A-7: The Vocative

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From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

Definition

The vocative is denoted by the use of <u>hamza</u> or *ʾayy* when the addressee is near, and *yā*, *ʾā*, *ʾāy*, *ʾyā*, and *hayyā* for an addressee that is far from the speaker. The particle *wā* is used to address a mourner.

These conventions may be broken for rhetorical effect: close-by addressees may be addressed as if they are far away, and vice-versa, to denote physical or emotional distance from the communicator. The vocative may also be used to introduce the expression of regret, lamentation, sarcasm or rebuke.[1][2][3][4]

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Example 1

> هيّا سليم، انتبه!
>
> **Oh Salim, pay attention!**

Explanation

Salim is close to the communicator but has been addressed as if he was far away. This highlights that Salim is not paying attention and is psychologically far away from the communicator.

Example 2

> يَٰحَسْرَةً عَلَى ٱلْعِبَادِ ۚ
>
> Ah! Alas for my servants.
>
> Qur'an 36:30 ⊞

Explanation

This statement is an expression of astonishment rather than an address.

References

1. ↑ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis* 📄 (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 119, ISBN 9780415386098. DOI: 10.4324/9780203965399 ⊞
2. ↑ Ayman Amin Abd Al-Ghani, *Al-Kāfī fī al-Balāgha: Al-Bayān, wa al-Badīʿ wa al-Maʿānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawfīqiyya lil-Turāth, 2011), 357-363.
3. ↑ Ḥafnī Nāṣif, Muḥammad Diyāb, Sultan Muḥammad and Muṣṭafā Ṭammām, *Durūs al-Balāgha* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2012), 38-40, ISBN 9786144162798.
4. ↑ Basil Hatim, *Arabic Rhetoric: The Pragmatics of Deviation from Linguistic Norms* ⊞, LINCOM Studies in Communication 04 (Munich: Lincom Europa, 2010), 168-169, ISBN 9780415386098.

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