

**Structural Analysis of Mozghan Sheikhi's Rewritings of  
Anecdotes of Sa'di's *Gulistan* for Children**

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**Introduction**

Rewriting or recreating ancient literary texts is one of the important methods of writing which has come to the attention of writers of children's and adolescents' literature in recent decades and is considered an independent genre among other literary genres. In today's world, recreating and rewriting ancient literary texts with the aim of transferring their valuable moral and educational themes has gained significance. These rewritings can reconnect children and adolescents with classic literary masterpieces.

Mozghan Sheikhi is one of the most prolific rewriters whose works will be analyzed in the present research due to her skill in using story elements and her ability to build strong plot structures for the rewritten anecdotes. The researchers have focused on her six-volume collection, *Illustrated Tales from Gulistan*, in order to reveal the artistic and literary techniques that she employs in recreating the anecdotes. The researchers try to find answers to these questions: has the rewriter

remained faithful to the original text or has she changed the elements of the story? In case there are any changes, have they damaged the content and the moral of the story or have they contributed to the better reception of the story and its message? In which element of the story is the creativity of the writer most noticeable?

### **Methodology, Review of Literature and Purpose**

The present research is conducted with a descriptive-analytical method using library information collecting tools. First, an integrated model was provided for the assessment of the rewritten stories by studying books on writing stories for children, handbooks of criticism of children's and adolescents' literature, and theoretical books and articles about rewriting and recreation. Then, the rewritten stories were compared with anecdotes in Sa'di's *Gulistan* and the structure and the elements of the stories of both texts were analyzed to see if the rewritten text has any remarkable quality or weakness.

A number of researchers have employed theoretical frameworks to study and evaluate rewritings of ancient Persian texts of prose and poetry from different perspectives; for example, Moshref Azad (1996) who studied rewritings from previous decades to that time, Forouzandeh (2010) who conducted a research on the elements of story in stories for children; Arablou (2010) who studied the recreation of ancient literature for adolescents, Safari and Najafi (2011) who wrote on the comparison and analysis of story elements in *Kelileh and Demneh* and its rewritings and also (2014) on ten rewritten stories based on *Gulistan* and their comparison with the original texts, and Haji-Alilou (2011) who studied the plot structure of some of the anecdotes

in *Gulistan*. In the present study, the researchers try to follow the model of these studies to analyze and evaluate Mozhgan Sheikhi's rewritten texts based on Sa'di's *Gulistan*.

### **Discussion**

Studying the elements comprising a text is one type of textual analysis. All the parts of story that make up the structure of the story in relation with each other are called story elements. Story elements can be divided into two categories: intra-built and extra-built. The extra-built elements are plot, characterization, point of view, setting and language. These elements are analyzed in Mozhgan Sheikhi's six rewritten works. In these stories, the rewriter, having the audience's mental ability in mind, has significantly expanded the plot of the story beyond the original text by adding beautiful scenes. In three stories, the plot is simple and closed; however, in "The Beggar Who Became King", "The Long Journey" and "The Young Watchman" the plot is open. While keeping the main thought and content of the ancient text, Sheikhi creatively modifies the structural dimension of the story by the used of short sentences, popular expressions, detailed description and simple words. In characterization, the rewriter follows Sa'di in giving a thought-provoking function to the characters; therefore, she creates a few minor characters and adds dialogues and description of the characters to enhance the fictional dimensions of the anecdotes and make the stories more real and more attractive for children. Sheikhi expands the dialogues in order to strengthen the chain of cause and effects of the events. The creativity of the rewriter is most observable in her characterization, adding descriptions, internal monologues as well as

dialogues between characters. In the rewritten text, just like the original text, the characters are simple, conventional and mostly static.

The point of view in these stories is third person omniscient. In some of the stories, there is a combination of the first person and third person point of view. The story “The Young Watchman” is in the form of an autobiography in the original text; however, in the rewritten text, the writer uses the phrase “Once upon a time” to draw the narrator out of the story and change the point of view from first person to third person. The analysis of the language of the text shows that the rewriter has used rather long and incomprehensible sentences for children in addition to direct short and simple sentences. Also, the literary level of the text is diminished by the frequent use of the conjunction “and” between many independent phrases, frequent use of idioms and colloquial words, and the grammatical mistake of moving the object indicator after the verb. The use of metaphors, simple adjectives and adverbs which are comprehensible for children, and employing synonymous words are the strong points of these rewritings. Sheikhi takes advantage of questions and ellipsis in order to invite children to participate and pay more attention to the text.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of the extra-built story elements in the rewritings of Mozghan Sheikhi and their comparison with Sa’di’s *Gulistan* reveals that the plot of the rewritten text has gained more coherence and causal order for children as audience. The beginning, the climax and the end of the stories in the rewritten texts are based on the concepts in Sa’di’s *Gulistan*.

The main characters of the stories, their actions and dynamism are the same as the original text. Characterization is direct and indirect, relying on dialogue and action.

On the whole, the point of view in all the six rewritten stories is third person omniscient. In some of the stories, the rewriter has used dialogue to come closer to a dramatic point of view, and in some, she combines first person and third person points of view. While maintaining the themes of the anecdotes in *Gulistan*, the rewriter has tried to create a contemporary and semi-creative text by making some modifications in the structure and story elements. Sheikhi's creative skill is most observable in her characterization and descriptions, especially in dialogues.

The rewriter is successful to some extent in delivering the messages of the original text and maintaining the main themes and simplifying the language; however, there is room for improvement in sustaining Sa'di's distinctive language which is the identity of his work.

**Keywords:** children's literature, rewriting, recreating, Sa'di, *Gulistan*, Mozhgan Sheikhi

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