

CH-8: Feigned Ignorance

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Definition

The communicator knows something but pretends not to know. This literary device may be found when the communicator wishes to express amazement, praise, dispraise, disapproval, or to reprimand, or create a sense of familiarity.^{[1][2]}

Example

The communicator wishes to impart some advice about starting a company:

أَتَمْنِي أَنْنِي كُنْتُ أَعْرِفُ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ عِنْدِمَا أَسْسَيْتُ هَذِهِ الشَّرْكَةَ قَبْلَ 10 سَنَوَاتٍ.

“This is something I wish I knew when I started this company 10 years ago.”

Explanation

It is possible that the information was actually known when the company was started, but feigning ignorance has been used to setup a rhetorical image of ignorance which mirrors the addressee's condition.

References

- ↑ W. P. Heinrichs, ‘Rhetorical Figures’, in [Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature](#), ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London: Routledge, 1998), 659, ISBN 0415068088. DOI: [10.4324/9780203020425](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203020425)
- ↑ Hashim Muhammad, *First Steps to Understanding Balaghah* (Leicester: Al-Qalam Publications, 2016), 48, ISBN 9780957653474.

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