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Investigating Semantic-Pragmatic Functions of Interrogative Sentences (Questions) in Amir Hushang Ebtehaj's (Sayeh) Poems

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Abstract

Interrogative sentences are among grammatical categories that occur most frequently in world languages. In Contemporary poetry including those composed by Ebtehaj, sometimes interrogative sentences fulfil semantic-pragmatic functions other than posing questions including surprise, breaking news, disappointment, complaint, objection, warning, rebuke, etc. This study aims at an investigation of the semantic-pragmatic functions that interrogative sentences fulfil in Ebtehaj's poetry. A descriptive-analytic methodology is employed to survey a statistical society that includes the complete poetical works by Ebtehaj. 120 sonnets, 84 Nimai poems, 17 quatrains, 10 couplets and 8 strophes were randomly studied. The results show that in 187 cases, Sayeh used interrogative sentences to fulfil 28 different secondary functions other than interrogation including the following respectively: expressing wish, objection, surprise, complaint, helplessness, doubt, rhetorical questions, disappointment, praise, emphasis, breaking news and attracting attention.

Keywords: Ebtehaj, Grammatical categories, Semantic-Pragmatic functions, Questions, Secondary meanings, Contemporary poetry.

Interrogative sentences are one of the most commonly used grammatical categories in all the world languages. However, these sentences are mainly interrogative that are used to ask a question. Linguistic typology studies have revealed that interrogative sentences sometimes do not intend to ask anything but are used for exclamation purposes or to inform, to name a few.

Semantic science addresses the study of subordinate meanings of sentences. Using a sentence in the figurative sense upsurge the influence of the discourse of the speech, and one of the features that improves the rhetorical style of the speech is to put the words in a meaning other than the one intended.

In addition to the main functions, interrogative sentences are used to convey other meanings associated with the knowledge of meanings by taking into account the time and situation of the expression. For the questions are not only used in terms of grammatical or linguistic forms, they are also used in the literary sense. This is what semantic knowledge addresses as the rhetorical questions in which the addresser is not intended to receive information nor to be informed. He prefers to know something more than finding an answer when a question is raised. What distinguishes the linguistic from the literary questions is that the former should be followed by an answer while the latter remains unanswered for good. A question may underlie several secondary intentions by which the appreciation of the intentions of the addresser deals with the various styles of reading, the context and the atmosphere of reading.

Questions in contemporary poetry, including Amir Hushang Ebtehaj's poems, sometimes play semantic-pragmatic functions and hence are not asked in terms of questions, but to surprise, inform, make disappointment, express grievance, protest, rebuke, blame, and so on. Given that most of the researches conducted to study Ebtehaj's poems have considered the social issues and symbolism, it can be claimed that few studies have taken into account the meaning of knowledge (semantic-pragmatic functions of questions) in his works. However, questions are of particular importance in Amir Hushang Ebtehaj (Sayeh) poems, so there are sonnets in which all or almost all the verses mainly ask questions (i.e. sonnets of the Broken Flute, All Spring, Sorrowful Sunset, In the Sediton of the Resurrection, and the Flaw Reflecting Mirror). Accordingly, the recognition and appreciation of the secondary and literary meanings of the questions proposed in Amir

Hushang Ebtehaj (Sayeh) poems can help us to appreciate his thoughts and his poetic talents.

This research aims to study and recognize the semantic-pragmatic functions categories of questions in the poems of Amir Hushang Ebtehaj (Sayeh). The applied research method is descriptive-analytic and the statistical population consists of all the poet's collections. To do so, 120 lyrics, 84 Free Verses, 17 Couplets, 10 Mathnawis and 8 Pieces were randomly selected and analyzed. 187 cases were detected in which Sayeh used questions to express the secondary meaning. The results of the research show that the poet has applied almost 28 functions of the secondary meaning in interrogative sentences. The statistical analysis of the data indicates that the most frequent functions of the secondary meaning or intentions of the questions are as follows:

1- Wish: 33 questions (13%), 2- Protest: 33 questions (13%), 3- Wonder: 33 questions (13%), 4- Complaint: the complaint has been reiterated 28 times (11%), 5- Helplessness: 24 questions (9%), 6- Hesitation: 20 questions (7%), 7- Denial: 19 questions (7%), 8- Despair: 18 items (7%), 9- Curtsy: 8 questions (3%), 10- To emphasize on the news and draw attention: 8 questions (3%), 11- Concern: 8 questions (3%), 12- Apprehension: This question is asked 7 times (2.5%), 13. Sadness and Gloominess: This question has been asked 7 times (2.5%), 14- Contradictions and Resignation: 6 times (2%) percent, 15- Rebuking and blaming: 4 questions (1.5%), 16- Negation: 4 questions (1.5%), 17- Humor and humiliation: 4 questions (1.5%), 18- Repentance: 4 questions (1.5%), 19- Pity and sympathy: This question has been repeated 4 times (1.5%), 20- Pain and regret: 4 questions (1.5%), 21- Foolishness: 3 times (1%), 22- Exaggeration: 3 times (1%), 23- Feeling proud: 3 times (1%), 24- Feelings of grief and sadness: 2 times (5%), 25- Euphoria and Joy: 2 times (5%), 26. Waiting: in this study 2 times (5%), 27. Settlement or clearing: in this study 2 times (5%), and 28- Shame: this question has been used just once.

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