

Extension of The Meaning and Physical Context of Vehicle Terms to Everyday Persian Vocabulary And Vice versa

Bashir Jam¹ 

Abstract

Many Persian terms and expressions related to vehicles have undergone extension of the meaning and physical context. The corpus under study includes vehicle terms that have entered Persian vocabulary as well as common words and expressions that have been added to vehicle terms through extension of the meaning and physical context. Identifying whether a word or an expression has undergone extension of meaning and physical context is based on the linguistic intuition of the author as a native speaker of Persian. This research presents several examples and discusses them within the framework of Relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). In line with this theory, there exists a combination of knowledge, experiences and shared background information about vehicle-related terms in the mind of every Persian speaker. Using this combination, not only Persian speakers are aware of their original meanings and physical contexts but also they have access to their extended meanings and/ or physical contexts. In accordance with the Relevance theory, when a Persian speaker hears a vehicle-related term, s/he considers the physical context to evaluate it and then matches it with her/his background knowledge in order to figure out if the speaker intended its original meaning or its extended meaning.

Key words: vehicle-related words, vehicle-related expressions, extension of meaning, extension of physical context, Relevance theory.

Extended abstract

1. Introduction

Transportation is an effective and inseparable part of human life. It has always been the reason for creating many words, idioms and proverbs in Persian. Its effect has been so great that vehicles and their features have been used to describe some of the features of human body and behavior. There are also some common Persian words and expressions that have been added to vehicle terms through extension of the meaning and physical context. The present study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. Associate Professor of Linguistics, Department of English, Shahrekord University, Sahrekord, Iran. (b_jam47@yahoo.com)

1. Which common Persian words and expressions have been added to vehicle terms through the extension of the meaning and physical context?
2. Which vehicle-related terms have been added to the Persian vocabulary through the extension of the meaning and physical context?
3. What are the reasons of this word and expression exchange?

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this paper is the Relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). In fact this theory is the extended model of Grice's maxim of relation as one of the cooperative principles. According to Luchjenbroers (1989: 1), Grice's theory is speaker-oriented while Sperber & Wilson's theory is listener-oriented.

According to the relevance theory, relevance means that the listener expects the speaker to do their best to create a message which is as relevant as possible. And the listener receives and interprets the message with the same expectation. The more contextual information in the message, the more relevant it is; and the existence of more relevant message requires less mental effort by the listener. Sperber & Wilson (1986) argue that human is evolved to look for the most relevant information. In accordance with this theory, there exists a combination of knowledge, experiences and shared background information in the mind of every speaker. When the listener hears the speaker's message, s/he considers the physical context to evaluate it and then matches it with her/his background knowledge in order to figure out its meaning.

3. Methodology

This research primarily aimed at addressing the extension of the meaning and physical context of vehicle terms to common Persian vocabulary and vice versa. Then, it discussed these words and expressions within the framework of Relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). They were collected using dictionaries, internet search, car classified ads, the experiences of the present researcher in dealing with mechanics, drivers, and petrolheads as well as his own vocabulary knowledge. Identifying whether a word or an expression has undergone extension of meaning and physical context is based on the linguistic intuition of the author as a native speaker of Persian. The corpus under study includes vehicle terms that have entered Persian vocabulary as well as common words and expressions that have been added to vehicle terms through extension of the meaning and physical context.

4. Results & Discussion

In response to the first and second research questions, it should be stated that almost all the Persian words and expressions that have been added to vehicle terms through extension of the meaning and physical context and those vehicle-

related terms that have been added likewise to the Persian vocabulary were introduced. In response to the third research question “What is the reason of this word and expression exchange?”, it should be stated that the analysis of these exchanges indicated that different semantic changes, extension of the physical context, and metaphorical extension occur due to the similarity between the function and behavior of vehicles and humans as well as the similarity between the appearance of some vehicle parts and the features of human body and life style. The possessor-possessee relation as a type of metonymy is one reason for the extension of vehicle-related terms to the Persian vocabulary, while metaphorical extension is a reason for the addition of Persian vocabulary to vehicle terms.

5. Conclusions & Suggestions

Using their shared background knowledge about vehicle-related terms, Persian speakers not only are aware of their original meanings and physical contexts but also they have access to their extended meanings and/ or physical contexts. According to the Relevance theory, when a Persian speaker hears a vehicle-related term, s/he considers the physical context to evaluate it and then matches it with her/his background knowledge in order to figure out if the speaker intended its original meaning or its extended meaning.

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