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A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN ENGLISH
AND PERSIAN QUESTION PATTERNS

By

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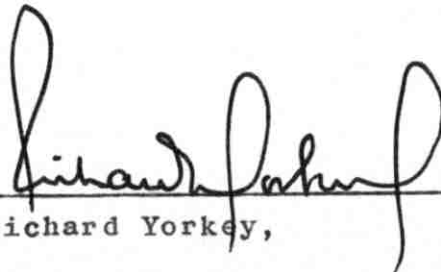
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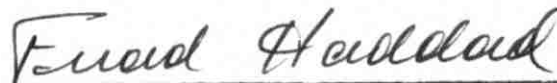
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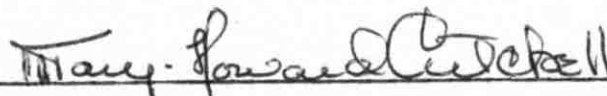
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To those who taught me linguistics,
and to those who taught me how to apply it
to teaching and language analysis,
this thesis is dedicated.

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ABSTRACT

The principal purpose of this study is as follows:

1. To identify the question patterns of English and Persian.
2. On the basis of a contrastive analysis, to predict the difficulties of Persian speakers in learning English question patterns.
3. To provide sample lessons together with suggestions for teaching English question patterns to Persian speakers.

Chapter I introduces the problem, the assumptions, purpose, methodology and limitations of the study, sources of the material used, the dialects and the significance of the study.

Chapter II presents the linguistic analysis of English question patterns. This analysis is based on the review of the works of traditional as well as modern grammarians and linguists.

Chapter III presents the linguistic analysis of Persian question patterns, based on the review of the available literature as well as the informa-

tion provided by Persian informants.

Chapter IV deals with the systematic contrastive analysis of the question patterns in English and Persian. The writer has adopted the method suggested by Robert Lado based on the linguistic factors of form, meaning, distribution, recognition and production.

Chapter V is devoted to the method of teaching English question patterns to Persian speakers. The major problems of Persian speakers are anticipated in five patterns. For each pattern a sample lesson is prepared together with suggestions for teaching and practice.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND STUDY

The Problem

The method of teaching English as a foreign language has undergone considerable changes during the recent years. The fundamental principle of preparing teaching materials has been given by Fries. He writes:

The most efficient teaching materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner.¹

In learning a foreign language, individuals tend to transfer the habits of their language and culture to the foreign language they learn. This transfer of habits occurs productively, namely, when they try to speak the foreign language; and receptively, namely, when they try to understand the

¹ Charles C. Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1945), p. 9.

foreign language.²

According to this assumption, Persian speakers learning English as a foreign language, may transfer the structure of their native language to that of English. A systematic analysis of the structure of Persian with that of English indicates the points of similarity and contrast, thus making a solid foundation upon which we can build teaching materials for Persian speakers.

Purpose of the Study

The principal purpose of this study is to make a contrastive analysis of the question patterns of American English and standard spoken Persian. On the basis of this study, we can predict the difficulties encountered by Persian speakers in this area of English grammar. The consequences of this study enable us to prepare proper practice materials through which the speakers of Persian can master the question patterns of English, making them matters of automatic habit.

²Robert Lado, Linguistics Across Cultures.
(Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1957),
p. 2.

Methodology of The Study

The method employed in this study is descriptive-comparative. Descriptive in the sense that it analyzes the question patterns of the two languages as they are actually used by their speakers; comparative in the sense that it compares the question patterns of Persian with those of English. This study analyzes the interrogative structure of each language in its own terms, without imposing any prescriptive rule on the part of the writer. Our methodology consists of the following steps:

1. A linguistic analysis of English question patterns.
2. A linguistic analysis of Persian question patterns.
3. The contrastive analysis of English and Persian question patterns.
4. Determining the points of similarity and contrast.

Selection of The Problem

A complete study of English and Persian grammar constitutes a vast area of investigation. For the main purpose of this study, only a limited part was chosen. In the first place, question

sentences are the second most frequent English sentence types.³ Secondly, according to the writer English, question patterns are one of the serious linguistic problems for Persian students.

Limitation of The Study

Although a scientific description of the language to be learned compared with the language of the learner and complemented with proper guidance and material may provide a guide-line in teaching a foreign language, this study cannot guarantee a high percentage of elimination of mistakes made by Persian students in this area of English grammar. Besides the interference of the native language, other non-linguistic factors such as, readiness to learn, intention, interest of the student, motivation, age, intelligence, etc., may operate in this connection.⁴ We hope to eliminate those types of mistakes which generally arise from the structural differences existing between English and Persian.

³ Charles Fries, The Structure of English (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1952), p. 51.

⁴ William Francis Mackey, Language Teaching Analysis (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., Ltd., 1965), pp. 120-127.

Sources of the Material

The types of sources employed in this study are primary and secondary. Traditional sources have been consulted because they provide us with information about the language.

Primary sources consist of descriptive analyses made during recent years. For English, I have relied on the works of Bloomfield, Fries, Francis, Joos, Lado, Palmer, Pike and Sledd.

In addition to my own knowledge of Persian and the patterns analyzed on the basis of primary sources, the linguistic analyses made by Hodge, Lambton, Rastorgueva and Yarmohammadi have been consulted.

Problems to be Investigated

1. A linguistic analysis of English question patterns.
2. A linguistic analysis of Persian question patterns.
3. The contrastive analysis of question patterns in English and Persian.
4. Preparing sample lessons and exercises based on the predicted difficulties of Persian speakers.

Significance of the Study

The applications of linguistic science to the problems of teaching English have led to the improvement of the method as well as the preparation and presentation of teaching materials. This study incorporates the modern findings and ideas into teaching English to Persian students in general and question patterns in particular as its chief contributions.

The problems of Persian students in learning English have convinced the writer that English question patterns must be taught in a well-defined contextual framework. Efforts have been made to provide sequenced materials to introduce them naturally into classroom procedure. Providing a meaningful context is the main concentration of each lesson in presenting the question patterns.

Dialects Used In The Study

The English used in this study is standard American English. The Persian used in the analysis is the Teheran dialect which is considered the standard Persian.

The Outline of The Study

Chapter II covers the linguistic analysis

of question patterns in English. Chapter III deals with the analysis of question patterns in Persian. Chapter IV is devoted to the contrastive analysis of English and Persian question patterns. Presentation of sample lessons and exercises will be taken up in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH QUESTION PATTERNS

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the question patterns in English. The writer found it necessary to see how this area of English grammar has been dealt with by traditional as well as modern grammarians. Heavy emphasis was laid on the works of modern structural linguists for their employment of linguistic techniques and procedures in working out the question signals according to which various patterns have been distinguished in the interrogative structure of American English.

Review of the Related Literature

A tremendous wealth of literature is available in the area of English grammar dealing with question sentences. Efforts were made to select those grammar books which are descriptive and linguistically oriented.

Sweet's work on grammar written in 1891 was founded on "the latest results of linguistic

investigation as far as they bear, directly or indirectly, on the English language."¹

Jespersen's books on grammar presents English as it has historically developed through the ages to its present status. In his own words:

It has been my endeavour in this work to represent English grammar not as a set of stiff dogmatic precepts, according to which some things are correct and others wrong, but as something living and developing under continual fluctuations and undulations.²

Curme's grammar books are to present a systematic outline of English syntax based upon actual usage. He points out that he has widely read the large works of foreign scholars, their observations, their quotations together with the materials gathered by English speaking scholars. The prominent point as regard to the actual usage of English is his extensive readings. He writes:

With his eyes upon present usage, he has read a large number of recent novels, dramas, lectures, orations, speeches, letters, essays, histories, scientific treatises, poems, etc., from all parts of the English speaking territory.³

In his book, Zandvoort presents a descriptive

¹Henry Sweet, A New English Grammar: Logical and Historical (London: Oxford University Press, 1891), p. v.

²Otto Jespersen, A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1928), p. v.

³George O. Curme, Syntax. (New York: D.C. Heath and Company, 1931), p. v.

grammar of contemporary English. It is devoted to accident and syntax. The author has tried to eschew historical digressions because "contemporary and historical grammar, or synchronic and diachronic in the terminology of modern linguistics, are best treated separately."⁴

Three features of the situation have prompted the composition of Sledd's book on grammar: the persistence of an eighteenth century grammatical tradition in the American schools, colleges and universities, the development of modern linguistics and recent attempts to make a linguistically respectable description of English for the classroom use.⁵ In his analysis, Sledd begins with the phonemic system of English in terms of segmentals and supra-segmentals. In the discussion of parts of speech he breaks sharply with the traditional way of analysis and defines them in the light of their morphologic and syntactic behavior.

Palmer's study of the English verb is a linguistic description and analysis of modern English. All the examples cited are from the spoken language, and none from the literature.

⁴R.W. Zandvoort, A Handbook of English Grammar. (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1957), p. v. when the author states that his book is a descriptive grammar, he refers to the title of the French version (Grammaire Descriptive de l'Anglais Contemporain) which appeared in 1949.

⁵James Sledd, A Short Introduction to English Grammar. (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1959), pp. 2-12.

Palmer states that "the grammatical categories are defined in terms of the forms of the language and not upon meaning." He is a linguist who feels the necessity of "a formal approach to grammatical analysis."⁶

Fries' works on grammar deserve a special mention. Gleason marks three movements which led to the present status of grammar and linguistics in America. They are "survey of errors", "usage" and the "new grammar."⁷ He states that Fries' American English Grammar and The Structure of English heralded a new era in grammar and linguistics. Before 1940, he adds, American descriptive linguistics "had very little to contribute to the analysis or statement of syntax."⁸ Fries was able to apply some of the principles underlying the modern scientific study of language. His analysis is descriptive, that is, how native speakers actually use English in their natural conversations. Our reference to his works in this study is based on the question patterns he has distinguished in English.

⁶F.R. Palmer, A Linguistic Study of The English Verb. (London: Longmans Green and Co. Ltd., 1965), p. v.

⁷H.A. Gleason, Jr., Linguistics and English Grammar. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 13.

⁸Ibid., p. 20.

Pike's book is based mainly on the structure of English intonation, in relation to the structural systems of stress, pause and rhythm.⁹ The part devoted to the discussion of questions in this book was reviewed in order to find examples in which the linguistic context or other situations have made the utilization of specific intonation contours possible.

Yorkey's book on American English pronunciation¹⁰ provided us with an excellent source containing pedagogical devices of how to teach questions according to their intonation patterns. Besides presenting a simultaneous treatment of segmentals and suprasegmentals, the lessons are based on some of the common linguistic problems of students from the Middle Eastern countries.

Definition of a Question Sentence in English

Among the early grammarians we find Jespersen who presents a detailed discussion of questions in English. He classifies the question sentences into

⁹ Kenneth L. Pike, The Intonation of American English (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1945), p. v.

¹⁰ Richard Yorkey, Pronunciation Practice (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1965).

two separate groups: nexus questions and x-questions.¹¹ In the nexus questions, this grammarian argues, it is a nexus the truth of which is called in question. The answer to this kind of question is either yes or no. The question may be positive or negative as illustrated by the following examples:

Did he say that?

Did he not say that?

He goes on to discuss the second type of question in which we have an unknown "quantity", aiming at finding out what x stands for. It may be an interrogative pronoun or pronominal adverb. The answer to this type of question depends on circumstances. It may be anything except yes or no. Nexus-questions have a rising and x-questions a falling tone towards the end of the sentence.

Examples:

Did he say that? (Nexus question)

What did he say? (x-questions)
Who said that?

In A New English Grammar Sweet classifies questions into two groups: (a) general interrogative

¹¹Otto Jespersen, Essentials of English Grammar (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1933), pp. 304-308.

sentences, such as Is the moon full tonight?, asks whether the relation between the subject and the predicate is affirmative or negative. Negative (general) interrogative sentences, such as, Is not the moon full tonight?, imply the expectation of an affirmative answer. General interrogative sentences are uttered with a rising intonation.

(b) special interrogative sentences, such as Who is he? Where does he live? ... begin with an interrogative word, whose meaning indicates what kind of information is sought. These questions are uttered with a falling intonation and are answered not by 'yes' or 'no', but by some word which specializes the meaning indicated by the interrogative word.¹²

He also distinguishes another type of question introduced by the presence of alternative conjunction:

Is he an Oxford or a Cambridge man?¹³

This kind of question does not differ from general questions in form except that it is uttered with a falling intonation.

¹²Sweet, op.cit., p. 173.

¹³Ibid., p. 174.

Curme, under the discussion of 'relative pronouns', defines an interrogative as an intensive indefinite indicating that an explanation has been demanded.¹⁴ On the basis of meaning and the explanation demanded, he classifies questions into 'deliberative' which expresses doubt, and 'rhetorical' which expresses an emphatic contrary assertion.

Deliberative:

What shall I (or am I to) do?

Speculative:

What can it mean?

Rhetorical:

Who could have foreseen it?

Palmer discusses disjunctive or tag questions. One group is the confirmative questions which either request confirmation of a statement or challenge refutation of a statement.¹⁵ When the first part of the sentence is affirmative, the second part is negative and vice-versa. Example:

¹⁴Curme, op.cit., 212.

¹⁵H.E. Palmer, A Grammar of Spoken English, (Cambridge: W. Heffner and Sons Ltd., 1924), pp. 263-68.

He is ready, isn't he?

He isn't ready, is he?

According to Zandvoort, interrogative sentences are of two kinds illustrated by the following examples:

1. Did you see him? Interrogative sentences of this type begin with "a finite verb (usually an auxiliary or a copula)" and end with a rising intonation. The answer elicited may be 'yes' or 'no' or other words which express "affirmation or denial." They are called "verbal questions."

2. What did he say? Interrogative sentences of this type begin with "an interrogative pronoun or pronominal adverb" and end with a falling intonation. The answer elicited may be a piece of information. They are called "pronominal questions."

A question, according to him, may be expressed in the form of a statement with a rising intonation. In this case "an affirmative is expected" or "surprise or incredulity is to be expressed."

You live here?

His father dead?¹⁶

So far our discussion of a question sentence

¹⁶Zandvoort, op.cit., pp. 206-207.

in English has been related to the grammar books using a traditional approach to language analysis. Such an analysis is mainly based on meaning and not the structure of the language. Traditional grammars are largely prescriptive and based upon an intuitive perception of the structure of English.

The modern structural method in language analysis has abandoned many of the traditional views of language and employs a formal analysis which operates under some basic principles. 1) Language is a set of behavior patterns common to the members of a community; 2) each language has its own systems of behavior patterns; 3) the analysis of a given language must conform to scientific principles.¹⁷

A formal analysis utilizes five principal devices to signal structural meanings:

1. Word order - the sequence of words and word-groups.
2. Function Words - words devoid of lexical meanings which indicate relationships among the meaningful words with which they appear.
3. Inflections - alteration in the forms of words themselves to signal changes in meaning

¹⁷W.N. Francis, "Revolution in Grammar", Readings in Applied English Linguistics, ed. Harold B. Allen (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1964), pp. 70-73.

and relationship.

4. Formal contrasts - contrasts in the forms of words indicating differences in function and meaning.

5. Prosody - the over-all musical pattern of stress, pitch and juncture in which the words of an utterance are spoken.¹⁸

In subsequent pages, we analyze the question patterns of English on the basis of devices which signal structural meaning. This analysis is presented on a morpho-syntactic level.

Definition of a Question Sentence in English

A question sentence in English may be defined as an utterance intended to elicit an oral response whose form cannot be narrowly predicted from the form of the question. Questions are mainly marked by word order, by an interrogative, or by a final rise in pitch.¹⁹

Question Signals

1. Word-order. The earlier grammarians
-

¹⁸Nelson W. Francis, The Structure of American English, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1958), p. 234.

¹⁹Sledd, op.cit., p. 244.

of English were primarily concerned with the morphological analysis of the language and, consequently, less attention was paid to word order as a syntactical device in English.

In An Introduction To Descriptive Linguistics

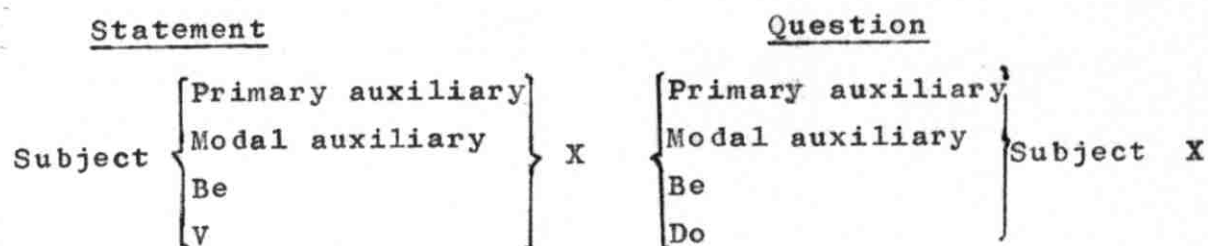
Gleason devotes ten pages to the discussion of word order as a syntactical device. He considers it as one of the most fundamental of structural markers which is easily over-looked and minimized.²⁰

In English the auxiliaries are divided into primary auxiliaries and secondary or modal auxiliaries. Primary auxiliaries are be, have and do. Modal auxiliaries are: will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, must, ought, dare and need. These auxiliaries show four clearly statable formal characteristics, namely, they occur with negation, inversion, code (avoidance of repetition) and emphatic affirmation.²¹ When inversion occurs, the auxiliary comes before the subject. The verbal phrase is, therefore, discontinuous, divided by the subject of the phrase. Do is a special kind of auxiliary which is used where the grammatical

²⁰H.A. Gleason, Jr., An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics. Revised ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart And Winston, 1961), pp. 154-55.

²¹Palmer, op.cit., p. 15.

rules of English makes its utilization necessary.²² Questions signalled by word order are usually called yes-no questions. The basic formula for them is as follows:



In this formula, X stands for any form which may occur after auxiliaries, Be and V. V stands for a main verb. Braces indicate alternatives.

Examples:

| <u>Statement</u> | <u>Question</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| They have gone. | Have they gone? |
| The teachers were there. | Were the teachers there? |
| He can come back. | Can he come back, |
| They like it. | Do they like it? |

Yes-no questions are either positive or negative. Negative questions are formed by the addition of not in its full form after the subject or in its contracted form /-n't/ to the primary auxiliary, modal auxiliary, Be and Do. Generally,

²² Ibid., pp. 21-27.

in negative questions the contracted form is more common than the long form.

Long (Formal) Negative Questions

Contracted (Informal Negative Questions)

Have they not gone?

Haven't they gone?

Were the teachers not here?

Weren't the teachers here?

Can he not come back?

Can't he come back?

Do they not like it?

Don't they like it?

Though a positive and a negative question may be used interchangeably, a subtle difference exists between them. A negative question has the implication of an affirmative answer.²³ Compare the following questions:

Positive

Negative

Do you like to dance?

Don't you like to dance?

(Please tell me if you like)

(I hope that you like to dance.)

The form of these questions makes no difference in the answer. As Fries states, the answers to these questions address themselves to the fact, not to the negative or non-negative of the question.²⁴

²³Fries, The Structure of ... p. 167.

²⁴Ibid., p. 167.

The basic formula for answers to yes-no questions may be given as follows:

| | | | | |
|-----|---------|--------------|--------|-----|
| Yes | Subject | Primary aux. | (Neg.) | (x) |
| No | | Modal aux. | | |
| | | Be | | |
| | | Do | | |

In this formula, the subject is usually a pronoun substitute. (x) is optional. One who answers such a type of question may repeat the whole question as an answer.

| <u>Question</u> | <u>Short R.</u> | <u>Normal R.</u> | <u>Long R.</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Do(-n't) you like it? | Yes | Yes, I do. | Yes, I like it. |
| | No | No, I don't. | No, I don't like it. |

In addition to yes and no, other linguistic forms may also occur as answers. They are: Certainly, probably, decidedly, absolutely, surely, certainly not, decidedly not, absolutely not and surely not.²⁵ Examples:

| <u>Question</u> | <u>Answer</u> |
|---|-------------------------|
| Do you think you can make it next summer? | Yes, I hope so. |
| Would that make any difference to you? | Certainly not. |
| Do you think we could make the change? | Probably. ²⁶ |

²⁵ Ibid., p. 165.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 166.

Question-Word Questions

Question words also signal interrogation in English. They are as follows:

Where asks about the location of something;

when asks about the time of some event;

why asks about the purpose or reason for an action;

how asks (1) about the manner of accomplishment;
(2) the state or condition of something or somebody; (3) the extent or degree of a quality;

whose asks about the ownership or relationship;

which asks about the identity, choice, or selection among a small or limited number of persons or things;

what asks about the identity, choice, or selection among a large or unlimited number of persons or things;

who, whom ask about the identity of one person or several people.²⁷

Question words are traditionally divided into interrogative pronouns, interrogative adjectives and interrogative adverbs as illustrated by the following examples:²⁸

1. Who caused the difficulty?
2. Which man seemed good?

²⁷Grant Taylor, Learning American English (New York: Saxon Press, 1956), pp. 114-116.

²⁸Sledd, op.cit., p. 103

3. When did it happen?

We analyze the question-word questions in three patterns.

1. In this pattern the question words are used in a subject position with the following basic formula:

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Question word} \\ \text{Question-word phrase} \end{array} \right\}^{29} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Primary aux.} \\ \text{Modal aux.} \\ \text{Be} \\ \text{V} \end{array} \right\} \quad \text{X}$$

Examples

Who came first?

What happened?

How many have participated in the discussion?

How much ~~was~~ left?

2. In the second pattern the question words function as modifiers of nouns in subject position. The basic formula is as follows:

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Question word} \\ \text{Question-word} \end{array} \right\} \text{phrase} \quad \text{Subject} \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Primary aux.} \\ \text{Modal aux.} \\ \text{Be} \\ \text{V} \end{array} \right\} \quad \text{X}$$

Examples:

How many students flunked the course?

²⁹Question-word phrases consist of a question word preceded by a preposition, noun, adverb or adjective such as, for what, whose class, how far and how big.

Which bus goes there?

Whose courage would last long?

How much money is left?

Which books are here?

3. Question words in this pattern function as part of the predicate. The basic formula is:

| | | | |
|---------------|---|---------|---|
| Question-word | { Primary aux. Modal aux. Be Do | Subject | V |
|---------------|---|---------|---|

Examples:

Why has she left?

When will they return?

Where does he come from?

Why are they leaving?

What did they see?

If we compare the patterns outlined for the question-word questions, we will see that patterns 1 and pattern 2 use the arrangement of a statement rather than that of a question. In these patterns, only question words signal the question. In the third pattern, the differential features are both inversion and question words.

The question words, who, which, what, how, when, where and why may each occur in isolation as the whole of a response. The rising intonation

seeks repetition of the preceding utterance and the falling intonation seeks additional information:³⁰

Examples:

First speaker: Mr. B thinks we ought to get the money...

Second speaker: Who (repetition)

First speaker: She is to leave there on June eighth

Second speaker: How (additional information)

The answer to the question-word questions may consist of any linguistic form which fits the particular type of question. Examples:

| <u>Answer</u> | <u>Question</u> |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Mr. -A did. | Who came first? |
| Mr. -A and his wife. | Who are they expecting? |
| The first one. | Which bus goes there? |
| He comes from Iran. | Where does he come from? |

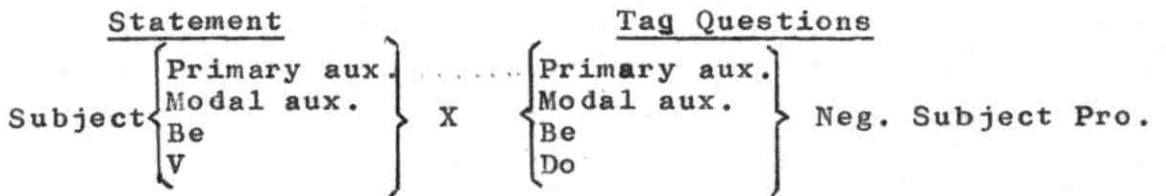
Tag Questions

In English, a short question is often attached to the end of a statement and is called a "tag question." Tag questions show morphological and syntactical correlation with the preceding statement. On the morphological level, if the subject in the statement is a pronoun, the same form

³⁰Fries, Structure of ... pp. 154-155.

is repeated in the tag question, otherwise a substitute form like he, she, it, and they is used. The syntactic correlation determines whether the tag question should be positive or negative according to the preceding statement. Accordingly, we may divide tag questions into two groups:

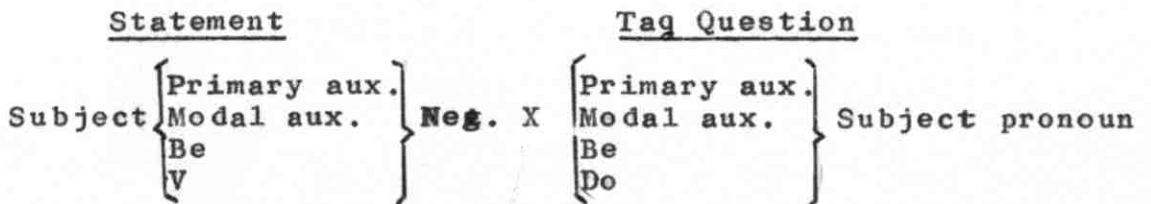
1. When the preceding statement is positive, the tag question is negative according to the following formula:



Examples:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| He has gone, | hasn't he? |
| She can come back, | can't she? |
| He is a teacher, | isn't he? |
| Mr. Miller teaches English, | doesn't he? |

2. When the preceding statement is negative, the tag is positive according to the following formula:



Examples:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| He hasn't gone, | has he? |
| She can't swim, | can she? |
| He isn't a teacher, | is he? |
| Mr. Miller doesn't teach English, | does he? |

The intonation contour in tag questions determines the attitude of the speaker toward the subject matter. A falling intonation is used for requesting confirmation to a statement, while a rising intonation is for seeking information. Consider the following examples:

She teaches English, doesn't she?

(The speaker is sure that she teaches English).

She teaches English, doesn't she?

(The speaker is not sure whether she teaches English. He is seeking information).

Sometimes, there is a parallel correlation between the question tag and the preceding statement. "It is frequently heard in English when one wishes to pass a truculent, sarcastic or incredulous comment on another person's remark."³¹ In this case both the preceding statement and the tag question are positive or negative. Consider the following examples:

³¹W. Standard Allen, Living English Structure (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1947), p. 167.

First speaker: I have broken a cup.

Second speaker: Oh you have, have you?

First speaker: I won't eat it.

Second speaker: Oh you won't, won't you?

Tag questions expressed in future tense form are added to imperatives to make them more polite requests. Examples:

Let's start the lesson, shall we?

Take care of the child, will you?

The answer to the tag questions are determined by the intonation and whether the tag questions are positive or negative. When the speaker uses a falling intonation on the tag question, he seeks confirmation. Here there is a converse correlation between the tag and its answer. When the tag is negative, the answer is positive and vice versa. Consider the following examples:

First speaker: You know him, don't you?

Second speaker: Yes, I do.

First speaker: She didn't study last night,
did she?

Second speaker: No, she didn't.

Intonation

One criterion that enables us to distinguish a statement from a question is the utilization of a rising intonation as illustrated by the following examples:

| | | | |
|------------|----|---------|----------|
| | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Statement: | He | teaches | English. |
| Question: | He | teaches | English |

Concerning the intonation patterns of questions, Bloomfield writes:

Within the domain of final-pitch, we can distinguish several phonemic differences. It's ten o'clock, as a statement, differs from it's ten o'clock as a question, ...³²

This is largely due to the fact that in American English, intonation contours according to Pike are explicit in meaning. A certain sequence of pitches may be used to convey certain things. Pike calls this phenomenon the "intonation meaning," which is carried by "a transitory extrinsic pitch contour," rather than carried by vowel and consonants which usually convey the lexical meanings. An intonation meaning may be superimposed upon the lexical meaning according to the speaker's

³² Leonard Bloomfield. Language. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933), pp. 114-115.

attitude toward the subject matter. Based upon the utilization of any specific intonation contour in accordance with the speaker's attitude, Pike concludes that "intonation contours cannot be defined in terms of the grammatical constructions with which they occur."³³

What we may infer from the statement made by this linguist is that no definite "statement pitch" or "question pitch" can be distinguished. He himself refers to this problem and discusses fifty-nine occurrences of questions in which one pattern or another of the intonation pattern is used. With regard to the teaching of questions to the speakers of other languages, and with regard to the pedagogical purpose which lies behind a contrastive analysis, all intonation contours of questions in English cannot be dealt with. What follows is an outline of the descriptions of intonation patterns of questions

In English, four pitch phonemes can be found:

- A. Extra-High (4)
- B. High (3)
- C. Mid (normal) (2)
- D. Low (1)

³³Pike, op.cit., p. 163.

The normal pitch of the speaking voice begins with 2, and from this it makes departures upward and downward. There are three terminals used in English to show the intonation closure. /↓/ shows the falling continued stream of speech, the pattern is that of statement rather than a question. Compare the following examples:

Question: Which will be more convenient

Statement: Which will be more convenient remains to be seen.

Questions without an interrogative word have a rising intonation except when the hearer's attention is drawn to some point, in which case a falling intonation is used.

Rising: 2 3
Are you going
 2 3
Is it there

Falling: 2 3 1
Are you going
 2 3 1
Does he care

Intonation: /↑/ is used for a rising intonation and /→/ indicates a sustained intonation.

/231/ corresponds to a falling intonation:

 2 3 1
I am going home.
 2 3 1
Who is your friend.

/ 2 3 / Corresponds to a rising intonation:

2 3
He's gone
2 3
Are they ready

Questions beginning with interrogative words most frequently use a falling intonation, but in certain environmental circumstances such as the repetition of the original question a rising intonation may be used. Examples:

2 3 1
What is your name
2 3
What did you say

In situations where interrogative words are used not in free utterances as the above examples show but in an alternative question, a rising intonation may be followed by a falling intonation.

2 3 2 3 1
Am I right or am I wrong

Yorkey notes that in a series of yes-no questions, there is a tendency to use each with a falling intonation:

2 3 1 2 3 1³⁴
Are you a student. Are you a freshman.

³⁴Yorkey, op.cit., pp.31-33.

Non-Question Utterances

Question word order may be found in other types of utterances which are not, in fact, questions but an inversion of ordinary word order.

1. Certain negative adverbs can, for emphasis, be placed at the beginning of the sentence. In this case the interrogative form is used. These adverbs are: Seldom, hardly, never, scarcely, nowhere, so, under no circumstances, to such lengths, not once, by no means.

Never before had I heard such an interesting story.

Hardly had he got into the bath when the phone rang.

2. Sentences beginning with the function word there show question word order:

There comes a time when it is useless to struggle.

There is the can that I've looked for many times.

3. In elliptical constructions where a verb substitute is used.

I went to the party. So did my brother.

4. When the condition is expressed without any conjunction:

Were he to see you ...

Had I known him earlier ...

Should the horse run away ...

5. In sentences when the subject is more important than the predicate:

Before them lay miles and miles of undulating moors.

Out rushed the man and his wife.

6. Sentences which begin with another element than a negative adverb. It may be the object of the sentence.

Well do I remember the day.

Many a rabbit had he snared.

7. When the reporting verb comes at the end of the reported statement.

"I am dead tired", said he.

8. Requests in affirmative or negative:

Will you please open the window?

Won't you have another cup of tea?

9. According to Jespersen, preparatory it represents "a whole group of words"³⁵ which cannot

³⁵Jespersen, Essentials of English ..., p. 154.

be properly put in an ordinary word order. The group itself comes afterwards in "extraposition".

Examples:

'It is wrong to lie.

It occurred to me that he might be ill.³⁶

10. In literary exclamations:

What a piece of work is a man! (Sh.)

11. In expressing wishes:

Long live the king!

May you be happy.

12. When here and there are put at the beginning of the sentence:

Here comes the old lady.

There came a time when he did repent.

Summary

In English, a question is an utterance used to elicit an oral response. Questions are marked by one or more of the devices of word order, question words, reversed tags or intonation. There are also non-question utterances which use question word order. They are not questions used to elicit

³⁶Ibid., p. 154.

an oral answer but utterances with an inversion of the ordinary statement word order. On the basis of our analysis, we can present the question patterns in English as follows:

I. Word Order

Pattern 1. Questions made by shifting the primary auxiliary to the front position.

Statement

They have gone.

Question

Have they gone?

Pattern 2. Questions by shifting the modal auxiliary to the front position.

Statement

You can come back.

Question

Can you come back?

Pattern 3. Questions by adding do, does, did

Statement

They went there.

Question

Did they go there?

Pattern 4. Questions made by the simple reversal of the subject and the main verb.

Statement

The teachers were there. Were the teachers there?

Question

II. Question-Word Questions

Pattern 5. Question word as subject

Who came?

Pattern 6. Question word as subject modifier:

What books are here?

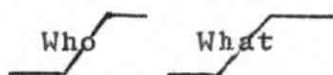
Pattern 7. Question word as part of the predicate (non-subject position):

What did they see?

Pattern 8. Question words in isolation:

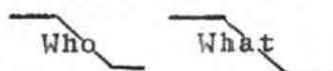
a. With a rising intonation for repetition

Who What

The diagram shows the words 'Who' and 'What' with lines above them that rise from left to right, indicating a rising intonation.

b. With a falling intonation for asking information

Who What

The diagram shows the words 'Who' and 'What' with lines above them that fall from left to right, indicating a falling intonation.

III. Tag Questions

Pattern 9. With a rising intonation for asking information.

She teaches English, doesn't she?

Pattern 10. With a falling intonation for seeking confirmation:

She teaches English, doesn't she?

IV. Intonation

Pattern 11. A statement becomes a question when it is used with a rising intonation.

They are going?

CHAPTER III

A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF PERSIAN

QUESTION PATTERNS

Persian belongs to the Indo-Iranian branch of the vaster family of Indo-European languages. It is written in the Arabic script from right to left. As a result of the Islamic conquest in the seventh century A.D., the Arabic alphabet replaced the older Persian alphabet and many Arabic words were introduced into Persian. In its grammatical structure and basic vocabulary, Persian remains Indo-European, quite different from Arabic.

As the history of these two languages show, English and Persian have changed from highly inflected languages toward analytical ones.¹

¹Albert C. Baugh, A History of The English Language (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1957), p. 59, For Persian see Ibid., p , 25.

Standard Persian

The Teheran dialect is considered as the standard dialect in Iran. It is the standard Persian used as the language of instruction in schools, colleges and universities. The language described in this study is the spoken Persian.²

Transcription System

The Persian alphabet consists of 32 letters written in the Arabic script. Four of these letters have been added by the Persians.

The transcription system used in this study is taken from the symbols suggested by Trager and Smith in An Outline of English Structure.³ To show the three pitch levels of Persian, numbers are used: 1 showing the low level of pitch, 2 normal and 3 the high one.

The purpose of this chapter is to make a descriptive analysis of question patterns in Persian. The types of materials used for this purpose come

²For the description of stylistic variants in spoken Persian determined on the basis of morpheme alternants and of phonetic variations, see Carleton T. Hodge, "Some Aspects of Persian Style," Language, 33 (1957), pp. 355-69.

³George L. Trager and Henry Lee Smith. An Outline of English Structure (Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1957), pp. 27-30.

from the following sources:

1. Conventional grammars which are available and which describe Persian grammar in the framework of the traditional grammatical categories of "parts of speech". Of these grammars, one is in Persian and the others are in English.

2. Descriptive analyses made of Persian grammar on the levels of phonology, morphology and syntax during recent years.

3. Five randomly selected informants from Teheran who speak the standard dialect provided the Persian equivalent for each English pattern. The Persian equivalents were transcribed and then were analyzed in terms of their syntactic structure and intonation contours. This analysis was complemented by descriptions and additional information provided by the writer.

Review of the Related Literature

No efforts have been made in the past by earlier grammarians to describe question patterns in Persian. What we find in their works is scattered information on interrogative words or other function words which signal questions. The examples given are usually literary citations. The linguistic studies of Persian have recently begun to deal with

the language, both spoken and written.⁴ Hodge states that "Persian grammars have been conservative in the presentation of linguistic data"⁵. In their analysis, he notes, "they settle comfortably into the use of the traditional grammatical categories of noun, pronoun, etc." Despite the fact that some of the books reviewed by the writer deal with "modern", "colloquial" or "spoken" Persian, they still remain traditional in their analysis and presentation of the materials. What we need today is, as Hodge points out, a modern grammar of Persian rather than a grammar of modern Persian.

Definition of a Question In Persian

A question in Persian may be defined in the same way as for English. It is an utterance used to elicit an answer whether for obtaining information, confirmation or denial of a previous statement.

⁴See the sources under Persian in bibliography, especially those by Ferguson, Hodge, Lambton, Rastorgueva, Chatman, Hosséinipur and Yarmohammadi.

⁵Carleton T. Hodge, Review of Lazard's Grammaire du Persan Contemporain, Language. 34, No. 1 (1958), p. 111.

Question Signals

Intonation plays an important part in signalling a question in Persian. The word order in statements and questions is the same, but a contrastive intonation pattern distinguishes a statement from a question. Word order, therefore, as a syntactic device to signal a question does not exist in Persian.

Most of the grammar books have referred to this linguistic fact without analyzing it in relation to the structural system of stress, pause and rhythm.

Some of these definitions will be quoted here:

A question is generally in conversation denoted merely by the tone of voice...⁶

Questions may be indicated (if there is no interrogative pronoun...) by the tone of voice alone...⁷

... a question may take the form of a statement from which it is distinguished by the inflection of the voice...⁸

⁶W. St. Clair-Tisdall, Modern Persian Conversation Grammar (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1902), pp. 26-27.

⁷L.P. Elwell-Sutton, Colloquial Persian (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Truber & Co., Ltd., 1941), p. 13.

⁸E.M.N. Hawker, Written and Spoken Persian (London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1941), p. 34.

When we make a question in Persian, we do not alter the order of the words. All we need to do is to raise the voice at the end of the question.⁹

Among the modern grammarians, Lambton has devoted a separate section to intonation in Persian. She discusses the general characteristics of Persian intonation in terms of stress, pause and rhythm. Interrogative sentences are analyzed in relation to their intonation patterns.¹⁰

Since intonation distinguishes a statement from a question we begin our analysis with statements. In Persian the most frequent intonation pattern of statements is /231/.¹¹

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 2 , | 3, | |
| /ʔuna | ræftæn/ | "They have gone." |
| they | gone-are+they | |
| 2 3, 1 | | |
| /peydakærdæm/ | | "I found it." |
| find | did+I | |

In sentences with a pause the pattern is usually /23|21/:¹²

⁹ John Mace, Modern Persian (London: The English Universities Press Limited, 1962), p. 56.

¹⁰ Ann K.S. Lambton, Persian Grammar (London: Cambridge University Press Limited, 1962), p. 56.

¹¹ Hodge, "Some Aspects ...", p. 360.

¹² Ibid., p. 360.

² /suræ thes³ d² bo¹ biyarid/ "Bring the check"
 check bring + you

In the first sentence the personal pronoun /?uná/ "they" is expressed, whereas in the second sentence there is no personal pronoun.¹³ In Persian, subject pronouns are not always used because the suffix at the end of the verb indicates the person and the number. This shows how the verbal system in Persian operates differently from that of English. A single verb in Persian may be used without any personal pronoun to correspond to a subject + verb construction in English.

¹³ Personal Pronouns in Persian are as follows:

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1st | singular | plural |
| | /mæ n/ "I" | /ma/ "we" |
| 2nd | /to / "thou" (informal) | /soma/ "you" |
| | /soma/ "you" (polite and formal) | |
| 3rd | /?u/ "he, she, it (formal) | {išan "they" (formal) |
| | /?un/ "he, she, it (informal) | {anha "they" (informal) |
| | | /?uná/ "they" (informal) |

There are also some pronominal enclitics which are attached to the preceding word. They are usually unaccented.

| | | |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| | singular | plural |
| 1st | /-æ m/ <u>I, me, my</u> | /-im/ <u>we, us, our</u> |
| 2nd | /-et/ <u>you, you, your</u> | /-etân/ <u>you, you, your</u> |
| 3rd | /-eš/ <u>he, him, his</u> <u>she, her, her</u> <u>it, it, its</u> | /-ešan/ <u>they, them, their</u> |

After vowels they become /-yæ m/, /-yet/, /-yeš/, /-yeman/, /-yetan/ and /-yešan/.

With regard to statements, the general characteristic of a rhythm group in Persian is that the length of the utterance depends on the number of syllables.¹⁴ In English, the number of syllables in a rhythm group does not necessarily make the pronunciation of that group longer. The reader has to "rush over them quickly to get to the next heavily stressed syllable."¹⁵ The following sentences in English should take about the same time irrespective of the number of the syllables. But in Persian, sentences in the second column are longer.

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|----|
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | | 3 | 1 | 16 |
| He's a teacher. | | He's really a very good teacher. | | | | | |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | | |
| He has a wife. | | He has a wealthy and pretty new wife. | | | | | |

Questions in Persian are made out of statements by adding a rising intonation. The frequent intonation pattern is /23/ and in utterances of more than one phrase it is /23/2 /.¹⁷

¹⁴Lotfoillah Yarmohammadi, "A Contrastive Study of Modern English and Persian," (Ann Arbor, Michigan University Microfilms, 1965), p. 69-70.

¹⁵Yorkey, Op.cit., p. 12.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁷Hodge, "Some Aspects . . .", p. 361.

2, 3
/?und ræftæn/ "Have they gone?"
they gone+are

2, 3, 2,
/meyldarid ?unjaro bebinid/ "Would you like to
like you there see+you see the place?"
(place)

Besides intonation, there are some function words in Persian which signal yes-no questions. In writing, the function words /mæ'gær/ meaning "is it like this?" or "isn't it so?" and /?aya/ meaning "whether" are used. The former is used with a falling intonation and the latter with a rising one. Examples:

2, 3, 1
/mæ'gær næ'ræftid/ "Didn't you go?"
not went+you

2, 3,
/?aya ?ura misenasid/ "Do you know him?"
— him know+you

In conversation the function word /mæ'gær/ is pronounced /mæ'ge/. It may occur in affirmative and negative questions. Our informants used it in negative questions.¹⁸ Examples:

2, 3, 1
/mæ'ge næ'ræft/ "Didn't he go?"
— not went+he

The last point which needs to be explained about /mæ'ge/ is that it usually denotes surprise, and as a question, it is used when one hears about

¹⁸To make a verb negative in Persian we simply add the prefix /næ-/ to the verb. A negative question is formed by changing the falling intonation of a negative sentence to a rising intonation. Our example here is used with a falling intonation because of the presence of /mæ'ge/ at the beginning of the sentence.

an event which is contrary to one's previous knowledge of it. Consider the following sentence.

| | | | |
|-------|--------|----|----------------|
| 2 / | 3 / | | |
| /mæge | zendæ/ | | "Is he alive?" |
| — | alive | is | he |

Sutton, in his discussion of questions in Persian, has included /ya næ/ "or not" as a question signal without elaborating on its meaning and distribution.¹⁹ /ya næ/ as a question signal in Persian occurs at the end of the sentence, making a choice between the positive or the negative aspect of an event. The answer elicited depends on the occurrence (positive) or non-occurrence (negative) of the event. Consider the following example:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|----------|---|--------|----------------------------|
| 2 | 3 / | / | 2 | 1 | |
| First speaker: | /ʔotomobil | hazere | | ya næ/ | |
| | automobile | ready+is | | or not | |
| | | | | | "Is the car ready or not?" |
| 2 | 3 / | / | | | |
| Second speaker: | /bæle | hazere/ | | | "Yes, it is ready" |
| | yes | ready+is | | | |

The word /ya/ "or" in Persian makes a choice question. The intonation is falling with the pattern of /23 | 21/.

| | | | | | | |
|--------|------------|---|---------|---|---|-------------------|
| 2 | 3 / | / | 2 | v | 1 | |
| /qæhve | meylidarid | | ya cay/ | | | "Do you drink tea |
| Coffee | drink+you | | or tea | | | or coffee?" |

Yes-no questions in Persian may elicit various types of answers, largely determined by the situation

¹⁹Sutton, op.cit., p. 13.

in which the conversation occurs. For formal positive answers /ʔári/ "yes" or /bǎli/ "yes" may be used; in informal conversation /ʔaré/ "yes" or /bǎle/ "yes" are frequently heard. For negative answers /nǎ/ "no" /xéyr/ "no" or /nǎxeyr/ are used. The answers elicited by our informants are of the informal types frequently used in everyday conversation.

Question Words

In Persian, like English, question words signal interrogation. They are as follows:

/ke/ and in informal style /ki/ "who"
/čé/ and in informal style /ci/ "what"
/kodám/ and in informal style /kudum/ "which" "what"
/čéciz/ "what thing" "what"
/čéra/ "why"
/kéy/ "When"
/čevǎxt/ }
/čevǎqt/ } "What time"
/čé moqe/ }
/koja/ "where"
/čǎnd/ "how many" "how much"
/čánta/ "how many"
/četowr/
/čéjur(i)/ "What" "What kind of"
/čeguné/
/takey/ "How long"

Before we embark upon a linguistic description of question-word questions in Persian, some phonological, morphological, and syntactical characteristics of question words should be discussed here.

1. Question words in Persian have a high pitch whereas the counterpart question in English usually puts it on the last syllable in the sentence.

/ki¹ ʔumæd/ "Who came?"

Who came+∅

/bæhram² key³ ræft¹/ "When did Bahram go?"

Bahram when went+∅

2. In contrast to English, question words in Persian may appear in the plural forms. Examples:

Question Word Plural Morpheme

ci¹ + -ha → /ci¹ha/ "what"

koja¹ + -ha → /koja¹ha/ "where"

ki¹ + -ha → /ki¹ha/ "who"

kudum¹ + -ha → /kudum¹ha/ "which" "what"

3. Some question words are compound, made of two constituents. They indicate an internal open juncture which is orthographically represented by a space.²⁰

²⁰The plural morphemes in Persian are /-ha/ and /-an/. The first is added to substantives, animate or inanimate. The second is added to animate substantives. For the linguistic discussion of juncture in Persian, see Hodge, "Some Aspects of Persian Style," *Language*, 33 (1957), pp. 359-361.

✓ ce + ✓ c iz /ce'ciz/ "What"
✓ ce + væxt /cevæxt/ "What time"
ta + key /'takey/ "How long"

In Persian, questions beginning with question words have a falling intonation as in statements.

The pitch pattern is /23 1/.

² /bæhræm key ræft/ "When did Bahram go?"
Bahram when went+Ø

When the question word appears at the beginning,

the pitch pattern is /3 1/.

³ /key ?umæd/ "When did he come?"
when came+he
³ /ci goft/ "What did he say?"
What said+he

Question words in English occur at the beginning of the sentence, whereas in Persian they are moveable elements which occupy any position according to their function in the given sentence. The following examples show question words in three positions.

³ /ci sode/ "What has happened?"
what happened+is
² /?unja ciye/ "What is over there?"
there what+is
² /ketābo koja xæridi/ "Where did you buy the book?"
book where buy+you

The oral answers elicited in question-word questions are directed toward the question-words.

Examples:

- First speaker: ² /?una key miræn/ "When are they leaving?"
 they when leave+they
- Second speaker: ² /færda miræn/ "They are leaving tomorrow!"
 tomorrow leave+they
- First speaker: ¹ /cemoqe/ "At what time?"
 what time
- Second speaker: ³ /intowr ke migæn | sobhe zuwd/
 this way that say+they morning early.
 "As they say, early in the morning."

Question words may be used in isolation with a rising intonation to ask for a repetition of the previous statement.

- First speaker: ² /sinema kojast/ "Where is the cinema?"
 cinema where+is
- Second speaker: ¹ /?unja/ "Over there."
 there
- First speaker: ¹ /koja/ "Where?"
 where

In the first sentence, the speaker uses a falling intonation for seeking information. When he repeats the word /koja/, he uses a rising intonation to ask for a repetition of the previous statement.

Tag Questions

Tag questions in Persian function differently from those in English. The tense form of the reversed tag in English depends on the tense form of the main verb used in the previous utterance. In the previous chapter we discussed them

in terms of rising and falling intonation which signal different meanings. In Persian, a tag question may be formed in one of the following ways:

1. After a statement the word /nist/ or /næ/ with a rising intonation meaning "Isn't it so" is used to make a question. This tag does not depend on the verb used in the previous statement.

Examples:

2 v , 3 , 2
/danesga baze | nist/ "The University is open,
university open is not+is isn't it?"
2 3 , 2
/?un engelisi dærs mide | næ/ "He teaches English,
he English lesson give no? doesn't he?"

2. The verbal phrase of the previous statement may occur in a negative form without mentioning the subject, if an independent one is used.

2 , 3 , 2 ,
/parsal ?inja budi | næbudi/ "Last year you were
last year here were you here, weren't you?"
not were+you?

Persian speakers rely more on intonation as a syntactic device than on word order. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that a single word, as in the case of tag questions, may be substituted for a sentence. This type of tag question in Persian corresponds to the English tag question in which the previous utterance is positive and the tag is negative. The following schematic formula

shows the structure of tag questions for which both languages use a rising intonation.

| <u>Statement</u> | <u>Tag question</u> | <u>Intonation</u> |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| <u>English:</u> | | |
| Subject+Verb+Object- | Aux. + not + subject | Rising |
| <u>Persian:</u> | | |
| (Indep. Subject)+Object+Verb+ | | |
| Pro. Suf. - | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} n\alpha + \text{verb} + \text{Pro. Suf.} \\ /n\alpha / \\ /nist/ \end{array} \right.$ | Rising |

Intonation

As we noticed earlier in the chapter, most questions in Persian are signalled by intonation. A statement word order uttered with a rising intonation signals a question. Therefore, intonation expresses a structural meaning. The most frequent pitch pattern of questions containing one phrase is / 2 3/ and those of more than one phrase is /23 | 2/.

In our analysis of intonation patterns, we are mainly concerned with those patterns which represent the basic molds for ordinary Persian questions.

Summary:

In Persian, a question is an utterance used to elicit an oral response. It seeks information, confirmation or denial to a previous statement.

Intonation, question words and some other function words are the major devices to signal interrogation. Persian does not require a word order contrast with that of a statement in its interrogative system. The question patterns in Persian may be summarized as follows:

I. Rising Intonation

Pattern 1. A question with a statement word order:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <u>Statement</u> | <u>Question</u> |
| 2 / 3 / 1 | 2 / 3 / 1 |
| /?una ræftæn/ | /?una ræft æ n / |
| they gone+are | they gone + are |

Pattern 2. Placing /?aya/ at the beginning of the question:

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 2 / 3 / | "Do you know him?" |
| /?aya ?ura misenasid/ | |
| Whether him know+you | |

Pattern 3. Making a tag question:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|---|
| 2 / 3 / | 2 / | |
| /parsal ?inja budid næbudid/ | næbudid/ | "You were here last year, weren't you?" |
| Last year here were you not were | | |
| | { /nist/ | |
| | { not+is | |
| | { /næ/ | |
| | { no | |

II. Falling Intonation

Pattern 4. Putting /mæge/ at the beginning of the question:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 2 / 3 / 1 | "Didn't he go?" |
| /mæge næ ræft/ | |
| — not went+he | |

Pattern 5. Putting /ya nʔ/ at the end of the sentence:
2 3 / / 2 1 /
/ʔotomobil hazere | ya nʔ/ "Is the car ready or
automobile ready+is or not not?"

Pattern 6. Making a choice question
2 3 / / 2 1 /
/qʔhve mey | darid | ya cay/ "Do you drink coffee
Coffee drink+you or tea or tea?"

III. Question Words

Pattern 7. Used as subjects:

3 / 1 /
/ki ʔum ʔd/ "Who came"
who came+ø

Pattern 8. Used as modifiers of subjects:

3v / / 2 / 1 /
/ce ketabay ʔinjan/ "What books are here?"
What books here+are

Pattern 9. Used as adverbs

3 / 1 /
/key mir ʔn/ "When are they leaving?"
When leave+they

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND PERSIAN QUESTION PATTERNS

In the previous chapters efforts were made to make an analysis of the question patterns in English and Persian. Throughout our linguistic descriptions of the two languages, we were mainly concerned with the fact of analyzing each language in its own terms. However, as it was felt necessary to clarify the materials being presented, occasional references were made to some points of similarity and difference between the two languages. The consequences hitherto obtained are not enough to highlight, in a careful and systematic way, the difficulties involved.

The main purpose of this chapter is to make a systematic contrastive analysis of English and Persian question patterns. The results of such an analysis bring into light the similarities and divergences and provide a solid foundation for the preparation of teaching materials.

The interrogative structures in English

and Persian constitute a part of the whole grammatical structure of the language. Our justification for including question patterns in the grammatical structure lies in the fact that they, by means of word order, function words or intonation, convey certain meanings and relationships.

Any grammatical structure functions on the basis of form, meaning and distribution.¹ In the area of question patterns, the form refers to word order, function words, and intonation. Meaning refers to the structural meaning of the question by which certain oral responses may be elicited. The responses largely depend on the **types** of questions put forth. Distribution distinguishes certain environments in which the questions might occur. Some begin the conversation, others occur after another sentence has been said.

In addition to the factors mentioned, the grammatical structure, or the language as a whole, also operates on two other basic levels which are worth considering. They consist of production and recognition.² By production, while dealing with

¹Lado, Linguistics Across . . . p. 53.

²Fries, Teaching and Learning English . . ., pp. 8-9.

question patterns, we mean the ability to utter different questions correctly according to their structure and the suprasegmentals imposed on them (intonation, pause, rhythm and stress). Recognition, in the same grammatical area, refers to the ability to understand the different question patterns uttered by others and especially by native speakers in relation to the students learning English as a foreign language. From a pedagogical point of view, this discrimination made at the early stages of learning English has been considered very helpful.³ It is also very significant and must be taken into account in the preparation of teaching materials.

For the contrastive analysis of question patterns in English and Persian, the writer uses the system suggested by Lado in Linguistics Across Cultures.

I. Word Order

Pattern 1. Questions with the primary auxiliary at the beginning.

English:

Form: Primary auxiliary + Subject + Verb

Examples:

Have the men gone?

Have they gone?

³Ibid., p. 8.

Has she gone?

Features:

1. Occurrence of have before the subject or its substitutes.
2. Presence of the subject or its substitute.
3. Mid-high (2-3) intonation pattern or Mid-high-low [2-3-1] intonation pattern. Each intonation pattern makes a difference in the structural meaning.

The rising intonation [2-3] makes a yes-no question. The answers elicited will be simply yes when positive or no when negative. Any other linguistic form may substitute yes and no.

4. A falling intonation pattern [2-3-1] underlies a contrastive pointing. The primary contour emphasizes the center of selective attention of the speaker, or draws the attention of the hearer to that point.⁴ When one of the question words occurs at the beginning of this type of question, the intonation is again falling like that of a statement.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question.

⁴Pike, op.cit., p. 44.

Distribution: This type of question is restricted to the auxiliary verbs have and had. It opens a conversation if the subject is a noun, such as Have the men gone? But it would be a sequence sentence if the subject is a pronoun like, Have they gone? In this situation the speaker and the hearer know who they are talking about. **Consequently,** such a sentence may open the conversation.

Persian:

Form: Independent subject + verb + pronominal suffix.

Example: $\overset{2}{/} \text{?und} \overset{3}{/} \text{r} \text{ʔft} \text{ʔn} /$ "Have they gone?"
 they gone+are

Features:

1. The word order is subject + verb.
2. The presence of an independent subject is optional.
3. The primary stress is on the final part of the verb.
4. The intonation pattern is /2-3/. If the last syllable is stressed, the pitch rises sharply at the end. If the high pitch does not coincide with the last stressed syllable, the pitch rises to /3/, then becomes normal and rises slightly at the end. In this case the intonation pattern may be /23|2 /.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question.

Distribution: No special restriction.

Problems:

a) Recognition: When this type of question is used with normal rising intonation, in English, the Persian student may not have any difficulty in recognizing it as a question to respond to it. This is due to the fact that in Persian rising intonation is the major device to signal a question. In case it is used with a falling intonation, the Persian student may take it for a statement rather than a question.

b) Production: (1) In making such a type of question, the Persian student may fail to put the main auxiliary at the beginning. (2) He may fail to provide the subject of the verb because it is optional in Persian. (3) It is within the linguistic ability of a Persian student to utter a question with arrising intonation all the time. He may fail to use a falling intonation. (4) A Persian student may fail to make an agreement between the subject and the main auxiliary. In his native language, the agreement between the subject and the verb is the function of the pronominal suffix and not the auxiliary.

Pattern 2. Questions with modal auxiliaries

at the beginning:

| <u>English</u> | <u>Persian</u> |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| shall | |
| will | /xast æn/ |
| should | |
| would | |
| can | /tʁvanest æn/ |
| could | |
| may | /sayest æn/ |
| might | |
| must | /bayest æn/ ⁵ |

English

Form: Modal auxiliary + subject + verb

Example:

Can John come?

Will she come?

Features:

1. Presence of modal auxiliary before the subject.
2. Occurrence of a noun or its substitute as the subject.
3. The main verb follows the subject in the form of infinitive.

⁵ In Persian there are other auxiliaries like /budæn/, /sodæn/ and /gozastæn/. For the functions of auxiliaries, see Lambton, op.cit., pp. 53-58 or Mace, op.cit., pp. 163-174.

4. Mid-high /2 3/ rising intonation or
Mid-high-low /2 3 1/ falling intonation.

Distribution:

Restricted to modal auxiliaries. It may open a conversation, when the subject is a noun, or it may occur as a sequence sentence when the subject is a pronoun, such as Will she come?

Persian:

Form: Independent subject + auxiliary + pronominal suffix + subjunctive present.⁶

Example:

² /bæhram ³ mitune ¹ biad/ "Can Bahram come?"
Bahram can+he come+he

or

auxiliary + independent subject + subjunctive present

Example:

³ /mitune ² bæhram ¹ biad/ "Can Bahram come?"
Can+he Bahram come+he

Features:

1. Occurrence of the independent subject is optional. The suffix of the verbs indicates the

⁶ To form the present subjunctive the following structure is used: Present stem + pronominal suffix + prefix /be-/. The subjunctive in Persian appears both in present and the past form.

See Rastorgueva, op.cit., p. 39-40.

person and number.

2. The auxiliary may appear before or after the independent subject without underlying any structural meaning.

3. Of these auxiliaries, /xastán/ and /tavanestán/ take personal endings together with the main verb. /sayestán/ and /bayestán/ have the same form of /sáyád/ and /bayád/ for all persons. In this case, the verb takes personal endings to indicate person and number.

4. When the verb is a compound, it does not take the prefix /be-/ to form the subjunctive present.

5. Rising intonation is used. The high pitch is usually on the auxiliary.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question.

Distribution: The auxiliaries /sayestán/ and /bayestán/ use the same form for all persons. The other two auxiliaries accept the personal endings. If the subject is a noun, it usually opens the conversation. When its substitute is used, it occurs as a sequence sentence.

Recognition:

When the English pattern is used with a rising intonation, the Persian student does not

have any difficulty in recognizing the pattern. When used with a falling intonation, he may take it for a statement.

Although the Persian student may be able to recognize the structure of the pattern, it is very difficult for him to recognize the different meanings which a modal auxiliary may have in English. Besides, he may take should, would, could and might forms to indicate past time, whereas they are not always used to mark time relations.⁷

Production:

1. The Persian student may not have any difficulty in forming the structure of this type of question because he uses the same pattern in his native language.

2. He may have a great difficulty in producing the questions beginning with shall, will, should and would according to the person and the meaning.

3. He may have a great difficulty in producing the past tense forms of modal auxiliaries according to their different meanings.

⁷For the linguistic discussion of modal auxiliaries in terms of present time reference, past time reference and their different meanings see, Palmer, op.cit., pp. 105-134.

4. He may omit the subject: as he does in his native language.
5. He may put the high pitch on the auxiliary.
6. He may add third person singular /s/ to the modal auxiliaries.

Pattern 3. Questions with the auxiliaries do, does, did:

English;

Form: Auxiliary + subject + verb

Examples:

- Do they go?
Did they go?

Features:

1. Occurrence of the auxiliary do before the subject.
2. In this type of question, do is the "neutral" or "empty" auxiliary used because the grammatical rules of English require its occurrence.⁸
3. Presence of the subject, a noun or its substitute.
4. Mid-high /2-3/ rising intonation or mid-high-low /2-3-1/ falling intonation.

⁸Ibid., p. 26.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question.

Distribution: This pattern is employed by all verbs except be and sometimes have.

Persian:

Form: Independent subject+verb+pronominal suffix

Examples:

$\overset{2}{/} \overset{3}{?} \text{una mir} \alpha \text{n/}$ "Do they go?"

they go+they

$\overset{2}{/} \overset{3}{?} \text{una r} \alpha \text{ft} \alpha \text{n/}$ "Did they go?"

they went+they

Features:

1. The independent subject may be omitted. The pronominal suffix indicates the person and the number.

2. When the last syllable is stressed the intonation pattern is /2 3/. If the last syllable is not stressed the intonation pattern will be

/23 | 2/.

Recognition:

The Persian student does not have any difficulty in recognizing this type of pattern when used with a rising intonation. His major difficulty arises when he hears it with a falling intonation.

Production:

1. He may fail to provide the auxiliary do,

does, did at the beginning of the pattern.

2. He may fail to make an agreement between the auxiliary and the main verb, especially in the past tense form where the main verb should appear in its present tense form. e.g., Did he go?

Pattern 4. Questions with the reversal of the subject and the verb.

Form: Verb + Subject + Predicate

Examples:

Is John a teacher?

Is she happy?

Were they here?

Features:

1. Occurrence of be before the subject or its substitute.
2. Presence of the subject or its substitute.
3. Rising intonation pattern of mid-high /2-3/ or mid-high-low /2-3 1/.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question.

Distribution:

This pattern is restricted to the verb be and sometimes have. It may be used as a situation utterance or as a sequence sentence.

Persian:

Form: Independent subject + Predicate + copula (or linking verb)⁹

Example:

2, 3, 2,
/?una ?inja budæn/ "Were they here?"

they here were+they

2, 3,
/?un xoshale/ "Is she happy?"

she happy+is

Features:

1. Occurrence of predicate in combination with the copula or linking verb /budæn/, "to be".
2. Independent subject is optional.
3. Rising intonation pattern.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question.

Distribution:

Restricted to the linking verb /budæn/ and other linking verbs.

Recognition:

The Persian student has no difficulty in recognizing this pattern when used with a rising intonation.

⁹ Linking verbs in Persian are: /budæn/ "to be", /sodæn/ "to become", /gæstæn/ "to become" or /gærdidæn/ "to become."

Production:

1. He may fail to make a reversal of the subject and the verb.
2. He may put the predicate before the verb to be as he does in his native language.
3. He may always utter the question with a rising intonation.

II. Question-Word Questions

Pattern 5. Questions with question-words as the subject of the sentence:

Form: Subject + verb

Example:

Who came?

What happened?

Features:

1. Occurrence of the question word as the subject of the sentence at the beginning.
2. Mid-high-low /2-3-1/ falling intonation.

Meaning: Question. This type of question elicits any oral response which is usually directed toward the question word.

Distribution:

It is restricted to who, what and which functioning as the subject.

Persian:

Form: Subject + verb

Example:

| | | |
|------|------------|------------------|
| 3 / | 1 / | |
| /ki | ʔumæd/ | "Who came?" |
| who | came+∅ | |
| /ci | sod/ | "What happened?" |
| what | happened+∅ | |

Features:

1. Occurrence of the question word as the subject before the verb.
2. Occurrence of the subject.
3. Falling intonation. The high pitch usually falls on the question word.

Meaning: Question. It may elicit any oral answer fitting the pattern.

Distribution:

Restricted to the question words which may function as the subject of the sentence.

Recognition:

The Persian student does not have any difficulty in recognizing this pattern because of the similarity of function in the two languages.

Production:

1. The Persian student may always put the high pitch on the question word.
2. He may express the question word in the plural form as he does in his native language.

Pattern 6. Questions with question words as subject modifier:

English:

Form: Modifier + subject + verb

Example:

Which bus goes there?

What books are here?

Features:

1. Presence of the question word as modifier before a noun.
2. Presence of a noun as the subject.
3. Mid-high-low /2-3-1/ falling intonation pattern.

Meaning: Question. It elicits any linguistic form as an oral answer directed toward the subject of the sentence, but not the question word.

Distribution:

Restricted to the question words functioning as the subject modifier. It usually opens the conversation.

Persian:

Form: Modifier + subject + verb + pronominal suffix

Example: /kudum ?otobus mire ?unja/ "Which bus goes
which bus go there there?"
3√, / 2,1
/ce ketabay ?injan/ "What books are here?"
what books here+are

Features:

1. Presence of the question word as subject modifier.
2. Presence of the subject.
3. Flexibility of word order. The adverbs of place may occur before the verb or after the verb.
4. Falling intonation. The high pitch usually falls on the question word.

Meaning: Question. The oral answer is usually directed toward modifying or specifying the subject according to the question words used.

Distribution:

Restricted to the question words used as subject modifier.

Recognition:

The same as pattern I.

Production:

1. The Persian student may always place the high pitch on the question word.
2. He may carry over the flexibility of the word order in Persian into English, putting the adverbs of place before or after the verb.

Pattern 7. Questions with question words as part of the predicate (non-subject position):

English:

Form: Question word + auxiliary + subject + verb

Example: When did the man arrive?

Where will they go?

When are they leaving?

Features:

1. Occurrence of the question word at the beginning.
2. Presence of the auxiliary before the subject.
3. Falling intonation of /2 3 1/ pattern.

Meaning: Question. The same as previous pattern.

Distribution:

Restricted to the question words used with all verbs except be when it is not used to form the progressive tenses.

Persian:

Form: Independent subject Question word verb Pro.suf.

Example: /?una key miræn/ "When are they leaving?"
 2, 3, 1, they when leave+they
 2, 3, 1, /?una ci didæn/ "What did they see?"
 they what saw+they

Form: Question word + Indep. subj. + verb + Pro. suf.

Example: 3, 2, /
/key ?una rəftæn/ "When did they go?"
when they went they

Features:

1. Independent subject is optional.
2. Occurrence of the interrogative before or after the subject.
3. Presence of the question word before the verb.
4. Falling intonation of /3-1/ or /2-3-1/ pattern.

Meaning: Question. The oral answer is directed toward the question word.

Distribution:

No special restriction.

Recognition: Since this pattern uses a falling intonation, the Persian speaker may take it for a statement.

Production:

The Persian student may encounter many difficulties in producing this type of pattern.

1. First of all, he may fail to put the auxiliary before the subject and say When they went? according to what he does in Persian.

2. He may put the question word in different positions, not fixed at the beginning.

3. He may fail to make an agreement between the subject and the auxiliary, especially with do, does and did. He may have fewer difficulties in the area of modal auxiliaries.

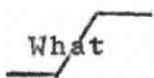
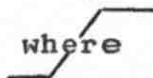
4. He may use a wrong intonation pattern by placing the high pitch on the question word.

5. He may fail to provide the subject pronoun which is obligatory in English and optional in Persian.


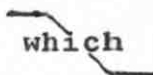
Pattern 8. Question words used in isolation as questions:

English:

Form: (1) Question word + rising intonation

Example: What  where 

(2) Question word + falling intonation

Example: Where  which 

Features:

No special features.

Meaning: Question. The rising pitch is used to seek a repetition of the previous utterance, and the falling pitch is used to seek additional information.

Distribution:

Restricted to question words used in isolation to signal a question.

Persian:

Form: Question word + rising intonation

Example: /koja/ "where"
/key/ "when"

Features:

No special features.

Meaning: Question. The rising intonation is used when the repetition of the previous utterance or additional information is sought.

Distribution:

To seek information, question words are used with falling intonation when they occur in questions but not in isolation. In isolation they are used with a rising intonation.

Recognition:

The Persian student may have no difficulty with this pattern because intonation is the same question signal in this type of pattern for both Persian and English.

Production:

He may use a rising intonation for the both cases explained above. Since intonation signals a question, less difficulty is predicted.

III. Tag Questions:

Pattern 9:

English:

Form: Statement auxiliary+not+subject-pronoun.

Example:

She teaches English, doesn't she?

Features:

1. Presence of the auxiliary in the tag question.
2. Occurrence of the subject of the previous utterance after the auxiliary in the tag question. When the verb be or a modal or have occur in the previous utterance they will be repeated in the tag question.
3. Rising intonation of /2 3/ pattern is used in the tag question.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question.

Distribution:

A tag question with a rising intonation is used when information is sought. A falling intonation is for asking confirmation to a previous utterance.

Persian:

Form: Statement $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} n\alpha + \text{verb} + \text{pronominal suffix} \\ /n\alpha/ \\ /nist/ \end{array} \right.$

Example:

| | | | |
|------|----------|--------|--|
| 2, | 3, | 2, | |
| /ʔun | engelisi | dærs | mide nαmide/ "She teaches |
| She | English | lesson | give not give +she English, doesn't |
| | | | she?" |
| | | | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} /n\alpha/ \\ \text{no} \\ /nist/ \\ \text{not+is} \end{array} \right.$ |

Features:

1. Occurrence of the negative form of the verb used in the previous utterance as a tag question. Instead of a negative verb, /nα/ or /nist/ is used. Both mean "Isn't it?"

2. Rising intonation.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question

Distribution:

No special restrictions.

Recognition:

The Persian speaker may easily recognize this pattern because of the rising intonation.

Production:

1. He may fail to use a proper auxiliary according to the main verb used in the previous statement.

2. He may omit the subject which is obligatory in the tag question.

3. He may use the stereotyped form of Persian for any tag question, irrespective of the tense of the previous statement.

4. He may fail to provide an appropriate answer according to the intonation pattern used.

IV. Questions Signalled by Intonation

Pattern 10.

English:

Form: Statement + rising intonation.

Example: They have gone.

Features:

1. Occurrence of the subject before the verb.
2. Mid-high /2-3/ pattern of intonation.

Meaning: Yes-no type of question.

Distribution:

No special restrictions.

Persian:

Form: Statement + rising intonation

Example: /²ʔuna ³raftæn/ "They have gone?"
they gone+are

Features:

1. Presence of a verb plus the pronominal to indicate the person and the number.
2. The independent subject is optional.
3. Mid-high /2 3/ or /2 3 2/ type of intonation.

Distribution:

No special restrictions.

Recognition:

The Persian speaker may not have any difficulty in recognizing this pattern because of the rising intonation.

Production:

This pattern is expected to be the easiest one for a Persian speaker. However, he may omit the subject and use the verb alone with a rising intonation.

Summary:

The question patterns of English and Persian were systematically compared and contrasted in terms of form, meaning and distribution. The problems of Persian speakers were predicted in terms of the levels of recognition and production.

As a consequence of this systematic comparison, we may predict that Persian speakers may encounter difficulties in the patterns of word order, namely, the patterns in which the main auxiliary, modal auxiliary, do, does and did, and the main verb should come before the subject to signal a question. In the question-word questions, when the question-words are used as part of the predicate or in non-subject position, Persian speakers may have difficulties. Tag questions which require substitutes of subject and the main verb of the preceding statement may also cause problems.

Problems such as the inclusion of the personal pronouns, differentiation between he, she and it, agreement between the third person singular and the main verb or the auxiliary do and the use of falling intonation instead of a rising intonation may be predicted as common problems in the area of English question patterns.

CHAPTER V

SUGGESTED METHODS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH QUESTION PATTERNS TO PERSIAN SPEAKERS: SAMPLE LESSONS AND EXERCISES

In the previous chapter, a systematic contrastive analysis of the question patterns between English and Persian indicated the points of similarity and contrast. The results obtained do not serve a pedagogical purpose unless they constitute a basic foundation upon which we can build our teaching materials. These materials should contain the points of contrast organized into a satisfactory plan so that the Persian student can master the interrogative structure of the English language.

The development of structural linguistics in America brought about new ideas about the nature of language and the approach to language teaching. The nature of language is conceived of as a set of habits which, in one's native language, constitutes an ordered system of structural patterns. Learning a foreign language, therefore, is a matter of acquiring a new set of habits, rather than an intel-

lectual mastery of a body of knowledge or information about the language.¹

Pattern practice has developed as an impact of structural linguistics on the approach to language teaching. Pattern practice is defined and interpreted by Nelson as follows:

... exercise in structural dexterity undertaken solely for the sake of practice, in order that performance may become habitual and automatic. ... Pattern practice capitalizes on the mind's capacity to perceive identity of structure where there is difference in content and its quickness to learn by analogy.²

Full consideration paid to the following basic concepts may help develop in students the new habits of the second language.

1. Modern language-teaching methodology considers the interferences of the student's native language and trains him first to listen, distinguish and understand the items presented from the foreign language. The teacher should emphasize the points of contrast rather than similarity. The results

¹Charles Fries, "American Linguistics and the Teaching of English", Language Learning, Vol. VI, Nos. 1 and 2 (1955), p. 3.

²Nelson Brooks, Language and Language Learning (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1960), p. 146.

drawn from a systematic contrastive analysis between the student's language and the target language are of considerable help to the teacher.

2. Inductive experience plays a significant role in learning a foreign language. After a pattern is presented to the student, he has a chance to make his own generalizations. Rules and explanations follow the presentation of materials. The teacher should also help his student in drawing his conclusions.³

3. Learning a foreign language is best achieved by doing rather than by observing other people perform. A large amount of class period should be devoted to oral and active practice on the part of the student.⁴

4. For effective learning, materials should be carefully graded for presentation, starting from the simplest and most basic to the more complex.⁵

5. Immediate reinforcement should be em-

³English Language Services, English This Way Teacher's Manual And Key to Books 7-12 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 9.

⁵Robert J. Dixon, Practical Guide to the Teaching of English (New York: Regents Publishing Co., Inc., 1960), p. 6.

phasized. The student should know immediately when his response has been successful.⁶

6. The structural approach to language teaching uses the oral approach in the first stage of language learning. The aim of learning a foreign language in the first stage is that the basic structural patterns, within a limited vocabulary, are to be learned so well that they can be produced orally, automatically, and without hesitation, when the learner is confronted with the appropriate situation.⁷

The method suggested by the writer in teaching English question patterns to Persian speakers is the oral approach. After the first stage of language learning, according to this approach, the teacher may devote his practice to reading and writing.

7. The materials for presentation should be related, providing a meaningful contextual situation in which the student can play an active part rather than engage in a boring mechanical

⁶B.F. Skinner, The Behavior of Organisms (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1938), quoted by Robert Lado, Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1964), p. 55.

⁷Fries, Teaching and Learning English ... pp. 5-9.

repetition of sentences.

In the subsequent pages, some sample lessons are presented on the basis of difficult patterns as determined by the comparison of the interrogative structure between English and Persian.

Each lesson begins with the statement of the general and specific aims of the teaching activities. Since learning cannot take place in a vacuum, a story or a conversation is put at the beginning of each lesson so that the students can learn the pattern from a meaningful and contextualized situation. The sentences selected for practice are directly related to the situation. This strengthens the relationship between the pattern and a real similar context in which such a pattern may be used by the student outside class.

The situation is followed by repetition drill, substitution drill and conversation drill between the student and the teacher or between students themselves. Efforts have been made to include games and other activities to motivate the learner and keep him alert. Each lesson plan goes through the following steps:

- I. Situation.
- II. Repetition drill.
- III. Substitution drill:

A. Single-slot substitution

B. Double-slot substitution

IV. Generalization

V. Conversation drill

A. Student-teacher conversation (Student asks questions)

B. Teacher-student conversation (Teacher asks questions)

C. Student-student conversation.

VI. Games, oral and written exercises.

For each phase of practice, only one or two examples are given. It is left to the teacher to provide adequate practice materials.

Lesson Plan 1

General Aim: Question patterns with reversal of the subject and the verb.

- Specific Aims:
- (1) To recognize the question pattern with be.
 - (2) To differentiate between am, is and are.
 - (3) To produce the pattern.

To begin the lesson, the teacher may ask two or three questions. This is intended to provide stimulation and render the lesson meaningful.

Examples:

Teacher to student A: My name is —. What's your name?

Teacher to student B: Is your house far from the school?

Then the teacher states that the lesson is going to be on the question patterns with am, is, are. He writes them on the blackboard and reads the following situation to his students.

Situation. Bahram and Nasser know each other and talk about their schools.

Bahram: I'm a student. Are you a student, too?

Nasser: Yes, I am.

Bahram: Is your school far from your house?

Nasser: No, it isn't. It's near our house.

Bahram: Are your teachers all new this year?

Nasser: Yes, they are. They're also very kind and helpful.⁸

The teacher reads the following sentences to his students. First the statements and then the questions.

Bahram's a student.

Is Bahram a student?

The school's near his house.

Is the school near his house?

I'm your teacher.

Am I your teacher?

You're a student.

Are you a student?⁹

1. Repetition drill: The teacher reads the same questions, and the students repeat after him in unison and individually.

Teacher: Is the school near his house?

Student: Is the school near his house?

Teacher: Is Bahram a student?

Student: Is Bahram a student?

2. Substitution drill: (Single-slot) The teacher puts the key sentence on the board.

| Verb | Subject | Complement |
|------|---------|------------|
| Is | Bahram | a student? |

⁸Since our approach is oral, we will use contractions in statements. The teacher should explain both the long forms and the contractions.

⁹The teacher should use a falling intonation. The purpose is to teach the word order signal for questions in English.

He points to the subject slot and asks the student to say the pattern with the new word.

Example:

Teacher: Is Bahram a student?

Student: Is Bahram a student?

Teacher: Nasser

Student: Is Nasser a student?

(Double-slot)

After practice in single-slot substitution, he indicates the complement slot and uses a double-slot substitution. Example:

Teacher: Is Bahram a student?

Student: Is Bahram a student?

Teacher: Nasser

Student: Is Nasser a student?

Teacher: a teacher

Student: Is Nasser a teacher?

The teacher follows the same steps for teaching question patterns with am and are.

| Verb | Subject | Complement |
|------|---------|------------|
| Is | Bahram | a student? |
| | he | a teacher? |
| | she | a teacher? |
| | | a doctor? |
| | | a writer? |

| Verb | Subject | Complement |
|------|---------|------------|
| Am | I | a student? |
| | | a teacher? |
| | | a doctor? |
| | | a writer? |

| Verb | | Subject | Complement? |
|------|--------|------------|-------------|
| Are | Bahram | you | students? |
| | | and Nasser | teachers? |
| | | they | doctors? |
| | | | writers? |

When the patterns become matters of habit, the teacher helps his students to make the generalization.

Generalization. To make a question from the statement in which the verb to be is used as the main verb, we put the verb before the subject.
Example:
Bahram is a student.
Is Bahram a student?

3. Conversation drill: The teacher gives the statement and the students make a question.

Example:

Teacher: Bahram's a student.

Student: Is Bahram a student?

1. Nasser's a student.
2. His house is near the school.
3. They're students.
4. The teachers are kind.
5. She's a teacher.

Now the students ask the question and the teacher gives a short answer. The teacher should write the short answers on the board. He gives both affirmative and negative answers and puts them on the board. Example.

Student: Is Bahram a student?

Teacher: Yes, he is.

Student: Is Nasser a doctor?

Teacher: No, he isn't.

Student: Are you a doctor?

Teacher: No, I'm not.¹⁰ I'm a teacher.

4. Chain drill: Each student asks the student next to him a question. This type of conversation goes around the class, and the teacher directs and corrects his students.

Student A to B: Are you a student?

Student B to A: Yes, I am.

Student B to C: Is your father a teacher?

Student C to B: No, he isn't.

¹⁰The teacher should indicate to his students that in the first person singular no contraction is used in negative statements and negative questions. It is necessary to say I'm not and am I not?

Exercise: Convert the following sentences to questions.

1. Bahram's a student.
2. Nasser's a student, too.
3. They're students.
4. You're in this school.
5. The school's near the house.
6. Nasser's teachers are kind.
7. They're helpful, too.
8. I'm a teacher.

Lesson Plan 2:

General Aim: Question Patterns with do, does and did.

Specific Aims: (1) To recognize questions with do, does and did.

(2) To differentiate between do, does and did.

(3) To produce the question.

To begin the lesson, the teacher may ask some questions. Example:

Teacher to Student A: Do you get up early in the morning?

Teacher to Student B: Does your class begin at eight in the morning?

Teacher to Student C: Did you come to school yesterday?

Then the teacher reads the following situation to his students:

Situation:

Mansur goes to school every day. He studies English and other subjects. He likes English very much and works hard on it. He has two brothers and one sister. His sister goes to another school near their house. On Friday Mansur didn't go to school. He stayed at home and prepared his assignments.

The teacher reads the following sentences, and the students are told to listen to the teacher's intonation:

You study English every day. Do you study English every day?

They go to school. Do they go to school?

He studies English. Does he study English?

She goes to another school. Does she go to another school?

He stayed at home. Did he stay at home?

He prepared his assignments. Did he prepare his assignments?

1. Repetition drill: The teacher reads the examples given in section 2, and the students repeat after him. First, in unison drill and then individually.

Example:

Teacher: Do you study English every day?

Student: Do you study English every day?

Teacher: Does his sister go to another school?

Student: Does his sister go to another school?

Teacher: Did he stay at home?

Student: Did he stay at home?

2. Substitution drill: (Single-slot). The teacher puts the key sentence on the board:

| Aux. | Subject | Verb | Object | x |
|------|---------|-------|---------|------------|
| Do | you | study | English | every day? |

Teacher: Do you study English every day?

Student: Do you study English every day?

Teacher: They

Student: Do they study English every day?

(Double-slot)

Teacher: Do they go to another school?

Student: Do they go to another school?

Teacher: **Mansur's** brothers

Student: Do Mansur's brothers go to another school.

Teacher: Study English

Student: Do Mansur's brothers study English?

The teacher provides two model sentences for does and did and follows the same procedure.

| Aux. | Subject | Verb | Object |
|------|------------|-------|----------|
| Does | his sister | study | English? |
| | she | write | French? |
| | Mansur | speak | Arabic? |
| | he | read | |

| | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-------|---------|-------------|
| Did | Mansur | study | English | yesterday? |
| | he | write | French | last week? |
| | his brother | read | Arabic | last month? |
| | they | speak | | last year? |
| | his sister | | | |
| | she | | | |

After dealing with the three patterns of do, does, did, the teacher makes the generalization.

Generalization:

To turn statements into questions, we put the proper form of the auxiliary do before the subject. This auxiliary is the tense carrier of the sentence. For the third person it changes to does. The main verb always remains in the infinitive form.

They go to school. Do they go to school?
He stayed at home. Did he stay at home?
She goes to another school. Does she go to another school?

3. Conversation drill. The student asks questions about the situation and the teacher gives a short positive or negative answer.

Example:

Student: Does Mansur go to school everyday?

Teacher: Yes, he does.

Student: Did he stay at home yesterday?

Teacher: Yes, he did.

Student: Does his sister go to the same school?

Teacher: No, she doesn't.

4. Chain drill. Each student asks the student next to him a question. The students should be directed to use one pattern at a time. They may begin with do, then proceed to does and did.

Example:

Student A to B: Do you walk to school everyday?

Student B to A: Yes, I do.

Student B to C: Do you like English?

Student C to B: Yes, I do.

This type of conversation goes around the class. The teacher directs and corrects his students. What students have learned should be carried over into conversations around their daily lives and topics of their interest.

5. A Game: For an oral exercise, the teacher divides his students into two equal groups. The teacher reads a positive sentence, and a student assigned by the group turns it into question. If it is correct, the teacher will allow one point for the group. Each student in a group should answer at least one question. The teacher should promise the winning group a prize. The following sentences may be used for this game.

1. Mansur goes to school every day.
2. He likes English very much.
3. His brothers go to the same school.
4. His sister goes to another school.
5. On Friday he stayed at home.
6. He prepared his assignments.
7. We studied English yesterday.
8. The students had a football match last week.

Lesson Plan 3:

General Aim: Questions with can, could, shall, should, will, would, may, might and must.

- Specific Aims:
- (1) To recognize questions with can, could, etc.
 - (2) To recognize the meanings of can, could, etc. in questions.
 - (3) To produce the questions.

The teacher reads the following situation to the students:

Situation:

Bahram: Can you play football, Ali?

Ali : Yes, I can. Last year I couldn't play (football) at all, but I soon learned it. Can you?

Bahram: I'm sorry. I can't.

Ali : You should learn it.

Bahram: May I come to the field with you this afternoon?

Ali : Yes, of course. I'll teach you how to play.

Bahram: Should I practice everyday?

Ali : Yes, you must practice regularly until you learn it very well.

1. Repetition drill. The teacher reads the following sentences to his students. The students repeat after him in unison and individually.

You can play football. Can you play football?

You could play last year. Could you play last year?

He may come with you. May he come with you?

I should practice everyday. Should I practice everyday?

They must learn football. Must they learn football?

The teacher puts the key sentence on the board.

| Modal aux. | Subject | Verb | Object |
|------------|---------|------|-----------|
| Can | Ali | play | football? |

2. Substitution drill (Single-slot)

Example:

Teacher: Can Ali play football?

Student: Can Ali play football?

Teacher: Must

Student: Must Ali play football?

Teacher: Could

Student: Could Ali play football?

(Double-slot)

Teacher: Can he play football?

Student: Can he play football?

Teacher: Must

Student: Must he play football?

Teacher: tennis

Student: Must he play tennis?

After this practice, the teacher puts the pattern on the board.

| Modal Aux. | Subject | Verb | Object |
|------------|---------|------|-------------|
| Can | Ali | play | football? |
| Must | he | | tennis? |
| Should | she | | volleyball? |
| Could | We | | basketball? |
| May | they | | |

Generalization:

To make a question from a statement in which a modal auxiliary is used, we put the modal auxiliary at the beginning of the sentence. The main verb always remains in the infinitive form.

Example:

He can play football.

Can he play football?

3. Conversation drill:

The teacher gives each student a statement as an answer, and the student provides the question.

Example.

Teacher: Ali can play football.

Student: Can Ali play football?

1. We can speak English.

2. He will teach you how to play.
3. Bahram may go with his friend.
4. We must practice English everyday.
5. You should do your homework.
6. They could play football last year.

4. Conversation:

Each student asks the teacher a question and he gives a short answer. The teacher puts the answers on the board for the students to learn.

Student A: May I ask you a question?

Student B: Yes, you may.

1. Will you be here next year?
2. Should we always speak English?
3. May I ask your name?
4. Must you come here everyday?
5. Could you buy a car last year?

Exercise: Convert the following statements into questions:

1. Ali can play football very well.
2. Bahram may go with Ali.
3. He will teach Bahram how to play.
4. Bahram should practice every day.
5. They should play football.
6. We must speak English in class.
7. You will be here tomorrow.
8. You can help me.

Lesson Plan 4:

General Aim: Introducing question patterns with the primary auxiliary at the beginning.

- Specific Aims:
- (1) To recognize the pattern with have.
 - (2) To differentiate between have and has.
 - (3) To produce the pattern.

The teacher should ask some questions first to introduce the lesson. Example:

Teacher to student A: Have you done your homework?

Teacher to student B: Have you prepared your lesson?

Then the teacher reads the following situation to his students:

Situation:

Ali to Bahram: Have you seen Mansur?

Bahram: No, I haven't. Have you looked in his classroom?

Ali: Yes, I have. I've looked everywhere, and still I haven't been able to find him.

Bahram: Has Farhad seen him?

Ali: Yes, he has.

Bahram: I think he's left the school.

The teacher reads the following sentences to his students:

You've seen Mansur. Have you seen Mansur?
Farhad's seen him. Has Farhad seen him?
He's left the school. Has he left the school?

1. Repetition drill: The students repeat the sentences after the teacher, first in unison and then individually.

Have you seen him?
Have they looked everywhere?
Has he left the school?
Have they found him?

The teacher puts the key sentence on the board:

| Primary aux. | Subject | Verb | Object |
|--------------|---------|------|--------|
| Have | you | seen | him? |

2. Substitution drill (Single-slot)

Example:

Teacher: Have you seen him?

Student: Have you seen him?

Teacher: They

Student: Have they seen him?

(Double-slot)

Example:

Teacher: Have you seen him?

Student: Have you seen him?

Teacher: They

Student: Have they seen him?

Teacher: found

Student: Have they found him?

The teacher puts the pattern on the board:

| Primary aux. | Subject | Verb | Object |
|--------------|-------------|-------|---------|
| Have | you | seen | Mansur? |
| | his friends | found | him? |
| | they | told | her? |
| | we | | |

| Main aux. | Subject | Verb | Object |
|-----------|---------|------|--------------|
| Has | Bahram | left | the school? |
| | he | | the house? |
| | she | | the library? |

Generalization:

To form a question from a statement using the primary auxiliary have, we place the primary auxiliary before the subject. Example:

They have looked everywhere.
Have they looked everywhere?

3. Conversation drill:

The teacher reads the situation again to his students so that they can remember what has happened. He gives the answer and the student asks the question.

Example:

Teacher : Mansur's left the school.

Student : Has Mansur left the school?

1. They've seen him.
2. Farhad's seen him.
3. He's left the school
4. His friends have looked everywhere.

Now the student asks the question and the teacher gives a short answer. He writes the answers on the board for his students to learn.

Example:

Student: Have you seen him?

Teacher: Yes, I have.

1. Has Ali seen Mansur?
2. Has Bahram seen him?
3. Have his friends looked everywhere?
4. Have they looked in his classroom?
5. Have they found him?

4. The teacher selects three of his better students. Two of them come to the front of the class and the third one goes out of class. One of the two students asks questions about the student who is out of the room. Example:

Student A to B: Have you seen ——?

Student B to A: Yes, I have or

No, I haven't.

The teacher directs and corrects his students.

Exercise: Convert the following sentences into questions:

1. They've seen Mansur.
2. They've looked everywhere.
3. Farhad's seen him.
4. He's left the school.
5. She's learned the lesson.
6. We've learned many new words.

Lesson Plan 5:

General Aim: To introduce questions with when, where.

- Specific Aims:
- (1) To produce questions with did after the question words.
 - (2) To recognize the question pattern with different question words.
 - (3) To produce the question pattern.

The teacher reads the following situation to his students:

Situation:

Last Friday, Mansur and his friends went for a picnic in the woods. They started early in the morning. After a long walk, they came to a beautiful place where there were many trees. Mansur made a fire to boil the water. At twelve they ate their lunch. In the afternoon, they went for a swim in the river. When they went back at five o'clock, they were all happy.

1. Repetition drill:

The teacher reads the following sentences. The students repeat after him, first in unison and then individually.

When did the boys go for a picnic?

When did they start?

Where did they go?

Where did they swim?

The teacher puts **the** key sentence on the board:

| Question word | Aux. | Subject | Verb |
|---------------|------|----------|------|
| When | did | the boys | go? |

2. Substitution drill (Single-slot)

Teacher: When did the boys go?

Student: When did the boys go?

Teacher: They

Student: When did they go for a picnic?

(Double-slot)

Teacher: Where did he go?

Student: Where did he go?

Teacher: They

Student: Where did they go?

Teacher: eat

Student: Where did they eat?

Teacher: When

Student: When did they eat?

The teacher places the pattern on the board.

| Question Word | Aux. | Subject | Verb |
|---------------|------|----------|-------|
| When | did | the boys | go? |
| Where | | they | eat? |
| | | he | swim? |
| | | she | play? |

Generalization:

This type of question may ask information about the time, place or any other aspect of an event. The auxiliary did is the tense carrier and is always placed before the subject. The main verb always remains in the infinitive form.

Question: When did they start?

Answer: They started early in the morning.

Question: Where did they go?

Answer: They went in the woods.

3. Conversation drill:

The teacher gives the answer and the student provides the question. Example:

Teacher: They went for a picnic in the woods.

Student: Where did they go for a picnic?

1. They started early in the morning.
2. They came to a beautiful place.
3. He went for a swim in the afternoon.
4. They ate at twelve.
5. The boys swam in the river.

The student asks a question and the teacher gives the answer. Example:

Student: Where did the boys go for a picnic?

Teacher: They went in the woods for a picnic.

1. When did they start?
2. Where did they go?
3. Where did he swim?
4. When did they eat their lunch?
5. Where did they go for a swim?

4. Chain drill:

Each student asks the student next to him a question about the situation or about the student himself.

Example:

Student A to B: When did the boys go for a picnic?

Student B to A: Last Friday.

Student B to C: Where did you go last Friday?

Student C to B: I went to the movies.

Exercise:

Ask questions about the underlined words:

1. The boys went for appicnic last week.
2. They started early in the morning.
3. Mansur swam in the river.
4. He ate his lunch at twelve.
5. They came to a beautiful place.
6. They swam in the river.
7. The boys played in the woods.
8. They returned home at five o'clock.

Concluding Statement:

The principal purpose of this study was as follows:

1. To identify the question patterns of English and Persian.
2. On the basis of a contrastive analysis, to predict the difficulties of Persian speakers in learning English question patterns.
3. To provide sample lessons together with suggestions for teaching question patterns to Persian speakers.

The results of our analysis revealed that the major problems of Persian speakers lie in the question patterns signalled by word order, both on the morphological and syntactic level. Five sample lessons, based on linguistic facts and psychological laws of learning, were provided to implement the analysis so that Persian students can master the English question patterns.

The writer hopes that the sample lessons and suggestions may serve as a guide-line in teaching English question patterns to Persian learners of English. Efforts have been made to show the teacher where the problems lie. It is, however, left to the teacher's creativity and ingenuity and his professional responsibility of how to integrate

these findings into his teaching practice and activities.

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