

CE-7: Differentiating Between Similar Items

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Discussion

Read

From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

Definition

This is to differentiate between two things that mistakenly could be considered to be same. It emphasizes the contrast in nature, value, or context between similar acts or entities, especially when they are performed or possessed by different agents. The rhetorical effect is to sharpen meaning, correct assumptions, or rhetorically elevate one party over another by highlighting qualitative differences within an apparently shared activity.^{[1][2][3]}

Example 1

سليم وكريم كلاهما من الطلاب الجيدين، غير أن سليماً يتفوق بطبعه، وكريماً لا يرقى إلا بجهدده.

Saleem and Karim are both good students, but Saleem is naturally superior, while Karim only advances through his own effort.

Example 2

The gift of the clouds at some time in the rainy season is not like the gift of the prince on a day of generosity;

for the gift of the prince is a camel-load of dinars and the gift of the clouds a drop of water.

- Rashīd al-Dīn al-Waṭwāṭ

Explanation

Both the clouds and the prince are giving something. However, the prince is rhetorically differentiated as being more generous than the clouds.

Example 3

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ شَرَابُهُ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ.

The two seas are not equal: one is fresh and sweet, the other is salty and bitter.

Qur'an 35:12

Explanation

The seas seem similar (“both are seas”), but are sharply differentiated in taste and benefit.

References

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- ↑ 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)
- ↑ Aḥmad al-Hāshimī, *Jawāhir al-Balāgha fī al-Maʿānī wa-al-Bayān wa-al-Badīʿ* (Windsor: Hindāwī Foundation, 2019), 374-375, *ISBN 9781527316386*.

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