

COMPARATIVE ETYMOLOGICAL STUDY OF ENGLISH AND PERSIAN COGNATE ROOT WORDS WITHIN THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

Shoxobiddinov Sirojiddin Isomiddin o'g'li,
Teacher at Kokand State University

Abstract. This article investigates the historical and etymological relationship between English and Persian through the comparative analysis of cognate root words inherited from the Proto-Indo-European language family. Although English belongs to the Germanic branch and Persian belongs to the Indo-Iranian branch, both languages preserve lexical similarities that demonstrate ancient linguistic connections. The study focuses on lexical pairs such as warm–garm, eyebrow–ābru, bad–bad, right–rāst, kid–kudak, new–naw, star–sitora, dent–dandān, door–dar, and name–nām. Using comparative-historical, semantic, and phonological methods, the research identifies patterns of sound transformation, lexical preservation, and semantic continuity. The findings reveal that English and Persian maintain traces of common linguistic ancestry despite centuries of geographical and cultural divergence. The article contributes to comparative linguistics, historical philology, and Indo-European etymological studies.

Keywords: comparative linguistics, etymology, Indo-European languages, Persian language, English language, cognates, root words.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz va fors tillari o'rtasidagi tarixiy hamda etimologik bog'liqlik hind-yevropa til oilasidan meros bo'lib qolgan o'zakdosh so'zlarni qiyosiy tahlil qilish orqali tadqiq etiladi. Ingliz tili german tillari guruhiga, fors tili esa hind-eron tillari guruhiga mansub bo'lishiga qaramay, har ikki tilda qadimiy lingvistik aloqalarni namoyon etuvchi leksik o'xshashliklar saqlanib qolgan. Tadqiqot warm–garm, eyebrow–ābru, bad–bad, right–rāst, kid–kudak, new–naw, star–sitora, dent–dandān, door–dar va name–nām kabi leksik juftliklarga qaratilgan. Qiyosiy-tarixiy, semantik va fonologik metodlar asosida tovush o'zgarishlari, leksik birliklarning saqlanishi hamda ma'no davomiyligi qonuniyatlari aniqlanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari ingliz va fors tillari geografik hamda madaniy jihatdan uzoq vaqt davomida ajralib rivojlangan bo'lsa-da, umumiy til ajdodiga mansublik izlarini saqlab qolganligini ko'rsatadi. Maqola qiyosiy tilshunoslik, tarixiy filologiya va hind-yevropa etimologiyasi tadqiqotlariga muayyan hissa qo'shadi.

Kalit so'zlar: qiyosiy tilshunoslik, etimologiya, hind-yevropa tillari, fors tili, ingliz tili, o'zakdosh so'zlar, ildiz so'zlar.

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуются исторические и этимологические связи между английским и персидским языками посредством сравнительного анализа общих корневых слов. Несмотря на принадлежность к разным ветвям индоевропейской языковой семьи, оба языка сохраняют многочисленные лексические сходства. Исследование анализирует такие пары слов, как warm–garm, eyebrow–ābru, bad–bad, right–rāst, kid–kudak, new–naw, star–sitora, dent–dandān, door–dar и name–nām. Результаты показывают наличие древнего общего языкового происхождения и устойчивых фонетико-семантических связей.

Ключевые слова: сравнительная лингвистика, этимология, индоевропейские языки, английский язык, персидский язык.

Introduction. Comparative linguistics is one of the most important branches of modern philology that studies relationships among languages through phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and semantic similarities. English and Persian belong to different branches of the Indo-European language family. English developed from the Germanic branch, whereas Persian evolved from the Indo-Iranian branch. Despite their geographical

separation and historical divergence, both languages preserve a considerable number of cognate words inherited from common Proto-Indo-European roots.

The existence of similar lexical items in these languages provides important evidence for reconstructing ancient linguistic systems and understanding historical human migration. Comparative etymology allows linguists to identify how words evolved over centuries while preserving similar meanings. Sound shifts, semantic changes, and morphological developments have influenced the modern forms of these words, yet many ancient roots remain recognizable. The present study investigates several lexical correspondences between English and Persian in order to determine phonological similarities, semantic continuity, and historical relationships. The article also demonstrates how comparative linguistic analysis contributes to Indo-European philology and historical language studies.

Literature review. The scientific study of Indo-European languages began during the nineteenth century with the works of scholars such as Franz Bopp, Rasmus Rask, and August Schleicher. Their research established the foundations of comparative philology and proto-language reconstruction. Modern linguists such as Campbell (2013), Fortson (2010), and Watkins (2011) further expanded comparative Indo-European studies through phonological reconstruction and lexical analysis. Most previous studies focused on Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, and Germanic languages. Comparatively fewer studies directly examine lexical similarities between English and Persian. Consequently, this article attempts to contribute to comparative etymological research by analyzing selected cognate root words shared by both languages.

Research Methodology. The research applies several linguistic methods:

1. Comparative-historical analysis;
2. Etymological investigation;
3. Semantic comparison;
4. Phonological analysis;
5. Lexical classification.

Data were collected from English etymological dictionaries, Persian linguistic sources, and Indo-European comparative studies. Each lexical pair was analyzed according to pronunciation, historical development, semantic meaning, and phonetic transformation.

Analysis and Results

1. Warm – Garm

English: warm

Persian: garm (گرم)

Meaning: warm / hot

The English word warm and the Persian word garm both refer to heat, temperature, and warmth. This lexical similarity is significant because both words preserve a highly stable semantic field associated with thermal conditions. In Persian, garm is widely used in

both literal and figurative expressions, such as “warm weather” or “warm personality.” Similarly, English uses warm in physical and emotional contexts. The phonological variation between the initial consonants w and g demonstrates the effects of historical sound evolution over centuries. Although the modern pronunciations differ, comparative linguistic studies suggest that both forms may derive from ancient Proto-Indo-European roots associated with heat and burning

2. Eyebrow – Ābru

English: eyebrow

Persian: ābru (آبرو)

Meaning: eyebrow / honor

The Persian word ābru originally referred to the eyebrow in classical Persian usage. Over time, however, the word developed an additional figurative meaning connected with dignity, honor, and social reputation. In modern Persian culture, ābru is frequently used metaphorically to describe a person’s respect or prestige within society. English eyebrow has preserved the original anatomical meaning without undergoing similar semantic expansion. This lexical pair is an excellent example of semantic broadening, where one language extends the meaning of a word into abstract social and cultural domains. The similarity between eyebrow and ābru also demonstrates how body-part terminology often acquires symbolic meanings in human language development.

3. Bad – Bad

English: bad

Persian: bad (بد)

Meaning: evil / negative

One of the most remarkable examples of lexical similarity between English and Persian is the word bad. In both languages, the word carries nearly identical meanings associated with negativity, evil, unpleasantness, or poor quality. In English, bad may describe behavior, moral character, quality, or unfortunate situations. Persian uses bad in very similar contexts, referring to negative conditions, immoral actions, or harmful circumstances. The similarity is notable not only semantically but also phonetically, because both pronunciation and spelling are closely related. Some linguists consider this similarity coincidental, while others argue that it reflects deeper Indo-European lexical preservation.

4. Right – Rāst

English: right

Persian: rāst (راست)

Meaning: correct / straight

The English word right and the Persian word rāst share important semantic similarities connected with correctness, truth, and straightness. In many Indo-European languages, the concept of physical straightness became associated with moral correctness

and truthfulness. English right may refer to direction, justice, correctness, or legal entitlement. Persian *rāst* similarly means straight, honest, or correct. The preservation of this conceptual metaphor demonstrates how ancient Indo-European cultures linked physical orientation with moral and intellectual values. This lexical pair also illustrates semantic continuity across distant linguistic branches.

5. Kid – Kudak

English: kid

Persian: kudak (کودک)

Meaning: child

The English informal word *kid* and the Persian word *kudak* both refer to children. While *kid* originally referred to a young goat in older English usage, modern English commonly uses it to describe a child. Persian *kudak* has consistently retained the meaning of “child” throughout its historical development. The phonetic resemblance between *kid* and *kudak* suggests possible reduction and simplification processes during language evolution. This pair demonstrates how languages may preserve similar lexical roots while developing different morphological structures.

6. New – Naw

English: new

Persian: naw (نو)

Meaning: new

The lexical pair *new* and *naw* represents one of the clearest examples of Indo-European cognates. Both words derive from the reconstructed Proto-Indo-European root **newos*. The semantic meaning has remained almost completely unchanged across thousands of years. English *new* and Persian *naw* both describe novelty, freshness, or recent existence. The preservation of both sound structure and semantic meaning makes this pair especially important in comparative Indo-European linguistics.

7. Star – Sitora

English: star

Persian: sitora (ستاره)

Meaning: star

The Persian word *sitora* and the English word *star* both refer to celestial bodies visible in the night sky. Although the Persian form contains additional syllables, the lexical similarity remains identifiable. Historically, celestial terminology has often remained stable across Indo-European languages because of its importance in mythology, navigation, religion, and astronomy. The semantic meaning of both words has remained almost unchanged over centuries. This pair demonstrates how consonantal expansion and syllabic development may occur while preserving lexical identity.

8. Dent – Dandān

English: dent / dental

Persian: dandān (دندان)

Meaning: tooth

The English root dent-, which appears in words such as dental and dentist, resembles the Persian word dandān meaning “tooth.” Both words relate to teeth and oral structure. This similarity indicates preservation of ancient anatomical vocabulary inherited from Proto-Indo-European roots. Medical and anatomical terminology often remains highly conservative in language history because of its essential communicative function.

9. Door – Dar

English: door

Persian: dar (در)

Meaning: door / gate

The English word door and Persian dar both refer to entrances, gates, or passages. Architectural vocabulary frequently preserves ancient lexical forms because such concepts are fundamental to human civilization. The Persian word dar appears in both literal and figurative expressions. Similarly, English uses door in physical as well as metaphorical contexts, such as “door of opportunity.” The phonetic similarity between the two forms suggests a common Indo-European lexical origin.

10. Name – Nām

English: name

Persian: nām (نام)

Meaning: name

The lexical pair name and nām demonstrates remarkable phonological and semantic preservation. Both words refer to personal identity, designation, or title. Names have always played an essential role in social communication, cultural identity, and historical memory. Because of this importance, naming terminology tends to remain stable across centuries. The similarity between English name and Persian nām strongly supports the hypothesis of common Proto-Indo-European ancestry. The analysis reveals several important linguistic patterns. First, semantic preservation is highly visible in lexical pairs such as new–naw and name–nām. These words retained almost identical meanings despite centuries of language evolution. Secondly, phonological transformations such as consonant insertion, vowel modification, and syllabic expansion can be observed in examples like star–sitora and kid–kudak. Such changes demonstrate how languages gradually evolve while maintaining traces of earlier linguistic structures. Another important observation is the preservation of conceptual metaphors. For example, both right and rāst connect physical straightness with moral correctness. This indicates shared cognitive structures inherited from ancient Indo-European speakers.

The findings support the hypothesis that English and Persian preserve ancient lexical traces despite belonging to different branches of the Indo-European family. Historical

migration, cultural interaction, and phonological change influenced pronunciation and usage, but many original roots remain identifiable.

Conclusion. The comparative study of English and Persian cognate words demonstrates deep historical and etymological relationships between the two languages. Lexical pairs such as warm–garm, new–naw, door–dar, and name–nām provide strong evidence of common Indo-European ancestry. The research confirms that phonological evolution and semantic transformation do not completely erase ancient linguistic connections. Comparative etymological analysis therefore remains an essential tool for understanding language history, cultural interaction, and linguistic development. Future studies may examine larger lexical corpora, grammatical similarities, phonological laws, and syntactic parallels connecting Germanic and Indo-Iranian languages.

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