

## The Study of Honorifics Types in Middle Persian

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### Abstract

Language is one of the means of communication of people in society. Linguistic communication, as one of the most important roles of language, shows the relationships between people. The concept of politeness as a socio-cognitive factor, indicates the social distance between individuals. This concept is manifested by different tools in communication between people. One of these tools is honorifics. People in the society use forms of honorifics to specify situations and social standings of participants and speakers. Shibatani (2006) places honorifics in Japanese in four classes; “referent honorifics”, “addressee honorifics”, “avoidance languages” and “beautification”. In most languages, referent honorifics are used more often than other types of honorifics, and among the types of referent honorifics, subject honorifics are used more than humbling honorifics and non-subject honorifics. In this study, four classes of honorifics in Middle Persian have been examined according to this framework. According to studies, in Middle Persian, as well as in Japanese, referent honorifics are the most widely used. In addition to the Shibatani classes, metaphors and similes, the adjective honorifics of the speaker and the benedictory honorifics can also be added to the group of Middle Persian honors.

**Keywords:** Honorifics, Referent honorifics, Metaphor, Middle Persian

### Extended abstract

#### 1. Introduction

Every society, considering the importance of the power relations that govern it, enjoys a special system of honorifics. A society with a very advanced system of honorifics shows the importance of superior-inferior and power relations. In contrast, in communities where these issues are not taken into account, a simpler system of honorifics is used.

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According to the mentioned cases, the study of honorific in different times is necessary to determine the evolution of human interactions and honorifics involved in these interactions in societies.

In this study, honorifics in Middle Persian have been studied to determine the level of Iranian society, in this period, in terms of politeness and indicating respect in language.

This research is based on the criteria presented in Shibatani's article named 'honorifics' (2006). Finally, the results of this period are examined with the results of subsequent periods (New Persian) in another study (Naghzguay Kohan, 2016), to determine what changes this course has undergone from Middle to New Persian.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Using honorifics are a feature for expressing politeness and determining the social status of the participants involved in the interaction as well as the audience and third parties. These features can be lexical, morphosyntactic, phonological or even intonational. (Brown, 2011:19). All languages use their own honorific features to express politeness and respect, but, as Shibatani (2006: 381) states, only some languages have an advanced system of honorifics. These languages are mainly concentrated in Asia, among them are Japanese, Korean, Tibetan, Javanese and Thai. According to Shibatani (2006), honorifics in languages fall into four groups: "referent honorifics", "addressee honorifics", "avoidance languages", and "beautification".

## **3. Methodology**

In this research, in order to extract linguistic evidence of honorifics in Middle Persian, the important sources of this period, namely Middle Persian (Pahlavi) texts, have been used. These sources are:

- "Middle Persian" gathered by "Jamasp J. Dastur Manouchehr J. Jamasp" by "Saeed Oriyan"
- "Karname Ardeshir Babakan" gathered by "Dr. Bahram Farahvashi".
- "Karname Ardeshir Babakan" by "Mohammad Javad Mashkour".

All the sentences of these books have been studied with the aim of extracting linguistic cases. The research method is such that the honorifics considered by Shibatani (2006) have been categorized and the sentences that contained these facilities have been extracted and each of them has been placed in its own category. In addition to Shibatani's classification, sentences were found in the texts that contained honorifics. These features were also added to the Shibatani category with new titles that are presented in the analysis section.

#### **4. Results & Discussion**

In this study, the authors have examined the honorific features in Middle Persian. The method of study has been sentence by sentence in a number of Middle Persian sources. Studies and finding linguistic samples contain honorific features of this research based on the Shibatani model. In other words, the honorific features were placed in sloping categories.

#### **5. Conclusions & Suggestions**

After reviewing the existing corpus, four items are presented in the conclusion section:

- Examining the corpus, it was observed that most of these features provided by Shibatani can also be found in Middle Persian; In other words, Middle Persian is very similar to Shibatani in terms of honorifics. In the meantime, some groups such as beautification and avoidance languages were not observed, and as a result no example was found for it.
- The important point in this study is the addition of three more groups of honorary facilities to the Shibatani's division. These three groups were not mentioned in the Shibatani division, but the authors believe that these three categories are among the honorific features in this period. And as a result, they added them to this division. These three categories are "praying honorifics", "metaphor" and "simile", and "addressee adjectival honorific". These three groups have a significant amount among honorific sentences. With this result, it is possible to receive honorific features in the Middle Persian period.
- In general, among the total honorifics presented, reference honorifics have the highest repetition among all honorifics. As mentioned earlier, these are honorifics that are used to show respect for nominal examples. honorific titles, pronouns, and agreements, which are among the most frequently used in speech, fall into this category and in this way, the possible misunderstandings in their expression are minimized and show the level of the speaker's awareness of the power and personal privacy of individuals.
- The ultimate goal of this study is to compare honorifics in the two periods of modern Persian and Middle Persian. According to the study of honorifics in modern Persian and its results with the present study, it can be seen that these facilities in Middle Persian were more than modern Persian. This result is obtained from the greater variety of these features in Middle Persian. This study expresses only the classification and diversity of honorifics in the Middle Persian and New Persian period. In other words, the three categories of praying honorifics, metaphor and simile and addressee adjectival honorifics have shown the importance of using honorific expressions in this period of time and the importance of respect and politeness more than the period after itself.

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