Present Status of Persian Language in Modern Turkish: the Case of Personal Names

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Abstract

The study reported in this paper tends to investigate the present status of Persian language in modern Turkish language through investigating the extent of familiarity of Turkish university students with Persian loan personal names as a part of Persian loan vocabulary. 50 Turkish students were selected through purposive sampling technique and the data was collected through semi-structured interview. The findings of the study were indicative of low degree of familiarity of Turkish students with Persian loan personal names and consequently Persian loan words. A qualitative analysis of data through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) technique also revealed interesting facts about students' both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge about their language.

Keywords: Contact types, Persian loan personal names, Turkish language, Typological and family relations

1. Introduction

According to Winford (2003) "Most, if not all, languages have been influenced at one time or another by contact with others" (p.2). The phenomenon of contact between languages also seems to exist in varying levels in terms of type, degree, and direction. Persian and Turkish languages are among those languages which have had a pervasive contact with each other through a substantial period of time. Despite their different typological properties and family relations, the contact between these two languages and its consequences has been extensive and more significantly *unidirectional*; that is to say the presence and influence of one language on the other one is more extensive. As Sankoff also puts "most language contact situations lead to unidirectional, rather than bidirectional linguistic results" (as cited in Labov, 2007). This unidirectionality is observable in case of the contact between Persian and Turkish language. The consequence of such unidirectionality has been the presence of many Persian loan words in Turkish language.[1] This contact has gone through many rises and falls during its history. Though it is impossible to pinpoint how and when the first Persian word entered Turkish language, the evidence found in historical sources and accounts suggest that the contact between Persian and Turkish languages began as far back as the reign of Sassanid and Roman Empires (Korkmaz,1995). Whatever the temporal extension - almost 1500 years- this old contact has resulted in borrowing extensive number of Persian words. As a natural consequence of borrowing, loanwords go through nativization process (Chambers, 2003). This process can be observed in case of Persian loan words being Turkified through time. Nativization process is sometimes so complicated and advanced in level that the origin of the loan word becomes hard to identify. Nativization of Persian loan words on the one hand, and the disconnection of Turkish language from its only common point with Persian language (Arabic script) as the consequence of modernization reforms - also known as *Kemlaist* reforms - in 1924 on the other hand, have made it difficult for the young Turkish speakers to identify Persian loan words. Among these loan words are the Persian personal names which have mainly entered Turkish language through Divan literature which was heavily influenced by Persian literature. These personal names have been, and are still extensively used by modern Turkish speakers. The purpose of the present study is to evaluate the present status of Persian language in modern Turkish language through investigating the extent of familiarity of Turkish university students with Persian loan personal names. This study also tries to find out how Turkish university students identify Persian loan personal names used in their language. The study reported in this article addressed the following research questions:

1) To what extent are Turkish university students familiar with Persian loan words (personal names)?

2) How do Turkish students identify these personal names?

2. Contact Types and Contact Situation

According to the definition provided by Crystal (1992, 2003), the phenomenon of contact bears both *geographical* and close *social proximity*. Consequently, the outcomes of such a

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[1] For further details on type and degree of contact between Persian and Turkish see Göksel & Kerslake, 2004.

contact are both social and linguistic including both micro and macro-aspects. The phenomenon of contact between languages is so dynamic and inevitable that Winford (2003, p.2) believes that this process is at work even though there is no social contact between the speakers of two speech communities. For instance, the lexical borrowing process can happen "through book learning by teachers, writers, lexicographers,…..religious texts, dictionaries and so on". The linguistic outcome of contact might be a simple lexical borrowing or creation of a new language.

Winford distinguishes three types of contact situations: *language maintenance* (borrowing situations, situations of structural convergence, code-switching situations), *language creation: new contact languages* (bilingual mixed languages, pidgins, creoles), and *language shift* (partial or total abandonment of a group's native language in favor of another). He defines the borrowing situation as "a situation where a language is preserved from generation to generation and it changes in small degrees but its various subsystems remains intact" (p.11). He divides the borrowing phenomenon into two types of *Lexical* (borrowing of content morphemes like nouns, verbs, etc.) and *structural* (borrowing of features in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, which are quite rarer. He also argues that:

> The possible results of such contact differ according to two broad categories of factors – internal (linguistic) and external (social and psychological). Among the relevant linguistic factors is the nature of the relationship between the languages in contact, specifically the degree of typological similarity between them. There is also a variety of other linguistic constraints which operate in such situations, some of them specific to particular areas of linguistic structure (e.g., the lexicon, phonology, morphology, etc.), others of a more general, perhaps universal nature. ….Relevant social factors include the length and intensity of contact between the groups, their respective sizes, the power or prestige relationships and patterns of interaction between them, and the functions which are served by intergroup communication. Sociopolitical factors which operate at both individual and group level, such as attitudes toward the languages, motivations to use one or the other, and so on, are also important (p.2).

3. Typology and Family of Persian and Turkish Languages

According to Crystal (1992) the traditional typology of world languages was first proposed by Wilhelm Von Humboldt (1768-1835). According to this typology, three types of languages have been distinguished: isolating, fusional and agglutinative. A fourth category was also added later, known as polysynthetic languages. Crystal reclassifies languages into four major types of analytic (isolating), synthetic (fusional/inflecting), agglutinative and polysynthetic languages. He believes that the distinction between languages is not clear-cut and languages show the characteristics of agglutinative languages to lesser or greater degree. According to this classification Persian language is put in the category of inflectional languages and Turkish language is put in the category of agglutinative languages. So typologically, these languages are different from each other. "In agglutinative language, words typically contain a linear sequence of morphs as seen in English dis/establish/ment…..Languages which display agglutinative to major extents include

Turkish and Japanese" (Crystal, 2003, p.17). Inflectional languages are the ones in which "words display grammatical relationships morphologically. They typically contain more than one morpheme….such as Greek and Arabic"(ibid, p.233). These two languages also differ from each other in terms of their family. Persian language is a member of indo-Iranian branch of indo-European family of languages. In contrast, Turkish language is a member of the Turkic group of Altaic family of languages. Taking into consideration the different typological and family characteristics of both languages and the classification provided by Winford about contact situation on the one hand, and the discussion on the effect of internal and external factors, on the other hand, two main points about the contact between Persian and Turkish languages could be inferred. First, the type of contact situation between Turkish and Persian language, is borrowing situation especially lexical borrowing. Second, due to typological differences between Persian and Turkish, internal factors have had less impact on the outcome of contact between Persian and Turkish languages in comparison to external factors.

4. Historical Development of the Contact between Persian and Turkish Languages

The plateau of Anatolia which has now embraced the modern Turkey has been home to many civilizations such as Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians, Persians, Greeks, Assyrians, Armenians, Romans, Georgians, Seljuk Turks and Ottomans. (Winick, 1992; Brewster, 1998; Ulin, 2001). The neighboring plateau; that is Iranian plateau, has also been home to many ancient civilizations like Elamite, Medes, Achaemenid Empire, Seleucid Empire, Parthian, Sassanid Empire, and many Islamic powers like Samanids, Abbasid, Tahirid, and Safavid, etc. (Newby, 2002& Camop,2009). During the reign of each of this powers many people of different cultures and languages have been integrated together and then disintegrated as the result of the triumph of the next upcoming powers. Due to the proximity of these people, the contact between their languages and cultures have been inevitable. Persian and Turkish speaking inhabitants of these regions have experienced this closeness. However, the contact between them has experienced many fluctuations influenced by the historical and social developments as the direct result of power shifts in this region. The history of contact between Persian and Turkish and its line of development can be divided into four temporal periods.

4.1 Sassanid Empire (224 –651)

The early imprints of contact between Persian speaking people and Turkish speaking people can be traced back to the period of reign of Sassanid Empire in Iran and Roman Empire in Anatolian plateau (Korkmaz,1995). These two neighboring Empires repeatedly went through wars during the first century AD; the famous wars known as Roman-Persian wars (Adler & Pouwels 2011). According to Minorsky, Romans moved the residents of Balkans and Bulgaria along with Avar Turks, to the eastern Anatolia near the border of Sassanid Empire in order to defend the eastern territories of their Empire against the invasion of Sassanid Empire (as cited in Korkmaz, 1995). Thus, the ground for the early settlement of Turks in Anatolian plateau and consequently the language contact between Persian and Turkish languages was set by Roman Empire. Turkish language came in contact first with middle

Persian because it was the language spoken "during the reign of the Sassanid dynasty of Iran and adjacent lands between 224 C.E. and 651 C.E."(Campo, 2009, p.550).

Devastated from constant wars, both Roman and Sassanid Empires began to weaken. "From the early 600, the Roman Empire was under more or less constant attack from two centuries. During this period, Roman Empire lost not only the western reconquests but also most of its own eastern territories, first to Avars and Persians and then to Arabs and Slavs" (Adler & Pouwels 2011, p. 151). In the mid-7[th]AD, frustrated from wars and domestic problems, the weakened Sassanid Empire collapsed in 651 due to the attack of unified Arab tribes, which had newly converted to Islam. Up to this period, Turkish language was in contact with pre-Islam Persian language but by the fall of Sassanid Empire, Persian language itself went through a heavy influence from Arabic language. This was the beginning of contact between Turkish and post- Islam Persian. In this period, Persian language was still in its middle era (Campo, 2009), but "Arabized through the script and the extensive use of Arabic vocabulary" (Newby, 2002, p.104).

4.2 Seljuk Dynasty (1030-1307)

The second period of contact between Persian and Turkish languages began much stronger by the emergence of Seljuk dynasty. Their territory covered the vast area from Iran to Iraq and Anatolia (Newby, 2002). "The early Seljuk clan was part of the ancient Oghuz tribal group of steppe nomads in Central Asia" (Campo, 2009, p.611). This dynasty was named after the founder of the tribe "named Seljuk, who was probably the first of his group to convert to Islam" (Cahen,1968 & Campo, 2009). In 1055 Seljuks conquered Baghdad and then developed their territory to Anatolia and defeated the Byzantine army in Malazgirt war in 1071, founding one of the strongest Turk dynasties from 11th up to 13th AD. Seljuks selected Arabic language as the language of religion, schooling and foreign correspondence, and Persian language as the official administration language and language of literature (Köprülü,1992 & Korkmaz,1995). "... Because the Turkish Seljuks had no Islamic tradition or strong literary heritage of their own, they adopted the cultural language of their Persian instructors in Islam" ("Seljuks", 2012, Para. 1). During Seljuks, Persian language experienced a widespread diffusion all over vast territory of Seljuk dynasty.

4.3 Ottoman Empire (1300-1922)

According to the historical records, the early settlement of Oghuz Turkish Muslim emirates or principalities in Anatolia began after the victory of Seljuk in 1701 (at the end of 11th century) and later extensively during the decline of Seljuk sultanate of Rum during the second half of 13th century. By the decline of Seljuk dynasty, local principalities known as Beyliks began to extend their power. One of these Beyliks known as Osmanoğlu, whose power was insignificant at the beginning, expanded its territory, and towards the end of 14th century, it became the strongest beylik founding Ottoman Empire. Unlike Seljuks, whose language of administration was Persian; the Anatolian Turkish emirates adopted spoken Turkish as their formal literary language. The Turkish language achieved widespread use in these principalities and reached its highest sophistication during the Ottoman era (Agoston & Masters, 2009). But Persian language was once again revived during Ottoman Empire after a

period of disregard during the Beyliks' power (Korkmaz, 1995). "it is well known that Ottoman Turkish literature from its very beginning to the early part of this century was strongly influenced by the classical Persian literature. "Knowledge of Persian language and letters was a *sine qua non* of the Ottoman education" (Tietze & Lazard, 1967, p.126). Tietze and Lazard divide the Persian loan words of this period into two types: *poetic* and *prosaic* loan words. According to this classification "the prosaic ones include a large amount of household terminology, which markedly differs from the high-level poetic terms by its stronger assimilation and integration in Turkish language" (ibid, p.126). The use of Persian language in Ottoman civilization remained strong until 19th century.

4.4 Post-reforms Period (beginning of Republic up to present)

The heydays of Persian language began to decline following two important radical shifts in policy towards language. The first shift was the beginning of Tanzimat period during which Turkey inclined more towards west and modernization. In this period, the use of Persian and Arabic words was discouraged; rather, the use of their Turkish equivalents was promoted. The next shift, which resulted in the disconnection between Turkish and Persian languages began due to the modernizing reforms performed by Atatürk in 1924 during which the Arabic script was replaced by Latin alphabet. Following his reformist measures Atatürk also "encouraged the replacement of Arabic and Persian words in the language with "pure" Turkish words, even if they had to be invented" (Campo, 2009, p.69). Thus, the contact between Persian and Turkish language was brought into a passive status but many of the previously-borrowed Persian words remained in Turkish language.

5. Method

5.1 Participants

To conduct the study, 100 university students were selected through purposive sampling technique from among the students of various universities in Ankara. From among this number only 50 participants' responses were found to be fully informative. Participants' (f=25, m=25) mean age was 22 and they were majoring in various disciplines. The first language of majority of participants was Turkish. For some of the Kurdish speakers, Turkish language was their second language.

5.2 Procedure

The present study adopted semi-structured interview as the data collection technique. Conducted in three weeks in autumn 2011, 100 participants were selected through purposive sampling technique. After sampling phase was over, The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and then were briefed about the process of the interview. The interview began first by collecting the demographic information of the participants (age, gender, birth place, major) then they were provided with a list of 20 Persian names including 10 male names and 10 female names. The Persian names selected for this study are illustrated in their turkified pronunciations. First they were asked about the origin of each name. In case their answer was "I don't know", they were asked about the next name, but in case of guessing a certain language as the origin of a name, they were asked to explain the criteria

based on which they had selected that certain language. All their remarks and comments in relation to each name were noted on the space specified to each name on the interview sheets. The interview was finished by a question about whether the students knew the official language spoken in their neighboring country; Iran. The interview sheets were coded "M" and "F" to separate the female participants from male participants. The obtained data were arranged and recorded and their frequency and percentage was calculated. From among 100 informants who had participated in this research, only the data provided by 50 of them were found sufficiently informative for further analysis.

5.3 Data Analysis

In order to answer the first question of the study concerning the extent of familiarity of Turkish university students with Persian loan personal names, the data obtained from 50 participants were analyzed in terms of frequency of the provided answers. The responses were classified from the most-frequently repeated to the least-frequently repeated ones. The percentage of each answer was also calculated and illustrated distinctly with respect to the gender of participants. As illustrated in Table 5.1, the most-frequently repeated answer by both male and female participants, was "*I don't know*". Other responses like "*Turkish*", "*Arabic*" and "*I know it is not Turkish but I don't know its origin*" were the second, third and fourth most-frequently repeated answers. Although the ideal answer for the researcher to hear for all the items was "*Persian*", actually it was the fifth frequently-repeated response comprising only 9.3% (m=4.8, f=4.5) of the total answers. One alternative to analyze the provided answers (except the ones in 5th row; Persian) is to consider them all as wrong (90.7%) illustrating very low degree of familiarity of participants with Persian loan personal names. The other possible alternative to analyze the provided responses is to divide the answers to three groups of: *Correct answer*, (Persian); *No knowledge*, (I don't know); and *Wrong answer*: (Turkish, Arabic, it is not Turkish but I don't know the origin (briefly; Not Turkish), Ottoman, Old Turkish, French, Kurdish, Turkish/Arabic, Azerbaijani, Persian/Arabic, European, English, Hebrew, Latin , Persian/Ottoman)

Looking at the provided answers illustrated in table 5.1 indicates that wrong answers have been repeated more frequently than other options allocating 52% of the total answers. "No knowledge" was ranked second allocating 38.7 % of the total answers, and finally correct answer ranked last allocating only 9.03% of the total answers.

In sum, the extent of the familiarity of Turkish university students with Persian loan names is too low (comprising only 9.03% of correct estimations). From among 50 participants, only one single female student who was studying Turkish language and literature provided all correct answers with correct criteria.

Table 5.1. participants' responses, their frequency and percentage.

Origins	M (*Rf*)	F(*Rf*)	∑N
I don't know	165(16.5%)	222(22.2%)	387(38.7%)
Turkish	118(11.8%)	97(9.7%)	215(21.5%)
Arabic	101(10.1%)	64(6.4%)	165(16.5%)
It is not Turkish	45(4.5%)	57(5.7%)	102(10.2%)
Persian	**48(4.8%)**	**45(4.5%)**	**93(9.3%)**
Ottoman	4(0.4%)	2(0.2%)	6(0.6%)
Old Turkish	1(0.1%)	3(0.3%)	4(0.4%)
French	2(0.2%)	3(0.3%)	5(0.5%)
Kurdish	1(0.1%)	3(0.3%)	4(0.4%)
Turkish/Arabic	2(0.2%)	1(0.1%)	3(0.3%)
Azerbaijani	2(0.2%)	1(0.1%)	3(0.3%)
Persian/Arabic	1(0.1%)	1(0.1%)	2(0.2%)
European	1(0.1%)	1(0.1%)	2(0.2%)
English	5(0.5%)		5(0.5%)
Ibrani (Hebrew)	1(0.1%)		1(0.1%)
Latin	1(0.1%)		1(0.1%)
Persian/Ottoman	1(0.1%)		1(0.1%)
Foreign	1(0.1%)		1(0.1%)

M (male) *Rf* (response frequency), F (female) *Rf* (response frequency)

In order to answer the second question of the present study, the gathered data were analyzed by adopting the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) technique. Inspired from Edmund Hurssel's philosophical work, (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2009) phenomenological analysis tries to find out the essence of an experience. According to this technique data organization and presentation should be around the themes which emerge from the data analysis (Willing, 2001, as cited in Coolican, 2004). In case of the present study, two main themes emerged after applying the IPA technique. Each of these main themes had their own sub-categories. The patterns emerging from the participants' responses revealed that they used two main criteria to identify the origin of Persian loan personal names; *linguistic* and *non-linguistic* criteria. The linguistic criteria used by participants included three sub-categories of *morphological criteria, phonetic similarity,* and *phonetic* and *phonological criteria*. The non-linguistic criteria were divided into three sub-categories of *associations, intuitions, and literature knowledge.* All these three groups can be regarded as non-linguistic or world knowledge. Table 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate the classification of participants' answers based on major emerging patterns.

Table 5.2. Participants' responses classified based on linguistic criteria.

Linguistic criteria	Names
Phonetic &Phonological criteria	
No double consonants in Turkish so they are not Turkish	Rüzgar,Gülşah,Mehtap,Zerrin,Serdar
/ʒ/ is not a Turkish consonant so it is not Turkish	Jale,Jülide
Violence of vowel harmony rule	Rüzgar,Şahin,Mehtap,Serdar,Dilara
/g/s/m/n/r/l/p/ʃ/dʒ/h/b/f/z/cannot come in initial position	Rüzgar,Serdar,Mehtap, Juldie,…
/ʃ/z/ are Kurdish consonants so they are Kurdish names	Şahin, Zerrin
/ʒ/ is a French sound so it is a French name	Jale, Jülide
Turkish names end in /t/,	Mert
/ʒ/ is a Persian consonant (*Jale,Jülide)*	Jale , Jülide
/ʒ/ belongs to another family of Turkish language	Jale , Jülide
/d/ can come in initial position in Turkey	Dilara,, Dilaver
It has compatibility with Turkish long vowels	Gülşah
Names with double consonant are Persian	Gülşah
Phonetic similarity	
it sounds like English names Clara and Melissa	Dilara,
it sounds like Arabic names so it is Arabic	Füsun
it sounds like English names	Jale, Jülide
it does not sound like Turkish names	Jale, Jülide
It is the name of a planet	Jülide
Morphological criteria:	
It is not compatible to Arabic forms so it is Turkish	Füsun
Gül is Turkish, *şah* is Persian so it is Turkish	Gülşah
It is Persian because Persian names are longer	Jülide

(J=ʒ), (Ş=ʃ)

The phonological criteria were the most frequently-appealed criteria to identify the origin of the names. The given responses under this heading have been sorted out and organized based on the frequency of use by participants. The first rule that both male and female students (f= 13, m=10) were aware of was absence of consonant clusters in Turkish language. To avoid consonant clusters in Turkish "Epenthetic vowels which serve to break up intrasyllabic consonant clusters" are used (Tietze & Lazard, 1967, p.126). By taking into consideration the lack of such an intervening vowel in the given names, participants realized the names such as *Zerrin* and *Serdar*, as non-Turkish names.

The second most-frequently used rule (phonetic) was the absence of /ʒ/ sound in Turkish language. That is why most of the participants used Jale and *Jülide* as non-Turkish names.

The third criterion used by participants (f=7, m=3) to distinguish the origin of the names was vowel harmony rule in Turkish language which is a famous feature of Turkish language (Crystal, 1992, 2003; Lazard &Tietze, 1967). Vowel harmony is a phonological process which determines what vowel will appear in the syllable. According to Göksel and Kerslake (2004), there are two types of vowel harmony; *fronting* and *rounding* harmony. In fronting harmony a front vowel can only be a back vowel. In rounding harmony, a rounded vowel occurs only when it is proceeded by another round vowel, unless it is in the first syllable of a word.

By applying the above-mentioned rules, participants realized that the names like *Rüzgar, Şahin, Mehtap, Serdar, Dilara, Nigar, Dilaver, Ferhat, Şahin* were not Turkish. The fourth phonological criterion that the participants (f=6,m=3) used to realize the origin of the Persian names was the absence of the /g/,/s/,/m/,/n/,/r/,/l/,/p/,/ʃ/,/dʒ/,/h/,/b/,/f/,/z/ sounds in initial position in Turkish language. The remaining less-frequently referred criteria are also illustrated in table 5.2 following the most-frequently used criteria and the names for which they were used.

Phonetic similarity was the second sub-category of the linguistic criteria. Participants used statements such as "it sounds like English names *Clara* and *Melissa*" for the name *Dilara*. "it sounds Arabic", "it sounds like English names", "it does not sound like Turkish names", and "It is the name of a planet" (wrongly taking Jülide for Jupiter!).

The third sub-category of linguistic criteria was morphological criteria. Only two participant (m=2) used the morphological rules to realize the origin of one names *Gülşah* and *Füsun*. This indicates that in comparison to phonological rules, students took less advantage of morphological rules. Implicitly this indicates that students had more in-depth knowledge of phonology of their language in comparison to other aspects of language knowledge. Looking at table 5.2 and the criteria provided by the participants, reveals a kind of paradox. For instance, participants have used the criteria of desonorization of consonants in final position in turkey (Lazard & Tietze, 1976) to identify *Mert* as a Turkish name, at the same time they used the rule of absence of Nasal in the initial position to identify the name *Mehtap* and *Mert* as non-Turkish. While *Mert* also begins with /m/. The same paradox is also observed in case of *Dilara*. The rule of appearance of /d/ sound in initial position in Turkish was used to identify *Dilara* as a Turkish name. But by the application of vowel harmony rule, they have identified *Dilara* as a non-Turkish name. The second criteria that Turkish students used to realize the origin of the names were non-linguistic criteria or world knowledge illustrated in table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Participants responses classified based on non- linguistic criteria

Non-linguistic criteria	Names
Associations	
associating withPersian love story of "Shirin and Farhad"	Şirin- Ferhat
associating with Qasr-i-Shirin treaty	ŞirinFerhat
associating with Ataturk's assistants known as " Yaver"	Yaver
intuitions	
I feel it is Arabic	Mehtap,Nigar,Füsun
I feel it is Persian	Füsun
I feel it is Turkish	Dilara
I feel it is Azerbaijan	Şirin
literature knowledge	
it is Persian because it is used in Divan literature	Gülşah
it is used in Persian literature so it is Persian	Şirin, Ferhat
it is familiar from literature so it is Turkish	Jale
it is a worrier in Shah-Name so it is Persian	Firidun

Under this heading, the given responses can be grouped into three main sub-categories of *associations, intuitions,* and *literature knowledge.* One of the interesting associations used by the participants was in the case of *Şirin* and *Ferhat*. Some of the respondents (f= 10, m= 5) associated these names with the famous Persian love story of *shirin* and *farhad*. The second association used by one of the participants (f=1) again in case of *Şirin* was to associate name *Şirin* with Qasr-i-shirin treaty. She inferred that since this treaty was signed in Iranian city of Qasr-i-Shirin, therefore *Şirin* must be a Persian name. The third case used by some participants (m=5) was associating the name *Yaver* with Ataturk's assistants known as *Yaver*. The male participants used this association to conclude that *Yaver* is therefore a Turkish name. Interesting is that only male participants used this association to identify the origin of this name.

Participants (m=4) also used their intuitions to identify the origin of the names. They had no clear criteria in mind, rather a feeling that was prompted them to select a certain language due to the activation of some properties of those languages by the names. For instance they used statements like: "I feel it is Persian", "I feel it is Arabic", "I feel it is Turkish", "I feel it is Azerbaijani". Another source of knowledge that the participants (f=4) used to identify the origin of the names was their literature knowledge. they used statements like "it is familiar from literature" for *Gülşah*, " it is a worrier in Shah-Name" for *Firidun* , "it is used in Persian literature" for *Şirin,* and "it is familiar from Turkish literature" for *Jale.*As it was mentioned in methodology section, the first phase of the interview was about collecting data on personal information. Analyzing the data about the names of the participants show that from among 50 participants only 6 of them had Persian names; *Şahin, Arman, Can, Ebru, Neslişah, Nagihan, Elmas, Seda, Jülide*. As it was mentioned earlier, Persian loan words in general and personal names in particular, have gone through nativization of the sounds. The analysis of the name

of the participants showed that loan words have also gone through function change as well. This change is either knowingly depending on the needs of the speakers, or due to the disconnection from Persian language and the borrowing of the forms of the words without enough knowledge about their meaning. For example, the name *Nagihan* that is a frequently-used name in Turkish is an adverb in Persian language meaning '*suddenly*' which is almost never used as personal name in Persian. In Turkish, this selection is done due to either of the reasons mentioned above. The other name which seems to be used only for its phonetic beauty (those names which include /ʒ/ sound are seemingly favored by most people) regardless of its meaning is *Jülide* (meaning *"unkempt"* in Persian) which is again never used as personal name in Persian. The last part of the interview was allocated to the question of whether the participants knew the official language of Iran. As illustrated in table 5.4 only 60% of the participants were sure about the official language spoken in Iran; that is Persian. What draws the attention in the provided responses in relation to this question is that the second- frequently-selected language as the official language of Iran was estimated to be *Arabic-* comprising 14% of the responses. To investigate the roots for having such a mentality about Iran as an Arabic-speaking community are worth studying.

Table 5.4. The percentage of respondents' answer to the official language of Iran

Iran's official language	M (Rf)	F(Rf)	∑N
Persian	17(34%)	13(26%)	30(60%)
Arabic	3(6%)	4(8%)	7(14%)
I don't know	1(2%)	2(4%)	3(6%)
Arabic/Persian	1(2%)	1(2%)	2(4%)
Arabic&Persian	1(2%)	1(2%)	2(4%)
Azerbaijani	1(2%)	1(2%)	2(4%)
Turkish		1(2%)	1(2%)
Ibrani(Hebrew)	1(2%)		1(2%)
Iranian	1(2%)		1(2%)

M (male) *Rf* (response frequency) , F(female) *Rf* (response frequency)

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study tried to deal with one of the issues of macro-linguistics known as "contact" which is mainly investigated in a field known as "contact linguistics" as a sub-discipline of sociolinguistics. The findings of the present study in relation to the first question revealed that the extent of familiarity of Turkish university students with Persian loan personal names was too low. The results of putting two patterns of "wrong answers" (52%) and "no knowledge" (38.7%) together, illustrate the low extent of familiarity of the participants (90.7%) about Persian loan names. This result might be interpreted as an indicator of participants' low knowledge about Persian language. This lack of familiarity might be either due to the big temporal gap between this generation and the time these names were borrowed, or due to the disconnection of Turkish languages from Persian language following the language reforms. Nativization of the sounds can also be regarded as a significant factor in lowering the Turkish speakers' knowledge about the loan Persian words. While interviewing

with participants, they were also asked about the criteria they used to identify the origin of the names. When they were asked "where have you obtained these information?", those who had used linguistic criteria mentioned that they remembered these information from their high school education. These remarks are indicative of the significant role of formal education on raising the awareness of new generation towards their own language and consequently the languages with which they have had contact. The evidence for the important role of education was the case of a female participant whose major was Turkish language and literature. She was the only participant who could identify all the names correctly because those who major in Turkish language and literature have some obligatory courses on Persian language and literature. Therefore, they get formal and systematic education on Persian language. According to the findings of the study, both male and females were equally less-informed about the origin of the names provided in the interview. In comparison to male informants, female participants were more precautious on guessing the origin of the names that is why the used the response "I don't know" more frequently than male participants did. (see table 5.1). Those participants (n=10) whose first language was Kurdish were expected to perform better in identifying the origin of Persian names because Kurdish language is a member of indo-Iranian languages and they have many common vocabulary including personal names. However, the findings of the study revealed that both Kurdish and Turkish speaking participants had almost the same level of familiarity with Persian language. The findings of the study, implicate that Persian language experiences a passive state of use in modern Turkish language where no more new vocabularies are borrowed, meanwhile the existing loan words go through nativization process both phonetically and functionally.

The findings in relation to the second question of the present study revealed some noteworthy psycholinguistic facts. The way the participants treated the names while trying to identify their origin supported Stanovich's compensatory interactive model (1980) developed to explain reading comprehension process. The strategies adopted by students to identify the origin of the names indicated that this model is a rigorous model not only applicable in reading comprehension studies but also in investigating the other aspects of language studies. According to this model both linguistic and world knowledge of a person go hand in hand to help the person understand and interpret the data. As in the case of the present study, participants used both their linguistic knowledge and their world knowledge or schematic knowledge to identify the origin of the names. As it is illustrated in table 5.3 participants' world knowledge, though in a lesser degree in comparison to their linguistic knowledge, played a significant role in identifying the origin of the Persian names. Appealing to gender-specific schemas was prominently observable in case of identifying the name "Yaver" because only male participants (m=5) made a link between this name and Atatürk. In addition to the main findings of the study, this study also has some anthropological implications which are worthy of further and much in-depth investigation.

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