

A Study of Common Expressions in English and Farsi languages and Their Equivalentents in Gilaki Dialect in North of Iran

Mohammad Kazemian Sana'ati, Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL

Farhad Passandyar, Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL

Davood Mashadi Heidar

Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon Branch, Tonekabon, Iran
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Abstract

The Gilaki dialect belongs to the north-western group of Iranian languages. The Gilaki dialect is spread along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea in one of the northern provinces of Iran known as Guilan. The native speakers of the language call themselves Gilaks and their dialect Gilaki. In Guilan province, Gilaki is the vernacular language of some three million people mostly born in central and eastern Guilan province. The present study focuses on the commonalities in expressions used in English, Farsi and Gilaki. To conduct the study, 50 people from all walks of life from Langroud, Eastern Guilan, were interviewed. The expressions uttered in Gilaki were then analyzed and compared in meaning with their nearest equivalentents in English and Farsi languages. The study showed that Gilaki satisfied the criteria necessary to be considered a language rather than a dialect.

Keywords: Guilan, Gilaks, and Gilaki expressions

1. Introduction

Guilan province lies along the Caspian Sea, west of Mazandaran Province, east of Ardabil Province, and north of Zanjan and Qazvin Provinces in Iran. Moreover, it borders the Republic of Azerbaijan in the north and Russia across the Caspian Sea. According to Kiyafar (2013,P. 11), "Guilan is very rich culture dates back to 7000 years ago. It is introduced as 'Varena' in Avesta and the Greeks called it 'Kadoosian'. In fact, it is the name of an Iranian native tribe who lived before the arrival of Aryans in the Iranian plateau. "

Based on the official Website of "omniglot"(2016), "Gilaki is a northwestern Iranian language spoken in Guilan Province in the northwest of Iran by some three million people."

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There are four dialects of Gilaki: Central Gilaki, Western Gilaki, Eastern Gilaki and Galeshi, and they are closely related to Mazanderani which is the prevailing language spoken in the neighboring Mazandaran Province.

Based on Lockwood (2012, P.1) who described Gilaki as a language, "the native speakers of the language call themselves Gilaks and their language Gilaki. The main city and principal industrial and cultural center of Guilan is Rasht (with more than 100,000 inhabitants). Bandar Anzali, the big sea-port on the Caspian Sea (with more than 30,000 inhabitants), and Lahijan (with about 20,000 inhabitants) may be included in the number of other heavily-populated areas of Guilan. The population of all the Gilaks is about 700,000."

Gilaki is a vernacular language of Guilan. The chief rational behind the topic of the paper is to accentuate Langaroudi dialect in the east of Guilan. Langaroud is a city located at the distance of 15 kilometers east of Lahijan and on the south coast of the Caspian Sea. Its population is more than 75000 people and they speak Eastern Gilaki. Eastern Gilaki has a mutual intelligibility with Rashti, the central Gilaki, but there are some differences between them at the level of sounds and lexicons. In fact, Langaroudi dialect is analogous to Western Mazani dialect of Mazandaran Province, in terms of dialect Continuum.

2. The rational for the study

In spite of the fact that the official language of Iran is Farsi, Gilaki dialect is used among Guilani people in Guilan Province. It is noteworthy that there are many vernacular languages and dialects spoken by Iranian including: Lori, Kurdish, Azeri, and Arabic. The main rational of this study is that Gilaki seems to be beyond the dialect.

3. Review of the Literature

3.1 Idioms

Merriam Webster Dictionary (2016) defines an idiom as "an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but that has a separate meaning of its own."

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Linguistically speaking Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2014, P.151) believe that "languages also contain many phrases whose meanings are not predictable on the basis of meanings of the individual words." When these phrases are repeated for a number of times, they are called idioms or idiomatic phrases or alternatively idiomatic expressions.

3.2 Dialect vs. Language

Based on Haugen (1966) language and dialect are vague terms. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) in spite of talking in a lay man term, people utilize these two terms with scant attention in their speech; for them a dialect is more or less considered as a less prestigious or, as Crystal (1989) has pointed out, a non-U language. In 1954, Ross published an article under the rubric of "Linguistic class-indicators in present -day English" and he mentioned two terminologies "U and non-U." U stands for "Upper class usage" and "non- U stands for other kinds of usages.

3.3 Gilaki Dialect vs. Gilaki Language

Linguistically speaking, Gilaki is not a dialect of Farsi and it is considered as an entire language owing to having almost no mutual intelligibility for Persian speakers. It seems that Gilaki is beyond the dialect, on the dialect-language continuum, but not a language. According to Wardhaugh (2015) another criterion for being considered a language rather than a dialect is the existence of written literature, history and dictionaries in that specific language. As such, Gilaki has its own literature, history and dictionary. Gilaki enjoys a big number of vernacular speakers and it is the major means of daily communication among a big population from all walks of life. There are volumes of books written on the rich culture, history, customs and traditions of Gilani people and Gilaki.

3.4 Gilaki Studies

There has been a plethora of research regarding Gilaki dialect. Omidi Rad et al (2013) did research on "Morphology of Gilaki words in Kouchesfahan, Iran". In the aforementioned research, they endeavored to get familiar with the grammatical structures of vocabulary items of Gilaki dialect in Kouchesfahan.

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It is worth mentioning that Sabzalipour and Afghari (2015) conducted research on studying the “idiomatic expressions in Persian language and Tonekaboni dialect”. Although the aforementioned research studies have shown, there has not been any study regarding the survey of “idiomatic expressions in English and Langaroudi dialect in Guilan”. All in all, this study seems to be novel in sociolinguistics.

Methodology

This study is based upon ethnography research. Ethnography research is a type of qualitative research including observation, interview, and library research. By the same token, various types of qualitative research were utilized in this investigation.

Participants

One hundred people, males and females, in Langaroud had cooperated with collecting the Gilaki expressions which are used as sample in the current study. The one hundred people were from all walks of life, with their age ranging from 30-80 years of age. Twenty of the participants in the study were illiterate, fifty of them had academic degrees (Bsc, MSc, and PhD) and thirty of them were diploma holders.

Procedures

To begin with, the researchers had found thirty English expressions with commonalities in lexical meanings between Gilaki and English. Then, in order to be sure on the safe side in terms of their accuracy, the researchers had interviewed one hundred people and checked the Gilaki and English expressions in the related dictionaries.

The material is arranged in the following order. First, the Gilaki Expression is given. Under each expression the phonological transcriptions in IPA are provided to facilitate uttering the expressions by the international readers. Next, the Farsi expression of each Gilaki expression is given so that the readers can familiarize with the rich cultural backgrounds of people in Guilan Province in Iran. And finally the nearest English equivalents of the Gilaki expressions are recorded.

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Table-1:

Gilaki Expression	Farsi Expressions	English Expression
adam-a vaxti bi-puli gir.e 'uni tançe kun.an luk dak.e	hæm.ey.e moʃkelat ba hæm miayæd	It never rains but it pours.
aʃ.e dale naxut, ge miyon.ə kalm	adæam.e hæm.e kar.e hiç ka r.e æst	He has a finger in every pie.
aquz dar.i aquz-bazi ba.kun	ægær gerdu dari gerdu bazi kon	Cut your coat according to your cloth.
aftow.ə lagan haf das, ʃom-u nahar hiççi	aftab.e lægæn hæft dæst ʃam o nahar hiçi	There are too many silverwares but no food.
aw xu çal.a payda kon.e	ab çal.e æʃ ra peyda mikon æd	Birds of a feather flock together!
æz çus nefasse gin.ə	æz ab kær.e migiræd	He skins the flint.
asb.e piʃkafi sen-u-sal.ə niya na.kun.an	dændan.e æsb.e piʃkeʃi ra n emiʃomarænd	Do not look a gift horse in the mouth.
amə-rə xul gir bard.ə	ma ra xol færz mikonæd	He is kidding us.
emsal.ə jujə pəlsal.ə juj.a gun.ə: jinjirə jis	gonjeʃk.e emsal.e be gonjeʃ k.e pərsal.e dærs midædæh æd	He is teaching his grandmother how to suck an egg!
kun xæn.ə mujəma parə ba.kun.ə	kar.e hær boz nist xærmæn kuftæn	To do a man's job requires great courage.
kise sar-a ba.dut.ə, kun-a vaqud.ə	sorna ra æz sær.e goʃadæʃ d æmidæn	He put the cart before the horse.
sak-u ʃaäl kasan.ə mondan.an	sæg.e zærd bæradær.e ʃoql æst	They are both tarred with the same brush.

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seyā-y, hači naft.ə jil	mesl.e qir siah æst	It is black as pitch blend.
ʃaal.ə hayt.ə gurg-ə had.a	æz næxord.e begir bed.e be xord.e	He robbed Peter to pay Paul.
taqi kola naqi sar	emruz ra be fārda resandæn	Rob Peter to pay Paul.
xaf va lis	bademjan dor.e qab çin	a bootlicker
ʃirin-æql.ə	xol o çel hæst	He has a wire loose.
arus gow-duʃ na.bu, gut: damad.ə kulom jir-jor dar.ə	ærus rah ræftæn bælæd næb ud æz zæmin irad migereft	A bad workman blames his tools.
a kula bə-səran-a mār nə.za	mægær adəmay.e addi ra m adær næza.id.e	Jack is as well as his master.
un.ə kin.e ji ba.kat.ə	hælalzad.e be də:if mir.e	The apple does not fall far from its tree.
in.ə ab in.ə asia çarxan.ə	æz ohdey.e omuratæf bærmi :ayæd	He can make both ends meet.
i yar aw æmbas gud.ə dar.i?	ab dær havæn mikubæd	He is flagging a dead horse.
bazar vægard.ə kasani zabil.ə miyon-ə niya ko nim	juj.e ra axær.e pa:iz miʃoma rænd	He who laughs last, laughs best.
ba.put.ə pælə kanduj naʃun.ə	ab.e ræft.e be asi:ab baz ne migærdæd	No use crying over spilt milk.
ba.tars.ə çafm dan.ə	mār gæzid.e æz risman.e sia h o sefid mitærsæd	A burnt child dreads the fire.
barar barar.ə ja, ma'amel.am ma'amele ja	hesab hesab æst kaka bæræd ær	Business is business.
pul mægə kal.ə kunus-ə	mægær pul ælæf.e xers æst)	Money doesn't

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		grow on the tree.
tow.ə gəməj-ə gunə: ti ru mi ru ji siya-tær-ə	dig be dig migu:yæd ru:yæt siah æst	The pot calling the kettle black.
bæd æz færaq.ə noqan ti kin.e surax.e qorban	nuf daru pæs æz mærg.e soh rab	Shut the stable door after the horse has bolted.
xodæm nædaram eʃken.e guzæm deræx.e miʃkæ n.e	poz.e ali jib.e xali	He /she is a big- time show.

Results and Conclusion

As the table-1 displays, there are a number of expressions in Gilaki dialect that are not akin to Persian at all. ' asb.e piʃkaʃi sen-u-sal.ə niya na.kun.an" is different from its equivalent in Persian and English.

The equivalents in English and Persian are "Do not look a gift horse in the mouth" and "dændan.e æsb.e piʃkeʃi ra nemisomarænd" respectively. Some English expressions are analogous to Gilaki. For instance, "a boot licker" is similar to, "xaf va lis" in Gilaki. As far as Gilaki dialect is concerned, some obscenities are noticeable.

For example, "xodæm nædaram eʃken.e guzæm deræxt.e miʃkæn.e" in Gilaki "poz.e ali jib.e xali" in Farsi, and "He /she is a big-time show" in English is an obvious sample of the use of obscene expressions in Gilaki. We can mention another example as well: In Gilaki we say "bæd æz færaq.ə noqan ti kin.e surax.e qorban." In Persian we say, "nuf daru pæs æz mærg.e sohrab", and in English we say, "Shut the stable door after the horse has bolted."

As far as obscenities are concerned, the lexical items which exist in Gilaki seem to be similar to English, mainly American expressions, which are replete with obscene words. With all due respect to Gilani people, a minority of laymen use these vulgar expressions. As the examples are illustrated here, we have no mutual intelligibility between these expressions.

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The above mentioned examples the style and register in Persian are a far cry from in Gilaki dialect. By the same token, in this case we can reiterate that Gilaki is beyond dialect and we cannot put Gilaki in the category of dialect. Another criterion for being considered a language rather than a dialect is the existence of written literature, history and dictionaries in that specific language. As such, Gilaki has its own literature, history and dictionary. Gilaki enjoys a big number of vernacular speakers and it is the major means of daily communication among a big population from all walks of life. There are volumes of books written on the rich culture, history, customs and traditions of Guilani people and Gilaki.

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**Mohammad Kazemian Sana'ati, Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL, Department of English,
Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran (Corresponding Author)**
Mazandaran Province, Tonekabon, 22
m_kazemiansanati@yahoo.com

**Farhad Passandyar, Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL, Department of English, Tonekabon
Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran**
passandyar@gmail.com

**Davood Mashadi Heidar, Assistant Professor in TEFL, Department of English,
Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran**
davoodm_tarbiatmodares@yahoo.com

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