

A Study of Norm-Breaking in Constitutional Era Poetry: Focusing on the Poems of Iraj Mirza and Mirzadeh Eshghi Based on Geoffrey Leech's Theory

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ABSTRACT

The goal of poetry and art is to try to penetrate the conscience of the audience and convey emotions. The Masrote era, which was greatly influenced by political, social and cultural factors and was the result of contact with the western world and modernization and progress in new and modern sciences and techniques, brought about fundamental changes in the entire structure of society. Undoubtedly, the literary and poetry gatherings did not stay away from these changes and in terms of content and language, created a very significant difference in constitutional poetry compared to his previous era. In particular, there were considerable stylistic changes. Therefore, the poets of this period, according to the political and social conditions of the society, spoke to the people of the social classes with the language of poetry, which is full of artistic tricks. This research, in a descriptive-analytical way and with a library method, has stated that rule-reduction and rule-addition are the two basic elements of norm avoidance and artistic tricks. These artistic techniques are examined in the poetry of constitutional poets (Iraj Mirza and Mirzadeh Eshghi). The results of the works of these poets showed that syntactic deviation in the field of grammar and the use of old words contrary to the standard language of the constitutional period and the construction of infinitives and combinations contrary to the rules of Persian grammar can also be seen in the poetry of this period, which is more evident in the poems of Mirzadeh Eshghi. Stylistic deviation, which is the frequent use of popular and everyday words and non-Persian and foreign words, has a very high contribution to the difference in the style of the poetry of this period with its previous periods, due to the fundamental changes and transformations of the society in the constitutional period and the generalization of poetry, and it has a very high frequency in the poetry of Iraj Mirza and then Mirzadeh Eshghi. Other types of deviance have also been investigated

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Introduction

Poetry serves as a sophisticated medium for articulating profound emotional and social truths, often utilizing artistic manipulation of language to enhance its impact. During the Constitutional Revolution in Iran—a period defined by significant socio-political transformations, modernization, and increased exposure to Western thought—Persian poetry underwent a fundamental shift. This era demanded a new poetic language that could communicate effectively with the broader populace, departing from the classical constraints of preceding periods. This research explores this transition through the lens of Geoffrey Leech’s linguistic theory, which categorizes artistic innovation into “norm-breaking” (deviation from standard rules) and “rule-addition.” By analyzing the works of two prominent figures of this era, Iraj Mirza and Mirzadeh Eshghi, this study examines how these poets employed various types of norm-breaking to bridge the gap between traditional literary forms and the burgeoning revolutionary discourse of the early 20th century.

Method

This research utilizes a descriptive-analytical methodology rooted in library research. The study applies Geoffrey Leech’s model of foregrounding, which identifies eight categories of norm-breaking, to the poetic corpuses of Iraj Mirza and Mirzadeh Eshghi. The analysis investigates specific instances of phonetic, lexical, syntactic, stylistic, and semantic deviations, evaluating their functions within the specific socio-political context of the Constitutional era.

Results

The analysis demonstrates that both poets heavily employed various forms of norm-breaking to achieve their artistic and communicative goals:

1. **Stylistic Norm-Breaking:** This emerged as the most significant differentiator between Constitutional poetry and its predecessors. The widespread integration of colloquialisms, everyday speech, and foreign (Western) loanwords—driven by the need to reach a

wider audience and reflect a changing society—is highly frequent in Iraj Mirza’s work, followed closely by Mirzadeh Eshghi.

۲. **Semantic Norm-Breaking:** Both poets made extensive use of literary devices such as metaphor, irony, synecdoche, personification, and proverbial expressions. These devices were not merely aesthetic but served to convey political and social critiques that would have been difficult to state explicitly.
۳. **Syntactic Norm-Breaking:** Deviations from standard Persian grammar—including unorthodox word order and the construction of novel, non-standard verb forms—are prevalent. These instances are particularly prominent in the poetry of Mirzadeh Eshghi.
۴. **Archaic/Historical Norm-Breaking:** Especially in the works of Mirzadeh Eshghi, there is a recurring use of archaic structures (e.g., *andar*, *aba*, *hami*). While partly attributable to the influence of classical predecessors, the researchers also suggest these instances may reflect the “weakness of composition” (*za’f-e ta’lif*) common in literary works during this transitional period.
۵. **Phonetic and Lexical Innovation:** The poets demonstrated high creativity in creating new compounds, sometimes mimicking Arabic rules for Persian roots (e.g., *ajfang*), which underscored their intent to disrupt traditional linguistic norms for specific rhetorical impact.

Conclusion

The study concludes that norm-breaking was not merely a linguistic quirk but a strategic necessity for Constitutional poets. By breaking the constraints of classical Persian, Iraj Mirza and Mirzadeh Eshghi successfully transformed poetry into a dynamic social tool. Iraj Mirza, in particular, favored stylistic and colloquial norm-breaking to simplify his language for mass accessibility and effective social commentary. Mirzadeh Eshghi’s work, while sharing these traits, is characterized by a higher degree of syntactic and archaic norm-breaking. Ultimately, the high frequency of these deviations reflects the seismic shift from the courtly, elitist literature of the Qajar period to a modern, revolutionary discourse that prioritized clarity, social relevance, and political engagement.