A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF PERSIAN AND ENGLISH VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

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Abstract: The study presents a contrastive analysis of two distinct sound systems, namely, those of Persian and English. It provides a descriptive analysis and a contrastive study of consonants and vowels of these languages, expatiating on the similar and dissimilar features of the two sound systems. Dissimilarities are especially important since they may result in production of deviant sounds by foreign language learners.

Keywords: contrastive analysis, sound system, phonological feature, consonant, vowel, bilingual speaker.

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Résumé

Our study aims to investigate the phonological features of Persian and English as two typological and phonological different languages. It presents a contrastive analysis of two sound systems, namely, those of Persian and English. The paper renders a detailed descriptive analysis and a contrastive study of consonants and vowels of these languages, elaborating on the similar and dissimilar features of the two sound systems, which may result in production of deviant sounds by Persian-English bilingual speakers and language learners. We believe that the findings of this study can also be used in teaching English to the speakers of Persian, for the fact that language learners in the process of learning a second language (L2) may overgeneralize the phonological features and patterns of their native language into the target language, resulting in pronunciation errors and production of deviant phonetic forms. In other words, as a result of distinct phonological features of Persian and English, Iranian learners of English might misinterpret certain sounds of English with their counterparts in their

native language, which finally results in deviant phonological productions or the mispronunciation of the words. Based on the contrastive analysis of Persian and English sound systems and the observed dissimilarities between them, the study provides some predictions about the possible errors of Iranian learners of English. For example, a Persian-English bilingual speaker will be inclined to transfer his/her native phonetic habits into English and use them as incorrect phones; s/he may also carry over his/her native language allophonic and distributional habits into English. Therefore, we hope such kind of contrastive study of Persian and English sound systems can theoretically and practically contribute to the existing research and significantly help linguists, researchers in the field and as well language teachers who engage in teaching English to the speakers of Persian.