The Poetics of Repetition in a Persian Heritage Classroom in Los Angeles

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Abstract

This study investigated how teachers in a Persian heritage classroom in Los Angeles socialized their students into their heritage culture through the use of many forms of repetition in speech as a poetic device for its affective impact.

Methods

Linguistic, anthropological framework (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1986)

Tool:
- MAAN (Dr.2:1.1) (mother tongue, an iranian heritage in West Los Angeles)

Participants:
- 2nd generation Iran-Americans or Persian heritage students, between 7-12 years old
- Data: 20 hours of naturally occurring conversation of audio and video recording of seventeen Persian heritage students, and two heritage teachers

Findings

The heritage teachers used repetition as a poetic device to bond their spontaneous interactions for affective impact on their students.

They socialized their students into the use of repetition as a poetic device for its affective impact.

Literature Review

Repetition and Affect:
- Repetition is used in poetry to influence audiences emotionally.
- It creates a “rhythmic pattern which sweeps the listener toward reading aloud” (Tannen, 1987).
- Repetition is used in chants to alter the state of consciousness (Bochner, 1994).

Types of repetition:
- Lexical (verbal, phrasal, etc.)
- Syntactic
- Homonymy and Alliteration
- Syntactic and Grammatical
- Parallelist

Repetition and Affect of Other Cultures:
- Kwara’ae use repeating routines to distract and entertain children (Watson-Glazier & Glazier, 1986).
- Repetition is used as a form of entertainment in children’s plays (Heath, 1981).
- In the narrative and worship of the black community in the United States (Felkorn, 1984).
- In the American Indian oral narratives (Tidlock, 1976; Hymes, 1981).

Poetry and Affect in Iran:
- Iran is well-known for its great poets such as Rumi, Foroughi, Hafez, and Saadi.
- Iranian-Islamic philosophy heavily relies on emotion as a way of acquiring and transferring knowledge. Knowledge to be suspend rationalization processes to transcend beyond mind and into the heart.
- Poetic devices such as repetition are widely used among Persian speakers for their affective impact on audience.

Temporal and Phrasal Repetition

2. (The Teacher: (Phrases toward two students working with the researcher))

3. (the Teacher)

4. (the Teacher)

The teacher creates a temporal repition by breaking down her instructions into four similar-on-same sentences such as quatrains in poetry. (lines 4, 5, 6, and 8). This is achieved by breaking her instruction in line 4 and elongating it in line 8.

By making a pause in line 6, the teacher creates a line break (such as in poetry) in her stanza-like utterances.

The teacher makes a phrasal repetition in line 5 and 7 to create a rhythmic tune and to connect the two parts of her utterance and give continuity to this quatrains.

Both lines 5 and 7 end with two compound verbs with the same ending (‘khodah’ in line 5 & ‘sozandeh’ in line 7). The verb repetition of ‘sozandeh’ has the poetic function of rhyming

Homonyms

(1) When he makes kholo khodeh, khodesh; marahaw hawar; human with tongue good even (her/sis Del) can all out with his/her own good words.

(2) Each time khodesh, beknsh.

FRIENDS T.N. to do

make everyone high/ber with friend

The similar-sounding words: ‘khodah’ (neck), ‘khodeh’ (tongue), and ‘khodesh’ (brother’s name) in line 1 and again ‘khodesh’ (brother’s name) in line 2 have been used as a homonymic repetition for aesthetic purposes.

Both of the words ‘khodeh’ and ‘khodesh’ in line 1 are semantically redundant and are used as a poetic continuation of the sound of the previous word: ‘khodah’

Beauty and Repetition:
- “If you want to experience something new walk the same path every day” (an old proverb)

The background of the poem is typical of Iranian architectural design where beauty is created through the repetition of simple forms of pattern and not distorting the facade of important buildings such as mosques, governmental offices, and palaces.

Socialization into the Use of Repetition

(Repetition is a heritage need. Same line in same mood: If a child learns a pattern plan, it is learn with their heritage culture. The drill: They are participating in every story heard. Filled with pride and resources for family members back home)

W: lamara, chinnah, sarim

EIGHT PIECE T.HYPPHE WE HAVE

10 PIECE T. OF HYPPHE: WE HAVE

WE TAKE

W: MUBARAK TA. MUBARAK GOMI

EIGHT PIECE NA T. HYPPHE: WE HAVE

WE TAKE

W: MUBARAK TA. MUBARAK GOMI

EIGHT PIECE NA T. HYPPHE: WE TAKE

WE TAKE

The heightened clitoris, elongation, and interjective fail in the maker’s utterance (line 3), as well as use of the lexical repetition of the morpheme “ta” (pieces) in the same line index emotional support toward N discomfort.

- Students learn how to use lexical repetition as a rhetorical device by recycling the word “ta” (pieces) between each other and their teacher (line 1 & N, line 2, line 3, 5, line 8) to express empathy.

- Utterances of all parties are compressed or prosodically manipulated in emphasizing the lexical repetition of “ta” (pieces).

- Participants intentionally repeat only the part of speech that can feed on the next participant’s affective display—here used to show sympathy.

- By repeating the morpheme “ta,” participants create a rhythmic tune which has a poetic effect.

These reflections are best illustrated by reproducing the transcript with the repeated words circled and linked.

Final Comments

Effective communication in Iran is believed to be obtained through a combination of repetition reaching out to both the heart and the mind of the audience. In my research on the heritage teachers used many linguistic devices such as repetition in its many forms to socialize their 2nd generation Iran-Americans students into the new avenues of the home culture. Furthermore, the heritage teachers used culture-specific, affective stances as a pedagogical tool to teach the home language their students.

By examining affective devices in language use among young Iranians engaged in the study of their heritage language and culture, we can shed light on culture-specific communicative styles of minority groups living in California. These findings, furthermore, may reveal the interaction between many language realizations among various languages and diverse minority groups in California.

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