

Literary Discourse:

An Investigation into Semiotic Perspectives of Persian Narratology

UN DISCOURS LITTÉRAIRE:

UNE ENQUÊTE SUR LES PERSPECTIVES SÉMIOTIQUES DE LA NARRATOLOGIE PERSANE

Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi^{1,*}

Shaahin Rahavard²

Momene Ghadiri³

Abstract: This study was to approach critical discourse analysis (CDA) from a semiotic perspective. A case in point was Persian anecdotes. The data included four anecdotes randomly extracted from the book *Stories of Bohlool*. Data analysis was done within the framework of *narrative semiotics of Greimas* (1986). The anecdotes were analyzed in terms of 1) applicability of Greimassian approach to Persian anecdotes and 2) different levels of meaning latent in literary texts. The results of the study indicated that Greimassian approach is applicable to Persian narratology.

Key words: CDA; Semiotic Perspective; Persian Anecdotes; Narrative Semiotics of Greimas

Resumé Cette étude tente d'aborder l'analyse critique du discours (ACD) dans une perspective sémiotique. Un exemple en a été anecdotes persiques. Les données comprenaient quatre anecdotes tirées au sort dans le livre *Histoires de Bohlool*. L'analyse des données a été réalisée dans le cadre de la sémiotique narrative de Greimas (1986). Les anecdotes ont été analysées en termes de 1) l'applicabilité de l'approche greimassienne d'anecdotes persiques et 2) les différents niveaux de sens latents dans les textes littéraires. Les résultats de l'étude ont indiqué que l'approche greimassienne est applicable à la narratologie persane.

Mots-clés: ACD; Perspective Sémiotique; Anecdotes Persiques; Sémiotique Narrative De Greimas

DOI: 10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020110702.014

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Semiotics and Literary Analysis

As a critical theory, semiotics has increasingly gained ground in the last two or three decades. It is now included in many academic surveys. The approach was also quick to establish itself within the fields of media, film, and advertising and in recent years has widened its field of investigation to include, for example, law, architecture, psychology, music and the natural sciences (Martin & Ringham, 2006).

¹ Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

* Corresponding Author. Email: h_vahid@yahoo.com

² M.A. Candidate, Department of English, Islamic Azad University, Khorasan Branch, Isfahan, Iran.

Email: shaahin_rahavard@yahoo.com

³ M.A. Candidate, Department of English, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. Email: mome_ghadiri@yahoo.com

† Received March 13, 2011; accepted April 20, 2011.

Semiotics is the theory of sign systems. A sign system is a linguistic or nonlinguistic object or behavior (or collections of objects and behaviors) that can be analyzed as if it were a specialized language. In other words, Semiotics examines the way linguistic and nonlinguistic objects and behaviors operate symbolically to tell something (Tyson, 2006).

From a semiotic point of view, signs appear within a threefold process: *semiosis*, which includes syntax (the study of the relationships among signs), semantics (dealing with the relationships between signs and the objects signified), and pragmatics (dealing with the relationships between signs and their interpreters). If in the past the phonemes, morphemes or sentences were regarded as basic signs, later on Hartmann viewed the *text* as the “initial linguistic sign”, a reference point for the other linguistic elements.

There are four basic principles that the semiotic analysis of texts is based (see Martin & Ringham, 2006):

Meaning is not inherent in objects, objects do not signify by themselves. Meaning rather, is constructed by what is known as a competent observer, that is, by a subject capable of giving form to objects.

The text, any text, is an autonomous unit, that is, one that is inherently coherent. Rather than starting with ideas/meaning external to the text and showing how they are reflected within it, semiotic analysis begins with a study of the actual language and structures of the text, showing how meanings are constructed and of course, at the same time what these meanings are. Semiotic analysis becomes, then, a discovery method and is clearly an invaluable tool for all those engaged in original research.

Story structure or narrativity underlies all discourse, not just, what is commonly known as a story. One can go as far as to say that narrativity underlies every concept of truth.

Semiotics posits the notion of the levels of meaning within the texts. It is the deep level that generates the narrative and discursive levels. A text must, therefore, be studied at these different levels of depth and not just at the surface level, as is the case with traditional linguistics

In terms of literary analysis, semiotics is interested in literary conventions: the rules, literary devices, and formal elements that constitute literary structures (Tyson, 2006). It deals with the way in which the meaning of the literary text is produced by the structures of interdependent signs, by codes and conventions. Literary Semiotics was used successfully during the structuralist decades in the study of theatre, poetry and the narrative.

The present study is to approach critical discourse analysis from a literary semiotic perspective. The theoretical model of the study is that of the Greimassian approach (1986). This approach has yielded outstanding results, proving itself to be particularly effective in the uncovering of the multiplicity of meaning within- and beyond-the text. The study will in fact, focus on narrative semiotics and empirically test the application of semiotic approach to Persian narratology; in particular, anecdotes.

The analysis in this paper is guided by following question:

What contributions can *narrative semiotics of Greimas* have for analyzing Persian narratology?

1.2 Greimassian Approach

Based on Greimas (1986), schemas whose application contribute to decoding the meaning of texts and are to be tested in this study are as follows: the discursive level, the narrative level and the deep or abstract level.

1.2.1 The Discursive Level

The discursive level is a surface level of meaning or level of manifestation. The specific words-or grammatical items/structures that are visible on the surface of the text are examined, at this level. Most textual analysis has been concerned exclusively with this level. Key elements on this level consist of:

The figurative component

All the elements in the text that refer to the external physical world; they are known as figures. Figurative reality, then, is that reality that can be apprehended by the five senses-vision, smell, hearing, taste and touch. It can be contrasted with the inner world of the conceptual abstract that is the third and deep level of meaning.

Grammatical/syntactic features:

The use of the active or passive voice or procedures like nominalization or cohesive markers throw light on the organization of a text and thus reveal textual strategies or manipulation.

The *enunciative* component

This relates to traces of the speaker/author and the listener/reader in the text. Investigation of the pronouns, of the narrative voice (personalized or depersonalized), of forms of speech (direct/indirect) indicate intentionality. Most important in this respect is also modality of a statement: categorical, in the case of news reporting or tentative on the part of a pupil.

1.2.2 The Narrative Level

This level is more general and more abstract than the discursive level. It is the level of story grammar or surface narrative syntax, a structure that, according to the Paris school, underpins all discourse, be in scientific, sociological, artistic, etc.

Semiotic analysis of this level of meaning makes use of two fundamental narrative models: 1) the actantial narrative schema and 2) the canonical narrative schema. These models jointly articulate the structure of the quest or, to be more precise, the global narrative program of the quest. They can be applied to an extract, for example a single paragraph, or to a whole text.

Actantial Narrative Schema presents six key narrative functions (actantial roles) which together account for all possible relationships within a story and indeed within the sphere of human action in general.

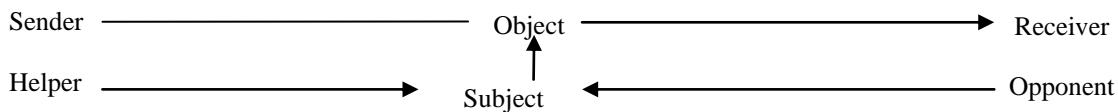


Figure 1: Actantial narrative schema (adopted from Martin & Ringham 2006, P.13)

The schema is a simplification of Propp's seven "spheres of action" or roles elaborated from a study of the Russian folk-tale – roles such as those of hero, villain, helper, etc. This diagram depicts the following relationship:

i. Subject/object

This is the most fundamental relationship: there can be no subject without an object and vice versa. A subject goes in quest could be concrete - a person or thing- or abstract, such as knowledge, truth or love. There is usually more than one subject and more than one quest in, for example, a novel or a newspaper article.

ii. Helper/ opponent

The subject could be helped or hindered in its quest. Again these actantial positions could be held by objects or internal qualities as well as people. Money or courage could be my helper and laziness my opponent. A variant of the opponent is the anti-subject. An anti-subject is a subject who, to achieve its goal, obstructs the quest of another subject. The subject/anti subject relationship characterizes all fiction and most newspaper articles or TV broadcasts.

iii. Sender/receiver

The sender is an actant (person/idea) that motivates an act or causes something to happen. In other words, the sender provokes action, causes someone to act. The sender transmits to the receiver the desire to act or the necessity to act. The desire or obligation to act is called modalities. What is known as a contract is established between sender and receiver. The receiver, when in possession of one (or both) of the relevant modalities, is transformed into a subject ready to embark on a quest.

B. Canonical Narrative Schema Consists of:

The contract

The sender motivates the action, communicating the modalities of desire or obligation to the receiver. A contract is established, the receiver becomes a subject and embarks on the quest. The contract is followed by three tests:

i. The qualifying test

The subject must acquire the necessary competence to perform the planned action or mission. The desire or obligation to act is in itself not sufficient. The subject must also possess the ability to act and/or the knowledge/skills to carry it out. The *being-able-to-do* and the *knowing-how-to-do* are also known as modalities.

ii. The decisive test

This represents the principal event or action for which the subject has been preparing, where the object of the quest is at stake. In adventure stories or newspaper articles, the decisive test frequently takes the form of a confrontation or conflict between a subject and an anti-subject.

iii. The glorifying test

This is the stage at which the outcome of the event is revealed. The decisive test has either succeeded or failed, the subject is acclaimed or punished. In other words, it is the point at which the performance of the subject is interpreted and

evaluated by what is known as the sender-adjudicator. The sender-adjudicator judges whether the performance is in accordance with the original set of values (ideology or mandane) instituted by the initial sender. To distinguish the two senders, the first one mandating sender and the second one the sender-adjudicator is called. The same actor or person does not necessarily play these roles.

Table 1: Canonical Narrative Schema (adopted from Martin & Ringham 2006, P.14)

Contract/manipulation	Competence	Performance	Sanction
Acquisition of a wanting-to-do or having-to-do	Qualifying test Strengthening of desire Acquisition of being-able-to-do and/or knowing-how-to-do	Decisive test The primary event where the object of value is at stake	Glorifying test Subject is recognized(praise/blame, success/failure)

When applying these fundamental narrative models to texts, it is important to be aware of several points:

Each individual text exploits these schemas in its own way. It is highly significant which stages of the quest are explicit, or manifested in the text, and which are implicit. The media, for instant, tend to foreground the stage of performance (decisive test) and the stage of sanction (glorifying test). Correlations can be made with the discursive level: figurative elements that have emerged as dominant isotopies or determining oppositions may, on the narrative level, take the positions of object or subject of a quest.

Not all stories or quests are completed. A quest may be aborted through the successful intervention or an anti-subject: if you set out to sail around the world and your boat capsizes, your quest is rather abruptly terminated.

1.2.3 The Deep or Abstract Level

After analyzing the narrative level of meaning, the next stage is to examine the deep level, sometimes also known as the thematic level. This is the level of abstract or conceptual syntax where the fundamental values that generate a text are articulated. These values can be presented in the form of a *semiotic square*.

The semiotic square is a visual presentation of the elementary structure of meaning. Articulating the relationships of contrariety (opposition), contradiction and implication, it is the logical expression of any semantic category.

The semiotic square includes terms, metaterms (compound terms), relations (between the terms), operations, observing subject(s) who do (es) the classifying (the real author, implied author, narrator, character, etc.), object(s) classified on the square, time (of observation), transformations and/or successions (in time) of subjects and objects.

Greimas' schema is useful since it illustrates the full complexity of any given semantic term (seme). Greimas points out that any given seme entails its opposite or "contrary." "Life" (s_1) for example is understood in relation to its contrary, "death" (s_2). Rather than rest at this simple binary opposition (S), however, Greimas points out that the opposition, "life" and "death," suggests what Greimas terms a contradictory pair ($-S$), i.e., "not-life" ($-s_1$) and "not-death" ($-s_2$).

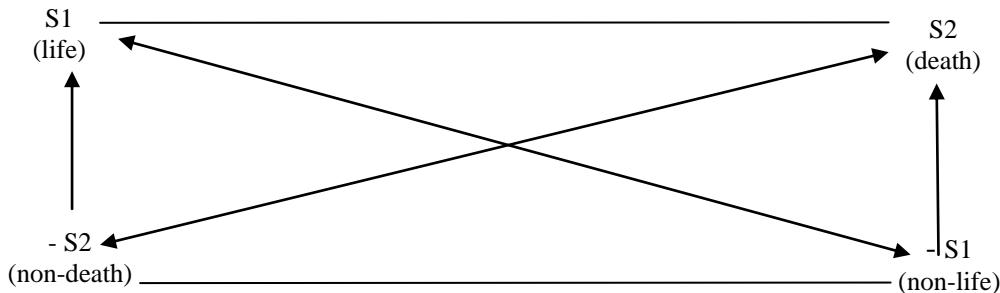


Figure 2: Semiotic Square (adopted from Martin & Ringham 2006, P.15)

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Materials⁴

The texts analyzed in this study were four anecdotes randomly extracted from the book *Stories of Bohlool*. These moral stories date back to the time of Imam Musa Kazmi (November 6, 745 AD - September 1, 799 AD), the seventh Shiite Imam. The texts are as follows:

Bohlool and Trader

Haroon and Hunter

Bohlool and Astronomer

Bohlool and Sheriff

2. 2 Procedures

The five extracted anecdotes were analyzed based on Greimassian approach (1986). First, vocabularies of each Persian text were explored and grouped together based on notations relating to place (including objects), time, and actors (characters). These groupings of words with similar meaning are called lexical fields, or, figurative isotopies. Second, each text was investigated in terms of sentence structure, repetition, ellipsis, active/passive, nominalization, and cohesive markers, as well as the traces of the writer and reader. In the next step, the principal events and transformations within each text were investigated. Finally, the fundamental values latent within each text were explored.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis of each anecdote, at three different levels of discursive, narrative and deep level, will be fully discussed below:

3.1 Anecdote 1: Bohlool and Trader

3.1. 1 The Discursive Level

A. Figurative Elements: The following isotopies, lexical fields were found within the first anecdote:

Table 3.1.1: The Figurative Isotopies of the First Anecdote

Objects		Time		Actors(characters)	
Persian	English Equivalent	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalent
آهن	Iron	روزی	One day	بهلول	Bohlool
پنبه	Cotton	چند ماهی	Some months	سوداگر بغدادی	Baghdadi Trader
بیان	Onion	مدت کمی	After a while	دیوانه	Sane
هندوانه	Watermelon	بار اول	First time	عاقل	Insane
		دفعه دوم	Second time		
		روز اول	First day		
		فوری	Immediately		

The following **oppositions** can be discerned within the first anecdote:

⁴ Bohlool was born in Kufa. His real name is Wahab bin Amr. Haroun Rashid feared for the safety of his Caliphate and kingdom from the seventh Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.); therefore, he tried to destroy the Imam. He put the blame of rebellion upon the Imam and demanded a judicial decree from the pious people of his time--which included Bohlool. Everyone gave the decree except Bohlool, who opposed the decision. He immediately went to the Imam and informed him of the circumstances, and asked for advice and guidance. The Imam told him to act insanely. Because of the situation, Bohlool acted insanely by the Imam's order. By doing this, he was saved from Haroun's punishment. Now, without any fear of danger, Bohlool protected himself from tyrannies. He insulted the notorious Caliph and his courtiers just by talking. Nevertheless, people acknowledged his superior wisdom and excellence. Even today, many of his stories are narrated in assemblies and teach the listeners valuable lessons. Before becoming insane, Bohlool lived a life of influence and power, but after obeying the Imam's order, he turned his face away from the majesty and splendor of the world. In reality, he became crazy over Allah. He did not accept favors from or depend upon Haroun or those like him. Bohlool considered himself better than the Caliph and his courtiers because of his way of life.

Table 3. 1.2: The Opposition Found in the First Anecdote

Objects				Time			
Edible		No edible		Durativeness		Punctuality	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
پیاز و هندوانه	Onion and Watermelon	آهن و پنبه	Iron and Cotton	چند ماهی	Some months	فوری	Immediately
Actors(characters)				Concepts			
Euphoria		Dysphoria		Positive		Negative	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
عقل	Sane	دیوانه	Insane	سؤال مودبانه	Polite question	سؤال غير مودبانه	Impolite question
				سود	Benefit	ضرر	detriment

B. Grammatical/Syntactic Features

The sentence structure is very simple and short. Some sentences are interrogative. In addition, Some sentences start by temporal connectors, like "once", "after a while", "after some months", etc. This intensifies the drama and pace of narrative in which the passage of time is an important concept.

What is salient within the story is the frequent repetition of "Bohlool". Bohlool is frequently addressed by his own name as trader is often addressed by "that man" or "he". This intensifies the significance of Bohlool's character.

Further linguistic devices worthy to mention include the frequent positioning of the subject (human) at the beginning of a sentence and the marked preference for the active voice.

C. The Enunciative Component

The narrator is limited omniscient. The narrator is third-person and extradiegetic (i.e. stands outside the story. The story is told in past, we are kept at a distance from the events recounted.

Concerning the use of modality, the statements in the story are of a categorical nature. They express certainty on the part of narrator, there are no tentative utterances suggesting the probability or possibility. the idea of complete objectivity is thus got across.

However, the presence of the narrator in the story is not that much salience. The use of tentative suggestions, subjectivity, or sharp opposition indicating the presence of the narrator was not explored.

3.1. 2 The Narrative Level

A. Actantial narrative schema

- 1.sender: The way of addressing Bohlool
- 2.helper: Sane Bohlool (first time)
- 3.object: Benefits from the deal
- 4.subject: Baghdadi Trader
- 5.receiver: Baghdadi Trader
- 6.opponent: Insane Bohlool(second time)

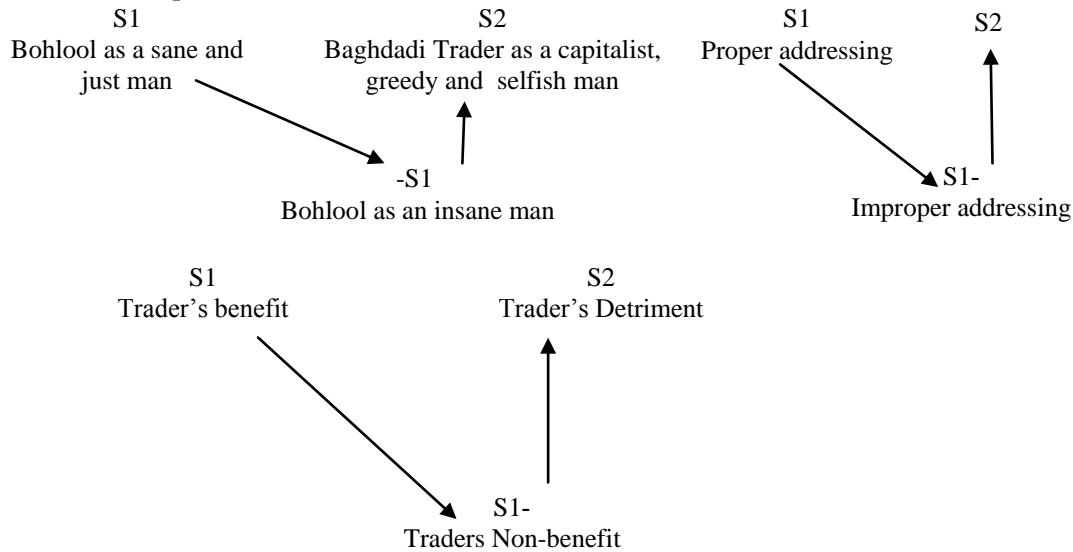
B. canonical narrative schema

The contract

- 1.The Qualifying Test: Bohlool's weapon is his innate knowledge. He answers the questions based on what he hears and thus acts upon it.
- 2.The Decisive Test: Two principal events represented. 1) The trader benefited a lot from his deal due to his proper addressing. 2) The trader lost in his deal due to improper addressing.
- 3.The Glorifying Test: The first time, the proper guidance led to a great benefit. The second time, the improper guidance led to loss of his fund.

3.1.3 The Deep or Abstract Level

A. Semiotic Square



B. Text and Context

- The story indirectly suggests the patriarchal system of the society, as all the characters are men.
- The story heightens the use of politeness in addressing people.
- Proper behavior towards people will lead to the favorable outcome, as improper behavior will have the opposite outcome.

3.2 Anecdote 2: Haroon and Hunter

3.2.1 The discursive level

A. Figurative Elements: The following isotopies, lexical fields were found within the second anecdote:

Table3.2.1: The Figurative Isotopies of the Second Anecdote

Place		Objects		Time		Actors(characters)	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
قصر	Palace	شطرنج	Chessboard	اعياد رسمي	Official ceremonies	خليفة	Caliph
زمین خزانه	Earth Treasury	ماهی درهم	Fish Drachma	در آن حال در آن روز	Meanwhile On that day	زبیده آنها	Zobeide They
پله ها	Stairs	انعام پول	Tip Money	هر روز به انده مدتی	Every day After a while	زن خود بهلول	His wife Bohlool
		نمک بندی	Salt A bag	الحال موقعی سه دفعه	immediately while Three times	هارون الرشید صبادي افراد لشکری و کشوری	Haroon-al-Rashid Hunter Civil and military staff
						هارون غلامان	Haroon Servants

The following **oppositions** can be discerned within the second anecdote:

Table 3.2.2: The Oppositions Found in the Second Anecdote

Objects				Time			
Less/singular/male		More/plural/female		Durativeness		Punctuality	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
نعم کمی	tightfisted tip	نعم زیادی	Generous tip	در آن روز	On that day	الحال	Immediately
پول	Money	پول ها	Much money	هر روز	Every day	به اندک مدتی	After a while
ماهی نر	Male fish	ماهی ماده	Female fish	سه دفعه	Three times	موقعی	while
						در آن حال	Meanwhile
Actors(characters)				Actors(characters)			
Euphoria		Dysphoria		Male		Female	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
نمک شناس	Grateful	نمک نشناش	Ungrateful	این مرد	This man	آن زن	That woman
خایفه	servant	غلامان	Servants				
		پست فطرت	Mean				

B. Grammatical/Syntactic Features

The sentence structure is very simple and short. There is frequent use of temporal connectors like, "On that day ", "after a while", "while ", etc. This intensifies the drama and pace of narrative in which the passage of time is an important concept.

What is salient within the story is the frequent repetition of "Haroon" and "Bohlool". Bohlool and Haroon are frequently addressed by their own names. This intensifies the significance of Haroon and Bohlool's character.

At the beginning of the story, Zobeide is referred by her own name. As at the end, Haroon addressed her as "that woman". This heightens the stereotype degrading view towards women, as always presented throughout the history.

Further linguistic devices worthy to mention include the frequent positioning of the subject (human) at the beginning of a sentence and the marked preference for the active voice.

C. The Enunciative Component

The narrator is limited omniscient. The narrator is third-person and extradiegetic (i.e. stands outside the story. the story is told in past, we are kept at a distance from the events recounted).

Concerning the use of modality, the statements in the story are of a categorical nature. They express certainty on the part of narrator, there are no tentative utterances suggesting the probability or possibility. The idea of complete objectivity is thus got across.

However, the presence of the narrator in the story is not that much salience. The use of tentative suggestions, subjectivity, or sharp opposition indicating the presence of the narrator was not explored.

3. 2.2 The Narrative Level

A. Actantial narrative schema

- 1.sender: The way of addressing Haroon / Hunter
- 2.helper: Bohlool
- 3.object: Fish/Tip
- 4.subject: Hunter
- 5.receiver: Haroon (fish) / Hunter(Tip)
- 6.opponent: Zobeide

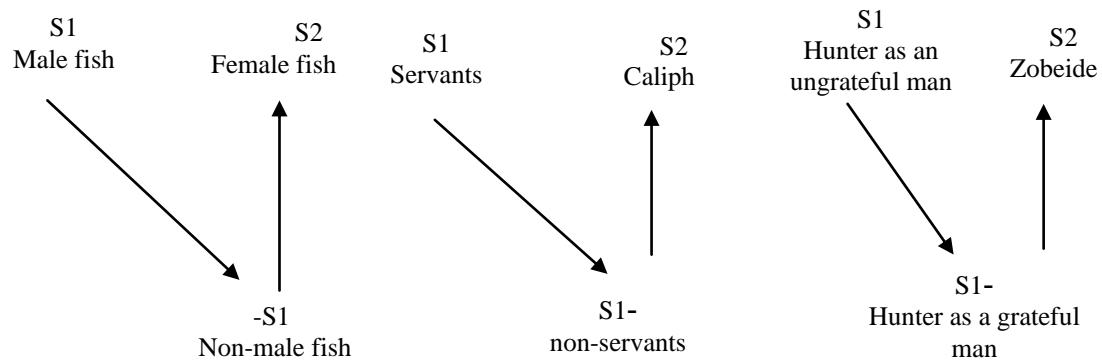
B. canonical narrative schema

The contract

- 1.The Qualifying Test: Bohlool, due to his innate knowledge, suggests the most appropriate solutions.
- 2.The Decisive Test: Two principal events represented. 1) The hunter brings fish for the caliph. 2) The caliph tips the hunter.
- 3.The Glorifying Test: The caliph loses because of listening to his wife.
The Hunter gains a generous tip because of his witty answers.

3.2. 3 The deep or abstract level

A. Semiotic Square



B. Text and Context

- a. The story indirectly suggests the traditional stereotype concerning that listening to women will lead to loss.
- b. The story heightens the discourse of wittiness and flattering in addressing the top officials.
- c. Those who call themselves "sane" can say big things. Their power lies within their words.

3. 3. Anecdote 3: *Bohlool and Astronomer*

3.3.1 The discursive level

A. Figurative Elements: The following isotopies, lexical fields were found within the third anecdote:

Table 3.3.1: The Figurative Isotopies of the Third Anecdote

Place		Objects		Social event		Actors(characters)	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
کنار	Close to	ستاره های آسمان	The stars in the sky	مجلس	Social gathering	خلیفه	Caliph
همسایگی	neighborhood					بهلوول	Bohlool
						هارون الرشید	Haroon-al-Rashid
						منجم	astronomer

The following **oppositions** can be discerned within the third anecdote:

Table 3.3.2: The Oppositions Found in the Third Anecdote

Objects				Actors(characters)			
low		high		literate		illiterate	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
همسایگی	neighborhood	ستاره های آسمان	The stars in the sky	منجم	astronomer	بهلول	Bohlool

B. Grammatical/Syntactic Features

The sentence structure is very simple and short. There is frequent repetition of "Bohlool" as the astronomer is just addressed as "astronomer" at first and in rest, he was addressed with the pronoun "he". This may intensify the significance of Bohlool's character in comparison to astronomer.

What is salient within the story is lack of temporal connectors like, "On that day ", "after a while", "while ", etc. This may intensify that time is not an important concept within this story.

Further linguistic devices worthy to mention include the frequent positioning of the subject (human) at the beginning of a sentence and the marked preference for the active voice.

C. The *enunciative* component

The narrator is limited omniscient. The narrator is third-person and extradiegetic (i.e. stands outside the story. the story is told in past, we are kept at a distance from the events recounted. the story is stated by " it is said that", showing that the narrator is not obvious. this indicates that the narrator is limited omniscient.

Concerning the use of modality, the statements in the story are of a categorical nature. They express certainty on the part of narrator, there are no tentative utterances suggesting the probability or possibility. The idea of complete objectivity is thus got across.

However, the presence of the narrator in the story is not that much salience. The use of tentative suggestions, subjectivity, or sharp opposition indicating the presence of the narrator was not explored.

3. 3.2 The Narrative Level

A. Actantial Narrative Schema

- 1.sender: -
- 2.helper: -
- 3.object: Approving the claim of knowing astronomy
- 4.subject: Astronomer
- 5.receiver: -
- 6.opponent: Bohlool

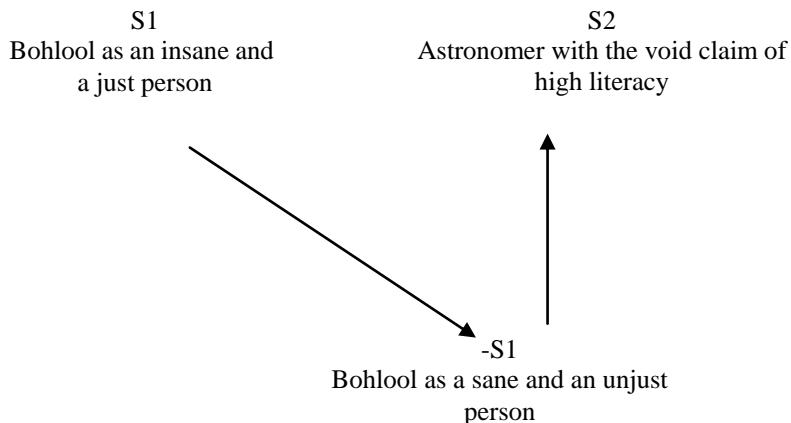
B. Canonical Narrative Schema

The contract

- 1.The Qualifying Test: Bohlool, due to his innate knowledge and truth-seeking temper, tries to overcome the vain. His weapon is always his words. Beside his insanity, he reiterates the elated truths through simple words.
- 2.The Decisive Test: Two principal events represented. 1) The astronomer claims he knows astronomy. 2) Bohlool, coming across his void claim of the astronomer, tries to defame him.
- 3.The Glorifying Test: Astronomer's helplessness in answering Bohlool's question leaves the ceremony.

3. 3. 3 The Deep Or Abstract Level

A. Semiotic Square



B. Text and Context

- The story indirectly suggests that vain and void claims will be defamed and truth remains.
- The story heightens the seeking of truth and, overcoming the vain.
- Never accept a claim without testing it.

3. 4 Anecdote 4: Bohlool and Sheriff

3. 4.1 The discursive level

A. Figurative elements: The following isotopies, lexical fields were found within the fourth anecdote:

Table 3.4.1: The Figurative Isotopies of the Fourth Anecdote

Place		Objects		Time		Actors(characters)	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
بغداد	Baghdad	-	-	تا به حال	So far	داروغه بغداد	Baghdadi Sheriff
در بین	between			المساعه	Immediately	بهلوول	Bohlool
در میان	among			دو ساعت	Two hours	جماعی	A crowd
همینجا	here			چندین ساعت	Some hours		
				اولین دفعه	First time		
				فوري	soon		

The following **oppositions** can be discerned within the fourth anecdote:

Table 3.4.2. The Oppositions Found in the Fourth Anecdote

Time				Actors(characters)			
Durativeness		Punctuality		low		high	
Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence	Persian	English Equivalence
چندین ساعت	Some hours	فوري	Soon	بهلوول	Bohlool	داروغه بغداد	Baghdadi Sheriff
تا به حال	So far	اولین دفعه	First time				
دو ساعت	Two hours	المساعه	Immediately				

B. Grammatical/syntactic features

The sentence structure is very simple and short. There is frequent use of temporal connectors like, "So far ", "Two hours ", "Some hours ", etc. This intensifies the drama and pace of narrative in which the passage of time is an important concept.

What is salient within the story is lack of use of pronouns. Both characters were addressed by their own names. This may intensify that both characters are regarded the same.

Further linguistic devices worthy to mention include the frequent positioning of the subject (human) at the beginning of a sentence and the marked preference for the active voice.

C. The *enunciative* component

The narrator is limited omniscient. The narrator is third-person and extradiegetic (i.e. stands outside the story. the story is told in past, we are kept at a distance from the events recounted. the story is stated by " it is said that", showing that the narrator is not obvious. this indicates that the narrator is limited omniscient.

Concerning the use of modality, the statements in the story are of a categorical nature. They express certainty on the part of narrator, there are no tentative utterances suggesting the probability or possibility. The idea of complete objectivity is thus got across.

However, the presence of the narrator in the story is not that much salience. The use of tentative suggestions, subjectivity, or sharp opposition indicating the presence of the narrator was not explored.

3.4.2 The narrative level

A. Actantial narrative schema

1.sender:	Bohlool
2.helper:	-
3.object:	Approving the claim of deceiving sheriff
4.subject:	Sheriff
5.receiver:	Sheriff
6.opponent:	-

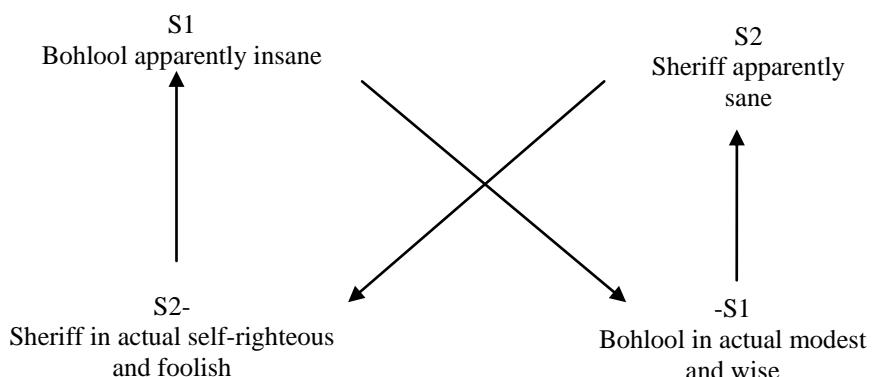
B. canonical narrative schema

The contract

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1.The Qualifying Test: | Bohlool, due to his innate knowledge makes the man aware of his mistake. |
| 2.The Decisive Test: | Two principal events represented. 1) The sheriff claims no one can deceive him. 2) Bohlool, claims he is able of deceiving The sheriff. |
| 3.The Glorifying Test: | The sheriff, being deceived and delayed, detained from his works. |

3.4.3 The deep or abstract level

A. Semiotic Square



B. Text and Context

- a. The story indirectly rejects self-righteous and self-centeredness.
- b. The story heightens the seeking of truth and, overcoming the vain.
- c. Those who are, in actual, wise and sane, never assert big claims.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The overall aim of this study was to find out what application semiotic analysis might bring to Persian literary discourse analysis. To achieve this purpose, four Persian anecdotes from the book *Stories of Bohlool* were randomly selected. Then, the texts were analyzed based on *narrative semiotics of Greimas* (1986). The texts were decoded and investigated at different levels of meaning including the discursive level, the narrative level, and the deep or abstract level.

The result of the analysis indicated that this model is applicable to Persian literary discourse. The texts were successfully analyzed at three levels of the meaning. At the discursive level, different isotopies came out. Anecdotes differed concerning the lexical fields. However, the isotopic "time" was almost the same in all anecdotes. Due to the brevity of the story, the figurative isotopies, were briefed, too. Analysis of the text structure indicated the use of simple, short sentences, the frequent positioning of the subject (human) at the beginning of a sentence and the marked preference for the active voice and considerable use of temporal connectors indicating the importance of the concept "time" within the narrative text. The narrator in all stories was third-person and extradiegetic. All the stories contained only one setting. Punctuation marks were not paid attention to within the Persian text. There were many cases within the text, which lack colon, or full stop. Number of actors was really limited due to the fact that the anecdotes were really short.

At the narrative level, analyzing the main principal events and main transformations within each anecdote, we try to summarize the plot in two or three sentences. This level was different in each anecdote. The main transformations and events within each story were fully explained. It was interesting that Bohlool who was the protagonist did not initiate the debate. He was the opponent for other antagonists who were usually some selfish and foolish people. The antagonists created the problems and it was Bohlool who solved them.

At the deep level, the fundamental values latent within the texts were investigated. Though apparently different, the latent values within the stories were ethical in nature, and seems to be true for all the time. In other words, Bohlool's stories transcend the time and his words can be a good source of tips for people of different cultures, as the stories reflect the ethical issues people all over the world, throughout the history, have faced.

The advantage of the anecdotes is that their simple language makes people with different life backgrounds interested. They are not just for a special group of people. We saw conflict between different classes in a society namely, king, queen, poor-man, cheaters and so on. However, the final step was clear. Bohlool won. All the groups understood him.

Morality was hidden in the anecdotes but it was not referred to directly. The whole anecdotes indirectly pointed to the good things that people can do and warned them about bad things. The art of the writer was to convey lots of information within limited, simple sentences. It did not need a great knowledge to infer the main idea and points; thus, it is suitable for all the people.

Bohlool did not mention the weaknesses and wrong acts directly but he just gave sometime to his addressee to figure out his mistake himself and thus the effect was greater. The addressee in the story felt ashamed inside without even being told a sentence about his fault. Experience helped. A man with a silly appearance helped those who pretend to be wise.

However, the major drawback of the study is the small size of the sample with four anecdotes, not allowing for a more exhaustive generalization about application of semiotic analysis within Persian literary discourse analysis. Greater range of data could have given us a better view of the phenomenon.

REFERENCES

- Eco, U. (1984). *The role of the reader: Explorations in the semiotics of texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Greimas, A. J. (1966). *Semantique structurale: Recherche de methode*. Paris: Larousse.
- Greimas, A. J. (1986). *On meaning: Selected writing in semiotic theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Jafari, K. (2000). *Stories of bohlool*. Retrieved from Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project team:
<http://www.al-islam.org/gallery/kids/Books/bohlool/index.htm>

- Martin, B. & Ringham, F. (2006). *Key terms in semiotics*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Meister, J. C., Kindt, T. & Schernus, W. (Eds.). (2005). *Narratology beyond literary criticism: Mediality and disciplinarity*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Peirce, C. S. (1931). *Collected papers of charles sanders peirce*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Prince, G. (1982). *Narratology: The form and functioning of narrative*. Amsterdam: Mouton.
- Propp, V. (1968). *Morphology of the folktale*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Propp, Vladimir. (1928) *The morphology of the fairy tale*. Leningrad: Academia.
- Robichaud, D. (2002). Greimas' semiotics and the analysis of organizational action. In Lui, K. et al. (Eds.). *Coordination and communication using signs: Studies in organizational semiotics*. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Saussure, F. (1974) [1913]. *Course in general linguistics*. London: Fontana.
- Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide*. London: Rutledge.

APPENDIX A

Bohlool and Trader

Bohlool va Sodagar

Roozi sodagare Baghadi az Bohlool soal nemood man che bekharan ta manafe ziad bebare? Bohlool javab dad ahan, panbe. An mard raft va meghdari ahan va panbe kharid va anbar nemood. Etefaghan pas az chand mahi forookht va soode faravan bord. Baz roozi be Bohlool barkhord. In dafe goft: Bohloole divane man che bekharan ta manafe ziad bebare. Javab dad piaz bekhar va hendavane. Sodagar indafe raft va tamame sarmaie khod ra piazo hendavane kharid va anbar nemood. Pas az modate kami tamame piaz va hendavanehaie oo poosid va az bein raft va zarar faravan nemood. Fori be soraghe Bohlool raft va goft ke bare aval ke ba to mashverat nemoodam gofti ahan bekhar va panbe va nafei borde vali dafeie dovom in che pishnahadi bood kardi? Tamame sarmaieie man az bein raft. Bohlool dar javabe an mard goft rooze aval ke mara seda zadi gofti aghaie sheikh Bohlool va chon mara shakhse agheli khatab nemoodi manham az rooie aghl be to javab dadam. Vali dafeie dovom mara divane khatab nemoodi, man ham az rooie divanegi javabat ra dadam. Mard az gofteie dovome khod khejel shod va matlab ra dark nemood.

APPENDIX B

Haroon and Hunter

Haroon va Saiad

Avardeand ke khalife haroon-al-rashid dar yeki az aiade rasmi ba zobeide zane khod neshaste va mashghoole baize shatranj boodand. Bohlool bar anha vared shod oo ham neshastva be tamashaie anha mashghool shod. Dar an hal saiadi zamine adab ra boose dad va mahie besiar farbehe ghashangi ra jahate khalife avarde bood. Haroon dar an rooz sarkhosh bood amr nemood ta chahar hezar derham be saiad anaam bedahand.

Zobeide be amale haroon eteraz nemood va goft: in mablagh bariae saiadi ziad ast be jahate inke to bayad har rooz bayad be afraade lashgari va keshvari anaam dahi va chenanke to az in mablagh kamtar be anha bedahi khahand goft ke ma be ghadre saiadi ham naboodim va agar ziad bedahi khazineie to be andak modati tohi khahad shod.

Haroon sokhane Zobeide ra pasandide va goft alhal che konam? Goft saiad ra seda kon va a zoo soal nama in mahi nar ast ya made? Agar goft nar ast begoo pasande ma nist va agar goft made ast baz ham begoo pasande ma nist va oo majboor mishavad mahi ra pas bebabrad anaam ra begozarad.

Bohlool be Haroon goft faribe zan nakhor va mozaheme saiad nasho vali Haroon ghabool nanemood. Saiad ra seda zad va be oo goft: mahi nar ast ya made? Saiad baz zamine adab boosid va arz nemood in mahi na nar ast na made balke khonsa ast. Haroon az in javabe saiad khoshhash amad va dastoos nemood ta chahar hezar derhame digar ham anaam be oo bedahand.

Saiad poolha ra gerefte, dar bandi rikht va moghei kea z pelehaie ghasr pain miraft yek derham az poolha be zamin oftad. Saiad kham shod va pool ra bardasht. Zobeide be Haroon goft: in mard che andaze past hemat ast ke az yek derham ham nemigozard.

Haroon ham az past fetrati saiad badash amad va oo ra seda zad va baz Bohlool goft mozaheeme oo nashavid. Haroon ghabool nanemood va saiad ra seda zad va goft: cheghadr pas fetrati ke hazer nisti haghe yek derham az in poolha ghesmate gholamane man shavad. Saïad ba zamine adab boose zad va arz kard: man pasfetrat nistam. Balke namakshenasam va az in jahat pool ra bardashtam ke didam yek tarafe in pool ayate ghoran va samte digare an esme khalife ast va chenanche rooie zamin bemanad shayad pa be an nahand va az adab door ast.

Khalife baz az sokhane sayad khoshash amad va amr nemood chahar hezar derhame digar ham be saiad anaam dadand va Haroon goft: man az to divanetaram be jahate inke se dafe mara mane shodi man harfe tora ghabool nanemoodam va harfe an zan ra be kar bastam va in hame motezarer shodam.

APPENDIX C

Bohlool and Astronomer

Monajem va Bohlool

Avardeand ke shaxsi be nazde khalife Haroon-al-rashid amad va edeaie danestane oloome nojoom nemood. Bohlool dar an majles hazer bood va etefaghan an monajem kenare bohlool gharar gerefte bood. Bohlool az oo soal nemood aya mitavani begooii ke dar hamsaiegie to ke neshaste? An mard goft nemidanam. Bohlool goft to ke hamsayeat ra nemishenasi chetor az setarehaie asman xabar midahi? An mard az harfhaie bohlool ja khord va majles ra tark kard.

APPENDIX D

Bohlool and Sheriff

Bohlool va Darooghe

Avardeand ke daroogheie Bagdad dar beine Jamee edea mikard ke ta behal hichkas natavaneste ast mara gool bezanad. Bohlool dar miane an jam bood goft: gool zadane to kare asani ast vali be zahmatash nemiarzad. Darooghe goft chon az ohdeie an barnemaii in harf ra mizani. Bohlool goft: heif ke assae kare kheili vajebi daram vaela hamin assae tora gool mizadam.

Darooghe goft hazeri beri va fori karat ra anjam bedahi va bargardi? Bohlool goft bali. Pas haminja montazere man bash fori miaiam. Bohlool rafto digar barnagasht. Darooghe pas az 2 saat moatali bana kard be ghor ghor kardan va bad goft in avalin dafe ast ke in divane mara be ghasam gool zad va chandin saat bijahat mara moatal va az kar baz nemood.