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A Hermeneutic Analysis of Proverbs in *Amālī* by al-Sayyid al-Murtada

Ghader Pariz

Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran, Tehran; pariz@atu.ac.ir

Robabeh Ramezani

Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran, Tehran

Abstract: The interpreter, in a hermeneutic perspective, plays an active role in explaining significations of a text and expressing their meanings according to a specific reading, understanding the text and making it understood, and being affected by it or affecting it. The text is analyzed regardless of the speaker/writer and their intentions and given a new meaning with the aim of expressing various implications and readings. Reflecting human lifestyles, modes of thinking, and interpretive modes in different periods and areas of life, proverbs are one of the deep-rooted literary forms and inseparable part of cultures, depicting habits, customs, and beliefs of nations. Studying proverbs can help us understand similarities and differences between cultures. For this reason, scholars have deployed proverbs in their writings to explain their ideas and make themselves understood. Using a descriptive method of content analysis and an author-centered literary hermeneutic approach, the present article strives to answer the important question as to whether or not the meaning of proverbs changes over time. It was concluded that proverbs are uninterpretable texts only aimed at conveying a meaning, concept, or knowledge in the form of simile, metaphor, or irony. Following a way similar to his predecessors', the author of *Amālī* used proverbs to explicate a difficult word or phrase in a narrative, a report, or a couplet. The present study used the list of proverbs from *Amālī* al-Sharif al-Murtada researched by Muhammad Abolfazl Ebrahim and (re)published by Zavel-Ghorba Publication in 1431 A.H. / 1388 S.H.

Keywords: proverb, interpretation, al-Sayyid al-Murtada, culture, *Amālī*

Introduction

Internal revisiting and criticism within a culture leads to both the enrichment of the culture and its deep understanding. In contemporary age, despite the variety and richness of available cultural resources, we have not approached them reasonably yet. Most cultural resources, such as proverbs, indelibly retained in frequently revoked textual or linguistic forms have not been studied in line with modern scientific theories. As such, questions on the part of audience cannot be answered adequately and convincingly. Therefore, it is both inevitable and necessary to revisit those texts with the use of a critical approach and theories of linguistics and interpretation of texts such as hermeneutics that has garnered undivided attention of linguists and interpreters. Characterized by particular linguistic features, proverbs are one of the deep-rooted and common literary forms used in scientific, literary, and commonplace texts as well as in spoken language for various purposes. As such, they should be subject to re-examination based on modern scientific methods so that they can continue to exist in and exert an influence on contemporary culture.

Statement of the problem

A proverb is a short, simple sentence or phrase that expresses effectively a general truth based on the practical experience or common sense. Their popularity among people lies in the fact that they are commonly used in speech and folklore literature to the degree that understanding their meaning does not often require interpretation or explanation.

Yet it does not generally hold true for all proverbs and audiences because there are some proverbs that require interpretation in respect to the audience, time, and place. In such cases, a different interpreter and audience or a change in the time and place of their usage may lead to a different understanding of the meaning.

Since any text is an embodiment of a meaning or mental concept that remains indelible through time and requires reading between lines, great authors in various fields, especially in the humanities, have one way or another used this rich cultural inheritance. Understanding the method of using proverbs can lead to understanding of richness and importance of proverbs in any culture as well as increasing understanding of their descriptive and explanatory capabilities in a field of knowledge. It is also possible to learn the cultural, social, and mental structure of a society by studying the frequency of proverbs usage in a society and analyzing relationships between them. More importantly, to gain a correct and up-to-date understanding of proverbs necessitates using modern theories of text interpretation and avoiding erroneous understanding, false or derivative interpretation, and radically rational interpretation.

Proverbs are used for various purposes, the most important of which is explaining a complex concept by an understandable proverbial concept in the source language. The speaker actually aims at a conscious representation by using a concrete entity to convey a rational concept to the audience. Others, such as poets, use proverbs with a specific purpose and style

to mystify their poems by complicating a proverb or using it partially. The didactic function of proverbs can be considered as the most important one because proverbs, usually containing indirect metaphors, give the speaker an opportunity to convey his/her message in an understandable and subtle way.

In the present research, the proverbs used in *Amālī* by al-Sayyid al-Murtada were studied hermeneutically, and their frequency of usage was analyzed.

Research questions

This research tries to answer the following questions:

1. How does the meaning of proverbs change due to change in time, geographical location, and audience?

2. How much did the author of *Amālī* use proverbs and for what purposes?

Hypotheses

Although the passage of time leads to prosperity of human experience and thought, hence better understanding of texts, identifying the context of text creation adds to its scientific understanding. Proverbs retain their original meanings despite the passage of time, the change in the context of text creation and in the audience, and the increase in the variety of contextual use.

Al-Sayyid al-Murtada, in his work *Amālī*, did not use proverbs with high frequency. He actually used proverbs to explain or bring the meaning of a word in a Quranic verse, hadith, or a couplet closer to the audience. Given the understandability of proverbs for the audience/reader, al-Sayyid al-Murtada just mentioned the proverbs without explaining all of them.

Review of the related literature

Proverbs and their meanings and origins have been dealt with in a great number of studies in both Persian and Arabic; the most important ones are reviewed in this section.

In the article "Cultural Value of Translating Proverbs & Ironies (Arabic–Persian)," Sh. Niazi and H. Nasiri [1] aimed to study the proper methods of translating proverbs and ironies in order to foster an accurate, correct communication between cultures and avoid the decrease in scientific and cultural values of translations. They analyzed several translations meticulously and suggested proper translation methods. This article also strives to explain the use of proverbs, their origins, and some of their literary aspects.

Another article written by E. Rahmani [2] is entitled "The Influence of Arabic Proverbs on Maqamaat of Hariry". Defining Maqāmah and the proverb, the author focused on the proverbs in *Maqāmāt* and analyzed their ironic meanings as well as their origins.

The present research can be considered as the first attempt that uses a hermeneutic approach to study the author's method of using proverbs in describing and explaining a word or phrase;

proverbs, especially in the book *Amālī*, have not been studied from such a perspective yet.

Method

Relying on a descriptive-analytical method, this research aims at explaining how the proverbs were used in *Amālī* and analyzing them from a hermeneutic perspective. To this end, the researchers extracted the proverbs (texts) used in *Amālī* and analyzed the reason for and method of using them with an eye to what the author had in mind. Then, a hermeneutic analysis was conducted focusing on the origin and the context of emergence of the proverbs in order to understand the meaning.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is known as a traditional way of text interpretation with its roots in the sacredness of the text [3, p. 496]. Etymologically speaking, *hermeneutic* is derived from the Greek *hermeneuein* meaning *interpretation* [4, p. 271], which in turn is etymologically linked to *Hermes*, the Greek deity, the messenger of Gods, and the God of frontiers whom Plato, in *Cratylus*, referred to as the inventor of language and speech [3, p. 496].

As a method that can be used to reach scientific understanding of the text, hermeneutics is the science of interpretation and analysis dating back to the past, recently developed with special scientific tools and principles.

Hermeneutics, as a by-product of philosophy, is considered to be one of the deepest forms of thinking with its primary focus on interpretation later evolving into understanding. Therefore, hermeneutics, as a method of interpretation, has undergone two phases: 1) methodological; initially concerning sacred texts and then all other texts, 2) philosophical; concerning all phenomena [5]. It should be noted that not every text is hermeneutically interpretable, as sometimes the creator of a work, conveying a mental concept, consciously selects some words that are completely consistent with the concept. The author simply intends to convey knowledge or a feeling to the audience. Texts in which the writer/speaker's reflection causes meaning to take precedence over form are more difficult to interpret.

Evolution in language, type and level of understanding of the text over time naturally changes the understanding previously attained in a specific temporal and spatial context. Therefore, in hermeneutics, which considers understanding of the text as a negotiation with the text, it is essential to answer the questions of what proverbs meant in the time of their emergence and what they mean now. In other words, it is imperative to realize whether or not understanding of audience in the time of proverb emergence is the same as that of contemporary audience. There is a proverb in Persian and in some other languages saying:

Once a word – حرفی که از دهانت خارج شد دیگر صاحب آن نیستی. *comes out of your mouth, you are no longer its owner*[1].

This proverb also has an equivalent in English as follows: What is told in the ear of a man is often heard a hundred miles away.

What comes out – حرفی که از دهان برآید، گرد جهان درآید. *of mouth reaches the world.*

حرفی که در گوش دیگری گفته شود صد بار شنیده می‌شود. (کنایه از اشاعهٔ آن) – What is told in the ear of a man is heard a hundred times (referring to its dissemination).

This example indicates that the common, conventional understanding is reduced to interpretation and hermeneutics; it is commonly believed and accepted that any utterance can be interpreted in different ways leading to different understandings.

In the course of history of hermeneutics, there have been three approaches, namely special hermeneutics, general hermeneutics, and philosophical hermeneutics. The first two approaches are about methods of understanding and interpreting the text while the third approach is concerned with understanding or philosophical reflection on the phenomenon of understanding. The three core elements constructing the text (author, text, and reader) have led to the identification of three hermeneutic approaches, namely author-centered, text-centered, and reader-centered.

Advocates of the author-centered approach in the literary domain believe that any literary text has an original, ultimate meaning, and any writing about the text is concerned with finding the author's intention. The meaning of a research work is finding what the author had in mind and tried to express in the text; hermeneutics is concerned with the identification of that meaning [3, p. 523]. According to proponents of the author-centered approach, the focus on the author-reader/interpreter dialog does not rely on the used words themselves but on the understanding of what the other side of the dialog expresses through words. Therefore, a hermeneutic focus on the unit of word is balanced by the unit of understanding that exists or must exist between the author and the reader just like between the speaker and the hearer. Interpretation is confirmation of empathy between the reader and the author.

Using the author-centered hermeneutic approach, the present paper tries to investigate the proverbs in *Amālī* with an eye to the text and the audience, as two necessary sides of negotiation, as well as the context.

Al-Sayyid al-Murtada

He was born in Baghdad in 355 A.H. [6, vol. 2, p. 120–121]. Since both his paternal and maternal lineages went back to Husaini, he was given the name of al-Sharif [7, vol. 4, p. 295]. His kunya (nickname) was Alam al-Huda, and he was titled as Dhul-Majdayn and al-Sharif al-Sayyid al-Murtada.

Despite the differing viewpoints on his being a Shia or Mu'tazili, Allamah al-Hilli referred to him as the teacher of Twelver Shia. His brother, al-Sayyid al-Radi (the compiler of *Nahj al-Balagha*). He studied under the tutelage of al-Shaykh al-Mufid [8, vol. 3, p. 26/75]. Al-Sayyid al-Murtada grew up in an atmosphere rich in knowledge and learnt from al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Ibn Nubata, and al-Shaykh Hassan Babawayh. Later, he trained well-known characters, such as al-Shaykh al-Tusi, Ibn al-Barraj, and Abu l-Salah al-Halabi. Of his many works, more than 72 titles were enumerated in *Rayhanat al-Adab*, and 127 books and treatises were listed in the introduction to *al-Intisār*, some of them described briefly [9, p. 48]. He died in Baghdad in 436 A.H. [10, vol. 8, p. 213]. Al-Najashi, in his *Rijal*, says that al-Sayyid al-Murtada passed away in 436, and his son prayed upon his body. He was buried in his house. "Abu Ya'la al-Ja'fari (al-Shaykh al-Mufid's son-in-law), Sallar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, and I undertook performing his ritual bath. Having transferred to Karbala, his body rested next to the Imam Husayn Shrine" [11, p. 270; 12, vol. 4, p. 190].

Amālī: Lexical and terminological meaning

Some lexicographers believe that امالی *amālī* is derived from ملا while some view the term as derived from ملل. Raghib Isfahani, in the entry of املاء (derived from ملا), defined the term as "to help" and "to give time" and provided relevant Quranic evidence; he believes that the word was originally املال later reduced to املاء, [13, ملا]. On the contrary, Ibn Manzur believes that املال is a word of Hijaz and Banu Asad whereas املاء is related to Banu Qays and Banu Tamim [14, ملء]. املاء meaning "to leave out, fill out, and begin"; as a term, it means "orthography", "a specific way of writing a combination of letters according to conventions", and "to give time and write something from memory", which is used with the verb کردن [15, vol. 1, p. 427].

There is less disagreement among scholars on the terminological use of امالی *amālī*; it is used to refer to some books of hadith including those hadiths heard from the dictation of the Shaykh of hadith who recites them from memory or reads them from a piece of writing. Actually students holding paper and pencil sit around the master and write down what the master says based on his own knowledge, and the resulting book is called املا and امالی [16, vol. 1, p. 161].

Amālī by al-Sayyid al-Murtada is originally titled as *Ghurar al-Fawa'id wa Durar al-Qala'id*. In *Al-Dhari'a*, the work is titled as *Ghurar al-Fawa'id wa Durar al-Qala'id, Al-Amālī, Majalis al-Ta'wilat*, etc. and said to contain information on biography of past individuals, poets, long-lived people, and exegesis of difficult Quranic verses and problematic hadiths [17, vol. 16, p. 42]. Containing 80 sessions and appendices (complementary parts), this book is a collection of sciences,

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[1] The text uses a literal translation from Persian.

poems, lexis, literature, exegesis, history, and hadith, which testifies to al-Sayyid al- Murtada's mastery over those fields [18, vol. 3, p. 285].

The proverb and its place in the Arabic literature

Assuming a prominent role in literature, especially in Arabic literature, the proverb has generally established its position in history of human life; it is considered to be wise inheritance from predecessors that is being used in conversations. Therefore, it can be considered as the most important and prominent literary technique which has retained its authenticity despite the age-old history. In the realm of culture, proverbs reflect how a nation thinks and what its cultural-social attitude is; this claim is proved by the popular saying: If you want to know people, know their proverbs.

"A proverb… is a simple, concrete, traditional saying that expresses a perceived truth based on common sense or experience. Proverbs are often metaphorical and use formulaic language. Collectively, they form a genre of folklore"[2].

Preventing the redundancy in speech, the statement of the evident, and controversy, using a proverb as the occasion demands creates a deep meaning with profound impact. Obviously, the one who can use proverbs in the appropriate time and place, as the occasion demands, is an adroit sage observing the general rule of لكل مقام مقال or there is time and place for everything.

As far as the denotative (lexical) meaning is concerned, مثِل *mesl* and مَثَل *masal* like شبه *šebh* and شَبَه *šabah* have the same meaning [14, مثل]. Anything characterizing something else is like (mesl) [19, مثل]. Abu ʻAmr ibn al-ʻAlāʼ (died in 154 A.H.) believes that مثل means adjective, and Yunus ibn Habib (died in 182 A.H.), al-Thaʻalibi (died in 429 A.H.), and Az-Zarkashī (died in 794 A.H.) have the same opinion [20, مثل]. Referring to the word as having the meaning of شِبه *šebh*, Raghib Isfahani (died in 502 A.H.) believes that the word denotes similarity in nature, quality, quantity, size, and area [13, p. 462, مثل].

As a term, مثل (proverb) is a clip of an utterance separated from its origin or commonly used in the language on its own. Without a change in the form, مثل (proverb) converts its current meaning to any concept in which it can be used correctly or any concept whose form requires the similar meaning [21, vol. 1, p. 289].

The author of *Majma-ul-Bahrain* defines مثل (proverb) as an utterance about something being similar to an utterance about something else, and there is similarity between the two utterances in such a way that expressing one of them brings the other to mind [22, مثل]. In addition, Al-Farabi understands مثل (proverb) as an utterance in which the general and the particular people agree on its form and meaning and use it in joy and misery to cut rough

pearls, fulfill far-fetched wishes, and survive exhausting sorrow [23, vol. 1, p. 74].

A short, clear, and wise saying that is commonly understandable, a proverb contains the meaning similar to the speaker's intension, and all people use it to refer to similar phenomena without changing its form.

Proverbs can be studied from literary and rhetorical perspectives. From a rhetorical perspective, it is known as a simile or metaphor including four features. Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm Ibn Sayyār, known as al-Nazzām, says that a proverb includes four features that are not found together in other types of utterances, namely brevity of speech / form, clarity of meaning, goodness of simile, and beauty of irony as the base of rhetoric of speech [24, vol. 1, p. 34].

From a literary perspective, a proverb is considered to be a distinct form. Al-Farabi (died in 350 A.H.) clearly defines that a proverb is an interpretation of the things that are not possible for us to express directly and clearly. It is necessary that a proverb should be expressed without any change in conjugation, structure, and syntax (*tarkib*) based on its original usage [2, p. 48].

Moreover, proverb has not undergone changes in status, sense, concept, structure, and usage since its creation. Unlike other literary forms and texts, there seems to be less disagreement on the use of proverbs among language users.

Proverbs are used for various purposes, such as didactic, moral, mental, rhetorical, and aesthetic. To issue an ultimatum is another purpose for which proverbs are used.

Proverbs in *Amālī*

The literati and scholars have used proverbs to explain some words and concepts in their writings because proverbs express the intention clearly so that the primary intention underlying the use of words or the meaning of concepts can be conveyed to the audience appropriately. Al-Sayyid al-Murtada, who was known for his knowledge of Arabic literature as well as other sciences of the time, deployed proverbs to describe and explain some words and phrases in Quranic verses, hadiths, and couplets.

Analysis of proverbs

The proverbs in *Amālī* are analyzed here in order of Arabic alphabets.

1. ذَهَبُوا شغَر بغَر – *They dispersed and became scattered.*

Al-Sayyid al-Murtada used the proverb interpreting the report containing the phrase شَغَرَ بِرِجلَيهِ in order to differentiate the original meaning of the phrase and the proverb.

He explains that شغَر is a strange word in this hadith; in شَغَرَ بِرِجلَيهِ, شغَر means, "to raise two legs" originally used for a dog when it raises the legs to urinate. He further cites a couplet from al-Farazdaq containing the word شغَّارة

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[2] Proverb // Wikipedia. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proverb (accessed 28 Apr 2021).

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[25, vol. 2, p. 583] and believes that شغَّارة ironically refers to raising two legs to perform an abominable act; he accepts this meaning in the above-mentioned hadith. Moreover, he mentions the proverb ذهبوا شغَر بغَر and considers it as irrelevant to the meaning of the hadith because it actually means they have dispersed in a way that cannot be summarized again.

Al-Sīrāfī believes that شغر in the proverb is derived from شغر الكلب meaning, "it raised one leg and moved it away from the other in order to urinate," and بغر is derived from بغر الرجل meaning, "in spite of drinking water, a man has not been able to quench his thirst because it is too hot." Therefore, both شغر and بغر are about dispersion without any subsequent gathering, just like when a dog urinates, the two legs do not come close to each other, or when a man cannot quench his thirst because it is too hot [26, vol. 1, p. 121].

As a word, شَغَرَ has been used with various meanings: to depopulate, to decrease price, to disperse, to expand, (of a dog) to raise legs to urinate, (of a camel) to raise a leg to kick the baby camel, (with the preposition عن) to dismiss. بغر has the following meanings: a disease that increases thirst, (of a wind) to rise, and to rain [14, شغر]. متفرقين is the only meaning of شغر بغر found in all dictionaries and books on proverbs. شغر بغر is a combination like حيص بيص and خمسةً عشر where there is a *taqdir* of واو between the two parts شغر وبغر, with inflexible (المبنى) *al-fathah* (الفتحه) in the *nasb* status, and the *haal mo'awwal* (الحال المؤول) derived from the subject pronoun واو in ذهبوا, so it means متفرقين.

The author uses the proverb to explain the mentioned word in the hadith. Since the word might be understood differently, he avoids this mentioning the proverb leading to the correct explanation for the meaning of the hadith.

This proverb and the subsequent ones are accumulated and used as evidence to eliminate the ambiguity surrounding the word. It is not used as evidence or introduction to an argument to prove the existence of truth or fact. Actually, proverbs are not practically useful in argumentation, because using proverbs is tantamount to logical fallacy in which a very general, broad concept is used to prove the particular.

As a short, simple, declarative sentence with correct and cohesive grammatical order, this proverb has been recorded in books on proverbs and dictionaries. However, it has probably lost its original usage over time due to the strangeness between شغر and بغر in spoken and written language; it might be used but the meaning different from the original is not conceivable. The plural, third-person past verb ذهبوا signifies the fact that the proverb was not used for an individual but for a group of people who dispersed. Furthermore, شغر بغر is a kind of large derivation/metathesis (الاشتقاق الكبير) functioning as an adverb of manner showing how the group move when people leave. Not every act of leaving or moving is necessarily an act of dispersion, and شغر بغر refers to leaving with intensity, violence, and discomfort, which indicates that the dispersion is accompanied by hatred without any hope

of subsequent assembly. The combination is derived from the letters that signify hatred and violence. The letter راء is used in the two words with the repetitive characteristic signifying continuity of action. The letter غين in the words is an amplified letter (المفخمه) with the characteristics of elevation (الاستعلاء) and loudness (الجهر) signifying intensity and difficulty.

Possessing the background knowledge in Ilm al-Kalām, Al-Sayyid al-Murtada used the proverb in interpreting the hadith in order to make it understood correctly. This fact indicates the proverb's broad context of use as well as people's understanding. Both use the proverb in order to interpret the text correctly so that misunderstanding of hadith should be impossible.

Culturally speaking, this proverb shows that at the time of creation, the dog was there among people as a domestic animal (whatever use it might have). Raising its leg to urinate was considered a typical action, so people used a word signifying the act to show the separation and dispersion.

2. ذَهَبُوا عَبَادِيدَ عَبَابِيدَ – *They dispersed and became scattered.*

This proverb follows the previous one and has the same meaning [27, vol. 1, p. 103]. Citing from *Montahi al-Arab* and *Anandraj*, Dehkhoda عبابيد defines them as groups of people and صار القوم عبابيد as a group of people in the past distressed, dispersed, and on the run to any direction. He further mentioned "far ways and the woods" as other meanings of عبابيد and considered عباديد and عبابيد as synonymous plural nouns without the singular form [28, عين]. This word is used to refer to only "to disperse and leave" and not "to come together." Also, the two words can be used interchangeably with the same meaning: ذهبوا عباديد and ذهبوا عبابيد [14, عبد]. Similar to the previous one, it means متفرقين because of the *taqdir* of واو between the two parts, with inflexible (المبنى) *al-fathah* (الفتحه) in the *nasb* status, and the *haal mo'awwal* (الحال المؤول) derived from the subject pronoun واو in ذهبوا.

The analysis of this proverb is the same as the previous one, and all the above-mentioned linguistic and semantic features hold true in this case, too. The plural واو in the verb ذهبوا makes it particularly applicable to a group, and the large derivation/metathesis between عبابيد and عباديد, the letter عين in the two words, and the letters باء and دال in each of them signify intensity, difficulty and dispersion.

Given the primary meanings of words (far ways or/ and the woods), it can be claimed that the phrase is conceptually similar to the fact that people of the time would leave home for the desert when they gave up hope or became upset. Given such conceptual similarity, the phrase has been used as a proverb expressing collective separation and dispersion. Because of change in the form of being away and separated throughout history as well as the strangeness of عبابيد and عباديد, the proverb is no longer used, and its traces can be found only in books on proverbs.

3. ذَهَبُوا أيادِيَ سَبَأ – *They dispersed and became scattered.*

This proverb is used to express the intensity of dispersion and distress. معديكرب like ايادى سبأ is a two-part utterance used as a single noun. Living in Ma'rib, Saba or Sheba سبا was a tribe of descendants of Saba ibn Yashjub ibn Ya'rub ibn Qahtan. When the Dam of Ma'rib was about to burst, the woman called Tareefa, who was a soothsayer, got to know it through divination and retold it to Amr bin Amer known as Maziqiya. He sold his possessions in Ma'rib and went to Mecca. The residents of Ma'rib got the fever for no apparent reason. They helplessly went to the soothsayer who made them aware of future and said that the accident would separate and disperse them. When asked for solution, she said that anyone who had ambition and a strong wish must go to Oman's palace and tower (the Azd tribe). Anyone who patiently withstood world disasters must join the Namar tribe (the Khuza'ah tribe). Anyone interested in strong mountains rooted in mud that could feed humans during the famine must go Yasreb, the city of dates (the Aws and Khazraj). Anyone who wanted wine, possessions, power, edifice, and harir must go to Busra and Ghavir in the Levant (the Jafnids from the Ghassanids). Anyone who dreamt of fine clothes, fast horses, treasures of the daily food, and blood on the ground must go to Iraq (Jadhima al-Abrash, Al-Muharraq, and residents of Al-Hirah). Since then, Arabs used it as a common proverb to talk about people who are dispersed after being together [29, vol. 1, p. 477].

There is a Quranic surah with the same title describing:
- the territory of the tribe (بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ);
- its blessings (لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ آيَةٌ جَنَّتَان عَنْ يَمِين وَشِمَال كُلُّوا مِنْ رِزْق رَبِّكُمْ);
- their ingratitude (فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَاعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ);
- retribution (فَأَعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِم وَبَدَّلْنَاهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتَيْ أُكُل خَمْطٍ وَأَثْلٍ وَشَيْءٍ مِنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ).

Moreover, there is the story of Solomon, and the Queen of Sheba (...إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ) in Surah An-Namal. Definitely, the Quranic expression of the proverb is the reason that it still remains in spoken and written language with its evidence in various contemporary literary forms ranging from narration to story and from qasida to ghazal.

This proverb is also used with *sukūn* (the absence of vowels) of ياء in أيادى despite the fact that the analogy is *nasb*. Actually, Arabs preferably reduce it and use it with *sukūn*; they also pronounce the *hamza* (glottal stop) in سبأ with reduction in sound. Here, ايدى means الانفس. Although it is definite (*ma'rifa*), it is in the *nasb* status based on *haal mo'awwal* (الحال المؤول) of indefinite (*nakira*)(متفرقين), or the first particle of the construction (*al-modaaf*) that has been omitted due to *taqdir al-mesl*, and its *taqdir* would be ايادى. ذهبوا مثل أيادى سبأ Some believe that ايادى here means الطرق whose accusative (المنصوب) depending on its *taqdir* would be ذهبوا فى طرقهم وسلكوا مسالكهم [30, vol. 2, p. 88; 31, p. 225, proverb 664].

The usage of these proverbs shows that in some of them like شغر بغر, dispersion seems not to be followed by gathering

while in some proverbs like ذهبوا ايادى سبا and ذهبوا عباديد عبابيد, it is possible that people get together again.

The historical context of emergence of this proverb also indicates the intensity of dispersion after a gathering in time and place full of blessings which finally led to a great separation due to diverse believes; yet such dispersion makes it impossible to get together again.

Several reasons have led the proverb to keep its usage alongside the word سبأ in Quran; the reasons are simplicity and fluency, popularity of the context of emergence, familiarity of the words, cohesion and order of words, absence of elevated / intensified characteristics and sounds, and unambiguity of the proverb. It proves that the popularity of the story from which the proverb is derived or of the person who used it first together with linguistic features can be considered as the reasons why the proverb has preserved its usage in different times.

Based on the analysis of usage of the proverb in contemporary literary forms, it can be claimed that the proverb has still kept its primary meaning though it is now used for different referents. For example, the book ايادى سبا written by Jamal ibn Huwaireb narrates a text, a prime example of usage of the proverb with a different referent.

4. أجْبَن من صافِر – *More afraid than an owl or a lark*.

Al-Sayyid al-Murtada used this proverb first in interpreting the report that Abu Hurairah had quoted from the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) forbidding the job الزمارّة or oboist. Examining the meaning of الزمارّة or الرمازة, he refers to the characteristics of a woman engaging in Zina (unlawful sexual intercourse). He cites from Mofazzal that it is about a man who whistles for a debauched woman and is afraid of everything. Al-Sayyid al-Murtada also cites from al-Asmaʿi that الصافر means any whistling bird that is described as scared because of not being a hunter. Considering these points, al-Sayyid al-Murtada refers to ibn Qutaybah who verifies only Mofazzal's point and proves it by two poems from al-Kumayt that are about a debauched man signaling a debauched woman by whistling [27, vol. 1, p. 432].

Second, al-Sayyid al-Murtada used the proverb referring to the best poem about being hospitable and getting accustomed to it. Having mentioned the best poem from Hatim al-Tai, he went on to analyze and explain the words and meaning of couplets.

Dehkhoda referred to صافر as a subject derived from صفير, which means "caller", "any calling bird" or "any bird that is not a hunter". He cited *Montahi al-Arab*, which defines it as an ill-wishing thief or bird, and from *Makhzan al-Adviyeh* calling it قره or ابوالمليح and in Persian چکاوک (lark). Relying on *Montahi al-Arab*, he also defined ما بالدار صافرٌ and ما بها صافر in the phrase أحدٌ as أحدٌ [29, صفر].

Jalaluddin Homaei, in a Persian qasida (chakameh) about his life adventure, says,

– به روز عرض هنر صافر برادر جغد به گاه لاف سخن رستم نبیره سام

A scops owl (صافر) *becomes the brother of the owl when it comes to performing the arts, Rostam becomes the descendant of Saam when one is rodomontading.*

Then, he defines صافر as a scops owl that, in Arabic, is a symbol of cowardice [32, p. 536–542].

In *Faraed al-Laal*, صافر is defined as any calling bird or songbird, and it is said that calling is not a characteristic of hunting birds but of the hunted ones that do not hunt. The book mentions other sayings about its definitions and referents; it means a bird that hangs with legs from the tree, keeps its head in a lower position because of being afraid of falling asleep and being hunted, and calls in that position during the night [33, vol. 1, p. 152].

Apparently, lexicographers appear to disagree on the meaning of صافر. It seems that the word means a caller and refers to an owl; the proverb originally emerged out of the context in which a debauched man signaled to a debauched woman by whistling, he himself afraid of being known by others. This proverb is used for people who are intrinsically afraid or feel intimidated because of their wrongdoing.

Both righteous and corrupt people who want to do something in secret choose an individual to stand away from the scene and make them aware of anything that might happen by whistling or signaling, or they fear the lowest sound or the smallest movement in the environment; this is common behavior that manifestly persisted over time. Logical continuity and intertwined relationship between the event the proverb is derived from; human behavior over time together with the linguistic features, such as brevity and simplicity of the declarative sentence; cohesion and word-order let the proverb persist throughout time. The audience never inferred different meanings from the proverb because its usage never transcended the act of making aware or warning against abandoning wrongdoing. Upon closer scrutiny, there seems to be a contradiction in its usage. Actually, it is used to both point out a secret wrongdoer and warn a person engaged in a secret activity. Both wrongdoing and being engaged in a secret activity cause fear on the part of the doer. The semantic components of "fear" and "being afraid" might be inferred both from the putative bird that continually calls or sings out of fear of being hunted during the night and from the secret activity that always involves fear and apprehension.

It seems that the author of *Amālī* used the proverb interpreting the report only to refer to the characteristics of the debauchee. He actually intended to express the fact that a wrongdoing usually occurs in secret, and people who commit a wrongdoing are aware of their wrong and afraid of any sound or movement so they appoint a lookout to warn them.

5. ایاک اعنی و اسمعي یا جارة – *I tell the door, so the wall hears.*

Used in the last complementary part of *Amālī*, this proverb comments on an issue in the book concerning reprimands given to the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Such reprimands were actually directed at the prophet's ummah and given

to the prophet himself. After giving an answer to the issue, al-Sayyid al-Murtada mentioned a narrative from ibn Abbas saying نزل القرآن بإیاک أعنی واسمعی یا جارة. Provided a Quranic evidence for the narrative in which God said, " یَا أَیُّهَا النَّبِیُّ" إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ (Surah At-Talaq, 1), al-Sayyid al-Murtada believes that directed at the prophet, it referred to the whole Muslim community (ummah) [27, vol. 2, p. 331]. Moreover, Imam Sadiq (PBUH) referred to the proverb in a popular hadith saying, "نزل القرآن باياک اعنی و اسمعی یا جاره" [34, vol. 1, p. 10] literally translated into English as: Quran has been revealed according to the proverb "I tell you, not the neighbor, you listen".

Abu Ubaid al-Qasim bin Salam understands the proverb as *tariz* (a kind of irony), which means that a speaker says something but means something else [35, vol. 1, p. 8].

As said in *Majma al-'amthal*, Sahl ibn Malik al-Fazari was the first person who used the proverb. Roaming alone the neighborhoods of the Tayy tribe, he asked about the tribal chief, and they replied, "Al-Harith ibn La'am.' Then he went to the chief's tent (*khaimah*) to see him but he could not. The chief's sister said to him, "Please, come down, ample God's gifts and blessings be upon thee.' As she got out of her tent, Sahl met one the most beautiful women of the time who was the wisest and the best woman in the tribe. He got such a feeling for her that he did not know how to express himself and get her consent. So, one day he sat down around the tent and recited the following poems in an audible voice [36, p. 77–76]:

یا – أُخْتَ خَیرِالبَدوِ وَ الحَضَارَة کَیفَ تَرَینَ فِی فَتَی فَزَارَة ؟ *Oh you, the sister of the best of Bedouin civilization. What do you think about the young person from al-Fazari.*

– أَصبَحَ یَهوَی حُرَّةً معطَّارَة إِیاکِ أَعنِی وَ اسمَعِي یَا جَارَة *Who is interested in a generous, sweet-scented woman? I say to the wall, I mean you, the neighbor.*

Having heard him, the woman knew it was about her. They talked to each other, and finally he proposed marriage to her [24, vol. 1, p. 66]. The Persian equivalent of the proverb is در به تو می گویم، دیوار تو بشنو [37, p. 115] is literally translated into English as follows, "The door, I speak to you; the wall, you hear."

It is obvious that al-Sayyid al-Murtada cited a saying from ibn Abbas containing the proverb in order to prove that the reprimands given to the prophet were actually directed at his ummah. Having been analyzed by various scholars and thinkers, ibn Abbas's saying does not need further discussion.

Tariz (a kind of irony) is a rhetorical form used in spoken language with various forms and referents. Being of the same usage as before, this aesthetic feature is extensively used in all contemporary social, cultural, and political areas. Although the domain of its usage and the degree of its poignancy differ in written and spoken language, it is known for its satirical usage.

In spite of being a hemistich of a couplet, the proverb has been common among the Arabs of Arabian Peninsula since the Age of Ignorance. It has extensive usage in both spoken

and written language. It is also commonly used in Arabic, Persian, and other languages because it is usually used in almost all human societies and languages. The English equivalent is "beat one to frighten another."

Linguistic features of the proverb are its rhyming, simplicity of words, تقديم ما حقه التأخير يفيد الحصر in اياك, and the role of vocative noun referring to the audience. The proverb has been used with high frequency in spoken and written language and even in dialects of the language throughout history. It indicates that the aesthetic expressions (irony, *tariz*, metonymy, simile, and metaphor) have found their ways into a wide range of sentences and phrases, and such aesthetic uniqueness is not separable from the language in general and literary language in particular.

6. حَمِيَ الوطيسُ – *The war became hard and escalated.*

In Session 65 interpreting Verse 40 of Surah Hud (حتى…إذا جاء امرنا و فار التنور), he writes about the six meanings of التنور and mentions the proverb in the fifth Verse. He refers to its meaning التنور as follows: When the wrath of God increased and the execution of divine torment became certain, God referred to التنور as an example of the torment. As Arabs, at the escalation of war, say قد حمى الوطيس with وطيس meaning 27 [التنور, vol. 2, p. 148]. Dehkhoda also says that وطيس means an iron tandoor (tannour) with وطائس as the plural form [28, وطس].

According to al-Hindi in *Kanz ul-Amaal*, the prophet (PBUH), in the Battle of Hunayn, said, "Now the tandoor of war has burst into flames." On that day, Ali ibn Abi Talib (PBUH) was the strongest warrior protecting the prophet in the battle [38, vol. 10, p. 548, Hadith 30225].

Without referring to its proverbial status, al-Sayyid al-Murtada used the proverb to explain a word in a Quranic verse; he actually referred to it as a saying of Arabs, not even mentioning whether it was from the prophet or not. Proverbs are typically used this way to explain a word or concept in scientific and literary forums and works, so this usage is not unique.

حمى is a past tense verb meaning that the heat has increased, and الوطيس means a fire tandoor. Taken together, they signify the fact that the heat of tandoor increased. Since the war escalates at some stages leading to further bloodshed, the whole battlefield and the escalation of war are compared to a tandoor and the increase in its heat, respectively, which is hot and red.

Despite the brevity and cohesion, this simple declarative phrase successfully conveys the writer's or speaker's message to the audience, requiring no interpretation. It should be noted that though there are other proverbs conveying the same meaning, they do not convey the meaning as aesthetically and compellingly as the mentioned proverb does.

The proverb emerged in the context signifying the escalation of war. Later, it has been used without any change in the original meaning to refer to critical and difficult activities where violence hits its peak. No change in possible referents changes

the meaning, and nothing except the original meaning is conveyed to the audience, aware of the context.

7. شالت نعامتنا – *We became incompatible.*

Explaining some couplets from the poet Al-Ausb'a Al-'Adwani, the author of *Amālī* mentions the poet's saying coined as a proverb and shortly explains it [39, p. 160; 40, vol. 2, p. 707]:

Our – أزرى بنا أننا شالت نعامتنا فخالني دونه بل خلته دوني *problem is that we are not compatible; he thinks I am against him, and I think he is against me.*

Without referring to its proverbial status, the author explains شالت نعامتنا saying that it means تنافرنا or "we have become incompatible", and النعام in the proverb means that neither of us trusts the other. When an ethnic group leaves the location of residence, they say, "شالت نعامة القوم" [27, vol. 1, p. 255]. In the proverb, it is referred to the ostrich because it is famous for weakness of wisdom, stupidity, ignorance, stampede, and speed of (presumable) flying on the ground. It lays eggs and leaves the place but does not remember the place again, so the proverb is used when an Arab leaves the place of living, due to death or other reasons, in such a way that he/she cannot return to it [24, p. 220, proverb 1198]. Again, the author intends only to explain the couplet and the meaning.

In other dictionaries, the proverb is defined as "to die", "to get angry and then be calm", "to disperse and become incompatible" [41, شال]. Using characteristics of animals to convey a meaning is prevailing feature in proverbs all over the world. Likewise, characteristics of an ostrich, such as ignorance, stupidity, and stampede, are used in this proverb to explain the fact that some people part because they forget the importance of their primary intent of being united and friendly and guarding their dignity. Both ostriches and those people share the same characteristics as points of resemblance.

Using this simple, the short declarative phrase شالت نعماته meaning "died" is probably related to the fact that losing unity and friendship in a group followed by separation is like death that separates people in an irrevocable way.

Because of its uses in various fields, the proverb has remained in literary and dialectical texts with its original meaning. This might be due to its clarity and eloquence as well as the high importance of unity and the large number of separations among people occurring for various reasons in the course of human life.

8. قد أنصف القارةَ مَن راماها – *One who competed with* القاره *in shooting, he judged* القاره *fairly.*

After interpreting the report from the prophet (PBUH) who said, "لعن الله السارق يسرق البيضة فيقطع يده و يسرق الحبل فتقطع يده", the author of *Amālī* cites a discussion with al-Asma'i that occurred between him and al-Rashid. Mentioning the proverb, al-Rashid askes the meaning of القارة, and al-Asma'i answers that there are two sayings about this: 1) the saline land with scorched black stones and 2) shooters of the Tubba' tribe as presumed by some narrators. When

a war broke out between the army of Abu Hesaan, the ruler of Tubba' tribe, and the Sogdian army, a horseman came out of the Sogdians, got an arrow nocked, and said, "Where are the Arab shooters?" Arabs replied, "انصف القارة من راماها" meaning "anyone shooting against القارة admits that the men of القارة are skilled shooters" [27, vol. 2, p. 11].

This story has been narrated differently, as in *The Great History of Islam and Iran* (1385) [42], *al-Maydani's Majma al-'amthal* [24, vol. 1, p. 42], and *Lisan Al-Arab* [14, قور]. Al-Sayyid al-Murtada had no specific intention in mentioning the proverb; the proverb was mentioned within the report and al-Sayyid al-Murtada skipped further explanation. Yet it should be noted that the report does not refer to the phrase as a proverb; it is actually stated as an Arabs' saying.

Simplicity, declarativeness, cohesion, and familiarity of words are some linguistic features of the proverb. Having surveyed the contemporary books and articles, researchers did not find an instance of its usage. Therefore, it can be claimed that linguistic features alone do not necessarily guarantee the susainability of proverbs throughout history. Actually, just as various reasons lead to the sustainability of proverbs, some factors cause proverbs to lose their usage and pass into history as linguistic and cultural inheritance found only in books on proverbs. These factors are: lack of similar referents; coining new proverbs according to the language and culture of each historical period; unclear and unfamiliar words within the proverb's structure; forgetting the context of use; and developing new culture, especially concerning the usage of proverbs with abnormal/hardly understandable meanings.

In this proverb, the unfamiliarity of القارة might be the main reason for its infrequent usage in contemporary age. It can also be proved that coining a proverb in an ethnic language in a given time is not sufficient for its usage in the same group in later historical periods. In fact, proverbs behave similarly to words. Words are coined and loaded with meaning by usage over time. Having manifested themselves in various rhetorical, semantic, metonymic, metaphorical, and ironic forms, they gradually go out of use, and their records remain in dictionaries. Likewise, proverbs emerge and find different referents until they are recorded and can be found only in books on proverbs after going out of use due to the emergence of new, similar proverbs or loss of their referents.

Analyzing the proverbs from an author-centered hermeneutic approach proves the fact that the text of proverbs is first created without the intention of making a proverb. The audience use the created text with its original context and referent to refer to similar phenomena and referents. Despite the variation in the referent, the original meaning of the text is preserved, and the audience does not interfere

with the meaning of the proverb; moreover, multiple audiences do not give rise to various meanings.

Most of the proverbs in *Amālī* were stated within the reports and couplets mentioned by the author; the author didactically tried to explain some words or meanings and disagreements narrating reports and couplets. Proverbs possess a kind of metaphorical and aesthetic concept; for example, in the proverb "Don't put all your eggs in one basket," "eggs" does not refer to the original meaning but to efforts, ideas, etc. that should not be concentrated on one area. However, al-Sayyid al-Murtada did not consider such a metaphorical use of proverbs in *Amālī*; he mostly used proverbs for didactic purposes.

Lexicographers also use proverbs in dictionaries to make the meaning of a word comprehensible. As a book on interpretation of reports, narratives, and Quranic verses, *Amālī* evidently used proverbs to explain some words. Yet the small number of proverbs used to explain the denotative (lexical) meaning indicates that al-Sayyid al-Murtada did not consider the proverb as an important literary form.

Therefore, it can be said that al-Sayyid al-Murtada used proverbs following the predecessors' method (Salaf); he occasionally deployed proverbs either to explain a word in a couplet or report or to mention the proverb's origin without further clarification and explanation. He actually did not adopt an innovative approach to using proverbs.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the proverbs, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Various readings of the text of the proverb do not generate various meanings in mind.

2. The author-centered hermeneutic approach focused on words and grammatical rules is appropriate to the study of proverbs.

3. Not every text, including proverbs, is interpretable.

4. Al-Sayyid al-Murtada did not use proverbs excessively. Actually, the necessity of denotative (lexical) explanation of some words and phrases in couplets and reports made him use some sayings and proverbs in order to clarify the meaning of couplets and phrases.

5. Al-Sayyid al-Murtada was not concerned with explanation of proverbs as metaphorical and/or common sayings used by people.

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оригинальная статья

Герменевтический анализ пословиц в Амали аль-Сайида аль-Муртады

Гадир Париз
Университет имени Алламе Табатабаи, Иран, г. Тегеран;
pariz@atu.ac.ir

Робабе Рамезани
Университет имени Алламе Табатабаи, Иран, г. Тегеран

Аннотация: С герменевтической точки зрения интерпретатор играет активную роль в объяснении и выражении значений текста в соответствии с конкретным прочтением, понимая текст и делая его понятным, находясь под его влиянием или влияя на него. Текст анализируется независимо от говорящего / писателя и их намерений и получает новое значение с целью выражения различных значений и прочтений. Отражая образ жизни, образ мышления и способы толкования человека в разные периоды и сферы жизни, пословицы являются одной из глубоко укоренившихся литературных форм и неотъемлемой частью культуры, посредством которой изображаются привычки, обычаи и верования народов. Изучение пословиц может помочь понять сходства и различия между культурами. По этой причине ученые всегда использовали пословицы в своих научных трудах, чтобы объяснить свои идеи и сделать их более понятными. Используя описательный метод контент-анализа и литературный герменевтический подход, ориентированный на автора, в настоящей статье мы попытались ответить на важный вопрос – меняется ли значение пословиц с течением времени. Был сделан вывод, что пословицы – это неинтерпретируемые тексты, предназначенные только для передачи значения, концепции или знания в форме сравнения, метафоры или иронии. Следуя примеру своих предшественников, автор Амали использовал пословицы для объяснения сложного слова или фразы в повествовании, отчете или двустишии. В настоящем исследовании использовался список пословиц из Амали аш-Шариф аль-Муртада, исследованный Мухаммадом Абольфазлом Эбрахимом и (пере)опубликованный Zavel-Ghorba Publication в 1431 г. от хиджры / 1388 г.

Ключевые слова: пословица, толкование, ас-Сайид аль-Муртада, культура, Амали

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