TECHNICAL NOTES

A Semantic Change Model for French Loanwords in Persian

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to propose a model of semantic change which corresponds to synchronic analysis of the data set. For this purpose, the study examined semantic change orientation of French loanwords in Persian. Zomorrodian's (1373/1994) book on European loanwords in Persian was selected as the database from which 1878 French loanwords were extracted. The data was analyzed semantically by consulting Bellows and Bellows' (1919) dictionary in order to compare meanings of the original lexical items against the present meaning of the loanwords. A number of 330 loaned items were found to have undergone a type of semantic change. The corpus was examined against the existing semantic change typologies. Finding these models to be incomplete, a new model was proposed. This model, being synchronic and non-linear, is of a more elaborate design with the following advantages: a) all items (loanwords) of the corpus could be contained in it, and b) all categories of this model were filled up by loaned items.

Keywords: Persian; loanwords; semantic changes; denotational meaning; connotational meaning

Izvleček

Cilj te študije je predložiti model pomenskih sprememb v besedišču, ki bi ustrezal sinhroni analizi podatkov. V ta namen je bila proučena orientacija pomenskih sprememb pri francoskih tujkah v perzijščini. Na osnovi Zomorrodianovega (1373/1994) dela o evropskih izposojenkah v perzijščini je bilo izbranih 1878 izposojenk iz francoščine. Ta korpus je bil analiziran na osnovi slovarja Bellows and Bellows (1919), da bi lahko primerjali tedanje pomene izposojenih besed v francoščini s pomeni, ki jih imajo te izposojenke v sodobni perzijščini. Tako je bilo najdenih 330 izposojenk, pri katerih je prišlo do spremembe pomena. Te spremembe so bile kategorizirane na osnovi obstoječih tipologij pomenskih sprememb. Ker pa so se te tipologije izkazale za nezadostne, študija predlaga nov model tipologije sprememb. Ta, sinhroni in nelinearni model je bolj podrobno načrtovan in ima naslednje prednosti: a) tipološki model pokriva vse lekseme v preiskovanem korpusu, ter b) vse kategorije modela so zapolnjene z leksemi iz korpusa.

Ključne besede: perzijščina; izposojenke; pomenske spremembe; denotativni pomen; konotativni pomen

1.   Introduction

Geographical or social closeness between languages known as "language contact" results in the growth of loanwords through the process of borrowing, a technique which is truly believed to be a common and frequent means of acquiring new words in all languages (Crystal, 2008; Trask, 2003). Following this general tendency, Persian has borrowed numerous words from many languages, such as English, German, Greek, Russian and particularly from Arabic and French, the biggest source of loanwords in Persian among different European Languages.

Iran has favored foreign relations with Europe since Shah Abbas I of the Safavieh (Safavid) dynasty. The turning point in the relations of Iran and Europe definitely dates back to Qajar dynasty, especially at the time of second Shah, Fath Ali Shah, who allied Persia with France, resulting also people going to France to pursue education or just to visit (Zomorrodian, 1373/1994). Later on, a group of French officers was sent to Iran upon Mohammad Shah's (also of Qajar dynasty) request for military help (Ghani, 2006). This contacts paved the way for loanwords from European languages to enter into Persian, in particular in the areas of military, science, everyday usage etc.

Borrowed French lexical items have been adopted in different ways:

− Some items have undergone no change in form/signifier as well as in meaning/signified.
− Some items may have undergone change in form/signifier but no change in meaning/signified.
− Some items may have undergone change in meaning/signified with no change in form/signified
− Some items may have undergone changes in both form/signifier and in meaning /signified.

Table 1: Samples of form/meaning changes in the loanwords

No.	Original/loan word	Meaning in French	Meaning in Persian
1	marmalade /mɑrmɑlɑd/	jam	jam
2	tulle /ture/	net	net
3	park /pɑrk/	park; cow pen	park
4	figure /figur/	form; diagram; face; human shape	form; human sense; gesture

Changes in loanwords can be initiated by the time they are borrowed or in the course of time upon further use and application, as Kay (1995) explained:

> "Loan words are especially open to modification, both on entering the language, and with time…. The flexibility of form and meaning of loanwords enables them to adapt easily to the structure of the host language, and current trends and needs." (Kay (1995, p. 72)

For example, while the meaning of the French Loanwords "blonde" has been specialized by the time of borrowing to mean *a fair girl*, the word "manteau" has after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran been generalized to mean *women's customary outfit*.

As a universal rule, all living languages change through time (Trask, 2003), and as loanwords become part of the target language through the process of borrowing, the change in their lexical meaning is neither strange nor extraordinary, but seems to be unavoidable.

1.1 Semantic Change Typologies

In the quest for finding a model which could properly correspond to the mechanism of semantic changes of French loanwords in Persian, a number of proposed typologies have been found. All these typologies were found to have two shared features: a) a diachronic approach to the study of semantic change and b) being based and tested on a single language.

Also, the models tend to be progressively refined so that classifications based on them get more and more mature and complete through time. Below, a list of semantic change models will be introduced:

The first typologies of semantic change were proposed since about mid-19c. It was Stern (1931) who extended the typology into seven items: substitution, analogy, shortening, nomination, regular transfer, permutation and adequation.

In a period of two years, Bloomfield (1933) proposed his own semantic change classification being the most widely accepted in the English-speaking academic world: narrowing, widening, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, litotes, degeneration and elevation.

Ullmann (1957/1962) made a distinction between the nature and consequences of semantic change: I) Nature of semantic change: metaphor, metonymy, folk-etymology, ellipsis and II) Consequences of semantic change: widening of meaning, narrowing of meaning, amelioration of meaning and pejoration of meaning.

Finally the most recently devised and elaborated categorization in course of semantic change typology, which has gained and attracted increasing acceptance, belongs to Blank (1998): metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, specialization, generalization, cohyponymic transfer, antiphrasis, auto-antonymy, auto-converse,

ellipsis and folk-etymology. He refused to include amelioration and pejoration of meaning as well as strengthening and weakening of meaning in his typology, as he believed them not to be objectively classifiable.

1.2 Statement of the Problem, Objectives and Research Questions

Based on the great number of French loanwords in Persian, this study aims to propose a model which can properly describe semantic change behaviors in this language. The objectives of the present paper are to arrive at a model which favors two premier features: a) all items (loanwords) can be fitted into it so that no item is left out; b) all categories of this model are filled up with the items of the corpus so that no category would be left blank.

In the light of the goal stated above, this paper seeks to find the answer to the following questions: 1) How relevant are the previously proposed semantic change typologies in terms of French loanwords in Persian? 2) How feasible is it to propose a new semantic change model whose categories are all filled up which is accounting for all the loaned items in the data?

The present study thus aims to examine sufficiency of the existing models as well as the need for a new model for semantic changes of French loanwords in Persian.

2. Methodology

In order to study the semantic change behavior of French loanwords in Persian, Zomorrodian's (1373/1994) book on European loanwords was used as the data source for the extraction of French loanwords in Persian. Zorrodian provides a full account of straightforward borrowings as well as the meanings according to the contemporary Persian language.

In this study of semantic changes of French loanwords in Persian the meanings are studied at two discrete points in time: the first one is the time when loanwords first were borrowed in Persian, i.e., some 170 years ago (Qajar era) and the second point is the contemporary Persian.

Iran and France generally enjoyed a friendly relationship since the Middle Ages. The Qajar era was taken since it served as the turning point in the two countries' relations paving the way for the entrance of French terms in different areas into Persian (Ghani, 2006).

From among 1878 French loanwords that were examined, a number of 330 lexical items were identified to have undergone semantic changes. For this purpose, the meanings of all of the 1878 lexical items were checked in Persian based on Moeen (1353/1974) and French based on Bellows and Bellows (1919). Then, the meanings were compared and the changes classified according to the observed types of semantic

change they indicated. The items that did not undergo any change (1548 items) were excluded from the study and were not further analyzed.

The theoretical framework employed in this study builds on the existing models of semantic change. The models are studied against the data to see their adequacy to explain the change of all examined French loanwords in Persian. Based on the results, a new model of semantic change is to be proposed, which is the main objective of this study.

3. Review of the Related Literature

Studies done on semantic changes in Persian especially on the French loanwords are scanty. Below is the list of related studies on the subject:

Gomnami (1370/1991, cited in Ahadi, 2002) focused on the varied linguistic and metalinguistic causes and consequences of lexical and semantic changes in Persian after the Islamic revolution of 1979.

Safavi (1387/2008) reviews the main semantic changes of lexical items in contemporary speech variety of Persian.

This study became the guideline for another one conducted by Gandomkar (1389/2010) who studied semantic change resulted from "projection" in Persian proverbs. She concluded that proverbs retain the whole semantic load pertinent to a story or an allegory with which they are ascribed

Regarding loanwords, Ghaffari (1378/1999) examined how Persian affected or better to say changed English and French loanwords in forms and meanings from Mashrouteh era (1285/1906) to date.

Pakar's (1381/2002) research centered round the study and analysis of phonological changes pertinent to French and English loanwords in Persian.

4. Results and discussion

In this research, 330 semantically changed French loanwords were analyzed against the existing models to determine the adequacy of these models to deal with the data as well as the need for a new model in which all items are fitted in and all categories are filled up.

4.1 Inadequacy of the Semantic Change Models

In order to have enough evidence to propose a new semantic change model, the first step is to find adequate reasons in rejecting the existing models in the analysis of French loanwords in Persian. Two main features which are questioned against each

existing model are: A) Are all categories in a single typology filled up so that none is left blank in that no members fit in? B) Are all items in the corpus of the present study included in a single typology?

Typologies of change proposed in 19c turn out to be inadequate, not being rich enough to comprise all types of observed changes.

Stern's (1931) typology does not account for "metaphorical changes". Also, the data did not have any items for "analogy". It sounds inadequate to maintain analogy in a semantic change classification since analogy involves a change in the syntactic structure of the word and more obviously in its parts of speech.

Regarding Bloomfield's (1933) typology, there is no category to cover "ellipsis", and also the data showed no "hyperbolic items".

As for Ullmann (1957/1962), he did not entail "synecdoche" in his observation. Also, the analyzed data presented no items in the "ellipsis" category.

Blank's (1998) typology, as the most elaborated model, did not include "ellipsis" and "amelioration". Also, no semantic change item in the present study was found to belong to such types as "auto-antonymy" and "auto-converse". The points made so far are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 2: Features of semantic change typologies against the corpus of the study

Authors	All items in the corpus are included	All categories in the typology are filled up
Stern	No	No
Bloomfield	No	No
Ullmann	No	No
Blank	No	No

As the table shows, both columns are homogeneously negative which means there are some semantic changes that are not included in any of the mentioned typologies.

Now that the insufficiencies of these typologies have been made clear, the next step would be to develop a new model that can effectively and practically describe the corpus of the present study which is indeed the concern of the next section of this chapter.

4.2 Proposing a Model for Semantic Changes

Search for a comprehensive semantic change model has been based on the analysis of all the French loanwords in Persian regarding their meanings in French at the time of borrowing and their meanings in cotemporary Persian. From here, the change types

were extracted and organized in a model that covers all the semantic changes observed in the data and whose categories are filled up by the relevant items (loanwords).

French loanwords have shown to be of three types:

1. Denotational semantic changes, which are changes in the referential, literal or explicit meaning(s) of the word, for example when a word with different meanings in the source language is has its meaning narrowed down to one meaning in the target language. As an example, the word "pipe" meaning "tube used for smoking tobacco, windpipe, flute and whistle" in French, is used in Persian with only its first meaning.

2. Connotational semantic changes, which are changes in the non-referential, implicit or metaphorical meaning(s) of the words in the source language, for example the French loanword "fossile" has changed metaphorically to mean "the old man" in Persian.

3. Denoconnotational semantic changes, which are changes of both types of denotational and connotational in a single word. For example, one of the four meanings of the French loanword "tableau" as well as a figurative meaning are used in Persian.

Examining the results of the semantic change analysis, it can be seen from Table 3 that denotational changes are more frequent than connotational changes. Also, the least frequent changes are deconnotational type. Table 3 shows the frequency of each semantic type, which are also diagrammatically represented in Figure 1.

Table 3: Percentage table of semantic changes

Semantic change	Number	Percentage across loanwords
Denotational	254	76.96%
Connotational	50	15.16%
Denoconnotational	26	7.88%
Total	**330**	**100%**

Indeed, as the above table shows, denotational changes with (76.96%) are the most frequent semantic change while connotational changes (15.16%) are the second most frequent semantic change. Finally, the denoconnotational changes (7.88%) are ranked third.

In what follows, each of the aforementioned changes will be discussed in full and illustrated with examples (Persian words associated with French loanwords are phonemically transcribed according to IPA font and placed in two slashes / /). In what follows, the types of changes as well as their subtypes are explained and illustrated:

4.2.1   Denotational Semantic Changes

Based on the data, denotationally-changed loanwords have either undergone "specialization" or "projection" that are discussed below:

Specialization

"Specialization" describes a state of change in the denotational properties of a word so that it is applicable in fewer contexts than were appropriate for the original word (Campbell and Mexico, 2007). That is, when a word has three senses in the source language and only one or two of them become evidently feasible in the target language. For example, the loanword /korokodil/ meaning "an aquatic reptile" and "the skin" in French, is specialized in Persian so that it only refers to "an aquatic reptile". Other examples of this type are:

Table 4: Examples of specialization

No.	Original/loan word	Meaning in French	Meaning in Persian
5	orchestra /ʔorkesr/	orchestra; band	orchestra
6	occasion /ʔokɑzijon/	great bargain; opportunity; circumstances	great bargain
7	boulevard /bolvɑr/	boulevard (main road); promenade	boulevard (main road)

Projection

The data provided a number of cases, which are structurally compound in the target language (i.e. French in the present study). When borrowed into Persian, these items tend to shorten, changing into some simple forms. In this process, the whole meaning is shifted or pejorized to only one part of the compound upon borrowing. Fore example, in French, *fer à friser* means "curling iron", *fer* corresponds to "iron" and *friser* is associated with "curl". In Persian, the shortened loanword, /fer/ absorbs the whole meaning of the compound. To clarify the point, more examples are offered:

Table 5: Examples of projection

No.	Original/loan word	Meaning in French	Meaning in Persian
8	nœud papillon /pɑpijon/	bow tie	bow tie
9	Prise de courant /periz/	power outlet	power outlet
10	Courant d'air /kurɑn/	draught	draught

Comparing the two types of denotational changes, "specialization" is more frequent than "projection". The following table shows the frequency of each type.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics regarding denotational semantic change

Semantic change	Number	Percentage
Specialization	247	97.24%
Projection	7	2.76%
Total	254	100%

As the table shows, specification outnumbers projection in the change process of the loanwords under study.

4.2.2   Connotational Semantic Change

According to the data, connotational aspect of semantic changes is subdivided into two groups, namely "figurative load" and "emotional load", each being correspondingly pertinent to the inferential properties of meanings.

Figurative Change

The figurative semantic load associated with loanwords concerns the inferred meanings based on resemblance, vicinity and similarity. According to Cruse (2006), "linguistic expressions are said to be figurative, or used figuratively, if their intended meaning is (a) something other than their literal meaning and (b) can be understood on the basis of generally applicable principles of meaning extension…"(p.63).

This sense of relatedness is a mental perception of a single sense attributed to the original word in the source language. The corresponding figurative changes could accompany yet another state of change being either narrowing or widening which explains their area of usage.

In this study, the two terms of "specification" and "narrowing" are meant and used differently; while in narrowing a single sense of a word is affected, in specification the whole-scale level (all senses) is changed. Moreover, narrowing and not specification points to a connotational type. Figurative change comprises: 1. metaphor, 2. metonymy, and 3. synecdoche.

1. Metaphor

Cruse (2006) defines metaphor as "a relation of resemblance or analogy, although this is not explicitly stated" (p. 106). It therefore describes a state in which a new meaning is generated based on implicit or explicit similarity or conceptual parallelism with the original word's meaning. For example, the loanwords /pɑsɑʒ/ takes a metaphoric sense as it refers to a "shopping center". A state of resemblance exists in French and Persian senses, though it is not explicitly stated. Corresponding changes in metaphoric

senses could accompany yet another state of change being either narrowing or widening. Further examples are offered below:

Table 7: Examples of metaphor

No.	Original/loan word	Meaning in French	Meaning in Persian	Type of change
11	antenne /ʔanten/	signal receiver	signal receiver; figurative use (spy)	widening
12	manteau /mɑnto/	over coat; mantle; cloak	Woman's uniform	narrowing

2. Metonymy

It is a change based on nearness in space or time (Bloomfield,1933). It is therefore a kind of semantic change in which a concept retains the name of another word that is placed adjacent to it in order to refer to something else. In French, *épaule* means "shoulder". In Persian, the loanword /ʔepol/ takes a metonymic sense as it refers to a "shoulder pad". A state of nearness in place is obvious in the Persian sense, which explains the vicinity attributed to shoulder and shoulder pad that is placed over the shoulder. The corresponding changes in metonymic sense could accompany yet another state of change being either narrowing or widening. Below are further examples:

Table 8: Examples of metonomy

No.	Original/loan word	Meaning in French	Meaning in Persian	Type of change
13	bottine /putin/	boot	soldier's boot	narrowing
14	locomotive /lokomotiv/	engine of a train	train	widening

3. Synecdoche

"Synecdoche" is a semantic change based on whole-part or part-whole associations so that either a part of a whole would represent the whole, or the whole would be established in a way to represent the part associated with the whole. Campbell and Mexico (2007) referred to it as "A kind of semantic change, that involves a part-to-whole relationship in which a term with more comprehensive meaning is used for a less comprehensive meaning or vice versa"(p.199). In French, *blond* means "light in color". In Persian, the loanword /blond/ also has a synecdocheic sense as it refers to a "woman who has light-colored hair". A part-to-whole relation is observed in the

Persian sense. The corresponding changes in synecdocheic sense could accompany yet another state of change being only widening.

Comparing the mentioned types of figurative semantic changes, metaphor (30 cases) and synecdoche (3 cases) are respectively the most and the least frequent types of changing.

Table 9: Examples of synecdoche

No.	Original/loan word	Meaning in French	Meaning in Persian
15	blond /belond/	person of light complexion; fair, light color	fair haired; fair, light color
16	moteur /motor/	engine; motor; motorcycle	engine; motor

Emotive Change

Apart from the figurative loads of words, there is yet another load associated with words, the emotional part. This highlights the mental perception in connection with the lexemes. The corresponding emotional changes could accompany yet another state of change being either optionally narrowed or widened. Emotive change includes: 1. pejoration, 2. amelioration, and 3. litotes.

1. Pejoration

"Pejoration" describes an added negative value to the already stated sense of a word. Campbell and Mexico (2007) termed it as a kind of "Semantic change in which the sense of a word takes on a less positive evaluation in the minds of the language users i.e. an increased negative value judgment" (p. 40). This meaning change does not wind up into a new meaning; rather an affective association is made between the word and its meaning in the target language (being Persian in this particular study). In French, *toilette* means "washroom, WC" and "dressing". In Persian, the loanword /towɑlet/ refers to "washroom, WC" and "dressing" but as for the first sense, the meaning is regressed in a negative manner therefore pejorized or changed for the worse. The corresponding changes in pejorated sense could accompany yet another state of change that is solely narrowing.

Table 10: Examples of pejoration

No.	Original/loan word	Meaning in French	Meaning in Persian
17	chauffeur /ʃufer/	driver	driver; fireman; stocker; brigand
18	alcool /ʔalekol/	alcohol	alcohol

2. Amelioration

"Amelioration" describes an added positive value to the already stated sense of a word. Campbell and Mexico's (2007) definition was that amelioration is a "Semantic change in which the meaning of a word shifts towards a more positive value in the mind of the language's users: an increased positive value judgment. In French, *gigolo* means "a man supported by a woman usually in return for his attentions" and "a professional dancing partner or male escort". However, in Persian the loanword /dʒigulu/ refers to "a man who tries to attract attentions through his appearance". As it is far obvious, the sense in Persian item (the only item which was found) is specialized and the meaning is elevated in a positive manner therefore ameliorated or changed for the better.

3. Litotes

"Litotes" describes a state in which the already stated sense of a word stands out quite more vividly in the target language than was appropriate for the original meaning so that the meaning becomes stronger and reinforced (Bloomfield, 1933). In French, *phrase* means "a sentence or a phrase" and "a professional dancing partner or male escort". In Persian the loanword /ferɑz/ refers to "a sentence or a phrase" in a more prominent way so that this word is only utilized in special contexts of dignity and honor for example *phrases from Nahjolbalaghe*. The Persian item (the only litotic item of connotational semantic change) is specialized in meaning.

Comparing the mentioned types of emotive semantic changes, pejoration (3 cases) is more frequent type than the other two types.

Moreover, regarding the connotational semantic types, figurative changes are more frequent than the emotive ones, as the following table shows:

Table 11: Percentage table of figurative and emotive changes

Semantic change	Number	Percentage
Figurative	46	92%
Emotive	4	8%
Total	50	100%

4.2.3   Denoconnotational Semantic Changes

This kind of change entails the properties of both denotational and connotational changes in a single lexical item, that is, the loanword changes both in referential and nonreferential metaphoric senses of meaning. In French, "côtelette" means "chop" and "a small piece of meat with a bone". In Persian, the loanword /kotlet/ is specialized so that it only refers to "a food made of ground meat and some other ingredients" which has itself narrowed down from the second sense in French based on metaphor. In the

following table, items of both denotational and connotational semantic changes in a single item are offered:

Table 12: Examples of denoconnotational semantic changes

No.	Original/loan word	Meaning in French	Meaning in Persian	Type of change
19	tableau /tɑblo/	picture painting; notice board; black board; table; scutcheon	picture painting; notice board; evident (figurative)	specialization narrowing metaphor
20	blouse /boluz/	pinaford, apron; pocket; work suit	shirt	specialization narrowing metaphor
21	gest /ʒest/	gesture; deed, act; story	gesture, figure	specialization narrowing litotes
22	sévère /sever/	rigid; stern; harsh	stern; quick	specialization wideninging litotes
23	châssis /ʃɑsi/	frame; slide; sash; chase	frame; tall woman (fig)	

The study of the data shows that items in this category may change denotationally in the form of specialization. Also, connotational semantic changes of metaphor, pejoration, amelioration and litotes were observed but no cases for metonymy and synechdoche were not found.

4.3 The New Proposed Model

By careful observation of the data, the researchers were able to propose their own semantic change model which is presented hereupon in Figure 1. In this scheme, meaning shifts are treated quite differently, i.e., words are studied according to their denotational and connotational semantic loads unlike previous typologies which treated senses of the words accumulatively.

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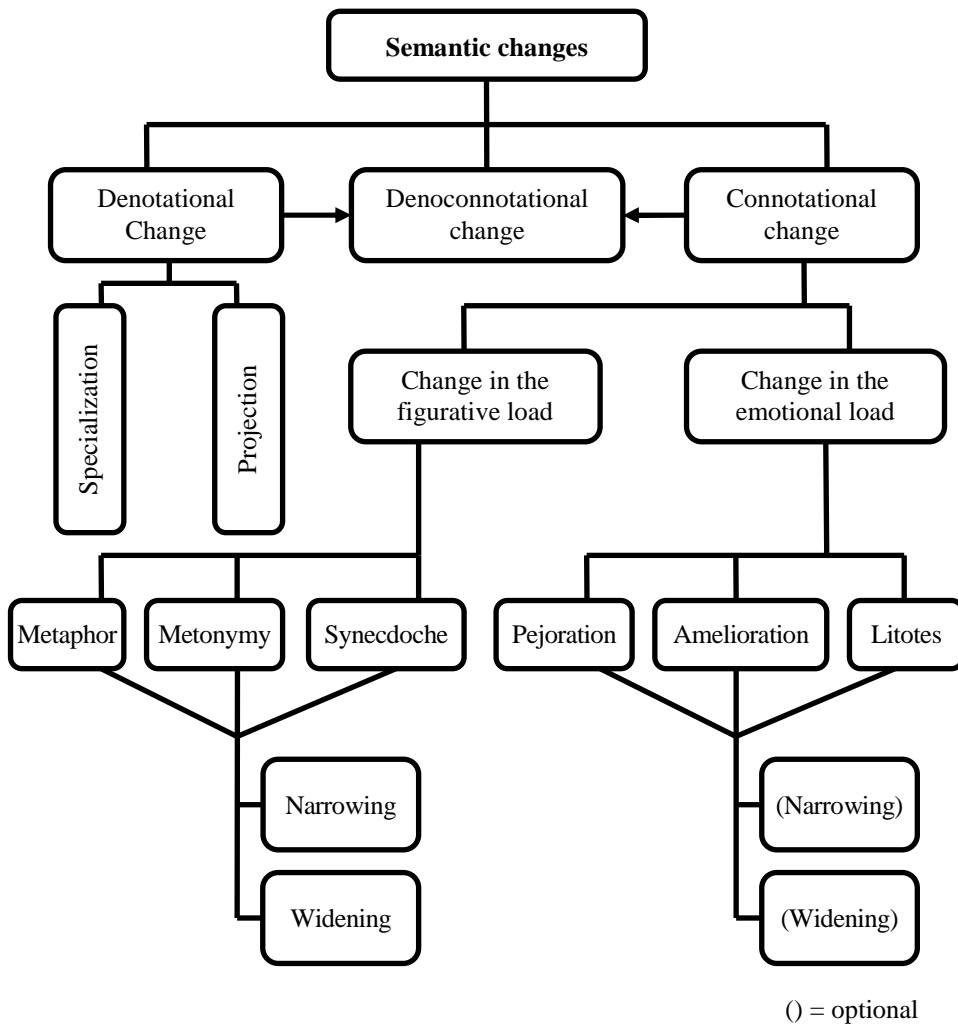

Figure 1: The new proposed semantic change model

5. Conclusion

This study sought to examine and study semantic change properties of French loanwords in Persian. In so doing, a total number of 1878 loanwords were extracted from Zomorrodian's (1373/1994) book and then were analyzed regarding their meanings; out of this number 330 items were found to have changed semantically. The analysis regarding these semantically changed items revealed some facts about the