

Sound Symbolism Continuum in Hafiz

“Based on Hinton’s Framework”¹

Azadeh Sharifi Moghadam²
Hosseyn Mehrara³

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Abstract

Poems as texts consist of words, morphemes, and sounds, and all of them are eloquent and meaningful. The effect of the sounds on the meanings in texts, especially in literature, is not a new idea and it has long been considered to be important by poets, linguists and literary scholars.

The semiotic system of language includes a set of symbols that can be generally divided into two groups of symbols and icons due to the degree of relationship between the signified and the signifier. Icons are words or forms with a type of imitation and similarity between the signifier and the signified. Iconicity and symbolism which are the result of relationship between the signifier and the signified are typical aesthetic features of literature and have attracted many researchers' attention.

Hinton et al. (1994) provide a method for analyzing the relationship between form and meaning. In this analysis, any kind of motivated relationship in a word is called "sound symbolism", which refers to a

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² Associate prof. at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Dep. of foreign Languages - MA. in English Translation, Azad University of Kerman[†]

kind of transparency that describes the phonetic-semantic relationship within a context. Motivated signs are divided into four types according to the degree of the relationship between form and meaning:

Corporeal sound symbolism: In this category of signs, the relationship between the signifier and the signified in a word is direct, concrete and transparent. It includes signs in which the phonetic features indicates the physical characteristics or emotional state. Natural symptoms (such as coughing, sneezing, nodding), physical markers, as well as words like "wow" and "oh" referring to the emotional state of the speaker are corporeal sound symbolism.

Imitative sound symbolism: It covers the signs whose phonetic features (the signified) is the imitation of the referent in the real world (the signifier). Onomatopoeias that reflect the sounds of the environment are placed in this category.

Synthetic sound symbolism: Motivation in synthetic signs are more complicated and less transparent than the above categories. This type of motivation is found in seemingly unmotivated forms in which there is a correspondence between the presence of vowels or consonants and some properties like size, shape or taste. The correspondence between the vowel /i/ and the concepts of diminution show this type of relation.

Conventional sound symbolism: The least degree of motivation between the signifier and the signified is found in conventional signs. So, the signs of this type are the most distant from the iconic signs due to their opacity. This kind of form-meaning relationship is also referred to as phonesthemes or phonetic intensive.

The purpose of this research was to study types and frequency of sound symbolism in Hafiz's Ghazals. The following questions were to be answered:

a) What are different types of sound symbolism in the poems? Can we put them in a motivation continuum?

b) What types of sound symbolism are more frequent? Is there any reason for that?

The huge number of motivated signs in Hafez's poems is significant, indicating the importance of the signifier and the signified relation of signs. The frequency of the use of these types of signs at the level of the poetry indicates the importance of this relationship in understanding the meaning and also shows that in addition to the transfer of meaning through the concept of the word, the poet also applied the relation between the word form and its phonetic features.

The body of the study consisted of 988 motivated signs, which were found in 936 lines / hemistiches from Hafez's Ghazals. In response to the first question of this research, motivated signs in Hafez's poetry can be classified into four corporeal, imitative, synesthetic, and conventional classes. In this category, which has a continuum, and on which signs are categorized based on the degree of motivated signs or the relationship between the signifier (form, sound attributes) and the signified (level of meaning) from the highest degree of transparency to the lowest level.

The quantitative analysis of the types of motivated signs in the poems confirmed that there is a direct relation between the degree of motivation and the frequency of the signs, which is the answer to the second question. That is, the more we move towards transparency, the more the frequency of signs occur. Therefore, the most frequent is the corporeal and the least frequent is the conventional.

The relative assumption of the relationship between the signifier and signified in the semantic language system makes it possible to put all the signs, both contractual and motivated, on a single continuum in a way that the existence of motivation does not contradict the

arbitrariness. Therefore, the above two principles are not contradictory, but they are complementary to each other.

And finally, transparency or motivation is one of the tools of creativity and also the means of aesthetics in language. It is undoubtedly one of the charming and survival mysteries of poetry signs in the minds and souls of readers.

Keywords: Motivation, Sound symbolism, Transparency, Opacity, Iconicity, Hafiz's Divan.