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Waiting Expressions in Arabic Religious texts : A Stylistic Study

A B S T R U C T

The study is a stylistic examination of waiting expressions used in Arabic religious texts. The study focuses on the language used in religious statements dealing with the idea of waiting for a savior . Stylistic investigations concerned with the influence of religious concepts over language style are rare. The study employs religious waiting expressions presented in Tafsir Al-Mizan) Interpretation of the Qur'an (by the Islamic scholar Muhammad Husain Al-Tabataba'i. The investigation's goals are served by the development of an eclectic model of analysis. The eclectic model includes Crystal and Davy (1969) religious language analytical frame work , Van Noppen (1981) religious language style and Leech and Short (2007) stylistic tool-kit .The questions aimed to be answered in this study involves : What are the main lexical , semantic , Grammatical , figures of speech and context and cohesion linguistic items used within religious waiting statements ? What is the significance of this investment ? And what is the effect of religious concepts upon the language style ? There is a focus on the use of specific linguistic items such as listing constructions , proper names, repetition of specific titles for The Waited and the same metaphor . In addition , the study concluded that no archaic expressions are used . It is also noted that the degree to which the religious concept under investigation is expressed in the linguistic items used varies.

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تعبير الانتظار الديني في النصوص العربية الدينية: دراسة اسلوبية

الاستاذ الدكتور رياض طارق كاظم العميدي/ قسم اللغة الانكليزية ، كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية ، جامعة بابل ، بابل ، العراق
م .م بدرية قاسم الشويلي/ وزارة التربية ، مديرية تربية ذي قار

الخلاصة:

هذه الدراسة عبارة عن دراسة اسلوبية لتعبير الانتظار المستخدمة في النصوص الدينية المكتوبة باللغة العربية. تركز هذه الدراسة على الأسلوب اللغوي للأقوال الدينية التي تتحدث عن الانتظار وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى سد الفجوة المتعلقة بنقص التحقيقات الأسلوبية للمفاهيم الدينية في النصوص. وقد استخدمت لتحقيق الغرض تحليل العبارات الدينية الموجودة في تفسير (تفسير الميزان) للقرآن (للعالم السيد محمد حسين

طببائي). استثمرت نموذجٌ للتحليل لغرض هذا التحليل ويشمل نموذج كرسنال وديفي (1969) الخاص بمواصفات اللغة الدينية ، نموذج فان نوبن (1981) للاسلوب الديني و نموذج شورت وليتش (2007) الخاص باسلوبية اللغة . تتضمن الأسئلة التي أثرت في هذه الدراسة ما يلي: ما هي الأشكال المعجمية والدلالية والنحوية الرئيسية وشخصيات الكلام والسياق وعناصر التماسك اللغوي المستخدمة في بيان الانتظار الديني؟ ما هي أهمية هذا الاستثمار؟ وما هو تأثير مفهوم الانتظار على اللغة المستثمرة؟ تشمل نتائج هذا التحليل ما يلي: هناك تركيز على الاستخدام على عناصر لغوية معينة مثل إنشاءات قائمة معينة (أسماء العلم) ، وتكرار عناوين معينة للمنتظر الموعود عليه السلام، ولم يتم استخدام لغة دينية قديمة ، بالإضافة إلى الاستخدام المكثف لـ نفس الاستعارة الدينية .

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأسلوبية ، الاسلوب ، اللغة الدينية ، تفسير الميزان ، المنتظر (المهدي) .

1. Introduction

Because of its long-lasting influence on receivers, language is one of the most potent weapons in human connections .Language provides a repertoire of its mines for writers to manage their intentions perfectly . The purpose of this research article is to investigate the aesthetic characterization of linguistic phrases associated with the concept of waiting found in Tafsir Al-Mizan (Interpretation of the Quran)by the scholar Muhammad Husain Al-Tabatabai. The importance of this approach lies in the investigation of the impact of religious conceptions on linguistic items and their usage. Any religious activity requires language to accurately communicate its traditions to others. In Addition , this study represents one of the articles that is conducted to measure the influence of religious concepts and doctrines on the use of language .

1.1 Stylistics

Stylistics is the study of the application of different language styles and tools in communication to convey a more powerful message to deliver indirectly. The investigation of diverse language styles to highlight the meaning or message contained within texts is known as stylistic analysis. Various dictionaries define "stylistics" as "the science of literary style" or "the art of producing good writing style." It is also defined as "the linguistic study of style" by Leech and Short (1981:13). Widdowson (1975:4), defines stylistics as “ the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation”. It may be defined in relation to the “ distinctive purpose of the language used as Verdonk (2002:4) puts it , stylistics is “the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect”. Likewise , Bradford (1997:1) confirms that stylistics is “an elusive and slippery topic every contribution to the vast, multifaceted discipline of literary studies will involve an engagement with style”. Stylistics, with its impartiality, linguistic perceptions , and useful terminology, validates our interpretation and increases our love of literature.

Stylistics is “a multidisciplinary approach that aims to foreground the peculiar properties of texts on the basis of language and derive hidden and in depth meanings to figure out major and minor themes. The evident fact that makes Stylistic a multidisciplinary approach is its retrievable, rigorous and replicable principles.” (Parveen et al. 2020:1). These language properties can be viewed on various levels of language since stylistics is part of the linguistic system . These language branches are :

1-Graphological Level : This level investigates the structure and pattern of the studying text, the systematic arrangement of sentences and the use of punctuation, , among other things.

2-Phonological level : This level investigates the supplied language's sound patterns, (pronunciation, rhyming patterns, Rhyming scheme, alliteration, assonance, and consonance) which are considered as common phonological strategies that draw attention.

3-Grammatical Level : This level looks at the structure of the work's sentences and clauses. The diction utilized, word patterns, usage of (verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, foregrounding, and variations)are all analyzed.

4-Lexico-Syntax Level : This level retains the phrase structure, word usage, omission of specific sections of a sentence, and atypical word usage.

5-Stylistic Devices : This level includes : (Imagery, irony, symbolism, rhetorical phrases, and allusion are the stylistic devices explored in the works)(Simpson , 2004:34).

1.2Style

Wales (1989:435) claims that the term "style" is difficult to define. The difficulty is merely related to the way readers understand and comprehend it . This could affect the aspects related to stylistics, that form part of linguistics. Stylistics is defined as the outcome of 'style,' which is, according to a well- known belief “the correspondence between thought and expression”. Style is founded on the premise that language performs two functions: communication and thinking molding (Tariq,2018:47).

There are several elements that might be considered when categorizing a style. There are numerous styles, such as (pure, ornate, florid, gay, somber, simple, elaborate), among others. All of these are examples of English styles. It is also classified by literary periods or customs such as "History, Metaphysical,

Restoration Prose Style, Biblical Style, Euphemistic Style, Prophetic Style, meditative Style, Romantic Style, and so on"(ibid).

As a result, style can be distinct based on the shadows of thought that reflect on the language. Because all utterance has an idea, no language or style can be considered pure. Religious style is unique since it carries not only the linguistic burden of language connotation , but also the religious ideologies and thoughts. Religious style shows several distinguishing elements of religious language that distinguish it from other registers of language. Religion's language is complicated in terms of style, function, and interrelationship with other writing styles .

2.Religious language

Religious language can be considered as a language that is “consistently used with religion” or within a religious domain of language use” (Samarin 1987: 85). In this view ,'religious language' refers to a type of language that is "particularly reserved for religious activities and utilized for very little else, except maybe as school subjects or literary and intellectual languages" (Fasold 1987: 77-78).Language is important in religion because it shapes how individuals describe spiritual experiences and gives structure to religious activities and beliefs . It is not only an empty system of signs but it embodies the “ culture, religion, and social norms of a specific society or even a specific register” . The language used by a speaking group to communicate its faith on public occasions is generally one of the most unique types it possesses (Naeem et al., 2014:40).

Buren (1972), on the other hand, connects human ideas with their actions (linguistic practice). He sees religion as a major type of "linguistic activity" that must be portrayed honestly by focusing on its key elements. Also for Buren (1972:2) "There is no need to deny that religion is more a matter of how men live than how they talk”. However, a human form of existence is precisely linguistic;

the fact that language is a vehicle to all of our activities and what it distinguishes those activities as uniquely human, as well as giving our language its specific character.

This essentially implies that language is considered as religious when it is culturally tinted with a collection of the beliefs and doctrines of the culture with whom it is communicating. Language is religious when it bears the burden of conveying religious thoughts. The investment of a religious style is part of this specialized use of language. A style that can totally address the issue.

It is worthy to say that religious language does not always relate to technical phrases, but rather to the overall use of language in the context and for the objectives of religious beliefs. Naturally, when a language evolves and second-order as a community's practical views are clarified via contemplation, more technical and precise language will be used. Language is taken as religious when it is employed religiously; that is, when it is used to pursue various purposes and communicate various ideas that we find in religion(Donovan ,1985:1).

3.Tafsir Al-Mizan

According to (Internet Archive .com) , Tafsir Al-Mizan (Interpretation of the Glorious Qur'an) , is written by Sayyid Muhammad Husain Al-Tabatabai (1904-1981). It is translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (Vol 1-13) published by (World Organization for Islamic Services) and published by the same organization. The next 14-40 volumes of Tafsir Al-Mizan are translated and published by(Tawheed Institute Australia LTD). Al-Mizan is a very significant Quranic Commentary for its philosophical orientation .

The Main features that characterizes Tafsir Al-Mizan and distinguish it from other Quranic interpretations are :

- 1- Al-Tabatabai's reliance on the Qur'an itself when analyzing and deciphering verses. In light of this, he adopts an objective stance and recognizes several Quranic ideas that are in opposition to the verses, taking them into consideration and profiting from them.
- 2- His approach to presenting Qur'anic stories is a Quranic approach, and he does not rely on contradictory narrations, nor he makes these stories imaginative .
- 3- Al-Tabatabai primarily uses the context of the Qur'an to distinguish between the Meccan and the Madani. It was also considered one of the most recent hints for comprehending the Qur'anic discourse.
- 4- Al-Tabataba'i includes separate sections for the philosophical interpretations of the verses of the Qur'an as well as the customary commentaries by the infallible Imams (عليهم السلام) (Widiyanto ,2021:46).

Therefore, Tafsir Al-Mizan is a crucial piece of information about Arabic religious writings and it contributes greatly to the Islamic heritage that can be explored and studied from various angles. This essay's goal is to examine the linguistic and stylistic choices made when expressing the idea of looking for a savior. It is crucial and essential to convey this idea to all believers.

4.The Waited (Al-Mahdi)

The Mahdi , or The Waited (عجل الله تعالى فرجه), according to Waines(2003) is “a messianic figure in Islamic eschatology who is believed to appear at the end of times to rid the world of evil and injustice. He is said to be a descendant of Muhammad who will appear shortly before the prophet ‘Isa’ (Jesus Christ) and lead Muslims to rule the world” .

According to the Twelver Shi'a, the Mahdi(may God Almighty hasten his honorable reappearance) was born but then disappeared only to emerge at the end

of times to deliver and spread justice to the world. This disappearance is a doctrine known as the “Occultation “ or “ Al-Ghaybah” . This occultation is the period of time that the Waited is hidden until Allah جل جلاله may choose the day of appearance. The Waited Mahdi (عجل الله تعالى فرجه) ,was born in (Samarra) around (868.A.H) , and his birth was kept a secret from the public. He lived with his father Al-Imam Al-Hasan Al-Askari(عليه السلام) until (874.H). After the martyrdom of his father, the Mahdi went into occultation by the divine command and this period of time was called (Minor occultation) . Only few elite among people are recognized as the four deputies were capable of direct contact with the infallible Imam(عليه السلام)These are by order (Uthman ibn Said Umari , Muhammad ibn Uthman Umari, Abul Qasim Husalyn ibn Ruh Nawbakhti, and Ali ibn Muhammad Simmari). After the death of the fourth deputy , the (Major Occultation) started and no contact established from the public with Al-Mahdi (may God Almighty hasten his honorable reappearance). During his disappearance , The Mahdi roams the globe and is protected by Allah almighty until the day his appearance comes when Allah wants(Waines, 2003: 215).

The Waited Imam is predicted and spoken about in theGlorious Quran in many verses . For example :

1-﴿وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ﴾(الانبياء: 105)

1-And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that [as for] the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it (Al-Anbiaa:105). (Shakir,1999: 154).

2-﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا﴾(النور:55)

2- Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever is ungrateful after this, these it is who are the Transgressors(Al-Nur:55).(Shakir,1999: 566).

The verses speak about good people (My righteous servants) who will come at the end of the times to establish a kingdom of justice and goodness(Beattie,2013:7).

These verses are interpreted by the infallible Imams (عليهم السلام) through narrated traditions mentioned by different authorities . These narrations are stylistically investigated in this study to explore linguistic tools used which express the doctrine of waiting in the most persuasive and tempted way .

5. Methodology

5.1 The Data

The data analyzed in this research will be mainly (20 narrations)concerned with the concept of (Religious Waiting) . The narrations are delivered by the Holy infallible Imams(عليهم السلام).These traditions and expressions are limited to the thought or vision of waiting for the appearance of the twelfth imam (Al-Mahdi) and traced from Tafsir Al-Mizan (Interpretation of the Quran)by the Islamic scholar Sayyid Muhammad Husain Al-Tabatabai.

5.2 The Model of Analysis

To investigate the data under study , a comprehensive model of analysis which takes into consideration the language of the texts and the religious shadows composed by the religious thoughts is needed. This is why the study adopts an

eclectic model. It consists of three main analytical frame works: Crystal and Davy (1969) religious language features , Van Noppen (1981) religious style framework and Short and Leech (2007) stylistic tool-kit .

Table(1) Crystal and Davy (1969) Religious Language fFeatures

Category	Sub-category
Grammatical Level	Verbal group ,Archaic pronominal forms ,Order for elements ,Sentence structure ,Ellipses ,Use of indefinite article, Vocative with /without '0', Unusual word order, relative constructions .
The vocabulary Level	Archaisms (Form words and inflections /lexical), Technical religious terms, Words which have changed in meaning, Specialist terminology of science, not archaic vocabulary.
Semantics Level	Statement of belief , Meaning-relations , Repeated titles for God, Antithesis.

Van Noppen’s(1981) suggests the following religious language framework :

Table(2 Van Noppen (1981) Religious Style Framework

Category	Sub-category
Metaphor logic	Divine / human
Assertions and statements	Faith / doctrines

Archaic features	lexical, grammatical
Situational or verbal context	religious" status or a particular meaning
Common presuppositions	individual and doctrinal differences
Modality	Clear ,understandable information
Speech Acts : Creeds	Expressive acts ,Informative representations
Doctrinal propositions	Of a declarative, normative, or a polemical value
Religious Vocabulary/ Religious register	Obviously religious terms , profane forms of thought ,Ordinary”, items used outside the religious register, Patterns of synonymy and of collocation, Collocations that are biblically conditioned.

Leech and Short (2007) offer a unique five leveled linguistic framework which is very suitable to analyze language style within any context :

Categories	Sub-categories
Lexical Categories	General-Nouns-Verbs-Adjectives-Adverbs
Grammatical Categories	Sentence type-Sentence complexity-clause type-clause structure- Types of phrases-Function words-listing constructions.
Figures Of Speech	Grammatical and lexical - Tropes
Cohesion and Context	Cohesion - Context

Table(3)Leech and Short (2007) Tool-Kit

All three frameworks constitute an ideal analytical framework for the study of language and its characteristics in the religious context chosen for this study.

5.3 Data Analysis and discussion

The stylistic analysis reveals that the following language characteristics are prominent in the selected religious narrations :

A-**Lexical features** : In general , the corpus expresses a tendency towards formal expressions . No use of colloquial forms . Narrations also reflect no archaic expressions .Some evaluative adjectives are used , such as “ truth “ in :

*-As-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: Those who believe in the unseen: “Those who believe in the rising of al-Qa’im that it is **truth.**”*

It is also noted in the data that the semantic field of the word (wait) is rarely applied .

The data expresses the use of specialist terms , but it is limited to the use of technical vocabulary related to numbers , such as (first , last) in :

- He said: Al-Hassan is an imam from Allah whose obedience is required, but from the seven ears, the first of them is Al-Hussain and the last of them is Al-Qa’im.

The investment of Quranic collocation is seen only in :

- there will be no land left without being called in it with a testimony that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad Messenger of God.

- The grain is Fatima (peace be upon her) and the seven ears of which are seven of her sons.

Within lexical features also , there is an intensive use of proper names :

*-He said: The grain is **Fatima** (peace be upon her) and the seven ears of which are seven of her sons,*

*-(Imām sadiq a.s) said: “That is, he completed them with **Muhammad** and ‘**Ali** and the Imāms from the descendants of ‘**Ali**,*

*-I said: **Al-Hassan?**. He said: **Al-Hassan** is an imam from Allah whose obedience is required, but from the seven ears, the first of them is **Al-Hussain** and the last of them is **Al-Qa’im**.*

B-Semantic features : Rare application of opposite relations is noted . The only appearance of this relation is in (No God but Allah) .

The most repeated title of the waited Imam(عجل الله تعالى فرجه) is Al-Qaim :

*- but from the seven ears, the first of them is **Al-Hussain** and the last of them is **Al-Qa’im**.*

*-“Those who believe in the rising of **al-Qa’im** that it is truth.”*

C-Grammatical features : Mostly , statements are declarative .They are complex especially by subordination. An application of directive expressions is noted in one narration :

*- **Be patient** in performing the obligatory duties, **be patient** with your enemy, and **be steadfast** in your awaited imam.*

A rare application of : negative expressions , vocative with and without (o) , and the relative constructions , within the sentences was clear .

In addition , a rare application of listing constructions that are limited to listing proper names . A little use of auxiliaries and articles . Yet , there is an intensive use of pronouns and propositions :

*-Be patient about **your** religion, and have patience against **your** enemy and be linked up to **your** Imam.*

*- **Those** who believe **in** the unseen: “**Those** who believe **in** the rising **of** al-Qa'im that it is truth”.*

*- The grain is Fatima (peace be upon her) and the seven ears **of** which are seven **of** **her** sons, the seventh of whom is **their** Qa'im. I said: Al-Hassan?. **He** said: Al-Hassan is an imam **from** Allah whose obedience is required, but **from** the seven ears, the first **of** **them** is Al-Hussain and the last **of** **them** is Al-Qa'im.*

Directive acts are applied in the same narrations intensively , such as :

- Be patient in/be patient with/ be steadfast .

Be patient about /have patience against/ be linked up to.

Be patient about / help each other to /be linked up to .

D- Figures of Speech : Human metaphor is the stylistic feature widely applied within the religious narrations of waiting . Mostly it is related to the Infallible Imams exclusively , such as :

*- **The grain is Fatima** (peace be upon her) and **the seven ears of which are seven of her sons**, the seventh of whom is **their** Qa'im.*

*- **The rising of al-Qa'im** that it is truth.*

*- and be steadfast in your **awaited imam**.*

E- Context and Cohesion : Within context , the narrations do not declare various ways of style shifting although some traditions present (direct and indirect speech) involved together within the same tradition , such as :

- *The grain is Fatima (peace be upon her) and the seven ears of which are seven of her sons, the seventh of whom is their Qa'im. I said: Al-Hassan?. He said: Al-Hassan is an imam from Allah whose obedience is required, but from the seven ears, the first of them is Al-Hussain and the last of them is Al-Qa'im.*

- *“That is, he completed them with Muhammad and ‘Ali and the Imāms from the descendants of ‘Ali, as Allāh says: Offspring, one from the other” .*

Other narrations do not shift from direct to indirect speech :

- *“If the Qa'im al-Mahdi rises, there will be no land left without being called in it with a testimony that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad Messenger of God.*

Cohesion involves more logical than implicit links , as in :

- *If the Qa'im al-Mahdi rises, there will be no land left without being called in it with a testimony that there is no god but God, **and** that Muhammad Messenger of God.*

- *Be patient about the obligatory commandments, **and** help each other to be patient in misfortunes, **and** be linked up to the Imams.*

Narrations of the Infallible imams concerned with the concept of waiting mentioned in Tafsir Al-Mizan express various stylistic features . The features serve the aim of designing perfectly the waiting expressions and carry the burden of make the believers stay in hope and wait as positively as possible .

6. Conclusion

This study concludes the following :

1) The results of the stylistic investigation show that Arabic religious writings make use of a variety of (lexical, semantic, grammatical, figures of speech, cohesion, and context elements). This underlines the religious concepts' effect on the language utilized. In addition ,other features are noted present such as (Archaic language, repetition of titles, statements, coordinated constructions, relative constructions, specific prepositions, repetition of certain auxiliaries, divine metaphor, implicit and logical coherence devices, change of style, and usage of quotes are the key aspects involved).

2). The importance of the employment of particular features is critical in effectively portraying the religious notion.

3). The uncommon usage of terms from the same semantic region as the word (Wait). The term itself is not used extensively in each corpus expression. This means that the notion of waiting is given in a holistic manner rather than only via direct instruction of waiting.

4) Arabic religious texts are mainly written with formal descriptive style . The use of proper names is common within the narratives . Archaic terms are rare and generally there is no investment of old forms .

5) Arabic religious narratives are complex subordinated sentences . Coordination is used within the subordinated structure. Relative forms are not intensively used.

6) Most narratives depended on metaphor in its human type . The human metaphor is noted mainly to picture the Waited Imam clearly .

7) There is a use of inferred linkages between phrases. Some sentences are not connected with logically obvious connection components.

8) Extensive use of directive speech actions phrases alongside informative terms. Speech acts with expressive effect are uncommon in religious waiting expressions.

9) A noticeable shift in style is not used frequently. Sentences frequently begin with a direct assertion and end with the same pattern. There is an investment to some direct quotations who act as clarification of some instructions. The pronouns used did not vary greatly.

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