Problematic Utilization of Poetry in Arabic Grammar

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ABSTRACT

This investigation is a critical approach on one of the most important linguistic material of the Arabic grammarian (i.e. Poetry) which has been used to justify the grammatical categories. The central discussion related to the poetry as a special structure that can’t be the proper patterns for derivation of grammatical rules. In the formalism perspective literariness means making-strange that take place on typical language. This process depends on several mechanisms such as the rhyme, putting the words forward and backward, delectionation, addition, and changing the position of the phrase in poetic context. These mechanism have been called (poetic necessities) or (zarorat Al sheriya) in the Arabic traditional linguistic. Our hypothesis is the poetic language has not sufficient authenticity to be used as a well form structure. But the grammarian considered it as a well-form structure that has validity to be used broadly in the derivation of grammatical rules. Controversially poetry loses its authenticity because of its abnormality. Indiscrimination between the poetry and prose in Arabic grammatical studies have leaded to the expansion of grammatical exceptional case and consequently this procedure created very serious complexity and ambiguity in the Arabic grammar.

KEYWORDS: Arabic grammar, poetry, abnormality, justifier phrases

I. INTRODUCTION

Applying poetry by Arabic grammarian for establishment of Arabic grammar leaded to problematic complexity of the Arabic grammar through many exceptional rules which was natural consequences of incorrect methodology. Long history of Arabic grammar’s compilation indicates that obscurity in definition of prose and poetry in addition to supreme authority of poetry in Arabic society convinced the first grammarian to consider the poetry as reliable patterns for setting up the grammatical rules. More and more exceptional grammatical categories developed by the subsequent generation of grammarians. Thought the special structure of language has been neglected by Arabic grammarians and consequently unnecessary rules increased in Arabic grammar but the formalism approach toward the poetry paves the way for critical attitude to the Arabic grammarian’s methodology. Using some aspect of formalism theory this study investigated relation of poetry with the increase of unnecessary grammatical rules suggesting the new reform in Arabic grammar.

I. Applying poetry in Arabic grammar and distinction between prose and poetry

A brief look at the major ancient sources of Arabic grammarian indicates that huge volume of poems has been used in their works. The poetry has High status in Arab culture; hence it is not surprising that according to the importance of poetry it took vast place at core attention of grammarians. For example, at the first book which have written in the Arabic grammar by Sibaveyh “Al Ketab”, both the common language and poetry have been used to establish grammatical categories. This approach demonstrates to us their attention to the theoretical and practical aspects of the syntax. To establish grammer rules; the grammarians looked for mechanism makes their rules applicable. “The grammarian efforts in the past, not only centralized theoretical aspects of Arabic (Nahv) but also concentrated on the implemental aspects of language. Occasionally they used some parts of the Qur'an and the poems of the pre-Islamic poets as a proper well - form structure to conform on the Nahv. Consequently it has been easy to see dozen books on the field of interpretation of Koran and illustration on the some poetical works which mainly lays stress on grammatical relationship between the words at the sentences.” (Abd al-Latif, 1992, p. 15-16)

Due to the high utilization of poems for justification of Arabic grammar –whether they are correct or false-it might be observed that poetry and prose have been used equally as a well form patterns. Very high frequency of the poems in the book Sibaveyh’s grammatical work ‘Al Ketab’ indicates the importance of poetry status in his work. Indeed Arabic culture should be considered as a reference-oriented in all of its areas. This is particularly true in the field of assigning Nahv accordingly the poetry for the reason of its ascetical aspects gradually replaced another type

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of speeches. According to accepted principles of linguistics, prose is more standard than poetry in order to be correct patterns for the grammarians. Despite of such a undeniable linguistic principle the poetry instead of the prose considered as a more reliable source to the grammarians who began to deduct grammar categories mainly according to poetical matters’ therefore beginning of that process has accomplished with the epistemological mistake. Naturally the prose was closer to the common language; however, less attention has been paid to it. It seems that Arab grammarian didn’t make any distinction between poetry and prose as two different type of literary technique so predominantly they had a similar concept about them. Hence they often mixed up these two issues in their works.

Concentration of Arabic philologist was on the dichotomy concept of eloquent and ineloquent. Gradually the binary concept of poetry and prose replaced by eloquent and non-eloquent, consequently the eloquent crystallized in poetry and prose against the Arabic dialects. Undoubtedly Arab philologists have clear insight of poetry and prose enabled them to recognize certain differences between prose and poetry. “Know that common phrases in Arabic language are either disciplined ones or undisciplined; disciplined ones is poetry and undisciplined is prose” Ibn al Vahab said. (Ibn al-Wahab, 1967, p. 160)

In the text has been quoted from Ibn Tabâ Tabâ the poetry has been considered at the apogee of eloquence: “the poetry is better than common language which the people use it at their typical communications. Thus the poetry consists of the discipline which the prose is in lack of it. (Ibn Tabâ Tabâ, 1982, p. 9)

Aesthetical aspects of poetry persuaded the Arab grammarians and philologist to admit the poetry as confident patterns neglecting its abnormal structures. What has been mentioned as poetic limitations “zarorat al sher” refers to grammarian’s observation on poetry as special form of language. They truly observed that the deviation which is possible in the poetry is impossible in prose. Thought the distinction between poetry and prose was obviously clear for grammarians whereas the eloquence of poetry convinced them to justify some of the syntactic structures just because of its eloquence. According to what is quoted from Abu Helal Al Askari is seems that poetry has considered as a well form structure. The speeches are three types: Letters, sermons; poetry. All these types require good organization and suitable order. (al-’Askari, 1952, p. 161)

According to such a given attitude toward the poetry, so it's no surprise that the poetry were used in grammatical categories as valid grammatical patterns.

II. Characteristics of poetry

Thought the Substantial difference between poetry and prose didn’t discussed at the given Arabic philological book’ Nevertheless we can come to conclusion thorough the grammarians viewpoints that the poetry has some special features. ‘The meanings are scattered in any way and everybody –Arabs, non Arabs, Bedouin, urban- know it therefore’ cardinal point is in setting up the rhythm and selecting the words which are versatile and having a goof talent to write. Poetry is some kind of molding, weaving, portraying”. (Jâhiz, 1913, p. 42)

using such descriptions by Arabic philologist shows that they paid great attention to the difference structure of poetry. Language at its poetical form has such fluency which enables words to be postponed or transposed from their real place at the sentences.

Abu Hilal Al Askari believed that in an optimal structure every words should be in its own right.

‘A good composition is that one which the words take place on their proper places and there are no deletion, postpone, transposition in the structure with the exception of deletion that don’t corrupt and complicate the meaning. Bad organization of the words means transposition of the words deserves postponing”. (al-’Askari, 1952, p. 161)

Inevitably disorganization of the words in poetry would happen. This is central issue which Abu Hilal has discussed; describing it as a bad composition. What Abu Hilal intends to explain is nothing more than going beyond prose and its structure? His opinion demonstrates the eloquent viewpoint with regard to poetry. Although the poetry is not like a prose and doesn’t depend on given grammatical rules but it should be considered that deviation is an essential part of poetry. According to the Abd Al Qahir Jurjani the only factor which makes difference between poetry and prose is the meaning that requires special expression base on displacement at its structure. According to his theory that is well known as a Nazm (discipline) any displacement should be justify by grammatical categories. ‘Know that discipline(Nazm jis) nothing but putting your words appropriate to what the grammar requires and doing according the rules of grammar and going on the road that has been paved by others”. (al-Jurjānī, 2004, p. 81)

The structure of language should be base on grammatical rules otherwise it leads to anarchy in semantic field. There are differences between approach of Abd Al Qahir Jurjani and Abu Hilal. Abu Hilal believes that structure of poetry depends on deviation whereas the authority is with prose. On the other hand Abd Al Qahir expands frame of grammar in such a manner that includes poetic deviations so any poetic deviation would be interpret according to its semantic aspects. As Abd Al Qahir maintains in his theory of discipline Nazm the form of the text should be consider as a mirror of meaning which reflected in grammar.
In this case the reason of being definite or indefinite or being postponed or transposed could be comprehensive due to the rules which dominate language. These rules have presented in grammar or Nahv “we will not know anything about the meaning that poet intended in his verses unless we pay attention to the grammatical paradigms and understand differences which are between grammatical categories”. (The same, p. 81)

According to Abd Al Qahir’ comprehension of poetry depends of our knowledge about grammar and the quality of applying the grammar depends on the meaning which has been intended by the poet. So the deviation of the poetry should not be considered as anarchy and the reason of any deviation is explainable. “The poet is who determines the quality of using the words definite or indefinite, postponed or transposed, deletion or repetition. Applying the noun or pronoun and the poet is who puts every word at its suitable places appropriately”. (The same, p. 82)

So the deviation is possible so far as it don’t come to ambiguity. Displacement in the poetry accomplished to add aesthetical aspects to the poems. Hence it would be considered that language has special structure. Regarding this subject Abdu Al Qahir says:

"when he called his companions they hasted to him from everywhere with the faces were like the Dinars” thought the metaphor at this verse is glorious but what increased its beauty is postponing and transposing which enriched its attractiveness. If you are in doubt’ change the position of words governed by preposition and say:

( The same, p. 99)

According to Ibn Roshd common language is cornerstone of literary language. Poetry made of transforming common language. “If the common language got transformation it would be poetry or poetical words”. (Ibn Rushd, 1971, p. 149)

Otherwise there were some philologists who considered the prose more important than poetry. According to them the poetry has a secondary important” the prose is a principle and poetry is an offshoot pleonastic to the principle. Primarily people intend to use prose and secondary incidentally they engage in poetry”. (al-Tuhidî, 1942, p. 139-138)

Abu Hayan mentions to essentiality of prose which innately is near to humankind whereas “poetry is limited by rhyme and rhythm”. (The same, p. 139)

III. Poetic limitation and formalism deviation

Formalism making strange and poetic limitations (Zaruratu Al Sheriya), Muslims scholars and Russian formalists have the same viewpoint toward the literature as an art. According to formalists literature is depend upon deviation. Language disturbs accustomed sense of readers by striking typical view. So we are able to understand the world across making strange process. The mechanism which cause derivation in formalism school corresponds with Arabic grammanarian concept of (poetic limitations) Zarurat Al Sheriya. Thought both approaches share in common background but it doesn’t mean that there are no differences.” It { poetry } employs an impressive range of so-called ‘devices’. It uses, for instance, forms of repetition that one does not find in ordinary language such as rhyme, a regular meter, or the subdivision in stanzas that we find in many poems" Bertens said. (Bertense, 2001, p. 34)

At the Arabic grammar discourse it is denied that poetry especially because of its structure is not proper patterns for being a base for establishment of grammar. If it been considered that grammar is application of language according to proper organization of the words in sentences so the grammar should be deducted from the patterns that in any rate have no deviation. ‘The words which used in poetry is the same words which used in prose but there is a difference in composition of words. The way the words compose in poetry differ from the prose’. (Muhammad Wiys, 2002, p. 139)

Prior Arabic grammarians concentrate on justification of deviated form of poetry by declaring the ‘poetic limitation’. Thought the Sibawayh didn’t allocate special part of his book Al Kitab to this issue but he clearly mentioned to difference between poetry and prose ‘ Know that what is permitted in poetry is not permitted beyond poetry’ (Sibawayh, 1990, p. 16) thought Sibawayh mentioned to verity of prose and poetry he advocate his efforts to bring all poetic deviations into frame of grammatical categories.

According to Ibn Al Malik ‘poetic limitations are inevitable at poetry’ (al-Suyûtî, 2006, p. 12) some Arabic scholars don’t agree with Ibn Al Malik. According to them the poet can easily avoid applying deviations in his poems. Maybe the definition that offered Ibn Al Malik inspires us that he means the poet can’t avoid from poetic limitation. Refusing such hermeneutical understanding al Baghdadi believes that poetic limitations are the options to poet ‘poetic limitations are unmoral compositions which take place in poetry whether the poet obliged to use it or not’. (al- Baghdâdî, 1997, p. 46)

Objective investigation of Ibn Jinni obviously shows that poetic limitation has any communication with constraint of poetry. Poetic limitation essentially means abnormal construction which inevitably takes place at
poetry. “The poetry is the ground of limitation and excuse of poet will be accepted because occasionally the words deviate from its normal forms”. (Ibn Jinnī, 1952, p. 188)

He explains that poetic experience requires deviation. According to Ibn Osfur the poetic constrain has no reflect on poetic limitations “since the poetry is a rhetorical composition so Arabs permit some deviation in the poetry which don’t permit it in ordinary language”. (Ibn ‘Usfūr, 1980, p. 13)

Undoubtedly Ibn Fares position against poetic limitation is most serious critics to the poets. Neglecting the special structure of poetry Ibn Fares refuse any deviation in poetry. In his discourse it has been considered as poetic mistakes. According to his criteria the poets make the mistakes in their poems. His viewpoint is a landmark for the linguist who critics applying poetry as a good patterns for grammar. “some of the ancient poets and their followers at the great part of their poems have gone on the right path and they have gone astray in the little part of their poems then some arab scholars and grammarian tried to find justification for their poetic mistakes”. (Ibn Fāris, 1980, p. 17)

IV. Negative role of poetry in Arabic grammar

The poetic structure which has been used by grammarians to justify their grammatical categories accomplished with problematic consequences as follow:
1-applying poetry as a normal form isolated common language at grammatical studies.
2-when the deviation which is essential for poetic language use by grammarian as a well form naturally it plays main role at complexing Arabic grammar. Increase of many exceptional grammatical categories makes the acquisition of Arabic grammar very complex for learners.
3-justification of deviated poetic compositions by Arabic grammarians made them depend on philosophical approach as a mechanism enables them to justify poetic deviations.

V. Conclusion

It seems that Poetry is considered as one of the key sources of Arabic grammar. This process took main places at the works of first generation of grammarians neglecting substantial difference between poetry and prose. No doubt the reason for ignoring such a great difference between the two levels of language relates to the lofty position of poetry as eloquent words among the Arabic-speakers. Recognition of the prose from poetry has embodied in concept of poetic limitations. Thought the poetic limitation denotes to separation between poetry and prose but the grammarian didn’t pay enough attention to this point. Hence the grammarians applied abnormal verses as justification for aberrant structures. The description of Eloquent made them to ignore substantial differences among the various levels of language. Poetry is seen as a credible source for the grammar establishment. Today in formalist approaches to language the poetry has been considered as a strange structure. This new approach to literature and poetry incites critic to the poetry as a well form patterns which is basis of grammar rules.

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