

*Content Analysis of Translated English itineraries about Iran Existing in Iranian Libraries*

Zohreh Mirhosseini, Islamic Azad University - Tehran North Branch, Iran  
Azadeh Haidari, Islamic Parliament of Iran Library, Iran

The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2017  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

A travel log has nice and sad stories inside by narrator to show historical facts. So this study investigates English Itineraries about Iran which are translated into Persian and exist in the libraries to help historians and researchers. On the whole 60 translated itineraries from 64 travelers were found since 16 to 20 centuries in the libraries such as National, Parliament, Astan-e-Ghods, Contemporary History Library, Iranology Foundation, Foreign Affairs Ministry, Tehran University, and Cultural Heritage Institution.

The content analysis is used to understand the history of the country within the sharp views of the English travelers. Data is gathered by taking notes in detail and grouping the subjects found in the books. For subject area also the library of congress subject heading is used.

The results showed that most of the travelers were English politicians (70%) and were interested to geographical situation of Iran. The majority of English travelers have come to the country during 1900-1950(51.56%) and 19 century (40.62%). The aim of travelers were multipurpose (62.5%), political purposes (21.87%), tourism (4.7%), business (3.12%), military (3.12%), archeology, medicine, and geography (each one 1.56%). Tehran, Isfahan and Qazvin are most visited cities. Behavioral description of the people like wedding ceremonies, funerals, dressing, proverbs, social relations and deficiencies are mentioned in these books. History of cities and rural areas like historical monuments were mentioned too. These historical evidences which have sometimes positive approaches (37.5%), sometimes negative (12.5%) and neutral (50%) help to know more about the past facts and the present situation.

Keywords: English travel log-Iran, English itineraries –Middle East, Content Analysis-Travel log

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction**

Travel logs are rich information resources that produce knowledge about a society. Through them, one can find precise information about a land within their lines.

Travelers have an outstanding situation to find out similarities and differences of a culture with their own culture, and reflect it without prejudice through their written observations. Though two travelers point of view about one place may differ according to the situation of the traveler and each may write his own story.

The writer of a Travel log is at first a story writer who writes the true story of what he has seen during a trip. He took the reader with himself and talks about what he has thought and shows the people and their way of lives. The writer shows that as the people are not the same, their characteristics and their customs and ethics are not the same (Daneshpajouh, 2001,20).

In a historical view, Tourists and their travel logs are means of inter cultural experiences and understanding others. In fact, they are the first manifestation of inter -cultural recognition and show the characteristics of cultural traditions of one culture for knowing the other culture tradition (Rahmani, 2004, 12).

Travelling and travel logs bring mental evolution; and even social, political, scientific and cultural changes (Fedaei Eraghi, 1996, 53). That's why the travel logs are important and should be investigated.

The European Travelers' purpose of traveling to the East including Iran can be divided into several groups: First, business men to find new markets for their goods; second, politicians for their trade and military purposes ( since Safavid Era); third, Military forces for gathering information about geographical situation and ethnic groups; fourth, orientalist and archeologists whom wanted to explore Eastern culture, especially in Iran to search about Achaemenian era; fifth, culture lovers whom wanted to know more about Iranian Learned persons such as famous Iranian poets like Khayyam, Rumi-Molana ,Hafiz ,Saadi Shirazi etc ,and the sixth are those Europeans whom were curious to know the mystic eastern lands in the narrations of the old fictions and enjoy it( Arya, 1997,10).

The English itineraries written about Iran mostly are a precise report about the Country's geographical situation and its administration and political organization, because most of English travelers had political missions. (Eshraghi, 1999,1).

Many of them wrote about social facts and moreover published historical documents and letters, which are useful for knowing about foreign relations on different eras (Hakimi, 2004, Vol. 1, 35).

Travel logs are important for historians and sociologists. Folklore, customs and beliefs, habits and values, sightseeing and monuments, and the socio-economic conditions all are involved in a travel log. So, subject classifying of them will help to information retrieval

more easily. Content analysis is a way to reveal the recognition of subjects inside travel logs, so this research used it to know what has happened during the trips of English people to Iran before Islamic Revolution of Iran.

### **Research Questions**

What are the subjects inside the English travel logs?

Which cities are most visited?

In which periods English travelers have visited Iran?

What purpose they had from their visits?

What are their views about Iran?

### **Methodology**

Conceptual Content analysis is used using subject headings of national library of Iran as a checklist. Of course because the research investigates the travel logs before Islamic Revolution to Iran, it also has a historical approach.

Statistical population of this research are 60 travel logs written by 6 travelers which were translated into Persian and are in different libraries around the country such as National Library, Parliament, Malek public library, Astan Qudse, Contemporary history library, Cultural heritage organization, Foreign Affairs Ministry, Iranology Foundation, Tehran University Central library, Tehran University Literature college, Islamic Encyclopedia, Humanities and cultural studies.

### **Findings**

There are many tables related to the detailed content analysis of the research among them tables related to research questions are answered. Because some tables like were long, here we refer just to their results. The first question about the subjects includes 91 subjects A-Z from Arts, carpets, dance, dialects, funerals, genealogy, etc to mines, superstitious, Tribes and women and Zoroastrians etc. according to subject headings that each one has its own table. Here is a sample table about the subject of cities/ towns/ villages.

Table 1: the cities/towns/villages in the travel logs

Subject	Frequency	percent
Climate	63	2.65
History	397	16.70
Description of Cities/ towns/villages	1771	74.53
Geographical situation	145	6.10
Total	2376	100

On the whole among 91 analyzed subjects, the subject of cities and towns respecting their history and their description has the majority with 2376 frequency and 23.55%; then Special places are referred more with 1016 frequency and 10.07%, then mountains and valleys with 797 frequency and 7.90% are in the third place. Political and religious characters along with their life details are mentioned with 6.72%; and rivers & springs with 3.95% are also referred.

Below the most frequent subjects are shown in table 2.

Table 2: the most frequent subjects in the English Itineraries

subjects	frequency	percent
Cities/towns/villages	2376	23.55
Special places(monuments)	1061	10.07
Mountains/valleys	797	7.90
Important Characters	678	6.72
Rivers/Springs	399	3.95
Old fortifications	223	2.22
Moral/appearance of Iranians	221	2.20
Population/area	221	2.19
Business/Industry	207	2.05
jobs	186	1.85
Islamic Shrines	158	1.56

Table 3: The most frequent cities visited by English travelers

Cities/towns	frequency	percent
Tehran	41	9.92%
Isfahan	32	7.74
Qazvin	27	6.53%
Shiraz	23	5.56
Ahvaz/Shushtar(KhuzastanProvince)	21	5.08
Masoule/Rasht(Gilan Province)	21	5.08
Kermanshah	21	5.08

Tehran as the Capital of Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties had had the most travelers with 9.92%.; Then Isfahan with 7.74% was visited more because of its historical monuments. Qazvin as the Capital of Safavid dynasty was mostly visited with 6.53%, Then Shiraz again because of ancient monuments such as Persepolis was visited with 5.56%.

Table4: frequency of different historical periods of English travelers to Iran

Time period/ dynasty	Safavids	Zand	Qajar	Pahlavi
frequency	3	1	48	12
percent	4.7	1.56	75	18.74

The majority of the travelers have come during Qajar era in Iran, 45 travelers with 75% among them 16 travelers have come during Naser-e-din Shah. Ethic, hospitality and superstitious of Qajars are reflected in these travel logs.

In Safavid era just 3 travelers came to Iran with 4.7% and before that in Zand era just one traveler has come to Iran with 1.56%. In Pahlavi era 12 English travelers came to Iran with 18.74%. In fact, the majority of them have come during 1900-1950 .

Table5: frequency of English travelers views about Iran

Views of Travelers	Positive	negative	Neutral
frequency	24	8	32
percent	37.5	12.5	50

Their views about Iran show that 32 travelers 50% had political missions, and had no views about Iranians, so they have done just their duties. 24 travelers 37.5% had positive views about Iranians and only 8 persons have written that they have no interest to Iranians 12.5%.

## Conclusion

The results show that the subject of cities and towns respecting their history and their description has the majority with 2376 frequency and 23.55% among 91 subjects that were found in English travel logs about Iran.

Among the cities Tehran as the Capital of Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties had the most travelers with 41 persons and 9.92%.

The majority of the travelers have come during Qajar era in Iran, 45 travelers 75% among them 16 travelers have come during Naser-e-din Shah. Ethic, hospitality and superstitious of Qajars are reflected in these travel logs.

The travelers' views about Iran shows those 32 travelers 50% had political missions, and wrote nothing about Iranians. So they have done just their duties with neutral views. 24 travelers 37.5% had positive views about Iranians and only 8 persons have written that they have no interest to Iranians 12.5%.

The most famous travelers to Iran during 1900-1950 are Lord Curzen<sup>1</sup> who had the most citations about Iran, 680 citations 39.42%, then Yate<sup>2</sup> with 256 citations 14.84%, Sykes<sup>3</sup> with 137 citations 7.945%.

Rabino<sup>4</sup>, Willey<sup>5</sup>, Rawlinson<sup>6</sup>, Metcalfe<sup>7</sup>, Layard<sup>8</sup>, Stark<sup>9</sup> and Brown<sup>10</sup> are also have citations about Iran. Most of them beside political purposes had other activities such as business, archeology and art, history and literature, economic and military.

Some other researches can be done in this respect such as: Survey on the culture& civilization of Iran in views of contemporary travelers.

---

<sup>1</sup> George Nathaniel Curzon, 1859-1925

<sup>2</sup> Charles Edward Yate 1849-1940

<sup>3</sup> Sir Percy Moles worth, 1867-1945

<sup>4</sup> Hyacinth Louis Rabino, 1877-1950

<sup>5</sup> Peter Willey, 1922-2009

<sup>6</sup> Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, 1810-1895

<sup>7</sup> Mc Gregor, Charles Metcalfe, 1840-1887

<sup>8</sup> Austen Henry Layard, 1817-1894

<sup>9</sup> Freya Stark, 1893-1993

<sup>10</sup> Edward Granville, 1862-1926

## References

*Almanac of famous people: a comprehensive reference guide* (2001). Editor Jennifer Mossman. Detroit: Gale group

Arya, M. (1996). *Lorestan Province in the travel logs*. Tehran: Fekr-e-Ruz

Daneshpajouh, M.(2001) *Travel Log: a lot of travel is needed...* Tehran: Salece; International Center for civilizations' dialog. 2Vol.

Eshraghi,F. (1999)*Isfahan from the view point of travelers*. Isfahan: Atropat

Fedaei Eraghi,Gh.( 1996) *Book& library*. Proceedings of management and cultural development. Tehran: Islamic Revolution Cultural Documents Organization

Hakimi,M( 2004) *In Accompany with Tourists, and history travelers*. Tehran: Aron. 4Vol.

Rahmani, J. (2004) “*Event of Understanding in the travel logs*”. *Ketab-E-Mah history & Geography*. Winter 2004. No. 88-89. Pp12-21

*The International Who's who: 1964-1969*. London: Europa Publication

**Contact email:** [z\\_mirhoseini@iau-tnbac.ir](mailto:z_mirhoseini@iau-tnbac.ir)