

A Survey of Persian Dialectal Versified Glossaries in Recent Centuries

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Abstract

Dialectal versified dictionaries, as an example of didactic poetry, in recent centuries, are compiled to protect dialectal words. Among the old dialect dictionaries, we can mention "Nesab-e Jame-al-Loghat" (10th AH), "Nesab-e Sabuhi" and "Nesab-e Tabari" (13th AH), most of these examples are based on the model of "Nesab al-Sabiyan" Abu Nasr Farahi (7th AH). In Iran, due to ethnic and racial diversity, we are faced with a wide range of local languages and dialects. Since a long time ago, one of the effective ways to protect their prosperity in the young generation has been using the language of poetry in order to simplify the process of memorizing dialect words. Despite this, for many languages and dialects of our country, we do not have a systematic dictionary in the form of versified glossary "Nesab". The present article aims to present examples of poetic dialect glossaries, and point out their structural features so that it may be an incentive to revive this poetic tradition as one of the approaches of lexicography in the contemporary period.

Keywords: versified dictionary, didactic poetry, Iranian dialects, lexicography.

Extended abstract

1. Introduction

"Nisab" is an Arabic word that means a certain limit of something for which other meanings are mentioned in the dictionaries. In literary terms, "Nisab" is a poem that usually has a word or words translated from one language to another in each verse. In other words, Nisab is a kind of rhymed dictionary so that words can be remembered better. Nisabs are generally written to teach science and technology, and do not necessarily have a poetic aspect (Akhwan Mahdavi, 2015: 63).

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Naibi (2013) based on the existing rhymed dictionaries in the history of Iranian literature, has divided the Nisab into three categories in terms of subject diversity. The "dialectal Nisabs" are a subset of "Linguistic Nisabs". In defining linguistic Nisab in poetry and literature, Naibi says it is explaining the words from one language to another language or to find its equivalents. This poetic art was created by bilingual poets. These Nisabs have been organized to teach and transfer the words of one language or dialect to the speakers of another language. Therefore, its composers should have sufficient command in both languages or dialects (Naibi, 2013: 10).

Nisabs are often composed in the range of 200 to 500 verses, which include about 7 to 10 forms of prosody. The Nisabs that have additional verses to explain the words, even include more than 500 verses (Naibi, 2013: 12). Among the published Nisabs on Persian language dialects, the following can be mentioned:

Niaz Hijazi's "Comprehensive Dictionary of Vocabularies" (second half of the 10th century AH), in which the author defines some words and combinations that represent the natural language of the region in his time. Birjandi's dialectal words include: "Sabuhi versified dictionary" (13th century) by Mulla Ali Ashraf Sabohi, and "Andalib Nisab" (current century) by Saeed Andalib, "Nasab Tabari" by Amir Teimur Qajar (1264 AH), "Gorgani Nisab" by Seyed Reza Erfani (1943-1947), "Gorgani Nisab" by Nasrollah Safai (second half of the present century), "Shoshtar Nisab" by Mohammad Baqer Niromand (1970), "Sabzevari Nisab" by Seyed Ali Naqi Amin (second half of the current century), and also two books on the local words of the Semnani dialect in 2013 and 2015 by Mohammad Reza Jadidi; and a poem by Mohammad Baqer Nayeri and Farhang Shkouhi which will be introduced in this article.

2. Theoretical framework

As an example of versified dictionary, Nisabs have less lexical richness than today's dictionaries. In comparison to non-versified dictionaries, they have a small volume in terms of the range and number of words, and the words that appear in the dictionary section are mostly everyday words in colloquial language. The uncommon and difficult words for writing are rarely seen in them. The meaning of all words is not expressed correctly due to the observance of poetic rules and restrictions such as rhyme and prosody. A word that conforms to the rules of poetry usually is chosen for the meaning of each word. In addition to Nisabs, we can mention *Alfiyes*, *Tohfes*, *Arjozes*, and other educational epopees as a kind of didactic literature.

3. Research method

In this article, the research is carried out in a library form including: articles and related research, dissertations and published books. For studying the dialect's

words in some cases it was necessary to access the manuscripts of those words. Then various dialectal Nisabs from the past to the present have been identified and their structural features have been mentioned. In the meantime, the various considerations of Nisabs, the structure of presenting words and the pattern of setting words according to the type of each Nisabs have been introduced. Finally, a report has been presented on the comparison of dialects' Nisabs. Since Nisabs are considered a kind of dictionary and since lexicography is intertwined with linguistics, we have tried to have a look at the structural parameters of Nisabs from this point of view.

4. Findings and discussion

Compiling and organizing the dialectal dictionaries is one of the ways that helps preserving the local languages and dialects. Among them, versified dictionaries, which are mainly based on the old Nisabs, due to their rhyme, help a lot in memorizing these dialect words. The Nisabs introduced in this article based on their regulatory structure can be classified into prefaced and non-prefaced Nisabs composed in Persian dialects.

It is interesting to note that the difference between these Nisabs and the emotional poems of other poets is that these versified dictionaries are mainly composed in a various prosodic environment. They often lack poetic charms. On the other hand, using poetry as a tool to address some scientific issues is considered one of the capabilities of some literary scholars who have used the capacity of prosodic features to reflect educational issues, and this innovation helps to facilitate learning these dialect words.

5. Conclusion

Languages and dialects, as a mirror of the native and national culture of Iranians, have faced serious threats in recent years due to the influx of media waves into villages and remote areas, and as a result, urbanization and increase migration to big cities. By reviewing the methods of dealing with words and their meanings in dialectal Nisabs, we can come up with solutions such as: consecutively presenting the dialect's words and their meanings and vice versa; presenting the meaning of a dialect word with another dialect word; presenting the meaning of a dialect word by using its opposite meaning; presenting the meaning of a dialect word in the form of a sentence; and presenting the meaning of a dialect word with a synonym in another dialect or language that was used by the writers of Nisabs.

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