adj</sub> → honærmænd <sub>N</sub>
	Adj → Adverb mostæqim <sub>Adj</sub> → mostæqim <sub>Adv</sub>
	Adj → Verb xošk → mixoškæd
	Noun → Verb fæhm <sub>N</sub> → befæhm; mifæhmæm

The main goal of the conversion process is to add a new entry to the lexicon of a language without any change in the form of the original item, i.e. without adding an affix. Hence, it is an economical machinery used by creative language users, which adds to the productivity of the language.

The present study aims to compare and contrast conversion in English and Persian in terms of its productivity, the word-classes that undergo this process, as well as its directionality. Of course, the main aim of this contrastive analysis is to find out the commonalities and differences in English and Persian to help both teachers and translators in dealing with the problem of homonymy. Therefore, first, the way this process works in either language is discussed. Then the common points and the points of difference in these languages are identified and clarified. Next, the way converted forms in L<sub>1</sub> (English/Persian) are translated to L<sub>2</sub> (Persian/English) is explained with examples. This is the very strong point of the study since, as far as the researchers know, no prior research has been done on the contrastive analysis of conversion in English and Persian.

The main questions of the research are as follows:

1. *How does conversion work in English and Persian?*
2. *What types of conversion are there in either language?*

3. *What are the similarities and differences between these two languages with regard to the conversion process?*

## **METHOD**

The research method is descriptive-analytical in order to carry out a contrastive analysis of conversion in English and Persian. To this end, various cases of conversion are investigated in both languages separately to identify the most frequent types of conversion in either language with regard to the parts of speech that are the input and output of the conversion process. The samples are taken from monolingual dictionaries and printed material and online journalistic texts. The analysis of English conversion is based mainly on (Martsa, 2013) and (Balteiro, 2001), and the analysis of cases of conversion in Persian is based on (Zaker, 2013).

## **RESULTS OF THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF CONVERSION IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN**

### **Conversion in English**

The conversion process is very productive in Modern English, with new uses occurring frequently.

### **Types of Conversion in English:**

Rank-based conversion in English:

In Hallidayan linguistics, the term rank refers to one of the scales of analysis. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004),

there is a scale of rank in the grammar of every language, which can be represented as clause, phrase/group, word, and morpheme. Rank-based conversion changes the rank scale of a linguistic structure. It is mostly downward in the scale in Persian and the output is at the word level. Accordingly, the two ranks above the word scale may undergo the conversion process, resulting in the formation of a new constituent at the word level.

#### Phrasal verb to Noun

- (5) **to print out** → a printout  
 (6) **to take over** → a takeover

#### Verb Phrase to Noun

- (7) **want to be** → wannabe (He isn't in the group, he's just a wannabe.)  
 (8) **forget-me-not** (Her flower is the forget-me-not and her gemstone is a sapphire.)

#### Sentence to Noun/Adjective

- (9) **do-it-yourself** (If your affairs are simple, you could consider a do-it-yourself kit).

Types of Conversion in English with regard to the parts of speech involved and the direction of conversion

The conversion can involve verbs/adjectives becoming nouns, nouns/adjectives becoming verbs, etc. Some examples of conversion in English are listed here.

### 1. X to Verb (X=N/Adj)

#### A. Noun to Verb:

Dixon (2008, pp. 32-33) lists three verbalization processes in English: suffixation (-ify, -ize, -ate, -en) such as to victimize (from the noun victim and the suffix -ize), prefixation (en-, be-) such as to defrost (from the prefix de- and the noun frost), and conversion such as to dust (from the noun dust).

The most productive form or “the most numerous type of conversion in English” is noun to verb conversion (Jovanović, 2003). According to Steven Pinker “, the easy conversion of nouns to verbs has been part of English grammar for centuries; it is one of the processes that make English English”(1995, p. 379).

As Pinker estimates approximately a fifth of English verbs originate from nouns, which, as documented in Clark & Clark (1979), may also have to do with the fact that new or innovative verbs in English arise predominantly from conversion of nouns to verbs. In line with Pinker, Martsa (2013, p. 1) also claims that it is not only the easy conversion of verbs from nouns but, more broadly, conversion as a word-formation process that makes English English.

In English, both proper nouns and common nouns may undergo the conversion process to form verbs.

#### Proper Noun to Verb:

Denominal verbs based on proper nouns are common, although most are virtually complete idioms (Clark & Clark, 1979). However, the verbification of proper nouns could not be easily understood by everyone since not all of them are globally known.

According to (Héois, 2020), like proper names which are both linguistic and cultural items, verbs originating from proper names are deeply influenced by the society and culture in which they are coined. As a result, they are a window to a culture at a certain time. Therefore, being familiar with personalities like Meghan Markle and Charlie Sheen is a prerequisite to figuring out what denominal verbs like *Meghan Markl-ed* (which is taken from the act of Meghan Markle leaving the royal family) and *Charlie Sheen-ing* (taken from the drug and drunk cases of Charlie Sheen) mean (Prasihan, Widyastuti, & Setiawan, 2021).

Other examples:

- (9) He Eddie Haskeled me. (=He hustled me like Eddie Haskel )  
 (10) They **boycotted** the city's bus system. (From retired British army captain Charles Boycott)  
 (11) Staff **hoovered** the floor just minutes before he arrived. (From William H. Hoover)  
 (12) We can **Uber** to the store. (=go to the store using Uber)  
 (13) I'll **xerox** these forms for you. (From Xerox, a trademark)  
 (14) If a Google user has a question about Google, well, Google wants them to **google**

it.<sup>1</sup> (to search for something on the internet using the Google search engine)

### Common Noun to Verb:

When creating a new verb from a noun, the resulting verb can have different meanings. For example, to bread means “to cover with bread crumbs”, while to fish means “to attempt to catch fish”, and to bottle means to place (drinks or other liquid) in bottles.

(15) **bottle** (The wine is bottled at the vineyard.)

(16) **butter** (Don't butter the bread for me. I prefer jam.)

(17) **table** (An amendment to the proposal was tabled by Mrs. James.)

(18) **bread** (bread the chicken and fry it in oil.)

(19) **fish** (They're fishing for tuna.)

### B. Adjective to Verb:

(20) **empty** (Can you empty the bin for me, please?)

(21) **dirty** (Don't sit on the floor - you might dirty your dress.)

(22) **dry** (He was drying his hair with a towel.)

(23) **yellow** (The paper had yellowed with age.)

C. Adverb to Verb

(24) **down** (We downed three enemy planes with our missiles.)

(25) **up** (It looks like tax rates are going to be upped again.)

### D. Interjection to Verb

(26) **coo** (Who else but a morally indifferent ingénue would coo over his feeling sorry for himself.)

(27) **oh** and **ah** (After several rings at the door-bell a smothered laugh, and a good deal of ohing and ahing, the door was thrown open, and one by one, in came the expected characters.)

(28) **oh-oh**: ‘to complaint’

## 2. X to Noun (X=V/Adj/P/Conj/Interj)

### A. Verb to Noun:

When we turn a verb into a noun, the meaning of the new word is usually more predictable; that is, the output of the conversion process usually means something like “an instance of V-ing”. So for example, a throw is “an instance of throwing”.

(29) **to cheat** → cheat<sub>N</sub> (He used some cheats in the computer game to make him win easier.)

(30) **to throw** → throw<sub>N</sub> (That was a great throw!)

(31) **to kick** → kick<sub>N</sub> (He gave the ball a good kick.)

(32) **to fix** → fix<sub>N</sub> (There is no quick fix to the organization's problems.)

(33) **must** (Warm clothes are a must in the mountains.)

### B. Adjective to Noun:

(34) **regular** (I am one of the regulars at the pubs in Tsim Sha Tsui.)

(35) **final** (It is obvious that the LA Lakers will enter the NBA Finals.)

(36) **crazy** (Stop shouting and running around like a crazy.)

### C. Adverb to Noun:

(37) **up and down** (the ups and downs of life);

D. **up** (House prices are still on the up.)

### E. Interjection to Noun,

(38) **ho ho ho** (I love the ho ho hos of Christmastime.)

### F. Conjunction to Noun:

(39) **if, and, but** → no ifs, ands, or buts

## 3. Adjective to Adverb

(40) **free** (Children under four can travel free.)

### Conversion in Persian

A large part of the data on Persian was collected based on (<https://pldb.ihcs.ac.ir/Default>, 2022).

<sup>1</sup> Joanne Mcneil, Harper's magazine, 20 Jan. 2020; <https://harpers.org/archive/2020/01/>



Typology of conversion in Persian:

Zaker (2013) introduces two types of conversion in Modern Persian in morphological terms: *word-to-word conversion* and *stem-to-word/word-to-stem conversion*.

### Word-to word conversion:

Word-to-word conversion involves Noun-to-Adjective and Adjective-to-Noun conversions where a full word is converted into another full word and both the input and output of the conversion process can stand alone in syntactic structures (Zaker, 2013, p. 112).

(41) bi-ædæb<sub>Adj</sub> → biædæb<sub>N</sub>

Both biædæb<sub>Adj</sub> and biædæb<sub>N</sub> can be used independently:

(42) bæçe-ye biædæb (Noun + Adjective)

(43) ba biædæb-an (Noun+pl.) mænešin.

In the former, the adjective form is used in the attributive position while in the latter example, biædæb<sub>N</sub> has taken the plural -an suffix and is used syntactically in the noun position as the object of the preposition. The same applies to Noun-to-Adjective conversion. For example, tæla is basically a noun in Persian but can be used as an adjective:

(44) tæla geran šode.

(45) ængoštære tæla

Stem-to-word/ Word-to-stem conversion in Persian

The other type of conversion in Persian involves both stem-to-word and word-to-stem conversions. Every verb has two stems in Persian: Stem I, the “present stem” and Stem II, the “past stem”. Stem II ends in a dental, /t/ (e.g. ræft) or /d/ (e.g. did), and is the base for the infinitive, short infinitive, the past tenses, and past/passive participle (Perry, 2007). Neither the past stem nor the present stem can stand alone.

### Stem-to-word conversion

Stem II of some verbs undergoes the conversion process to create a noun:

(46) xærid-æm (past stem) → xærid<sub>N</sub>

Similarly, Stem I of a few verbs can be converted into a deverbial noun; though, the number of nouns converted from the present stem is smaller compared with the deverbial nouns from past stems.

(47) mi-foruš-æm (present stem) → foruš<sub>N</sub>

### Word-to-stem conversion

In word-to-stem conversion, the conversion process happens in a downward direction on the rank scale, changing nouns or adjectives to the present stem of Persian verbs.

(48) jæng<sub>N</sub> → jæng-id (past-3SG<sup>2</sup>)

(49) agah<sub>Adj</sub> → agah-id-æn (infinitive)

Types of conversion in Persian based on the rank or class of the input of the conversion process:

Persian conversion cases can be categorized based on the rank, or the class of the input of this process into rank-based conversion and word class-based conversion, which will be explained and exemplified below.

Rank-based conversion in Persian:

### Sentence to word conversion:

Some structures like “besaz-bafruš” are categorized under irreversible binominals in Persian defined as “the nominal compounds that made up of two morphemes, which can belong to any word class such as noun, verb, adjective, and adverb” (Golfam, Mahmoodi-Bakhtiar, & Sadegh, 2014).

However, we argue that since both “besaz” and “befruš” are imperatives, meaning “buy it and sell it”, they belong to the higher rank scale of the clause and they are combined to form a single new lexical entity on the word level:

(50) sæxti-ye kar-e **besaz-befruš**-ha<sup>3</sup>

In some cases, a neologism is formed based on this type of conversion:

(51) bæname-ye **besaz-befruš-šo**<sup>4</sup>

Other examples:

(52) dowrane **bezæn-dær-ro** gozæšte

<sup>2</sup> Third singular

<sup>3</sup> Donyaye Eqtesad newspaper, No. 4826, News Number, 3625449; August 31, 2019 (<https://www.donya-e-eqtesad.com/fa/tiny/news-3625449>)

<sup>4</sup> an android game application:

<https://cafebazaar.ir/app/Hadaf.Building.Construction>

bezæn dær ro (Imperative Sentence) →  
bezæn-dær-ro (Word: Modifier)

(53) fesad ba **begir-o-bebænd** æz bein ne-  
mi-rævæd.<sup>5</sup>

begir o bebænd (Imperative Sentence) →  
begir-o-bebænd<sub>N</sub> (Word: Noun)

(54) bi **boro-bærgærd** jayeze begir.

boro væ bærgærd (Compound Sentence) →  
boro-bærgærd<sub>N</sub> (Word: Noun)

(55) **bia-(o)-boro** daštæn

bia o boro (Compound Sentence) → bia-o-  
boron<sub>N</sub> (Word: Noun)

(56) **bede-bestan** æz mæfahim-e daneš-e  
eqtesad æst.

**bede va bestan** (Compound Sentence) →  
bede-bestan<sub>N</sub> (Word: Noun)

### Phrase to word conversion:

(57) ba **æz-ma-behtær-an** (Pl. Noun) mi-  
pæri!

(58) adæm-e **be-dærd-næxor** (adjective)

(59) **nan-be-nerxe-ruz-xor**

æfrad-e **nan-be-nerxe-ruz-xor** (adjective);  
nan-be-nerxe-ruz-xor-ha (Noun)

(60) **æz-pa(y)-oftade** (adjective): mard-e  
**æz-pa(y)-oftade** be rah-e xod edame dad.

(61) **piš-æz-tarix**<sup>6</sup> (adjective): mohævæte-  
ye **piš-æz-tarix**

### Word class-based conversion in Persian

This type of conversion leads to a change in the word class, e.g. Noun → Adjective. In Persian the following types of word class-based conversion can be found, where the main types involve a bilateral conversion among the three parts of speech, namely, Verb, Noun, and Adjective constituting six types of conversion:

- (1) Noun to Verb,
- (2) Adjective to Verb,
- (3) Verb to Noun,
- (4) Adjective to Noun,
- (5) Verb to Adjective,
- (6) Noun to Adjective.

Zaker (2013) only recognizes the six above-mentioned types of conversion. However, there is a seventh type of conversion, introduced in

Tabatabaee (2006), i.e. (7) Adjective to Adverb.

1. X to Verb (X=N/Adj)

A. *Noun-to-Verb conversion*

### Proper Noun to Verb

Denominal verbs derived from proper names are very rare in Persian as compared with the English language; however, innovative forms may occasionally be found, especially in journalistic texts:

رئیس جمهور آمریکا ۳ میلیارد دلار از بول های بلو که افغانستان را به بارانندگان قربانیان اسپتامبر اختصاص داد

**بایدن هم ترامپید**

نزدی دولت آمریکا از مردم افغانستان در حالی است که سازمان ملل ماه گذشته اعلام کرد مردم افغانستان باجران گرسنگی روبه رو هستند

### Figure 1

*Example of a denominal verb derived from a proper name in Persian (vatan-e-emrooz vol.14 no.3426 SUN. FEB.13, 2022)*

(62) bayden (=Joe Biden) hæm **tramp-id**.

Here, a proper name, Trump, converts into a stem, and then the third person singular past simple marker is added to form “tramp-id”, to refer to the acts reminiscent and typical of Donald Trump. Nevertheless, no similar case of conversion, forming denominal verbs from proper names of Iranian political, social, etc. figures was observed in Persian (i.e. \*hæsan-idæn, \*mæhmud-idæn)<sup>7</sup>. This neologism is context-dependent and is formed based on the shared knowledge among individuals.

### Common Noun to Verb

According to Zaker (2013) there are 50 cases of denominal verbs in Persian.

(63) ræqs<sub>N</sub> → mi-ræqs-ad (present-3SG)

### B. Adjective-to-Verb conversion

The number of deadjectival verbs is limited i.e. 13 cases, in Persian.

(64) xošk → xošk-id-æn (infinitive)

<sup>5</sup> Donyaye Eqtesad newspaper, No. 4693, News Number, 3566012; August 31, 2019

<sup>6</sup> equivalent of prehistory in Persian

<sup>7</sup> Former presidents, Hassan Rouhani and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

(65) xošk → xam-id-æn (infinitive)

## 2. X to Noun (X=V/Adj)

### C. Verb-to-Noun conversion

The input of this type of conversion process can be either a present stem or a past stem of the verb:

(66) ræft (past stem); amæd (past stem) → ræft-o- amæd<sub>N</sub> (æft-o-amæd-ha)

(67) baxt<sub>V</sub> (esteqlal be perspolis baxt) → baxt<sub>N</sub> (baxt-e esteqlal moqabel-e perspolis).

(68) saxt-æm (past stem); mi-saz-æm (present stem) → saxt-o-saz<sub>N</sub> (saxt-o-saz-ha)

(69) gir (present stem); gereft (past stem) → gir-o-gereft<sub>N</sub> (gir-o-gereft-ha)

### D. Adjective-to-Noun conversion

Adjective-to-Noun conversion is the most productive type of this process in Persian (2013, p. 146).

(70) æhmæq<sub>Adj</sub> → æhmæq<sub>N</sub> (æz æhmæq-an bogriz)

(71) aqel<sub>Adj</sub> → aqel<sub>N</sub> (aqel-an ra ešaræti bæst æst)

(72) abi<sub>Adj</sub> → abi<sub>N</sub> (un abi-ha ra bede be mæn)

(73) qermez<sub>Adj</sub> → qermez<sub>N</sub> (un qermez-e čænde?)

## 3. X to Adjective (X=V/N)

### E. Verb-to-Adjective conversion

(74) bezæn<sub>V</sub> → bezæn<sub>Adj</sub> (u dæst-e bezæn daræd)

### F. Noun-to-Adjective conversion

(75) tækmil<sub>N</sub> → tækmil<sub>Adj</sub> (zærfiæt-e kelas tækmil šod)

(76) bæradær<sub>N</sub> → bæradær<sub>Adj</sub> (kešvæ-r-e dust o bæradær)

### G. Adjective to Adverb

(77) særi<sub>2Adj</sub> → særi<sub>2Adv</sub> (særi<sub>2</sub> boro va bærgærd)

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results, it can be concluded that while conversion is a productive word-formation process in Persian, it acts differently

compared with the English language in variety, frequency, and its target of application.

With regard to the typology of these two languages, while Modern English has only word-to-word conversion, in Modern Persian, there are three types of conversion: word-to-word conversion, stem-to-word conversion, and word-to-stem conversion.

Regarding rank-based conversion, in English phrase-to-word and sentence-to-word conversions were found, where the output of the former was a Noun and the output of the latter was Noun/Adjective. Likewise, phrase-to-word and sentence-to-word conversions were observed in Persian with the Noun/Adjective as the output of both processes.

In both languages, the class-based conversion process is quite productive but differences can be observed in the input and output of the conversion process.

The conversion processes that are common to both languages are Noun-to-Verb, Adjective-to-Verb, Verb-to-Noun, and Adjective-to-Noun conversions. Looking at the output, one can see that both languages need to create new Nouns and Verbs to denote new phenomena and ideas, and new activities.

However, the word class of the most productive and frequently used conversion process is different in the two languages. In English, Noun-to-Verb conversion is the most frequently used one while in Persian, Adjective-to-Noun conversion is the most productive one.

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