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**HOME AND AWAY: BLOGGING EMOTIONS IN A
PERSIAN VIRTUAL *DOWREH***

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics and Second Language Teaching
at Massey University**

Samad Zare

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the creation of a virtual *dowreh* (family/social circle) via Persian language weblogs among a group of Iranian migrants in Australia. The motivation and inspiration for this study arose from my own experience as a migrant. I became interested in looking at how the new generation of Iranian migrants use weblogs to form digital diasporas and why they publish their emotional experiences online, thereby adding to the understanding of a relatively under-researched community.

The study draws upon a sociocultural approach in order to bring to light the role of weblogs in the context of the most recent Iranian migration and the way Iranian migrants use them to replace *dowrehs* disrupted by the migration experience where they could perform cultural identities and express and share their emotions. Using a grounded theory approach and discourse analysis to blog posts, the study investigates the expression of emotional challenges, expectations, and cultural performances of a group of Persian diasporic bloggers.

The exploration of a diasporic virtual *dowreh* produced several interesting results. The findings suggest the possibility of online community formation via weblogs where Iranians could meet and perform cultural identities which are not available to them in the host society. Two characteristics that marked the virtual *dowreh* were the type of Persian language used and the interaction between the bloggers and their audience. The analysis demonstrated that interactions between the bloggers and their audience via commenting functions were noticeably governed by Iranian notions of politeness and other Persian rules of decorum and cultural practices. The analysis also illustrated that the language used in the virtual *dowreh* was a combination of written and spoken Persian, Internet jargon, weblog terms, and concepts from the host society. Furthermore, the exploration of the emotional challenges of the bloggers revealed that certain emotions such as homesickness and self-conscious emotions were among the major sources of emotion in the diaspora and indexed the bloggers' Iranian diasporic identities online. The study concludes with the importance of weblogs for Iranian migrants in creating virtual *dowrehs* where they could practise/perform cultural identities and express and thereby share their emotional experience.

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A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSCRIPTION

In order to transliterate and transcribe the Persian language used in the body of this thesis I simply considered the computer keyboard as it was the fastest and the most convenient way of transliterating or transcribing Persian into Latin characters. Furthermore, I felt that using English keyboard and English alphabet were the most comprehensible way of presenting the Persian language to readers of English. In using the keyboard, I have tried very hard to create a simple and user-friendly way of representing the Persian sounds to the reader. However, there were two cases that I preferred to use two different symbols to represent the sounds. I have represented /i:/ with “i” and “ee”. This is because it is common in Persian to write “ee” for names that include /i:/. Therefore, all the Persian names that needed /i:/ have been transliterated with “ee”; other Persian words have been transliterated with “i”. The second case was the transliteration of /u:/. This was once again because some Persian names use “oo” to represent /u:/. Furthermore, I have used “oo” in the initial syllables of the Persian words so that the English reader does not confuse /u:/ with /ʌ/; elsewhere “u” has been used to represent /u:/.

The Persian language has six vowel phonemes and twenty three consonant phonemes. The following tables show the Persian vowel and consonant phonemes and their Romanised equivalents that have been used in this thesis:

Phoneme	Sound in IPA	Persian Letter	Romanisation in this thesis	Example
/i:/	[i:]	ی	i, ee	ist /i:st/ (stop); Saeed /sai:d/ (a Persian name)
/e/	[e]	اَ, اِ	e	ketaab /keta:b/ (book)
/æ/	[æ]	اَ	a	dard /dærd/ (pain)
/u:/	[u:]	و	oo, u	moo /mu:/ (hair); nofuz /nofu:z/ (influence);
/o/	[o]	و, اُ, اَو	o	gol /gol/ (flower)
/a:/	[a:]	اَ, اِ	aa	maar /ma:r/ (snake)

Phoneme	Sound in IPA	Persian Letter	Romanisation in this thesis	Example
/p/	[p]	پ	p	par /pær/ (feather)
/b/	[b]	ب	b	baaraan/ba:ra:n/ (rain)
/t/	[t]	ت, ط	t	taa /ta:/ (till)
/d/	[d]	د	d	dast /dæst/ (hand)
/k/	[k]	ک	k	kshaavarz /keʃa:værz/ (farmer)
/g/	[g]	گ	g	goruh /goru:h/ (group)
/ʔ/	[ʔ]	ع, ع	'	ma'ani /mæʔni:/ (meaning)
/tʃ/	[tʃ]	چ	ch	chaaneh /tʃa:ne/ (chin)
/dʒ/	[dʒ]	ج	j	jeld /dʒeld/ (cover)
/f/	[f]	ف	f	faraar /færa:r/ (escape)
/v/	[v]	و	v	vazn /væzn/ (weight)
/s/	[s]	س, ص, ث	s	saraab /særa:b/ (mirage)
/z/	[z]	ز, ذ, ض, ظ	z	zabaan /zæba:n/ (tongue)
/ʃ/	[ʃ]	ش	sh	shaad /ʃa:d/ (happy)
/ʒ/	[ʒ]	ژ	zh	zhaaleh /ʒa:le/ (dew)
/x/	[x]	خ	kh	khaahar /xa:hær/ (sister)
/ɣ/ /G/	[ɣ] [G]	غ, ق	gh	gholaam /ɣola:m/ (servant)
/h/	[h]	ه, ح	h	haft /hæft/ (seven)
/m/	[m]	م	m	maadar /ma:dær/ (mother)
/n/	[n]	ن	n	narm /nærm/ (soft)
/l/	[l]	ل	l	lab /læb/ (lip)
/r/	[r]	ر	r	iraan /i:ra:n/ (Iran)
/j/	[j]	ی	y	yaa /ja:/ (or)

Persian also has long consonants which are a borrowing from Arabic. The long consonants are called *tashdid* (literally ‘emphasis’) which is represented as ˆ over a consonant. In most English texts Persian consonants with *tashdid* have been transcribed with double consonants. In the same way, I have used double consonants in the transliteration of some Persian words to show the long consonants. For example, the word meaning ‘sensitivity’ in Persian has been transliterated as *hassasiat*.