

The Role of Adjectival Terms in Ferdowsi's Shah Nameh

Safura Ramshini^{1*}, Ali Eshghi Sardehi², Sa'eid Rouzbahani²

¹ PhD student, Persian language and literature, Islamic Azad University, Sabzevar Branch, Sabzevar, Iran. ² Assistant professor, Persian language and literature, Islamic Azad University, Sabzevar Branch, Sabzevar, Iran.

Correspondence: Safura Ramshini, PhD student, Persian language and literature, Islamic Azad University, Sabzevar Branch, Sabzevar, Iran.

ABSTRACT

Exploration and investigation of the past times' literary texts from various perspectives enable the ever-increasing recognition and discovery of their unknown capabilities and, besides giving literary pleasures, illuminates the path and provides the researchers with solutions and variegated uses for the achievement of the creation of better works in future. Ferdowsi's Shah Nameh is one of the most outstanding and most valuable works enumerated amongst the first hand artworks in terms of literary, national and semantic values. One of the subjects that can be contemplated and examined in this regard is the functions of the words of the adjective type that have been skillfully applied by Hakim Ferdowsi for expanding the breadth of his words; these are the words the signification circle of which transcends beyond the limits of a word and seem to be a lot more vaster in literal and semantic terms than what they look and their inclusion circle is also wider. In order to induce the sensory or abstract concepts, Hakim Ferdowsi has selected words and adjectives that either have a very vast semantic domain or have been expanded in their semantic domain by himself through taking advantage of completely masterful techniques. The current research paper uses descriptive-analytical method to deal with the role of adjectives in fostering the story in Ferdowsi's Shah Nameh and the researcher intends to represent part of Ferdowsi's abilities and creativities that have been influential during hundreds of years for the fluency and eloquence of Shah Nameh's words but have been so far left unattended.

Keywords: Shah Nameh, Ferdowsi, word, adjective

Introduction

Undoubtedly, Ferdowsi's Shah Nameh is an unprecedented national and epical work to the Persian language speakers and it is worthwhile to investigate it as a prominent literary work showing the national identity of Iranians and, simultaneously, pay attention to it in terms of the original and meaningful words featuring a wide inclusion circle. "The vastness of Ferdowsi's treasury of words is not hidden to anyone and his mastery over Persian language is unexampled".^[1]

In order to be able to provide the readers with sophisticated and admirable words, Ferdowsi makes use of diverse and

meaningful words and adjectives the inclusion circles of which are in their peaks in such a way that Shah Nameh is deemed as the best source for the diversity of words. One of the methods of story processing is the use of adjectival terms, i.e. the adjectives that come with noun and/or instead of a noun for the story characters like humans, animals, God, natural phenomena and war instruments. The present study deals with the role and function of these words.

Discussion:

One of the methods of story fostering is the description by means of adjectives. It is untold clear that description has been accompanying Persian poetry since its emergence and "they have come to the existence as twins and finished the stages of perfection and promotion in parallel to one another".^[2] On the other hand, researchers and investigators of Shah Nameh believe that "description and portrayal in Shah Nameh are atop of all other ancient Persian texts because the finest images of the whereabouts and statuses of classic Persian poetry can be observed in Shah Nameh".^[3] Therefore, it is highly evident that

Access this article online

Website: www.japer.in

E-ISSN: 2249-3379

How to cite this article: Safura Ramshini, Ali Eshghi Sardehi, Sa'eid Rouzbahani. The Role of Adjectival Terms in Ferdowsi's Shah Nameh. J Adv Pharm Edu Res 2020;10(S2):171-175.
Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None declared.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Ferdowsi has been very well capable of providing precise descriptions and portrayals in such a way that "no other poet can be found keeping pace with him in Persian language in this regard".^[4] A group of words with high frequency in Shah Nameh includes terms that are selected in adjective form for the characters, places and such natural phenomena as the moon, the sun, clouds, sky and so forth as well as for the God and/or demonic creatures. Perhaps, Ferdowsi has described individuals every time with diverse and proportional adjectives for evading repetition and avoiding the readers' annoyance and boredom. However, the majority of these adjectives is closely interlaced with their nouns and may even have a considerable role in the story's course. "One of the advantages of using adjective is embodiment of the scenes and obtaining of an exact image of the story's characters and several adjectives have been occasionally used for a noun so as to make it appear more beautiful".^[5]

The inferior tyrannical Zahhak could take the place of his father by the use of such a solution".^[6]

The adjectives in Shah Nameh are often closely interwoven with their nouns in semantic terms. "Ferdowsi generally considers the position and situation of the protagonists and arranges the words and expressions in proportion to their whereabouts"^[7] in such a way that he uses two types of words and adjectives for Rostam and Esfandiyar:

"I want to see if Esfandiyar's horse would come to an end while not being ridden by its rider"

"And, or the horse of the warrior Rostam would place its face on the porch without the god [its rider]"^[6]

Generally, adjectives in Shah Nameh can be divided into several groups and each of them can be separately investigated.

Personality Adjectives:

As it was mentioned, every character has been given an adjective in Shah Nameh according to his or her specialty, property and/or courage and some of the characters with higher frequency of their names are given a new adjective in proportion to their situation. These adjectives are often used without their nouns in the form of irony or metaphor. For example, phoenix predicts the birth of Rostam:

"That there would be born of **this moon-faced silvered-body** cedar a male lion seeking for fame"^[6]

During Rudabeh's delivery of the child, as well, Magus cleaves her flank but there is seen no name of Rudabeh in this verse rather she has been mentioned with such adjectives as moon-faced:

"The magus cleaved the **moon's** flank effortlessly and brought out the head of the child"^[6]

Use has repeatedly made of world-seeker in lieu of Rostam's name. These cases can be often seen in the majority of Shah Nameh's verses but dealing with them is beyond the present study's scope. But, the thing intended by us here is the

adjectives that have been verbally applied with their nouns. Such a type of use, as well, accounts for the entire descriptions in Shah Nameh and it is seen very frequently and achieved with no effort. In this discussion, several characters have been haphazardly selected according to their roles in the stories and each of them has been described with an adjective and sufficiency is made to the mentioning of an exemplary specimen in order to avoid wordiness.

Rostam: from the perspective of every reader and even the reciter of Shah Nameh, Rostam is probably the most important character with the most accentuated role. His name has been repeated in this book for more than two thousand times. Therefore, it seems natural that Ferdowsi from the beginning has used his name each time with a new adjective so as to not only dodge the stingy and dry repetition but also make his words more fascinating and pleasant. He decorated the name of this hero with a different adjective every time, since his birth, the grounds of Rostam's valor is manifested:

"So they took the **bludgeon-carrying Rostam** that way to Sam who was riding a horse"^[6]

In the story of Bijan and Manijeh, the only person who deserves rescuing Bijan is Rostam:

"Nobody else but **sharp-grasping Rostam** can bring out whale from the depth of the sea"^[6]

In Shah Nameh, Rostam has been described with such adjectives as crown-bestowing, elephant-like body, vigorous, chivalrous hero, warrior Rostam, luckily founded broadside hero, the virtue-founded sage, the world-seeking Rostam, Zal-originated Rostam, the strong bull and tens of other adjectives and properties each indicating a part of his internal and external magnificence and grandeur.

Zal: before Rostam steps into the heroism arena, his father, Zal, is a worldwide hero and everyone is amazed by the power of his arms. Zal is in the peak of power even during Rostam's life. Whenever talks are made about Zal in Shah Nameh, his chivalry and heroism are retold except during the birth and childhood when his apparent characteristics have been dealt with. Zal's name has also been often used with adjectives. He is recounted as golden Zal in the first time and he is often well-known with the same epithet:

"When the name of the hero-creator was called, gems were thrown on the supernatural **golden Zal**" (1/152)

"He was sent to the great Sam who sent a message to the **robust Zal**"^[6]

Then, he is described with such attributes as the young Zal, the lucky Zal, army-leading Zal, the erect cedar, the golden waist and so forth. The adjectives used for the character of Zal are limited and finite and he is only described with such adjectives as the brave hero, lion-hearted, elephant-strong, gem-distributing, sharp, fast-grasping, white-haired and so forth when his features are told to Rudabeh,

Rudabeh: the story of Zal's and Rudabeh's marriage contains beautiful and meandering events and Ferdowsi is obliged to repeat their names in the conversations. Thus, Rudabeh, as well, has been described with such attributes as moon-faced, sun-faced, brilliant gem, moon-looking, fairy-faced, the cedar with silvery body, robust cedar, new moon and so forth all of which match the internal and external features of this character.

“That there would be born of this **moon-faced silvered-body cedar** a male lion seeking for fame”^[6]

Sohrab: he is a young and newly emerged hero with his unique characteristics depicting both a young and an unexampled hero that, as he himself puts it, has grown up very quickly:

“The other persons of my age are playing games but my fate was made like this”^[6]

In a beautiful exordium and setting, Ferdowsi gives him superiority and recounts him as a non-ripened bergamot. The adjectives mentioned for Sohrab can be divided into three sets: his childhood is firstly described when he is living with his mother:

“The two heroes went awake to the **psyche-illuminated Sohrab**”^[6]

In this stage, Sohrab is recounted with such adjectives as non-ripened child, brilliant moon, lion-hearted man and so on. The second stage includes Sohrab's movement towards Iran and his engagement in a fight with Rostam that is described with such attributes as world-seeker, lion Sohrab, lion-defeating Sohrab, war-testing Rostam, army-commander Sohrab, courageous Sohrab, cheerful cedar, young cavalier, honorable Sohrab, warrior leopard and so on:

“When **lion-defeating Sohrab** saw him, his heart started palpitating out of youngness”^[6]

The third stage describes Sohrab in the instants before death in a conversation with Rostam. Here, Sohrab has been described from the mouth of other heroes by such traits as noble, honorable, chivalrous, courageous youth and so on:

“Who in the world has killed his child; a **chivalrous, young and sage one**”^[6]

Kaveh: the most important and most efficient adjective stated in Shah Nameh for Kaveh is justness-seeking but there are also mentioned other adjectives for this positive character in Shah Nameh:

“He roared and bumped his hands on king's head that O king I am the justice-seeking Kaveh”^[6]

Also, such adjectives like wronged, ironsmith, courageous man and others have been used for Kaveh. Zahak's companions also

once reproach him that why he has been treated Kaveh smoothly:

“Why rude Kaveh is allowed to become angry before you as if he is a person of the same rank as you”^[6]

Fereydun: the most common adjective used for Fereydun is 'propitious' which has been frequently retold in Shah Nameh and the mouths of the readers.

“Fereydun the propitious was not a lucky angel and he was not also nurtured by musk and amber”^[6]

Fereydun has also been described by such other attributes as fortunate, new commander, army chief, sage Fereydun, the God-knowing victorious king, courageous Fereydun, the world sovereign, the king of the world, the king of the earth, the world-bestowing elder and so forth.

“The **sage** Fereydun patted them to the size of their construction's basis”^[6]

Zahhak: although Zahhak has been depicted with an abhorring visage before Iranians and Shah Nameh readers, Ferdowsi, in the position of a narrator, has not applied any heinous adjectives for him unless when he wants to show his tyranny and despotism. In the beginning of the story, Zahhak is described as a person with no love and affectionate feelings and he rises up against his father. He has been described with two good attributes and two bad characteristics:

“The **world-seeker's** name was Zahhak who was **chivalrous, quick and unclean**”^[6]

From this very beginning, the poet portrays a bad visage of him in the reader's idea and mind. Therefore, the reader expects him to exhibit any wicked behavior. When Zahhak cooperates with Satan to perish his father, he is given such attributes as monstrously founded and inferior.

“His jocund child was so **wickedly founded** that deviated from the path of justice and his pact”^[6]

After Zahhak seizes the kingship of Tazian and then Iranians, he is described with heinous and pretty traits like the long-necked king, the dragon-bodied person, the king of Iranian land, the inversely tempered Zahhak, the army commander, the person with unclean religion, dragon-like, bad-destined Zahhak and so forth.

God's Adjectives:

The name of the God has been accompanied in Shah Nameh with such words as Father, Originator of good, righteous, arbitrator, the deity, the overlord and so on. But, the thing that is intended here is the adjectives used along with His name; such a type of application is frequently seen in Shah Nameh. Ferdowsi quotes Kaveh:

“He roared that O the troopers of the beast with hearts cut of the fear of the universe's God”^[6]

In the course of his seven contests, Rostam is stuck in a desert and has no way out; he looks up to the sky and says: "he said that O the **just arbitrator**, it is you who bring down all the pain and hardship in to a person's head" ^[6]

It is right then that a sheep appears and guides him towards water and he achieves a spring of water and he again looks up to the sky and says: "the undefeatable hero looked up to the sky and said that O the **truthful arbitrator**, the person who turns away his face from a just God is not wise" ^[6]

The offspring of the beast reminds of the abundance of the army of the ogres and their chivalrous heroes and warns Rostam of standing against them but Rostam responds to them in this way: "By the force of the **victory-granting deity** and by the power of luck and the sharp sword and art, he will tear apart their skin and bodies in dread to the extent that they cannot release themselves of the harness patiently" ^[6]

It is seen here that the victory-granting is the adjective used properly and appropriately for the God. In general, the God's adjectives have been variously mentioned including the goodness-bestowing deity, the clean originator of good, the god of the universe, the god of the world and so forth.

Animals Adjectives:

Animals have also been described according to their properties and functions with special adjectives in Shah Nameh. The most important description belongs to the horse, especially Rostam's Rakhsh that is described with different adjectives from the very beginning of its selection. "The color of Rakhsh is red and white intermixed with one another, something between black and auburn" ^[8] which has been described to be brilliant and bright:

"His body full of imprints from side to side like the stigma of the red flower on saffron"

"We call it Rakhsh that has auburn face; furious in temper and fire-like in color" ^[6]

"Rakhsh" has been replaced in Shah Nameh with such adjectives as safflower, elephant, horse and so forth and has been described with various attributes:

"He came furiously towards the **brilliant** Rakhsh and it started bowling at that time" ^[6]

Elsewhere, Rakhsh is given a human trait; in his third contest, Rostam treats Rakhsh unkindly. Thus, Ferdowsi states that:

"He told that wake **kind** Rakhsh that you will not be able to hide in the darkness of the night?" ^[6]

Rakhsh has been described with such adjectives as forest Rakhsh, metal-hoofed, good assistant, astute, lucky Rakhsh, angry huge elephant, belligerent Rakhsh, black-eyed, chivalrous Rakhsh and so forth.

Elephant: elephant has been one of the animals used in the battles not only for victory but also for its huge body to terrify and scare. It has also been repetitively used in Shah Nameh with such various traits as the fierce elephant, warrior elephant,

honored elephant, drunken elephant, aggressive elephants and so forth:

"There were a thousand and two hundred **war** elephants that there was no empty space in the city" ^[6]

Lion: the properties of this animal have been most often ascribed to the heroes and protagonists of the stories except the event in the course of which Rostam fights in his seven contests with a lion having specific characteristics; and in the course of Sohrab's murder, Ferdowsi describes Sohrab as a lion but grants the adjective of awakened heart which is specific to human being to (Sohrab):

"Quickly, he pulled out the blade from the sheath and roared on the **heart-awakened** lion" ^[6]

Adjectives for the Natural Phenomena:

Natural phenomena like the sun, the moon, clouds, mountains, the wheel, sky, night day and so forth have been described in Shah Nameh each time with a proper and beautiful adjective. "One of the factors contributing to the depiction in Shah Nameh is the nature and the natural factors. For Ferdowsi, several words are sufficient to create an image". ^[9]

Night:

"On a **tar-colored** night, the moon was hidden and birds and domestic and wild animals were all asleep" ^[6]

Day:

"The representative of the night became the conqueror of the treasure before hope on the **white day**" ^[6]

Thunder:

"The horns and drums became like **roaring** thunderbolts that were played behind the curtain of ebony" ^[6]

The Sun:

"He disappeared like a **radiating** sun as if the door of the booth has been locked and its key has been lost" ^[6]

Dome:

"It was as if the sun has spread yellow ruby on the **azure** dome" ^[6]

The Sky:

"Surely, this plain is my place and its **lofty** sky is my air" ^[6]

Wind:

"He was feeling unrest in his heart for Rostam and ran like a **furious** wind towards him" ^[6]

Spring:

"He went towards the **bright** spring and stood at the side of water and decided to sleep after becoming satiated" ^[6]

Cloud:

"Like a brilliant thunder from a **dark** cloud, he started pouring down fire of sword and bludgeon" ^[6]

Examples of natural phenomena are many in Shah Nameh but sufficiency is made to these cases due to their large volume.

The Attributes of the War Instruments:

Due to their abundant use in epic hence Shah Nameh, the war instruments have been described with various attributes some of which have been pointed out beneath:

Sword:

"If you make such a resurrection again, I will cut your hair by the **sharp** sword" ^[6]

Blade:

"He sat on Rakhsh and pulled out the **brilliant blade** and came upon them like a thundering cloud" ^[6]

Bludgeon:

"I will walk towards Mazandaran and I will carry the tiger, sword and the **hefty** bludgeon along with me" ^[6]

Flag:

"There was a **moon-bodied** large flag behind him and many cavaliers and huge dust were accompanying him" ^[6]

Dagger:

"He pulled out a slaked **dagger** and decided to cut his head" ^[6]

The Adjectives for Ogre, Dragon and Phoenix:

These three abnormal creatures have been described in Shah Nameh with various attributes.

Dragon:

"That the **gigantic** dragon cannot stand remaining in the clasp of the wolf"

"He looked around the desert but the **gloomy** dragon had vanished" ^[6]

Ogre:

"He was a border guard protected by an ogre who was the commander of all the **big** beasts" ^[6]

Phoenix:

"The **commander** bird saw a manna tree with branches into the air and landed thereon" ^[6]

Except the cases that were discussed above, places, cities, countries, mountains, seas, woodlands, kings, armies and

troopers, temperaments and many of the other things in Shah Nameh have been described with different and various adjectives but they are not mentioned here for avoiding prorogation.

Result:

According to what was mentioned in the present study, the following results can be discerned:

- 1) Ferdowsi's Shah Nameh is an endless treasure the hugeness of which can be displayed from inside the verses and hemistiches recited during long years and the more they are dealt with, the more their capabilities and competencies can be manifested.
- 2) Contemplation over Shah Nameh's words from various perspectives can reveal the outstanding properties of this precious work to the readers.
- 3) In order to avoid repetition and beautify his words, Ferdowsi introduces adjectives that accompany their nouns and sometimes used instead of their nouns. These adjectives have been used for individuals, animals, natural phenomena, war instruments and even God's characteristics each time expressing one of the attributes of the intended noun in a manner exactly conforming to the story character.

References

1. Shafi'ei Kadkani, M.R. forms of imagination in Persian poetry, 11th ed., Tehran, Agah. 2006.
2. Mo'tamen, Z.Al-A. Persian poetry and literature, 2nd ed., Tehran, Zarrin. 1985.
3. Hamidian, S. Military Utopia, 1st ed., Tehran, Qatreh. 1993.
4. Safa, Z. epic-reciting in Iran, 7th ed., Tehran, Ferdows. 1999.
5. Hosseini Abbariki, S.A. A research on depiction in Shah Nameh, Roshd, instruction of Persian language and literature. 2012.
6. Ferdowsi, A. Al-Q. Shah Nameh, revised by Jalal Khaleghi Motlaq, Tehran, Sokhan. 2006.
7. Shamisa, S. The king of the letters, 3rd ed., Tehran, Hermes. 2018.
8. Zanjani, M. a comprehensive dictionary of Shah Nameh, 2nd ed., Tehran, Ata'ei. 2001.
9. Masse, H. Ferdowsi and national epic, tr. Mahdi Rowshan Zamir, Tabriz University, Tabriz. 1996.