

## **The Contrastive Analysis of Persian and English Adjective Knowledge**

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### **Abstract**

There are a lot of learners all around the world, who are studying in the field of English, but not all of them are proficient in any field of English such as (literature-teaching-translation), and especially in the field of translation which requires a considerable knowledge of two languages such as English and Persian. The present article intended to consider the contrastive of English and Persian Adjective knowledge. This article considered adjectives in Persian and English as a grammatical feature in order to find the differences and similarities between two languages. It also consisted of a complete classification of English and Persian adjectives. Comparing adjectives in Persian and English represented that there were more derived adjectives in Persian particularly in case of suffixes. The paper sought to find out which aspects of English adjective posed problem to the learners of English as a second language. The study aimed to consider whether it was helpful to use contrastive analysis of two languages as a part of syllabus and teaching materials and techniques in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Comparative grammatical studies; Persian adjectives; English adjectives.

### **Introduction and Review of the Literature**

In the recent years, there have been a lot of researches in the case of errors. Perhaps, learners' errors were involved in comparison of learners in the first and target languages. So the differences and similarities between two languages have been the matter of controversy for a long time.

Iranian students think that they know all aspects in Persian language and don't have any problems while they are using different parts of speech, such as using nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. Because the Persian is their mother tongue, they think they know all colloquial forms used in everyday life but they are unable to specify the differences between the mother tongue and target language. So, the students always encounter the problems and teachers also ignore the fact. Thus in one way applied contrastive analysis and in the other way English grammar, are two important ways in English that must be considered, especially in the case of those who works on translation. Comparatives grammatical studies on both languages needs to be done practically to give the students enough insights into both languages in order to be capable them in any field of English and productive and receptive skills. Adjectives are as a part of grammatical features in English. In this way contrasting target and mother tongue can help learners to improve their

knowledge in target language. Considering these differences and similarities can enable the language teachers to find out their students' learning processes and designing their syllabuses based on these highlighting parts, and classroom activities.

According to Selinker (1992) and Robinson (1995), in language learning and teaching, learners conducted an L1/ L2 comparison and this comparison was implicit and might result in the formation of wrong rules and incomplete L2 knowledge. In 1950s, behaviorist psychology proposed that L2 learning was the process of habit formation that influenced by first language and L1 transfer. Where the same linguistic elements were presented in the first and target languages, they had an interfering effect. So there was a difference between the two languages. Contrastive analysis was used to make the prediction about the linguistic structures of two languages.

According Fotos (1994), grammar tasks should conclude the problematic L2 grammatical features, so the most important grammar part like Adjectives were considered by this article. Adjectives are vital aspect of productive and receptive skills in English so learning them can help to use the language correctly. This is why that it is important to work on the difficult areas and possible sources of difficulties that learners encounter in learning adjectives. These difficulties teaching can help students to learn language correctly. Adjectives are words to modify a noun or pronouns which are used to specify the exact meaning of word. Adjectives as modifiers don't not change the basic meaning of the word and just modify a noun or pronoun by describing, limiting and making its meaning more nearly exact, for example a black car is still a car. Just adjectives or modifier the "black" here can tell us something more specific about the next word. Quirk (1980) supposed that, there were four features as characteristics of adjectives:

1. "Adjectives can occur in predictive position and have function as subject and object complement.
2. Adjectives can occur in attribution position and pre modify a noun.
3. Adjectives can take comparative and superlative form with inflection or by addition of the pre-modifiers more or most.
4. Adjectives can be pre-modified by the intensifier very".

Theoretically, this study has its origin in the theories of contrastive analysis. Contrastive analysis was based on structural linguistics and behavioral psychology and was proposed by

Bloomfield (1933), elaborated by Fries (1945) and Lado (1957). According to Lado (1957, p. 2), “in the comparison between native and foreign language lies the key to ease or difficulty in foreign language learning. These elements that are similar to the learners’ native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult”. James (1998) believed that Contrastive analysis was concerned the way in which native language affected foreign language in the individual

Another theoretical framework is followed by this article is teaching theories in learning L2 grammar (especially in the case of adjectives). Teaching and learning L2 grammar is central and important issue in the field of SLA. According to Sweet (1899/1964, p. 97), “Although language is made up words, we don’t speak in words, but in sentences.” So the correct use of words in the sentence is important. Grammar is not as one important component of language system, it is as part of language competence that is necessary for the communication.

There were a lot of studies in the case of contrasting L1 and L2 grammatical features; one of them was a CA of adjectives in English and Yoruba. This research was done by Adelabu (2014) in Nigeria. This study proposed some aspects of English adjective made problem to the learners of English. The results of this study revealed a high error margin. Yoruba learners of English had problems in using of English adjectives. Based on this result, the researcher suggested that the curriculum designers should bear the linguistic differences that exist between L1 and L2 in designing curriculum (Adelabu, 2014).

### **English Adjective**

There are two major classes for English adjectives. The first one is (A) simple adjectives that are subdivided into based and derived, and the second one is (B) compound adjectives that include phrases and clauses.

#### (A) Simple Adjectives

1. Base simple adjectives serve as stems of nouns, verbs, adverbs, comparatives, superlatives, and are include of one or two syllables. If they are preceded the noun are called attributive and if they follow it called predictive.
- Attributive adjectives are modifiers of preceding nouns and include: numerical (cardinal and ordinal), articles, proper forms (religion and nationalities), descriptive (general and physical state), noun adjunct, possessives, demonstratives, colors and indefinite quality.

For examples:

- a) Seven boys are on the street. (Numerical)
- b) The pen is there. (Article)
- c) Iranian workers work hard. (Proper form-nationalities)
- d) She is a small girl. (Descriptive-physical state)
- e) Sara is a pretty girl. (Descriptive-general)
- f) She is the crime reporter. (Noun adjunct)
- g) They want to bring their girl to the party. (Possessive)
- h) That bag is mine. (Demonstrative)
- i) He likes red car. (Color)
- j) My mother bought some cakes. (Indefinite quality)

- Predictive adjectives act as complement of verbs includes:
  - a) Subjective complements that comes after linking verbs, (e.g. She felt sad.)
  - b) Object complements that come after verbs like make, find, keep, etc, (e.g. she made her sad. (They found the place calm.)
  - c) Complements to a subject in a finite or nonfinite clause, (e.g. whether he goes is certain. Learning French is difficult.)
  - d) Object Complements to the clause, (e.g. my father believes working hard is good.)
- 2. Derived simple adjectives are words which are formed by addition of suffixes to so stems. The most important suffixes that are used to make adjectives are:
  - The suffixes that added to the nouns such as (-en)→ (woolen), (-wide)→ (nationwide), (-ery)→ (fishery), (-ary)→ (legendary), (-like)→ (manlike), (-ish)→ (childish), (-ic(al))→ (comic), (-ous)→ (famous), (-al)→ (national), (-ly)→ (locally), (-y)→ (faulty), (-less)→ (useless), (-ful)→ (useful).
  - The suffixes that added to verbs such as: (-ent)→ (convenient),(-ant)→ (significant), (-able)→ (workable), (-ible)→ (visible), (-ive)→ (active), (-ed)→ (learned), (-ing)→ (surprising), (-worthy)→ (trustworthy), (-some)→ (lonesome), (-(at) ory)→ (explanatory).
  - er and est that added to adjectives stems for comparison, (faster, fastest).

### (B) Compound adjectives

There are two types for compound adjectives phrases and clauses. Adjective phrases may be divided in the form of infinitives and participles.

#### 1. Adjective Phrases Infinitive

- a) Adjectives phrases infinitive can modify a word or a sentence and may function as adjectives. For example: There are some fruits for you to eat.

To drive well she must be alert.

- b) Infinitive can take active and passive forms too.

For example: Here is a car for you to fix. (Active)

Here is a car for you to be fixed. (Passive)

c) They can also be used with participles as adjectives.

For example: This is a noble goal to try for.

She needs car to drive with.

## 2. Participant Phrases Adjectives

a) Participant phrases which functions as subject, object of a prepositions, a verb complement, and as object of a verb can modify a noun or pronoun. They take active and passive forms and they usually follow the words. For example:

The girl talking to her mother is deaf. (Subject complement-modify a noun)

b) Participial phrases may show cause or time in place of adverbial clauses.

Putting on her hat, Ali ran out to see his father. (Time)

Working hard all afternoon, he decided to go to bed early at night. (Cause)

Clauses sometimes make function as adjectives to modify the following antecedents: a person or thing as subject, object, object of preposition, or possessive position. An adjective clause includes a subject and a predicate which modifies a noun or a pronoun antecedent. Who and whom are used for a person while which is used for thing, but that is used both for persons and things. The relative words who, whom, that, where, etc. refer to singular and plural antecedents.

- A person (that can be used in place of who and whom in most case except the possessive form)
  - a<sup>1</sup>) The woman who is going is my mother.
  - a<sup>2</sup>) The girl whom you saw is my friend.
  - b<sup>1</sup>) I like the dancers who dance Kurdish.
  - b<sup>2</sup>) I like the teacher whom you taught.
  - b<sup>3</sup>) I like a girl whose dress is red.
  - c) She talked to the teacher who teaches Arabic.
  - d<sup>1</sup>) He likes his neighborhood's girl who is his wife.
  - d<sup>2</sup>) He likes his neighborhood's girl whom you sew.
- A thing (that can be used in place of which in all the position)
  - a) The pen which is here belongs to you.
  - b) Mona bought the bag which is there.
  - c) She paid for the bag which is there.
  - d) I saw her bag which costs a lot.

- Adjective can also modify a time, a place, or a reason. In this case when, where, or why are used in adjective clause.
  - a) This the year when she visit her family.
  - b) That is place where you can relax.
  - c) That is the reason why he told the truth.
- “As” is used after the same to mean “that”.
  - a) They bought the same dress as she did.
  - b) They went to same place as he did.
- After and before are used to introduce adjective clause too:
  - a) He went the house the day after he got divorced.
  - b) They came here the day before they were going to marry.
- Adjective clauses may also be used as restrictive or nonrestrictive clauses in all the preceding cases:
  - a) The woman who loves her very much is a nurse.
  - b) Mina who loves him very much is a doctor.

### Persian Adjectives

Persian adjectives can be divided in two categories simple and compound. Simple adjectives can be subdivided into base and derived and compound adjectives can be divided into phrases and clauses.

#### (A) Simple Adjectives

1. Based simple adjectives: base adjectives in Persian are used as stems of nouns, verbs, comparative and superlative forms, and adverbs. They include attributive, numerals, descriptive, subjective and objective complements, demonstrative, colors, possessives, interrogatives, etc. most of them exist in the base forms and some of them are formed by using nouns, infinitives or imperatives plus suffixes. They precede or follow a noun based on the role they act. They conclude one, two, three or four syllables which are considered as one word. According to Mirhassani (1379), definite article in Persian language doesn't have any representation as a word or sign but the infinite one has symbol of “i” at the end of the noun.

For example: /xanei/= a house.

- Preceding the noun: Some adjectives often preceding the noun such as: numerical (cardinals), demonstrative, exclamation, interrogative, superlative and comparative, indefinite quantity and indefinite adjective.
  - a) /tʃahar xane inja hæst/. (Numerical). ( Four houses are here)
  - b) /in lebas kohne æst/. (Demonstrative). (This dress is old)

- c) /tʃe ketabe xobi!/ (Exclamation). (What a good book)
- d) /tʃegone lebase mixahi/? (Interrogative). (What kind of dress do you want)
- e) /behtærin tolidat dær iran æst/. (Superlative). (The best production is in Iran)
- f) /daneʃe æli behtær æz daneʃe sara æst/. (Comparative). (Ali' knowledge is better than Sara)
- g) /meqdari pol jæmaværi kærdæm/. (Indefinite quantity). (I spend some money)
- h) /hær goli xar daræd/. (Indefinite adjective). (Each flower has thorn)
- Following the noun: Some adjectives mostly follow the noun to modify, such as: noun adjunct, shape, color, nationality, attributive adjectives, indefinite adjective and general description.
    - a) /ou bazigære sinæma æst/. (Noun adjunct). (She is a movie actress)
    - b) /zæmin گرد æst/. (Shape). (The ground is circle.)
    - c) /kæʃfe zærde ou zeʃt æst/. (Color). ( Her yellow shoes are ugly)
    - d) /karegærane irani sæxt kar mikonænd/. (Nationality). ( Iranian workers work hard)
    - e) /abe rævæn ra bebin!/ (Attributive adjective). (See the flowing water)
    - f) /mæn goli xæridæm/. (Indefinite adjective). ( I bought a flower)
    - g) /ou yek lebase ziba xærid/. (General description). (She bought a pretty dress)
  - There are two types of ordinal numbers in Persian. The first type is those which precede the nouns and are made by adding the suffix “-omin” to the cardinals and the second type is those which follow the noun and are made by adding the suffix “om” to the cardinals except for the first one which has an exceptional form, that is /ævæʃ/.
    - a) /mæn sevomin lebas ra xæridæm/. (I bought the third dress.)
    - b) /mæn lebase sevom ra xæridæm/. (I bought third dress.)

Cardinal number in Persian acts two roles, (cordinal and ordinal) and in fact, the first type can be used for cardinal numbers in English
  - Predictive adjectives can play role as complements of verbs and include:
    - a) In Persian, simple adjectives are used to complement a phrasal subject or object: /amuzefe zban sæxt æst/, (language learning is difficult.)
 

/ou motæqed æst ke sæxt kar kærdæn khob æst/

(She believes that hard working is good)

- b) Subject complements along with the linking verbs (in Persian /bɒdæn/ & /dɑftæn/ in English “to be” & “to have”) and so on which can equal to English ones. When infinitive forms are conjugated in different tenses, they always change. For example: /an gol ziba æst/. (That picture is pretty.)
- c) Object complements after some words such as /didæn/ (to see), /kærdæn/ (to make), /yaftæn/ (to find).

For example: /mæn ɒʊ ra narahæt yaftæm. (I found her sad.)

2. Derived simple adjective: these kind of adjectives are formed by the addition of suffixes to stems and the most common ones are:

- /-an/, /-a/, /-ar/, /-e/, /-i/, added to the main part of the verbs after omitting the infinitive sign (/i/ dæn) or (/t/ æn) except for the last one which takes /i/ after the infinitive:

/porsan/, /gereftar/, /fenæva/, /poxtə/, /xordæni/

- /-nde/ → e.g. /ʃærmænde/, /-gar/ → e.g. /pærhizgar/, /gær/ → e.g. /dadgær/, /-kar/ → e.g. /tælæbkar/, /-saz/ → e.g. /karsaz/, /-ju/ → e.g. /danəfju/, /-soz/ → e.g. /jansoz/, /-nak/ → e.g. /dærdnak/, /-baxte/ → e.g. /pakbaxte/, /-i/ → e.g. (posttʃi), /-e/ → e.g. /yekʃæbe/, /-avær/ → e.g. /ʃærmavær/, /-æfza/ → e.g. /ʃadiæfza/, /-gu/ → e.g. /rastgu/, /-alod/ → e.g. /pæʃmalod/, /-mænd/ → e.g. /danəfmænd/, /-gir/ → e.g. /bæhanegir/, /-in/ → e.g. /næmækɪn/, /-gan/ → e.g. /gerogan/, /-ani/ → e.g. /irani/, /-ane/ → e.g. /salane/, /-gin/ → e.g. /rængin/, /-ani/ → e.g. /norani/, /-bæxf/ → e.g. /færæhbæxf/, /-ængiz/ → e.g. /vahʃætængiz/.

### (B) Compound Adjectives

In Persian, compound adjectives can be divided in two categories which are called, phrases and clauses.

1. Adjective phrases can be used and formed in following manners:

- Combination of two nouns, for example: /ʃirdel/= /ʃir/+ /del/ , (brave)  
/ɒʊ mærdi ʃirdel æst/, (he is a brave man)
- Combination of an adjective and a noun or vice versa, for example: /særbolænd/= /sær/+ /bolænd/, (prideful) or /xoʃlebas/= /xoʃ/+ /lebas/ ,(well-dressed)  
/an zæn xoʃlebas æst/ (that woman is well-dressed)



- Infinitives preceding by the Persian word /bæraye/ are used as adjectives, for example: /ab bæraye nufidæn/ (water to drink)
  - Some prepositional phrases may serve as adjectives, for example:  
/medade røye miz/, (the pencil on the table)  
/banke røberøye mænzele foma/, (the bank opposite your house)
  - In Persian participial phrases are not common, but occasionally past participles are in Persian with word /fodæn/ (become), for example:  
/kofde fode/ = /kofte/ (killed)  
/foste fode/ = /foste/ (washed)
  - A rhyming compound that in it, the second part may be meaningless and beginning with /m/ or /p/ sound is used as an adjective in the Persian, such as /tar o mar/ (scattered) or /qati pati/ (mixed).
  - Miscellaneous type of adjectives are formed by combination:
    - a) A verb + a noun, for example: / bezæn bæhador/
    - b) Preposition+ noun+ adjective or adverbs, for example: /æz xod razi/ (conceited), or /æz jan gozæfte/ (self sacrificed).
    - c) Imperative verb+ connective + imperative verb, for example: /begu o bexænd/
    - d) A particle + a noun, for example: /hæm æqide/ (the same position).
  - A noun + past participle are formed an adjective, for example: /donya dide/ (experienced). And an adjective + the present stem of a verb, for example: /tizro/ (speedy)
2. Adjective clauses: Lambton (1976) believed that these kinds of adjective were used to modify antecedents or noun such as: a thing, a person, an object, a subject, an object of preposition, or possessive form. In these forms of adjectives the sound /-i/ was added to the antecedent if definite except to the proper, singular demonstrative, personal, a word with the prononminal suffix, pronoun substitution, generic noun and an unparticularized plural. These clauses were preceded by a Persian relative pronoun /ke/ (=who, whom, which, whose, that) and the /i/ sound was added to the last modifying word, if the antecedent was modify by an adjectives or a group of adjectives. If the antecedent is definite and direct object of the main clause, the word /ra/ is used after it. If the

antecedent was used as a predicate of the main clause, the verb of the clause followed /ra/ and came before /ke/.

There is a point in the Persian that there is no punctuation to discriminate the nonrestrictive clauses from restrictive ones. There is a difference between descriptive and restrictive clauses that in the former, the pronoun /ke/ is used. There is no /i/ added to the subject. Plural antecedents refer to a group or class as a whole but it may be added in order to determine a special number of a group.

- a) /zæni ke inja bud madære mæn æst/  
(The woman whom you saw is my mother.)
- b) /zæni ke didi madære mæn æst/  
(The woman whom you saw is my mother.)
- c) /medadi ke ou xærid gomfod/  
(The pencil which she bought is lost.)
- d) /in zæni æst ke æz ou ketab xæridid/  
(This is the woman from whom you bought the book.)

In part (d), the pronoun /ou/ refers to she/he or her/him. So, it is a major source of mistake in translation from Persian into English.

- e) /Zæni ke doxtæræf doste mæn æst inja æst/  
(The woman whose daughter is my friend is here.)
- f) /moallefi ke nevisænde xubi æst in sæbk ra entexab kærdeh æst/  
(The author who is a good writer has chosen this style.)

The relative pronoun /ke/ is used with plural and singular antecedents in all type of sentences. The Persian relative pronoun is used with antecedents referring to person, place and time, etc.

- /zæmani ke ou inja bud hæva bæd bød/  
(The time when she was here the weather was bad.)

### **Discussion about the Differences Persian/English Adjectives**

1. The first source of differences in the function of adjective between Persian and English was related to lack of present participle in Persian as it existed in English that was caused the errors and was a source of confusion for the students.

2. The second difference showed that there were more derived adjectives in Persian especially in the case of suffixes that made trouble for those who translate English into Persian and also language learners.
3. The third difference that was noticed here, was Persian was richer in adjective phrases in contrast into English adjectives so sometimes students might have some difficulties in using adjective clauses.
4. The fourth difference referred that there was only the form /ke/ in Persian language, but in place of /ke/, there were many relative pronouns which play different roles in English.
5. The fifth difference was about the ordering of adjectives especially in the case of simple base adjectives. In Persian simple base adjectives came after the noun (e.g. /doxtære ziba/, but in English this kind of adjective came before a noun, (e.g. beautiful girl).

All of these differences showed themselves in using different skills and made some troubles for language learners and in translators. So teachers and translators must be aware of the major and also the minor points in order to facilitate learning and translation. Teachers must give their students enough practice to overcome these difficulties and try to realize the obstacles in order to use the language correctly especially in translating from one language to another language. Using comprehensive exercises and sufficient drills while teaching grammar to the students especially to those who major in translation, can help them to understand English and Persian better.

### **Conclusion**

Complex processes were involved in L1 and L2 learning and understanding and investigating these processes would help teachers to be more aware and involved the recommended language teaching tips though they shouldn't adhere to only a certain claim or factor. They should understand, analyze, synthesize and even criticize before trying to implement any of the suggestions made for teaching. Comparing adjectives in Persian and English represented that there were more derived adjectives in Persian particularly in case of suffixes.

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