

## Meaning differences in the absolute pun

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### Abstract

The pun is one of the most important types of rhetorical figures. Two pillars or two conditions for the realization of an absolute pun include both the same spelling and sound and different meanings. Although the verbal similarity of two homonymic words has been discussed so far, the semantic dissonance of the two words has not yet been taken into account for various reasons. Therefore, it is not yet lucid which of the different meanings of a word is of interest and what the meaning difference is. In the current study, the descriptive-analytical method was used to both investigate the origin of absolute pun according to the views of past linguists and lecturers and contemporary scholars and determine what kind of meaning is intended in this type of pun in line with the rhetorical heritage of Persian and Arabic.

An absolute pun is made by two words which are the same in type, grammatical number, ordering, and morphology of phonemes and includes several modes: both words are simple and morphologically similar (Momathel i.e., similar) or not similar (Mostawfi i.e., absolute), one or both words are compound words (Marfovy: darned by, Molaffaq: combined). The meaning difference is controversial only in the first two types and is clear in two other types, which are not the subject of this study. The processes of homonym and polysemy lead to verbal similarities and semantic differences amongst words. Ancient and contemporary linguists believe there are a variety of causes for polysemy, but past linguists unlike nowadays' logicians, fundamentalists, and semanticists do not distinguish such causes and consider all polysemies as homonyms. The attitude of past linguists has been found in absolute puns, so the type of meaning difference has been remained ambiguous. The origin and scope of absolute puns can be revealed through investigating the ideas of rhetoric scholars, evidence in oratory books, and aesthetic evaluation of types of meaning. Rhetoric scholars' ideas and evidence in oratory books demonstrate there are two ideas on the origin and scope of absolute puns: polysemies and homonyms, regardless of the effect of types of meaning on the exquisiteness of absolute puns. The assessment of the effect of types of meaning on the exquisiteness of absolute pun according to the intensity of meaning differences introduce the following ordering: verbal transformation, reinstating, deletion, forwarding meaning, metaphor, changing usage, primary and secondary meaning, and sub-layers of meaning. The results of the present study depicted that the absolute pun in the past was influenced by the perspective of linguists, so nowadays it can be influenced too. In other words, its origin and scope can comprise polysemies and homonyms. Considering this issue, the assessment of absolute pun examples is necessary. Therefore, the intensity of

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meaning differences can be chosen as a good standard for categorizations. Eventually, the pun can be a two-dimensional (i.e. literal- semantic) figure of speech.

**Keywords:** Science of rhetoric, Absolute Pun, Semantics, Homonym, Polysemy

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