



## False Friends in Zanjani Turkish and Istanbul Turkish

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### 1. Introduction

The topic of false friends is as old as languages themselves. The term false friends (or *faux amis*, in French) first appeared in the 20th century, coined by French linguists Koessler and Derocquigny in their seminal work on the topic (1928). From a synchronic perspective, false friends refer to two words that are similar or equivalent (graphically and/or phonetically) in two or more languages but have different meanings. False friends can be divided into two groups: total false friends are similar or equivalent on a graphic or phonetic level in two or more languages but differ completely in their meanings, while partial false friends share some meanings, but not others, depending on the context.

False friends have long been considered problematic in L2 learning. They often cause problems in translation and communication and have led to diplomatic incidents. A diachronic study of different false friends across languages suggests that many of these words are etymologically related and share a common origin. In fact, many false friends stem from the same origin; i.e., they are cognates. The meaning differences false friends may have arisen as a result of diverging evolutionary paths. The changes occurring in the words due to historical, geographical, and political conditions between the Turkish dialects have led to a lack of communication among Turkish societies and Turkish tribes have become unable to understand each other.

The Zanjani and Turkey dialects of Turkish, despite having common features, differ in some respects. One such difference lies in the false friends, which can display varying semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic properties in translation and communication between the dialects. This study focuses on the false friends present in Zanjani and Istanbul Turkish, estimating the significant differences in their

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frequency across lexical categories (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs).

The main questions of this study are as follow:

1. What are the types of false friends in Istanbuli Turkish and Zanjani Turkish?
2. Is there a significant difference between the lexical categories in terms of false friends in Istanbuli Turkish and Zanjani Turkish?
3. How can the similarities and differences of the number of false friends across lexical categories be explained?

## 2. Materials and methods

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative aspect involves identifying false friends and categorizing them by lexical categories (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb) in Zanjani Turkish and Istanbul Turkish. The quantitative aspect involves the calculation of frequency and the significance of their frequency difference in terms of grammatical categories. The independent variable is the false friends in Zanjani and Istanbul dialects. Due to the lack of cause-and-effect relationship in this research, the dependent variable is not applicable.

To collect data, the first author's linguistic intuition, as a native speaker of the Turkish language, and various library and internet sources were used. The false friends were extracted from written sources and categorized into four grammatical categories: noun, verb, adjective, and adverb, listed alphabetically. Statistical analysis was then performed to show the frequency distribution of each grammatical category, presented in tables and graphs. The dataset comprises all false friends found in Zanjani and Istanbul Turkish dialects.

Data sampling was conducted using a purposive sampling method drawing from the following sources:

1. Lists of false friends from previous research on other Turkish dialects
2. Turkish proverbs in the Zanjani dialect
3. An etymological dictionary of Turkish
4. [Tureng Dictionary](#)
5. Türkiye Türkçesindeki Türkçe Sözcüklerin Köken Bilgisi Sözlüğü
6. *Sözlerin Soyağacı - Çağdaş Türkçenin Etimolojik Sözlüğü*
7. Webster's Turkish-English Thesaurus Dictionary

After determining the frequency distribution for each grammatical category, the significance of the differences between the two dialects were analyzed using inferential statistics.

## 3. Results and discussion

Two hundred false friends were identified between the two languages, which categorized in four grammatical groups: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. These were presented in separate table, arranged alphabetically and by frequency.

Descriptive statistics showed that, in terms of the number of grammatical categories, 53.5% of the false friends were nouns, 31% were verbs, 13% were

adjectives, and 2.5% were adverbs.

Inferential statistics indicated that there is a significant difference between lexical categories in terms of false friends in Istanbul Turkish and Zanjani Turkish. More than half of the data were nouns (53.5%), significantly outnumbering other parts of speech. This probably reflects the fact that Turkish contains more nouns than verbs.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The lexical list of false friends presented in this research can be a useful and effective resource in teaching language and translation for students of Istanbul Turkish who are familiar with Zanjani Turkish. As mentioned before, false friends pose a significant challenge in second language learning because they are an inseparable part of the lexical system of a language. Without a thorough understanding these words, achieving language skills and abilities will not be complete and efficient. Misusing falsefriends can naturally lead to communication breakdowns.

In the field of translation, the challenges arising from the phenomenon of false friends are evident. Without recognizing and understanding the subtleties and details of false friends, translators will face a serious challenges. Therefore, having a ready-made list of false friends, like the one presented in this study, can save energy and time while facilitating the learning processs. Additionally, these findings can help Turkish language teachers in designing lessons and teaching vocabulary more effectively.

**Keywords:** false friends, Istanbul Turkish, partial false friends, total false friends, Zanjani Turkish