

## Is There Theological Pragmatics: How to Do Ideologies with Words

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### Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of what is involved in religious settings and mosque orations. The paper presents religious rhetoric and other strategies stylized to establish a new set of ideologies on the basis of already-established ones. Ideologies are taken to be a cognitive, social and cultural system of beliefs, judgments, norms, group interests, attitudes, behavior, .. etc. Ideology-control involves using certain established frames of reference; The Glorious Qura'an verses, Prophet Mohammed's Alhadith, his followers' speech, stories, poems, events, and evidence. Linguistic strategies include speech acts, politeness conventions, Me first principle, metaphors, honorific expressions, stylistic devices, repetition, discourse genre and other devices used to achieve the reality-establishing-process of self-awareness. However, concentration is going to be restricted to some of these strategies due to limitation of space. Thus, the paper is an attempt in theological oratory discourse pragmatics.

هل هنالك بير اغميطيقيا دينية

كيفية ايجاد ايديولوجيات باستخدام الكلمات

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ملخص البحث :

ان الهدف من هذا البحث هو تقديم وجهة نظر حول ماتحتويه نصوص التجمعات الدينية وخطب الجوامع الاسلامية. ويقدم البحث البلاغة الدينية وستراتيديات تستخدم لايجاد مجاميع ايديولوجية جديدة على خلفية ايديولوجيات قديمة يمتلكها المستمع. وتعرف هذه ايديولوجيات على انها نظام من المفاهيم الادراكية والثقافية والاجتماعية ومجموعة من الاحكام والاعراف وسلوكيات وارااء مجموعة ما. ويعتمد مبدأ السيطرة الايديولوجية علناستخدام بعض الستراتيديات مثل الاشارة ( آيات القرآن الكريم والحديث النبوي الشريف وحديث الصحابة والشعر والاحداث التاريخية والدلائل). وتضم الستراتيديات اللغوية افعال الكلام والاعراف التاديبية ومبدأ "انا أولا" والكناية والعبارات التبجيلية والاسلوبية والتكرار ونوع النص واساليب اخرى تستخدم من اجل خلق ملية ادراك الحقيقة في ذهن المستمع. ومع ذلك فأن التركيز سيكون محددنا هنا لبعض هذه الستراتيديات بسبب ضيق المكان والوقت. وبذلك فان البحث يعتبر محاولة في البير اغميطيقيا النصية الدينية.

## 1. Definition:

Van Dijk (1998: 138 and 2000 : 4-5).takes ideology to be “Systems that are the basis of the socio-political cognition of groups. Thus, ideologies organize group attitudes consisting of schematically organized general opinions about relevant social issues”. Ideologies are abstract, general, social, cognitive and situation independent systems. Van Dijk’s sense of the term can be best understood in the formula of THEM Vs US, i.e. the general attitudes a group hold against another group. He believes, also that a person may have more than one system of ideologies if he belongs to different mutually exclusive groups, (e.g. a black woman may have two systems of ideologies a feminist and a racist). Such ideologies could be reflected via discourse by using specific semantic, pragmatic and syntactic strategies (See Van Dijk 1995a, 1995b, 1995c 1995d and 1998).

Furthermore, ideology is defined as “a form of social ... philosophy ... it is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it ... it aims at serving man, even saving him, by ridding their minds of prejudice and preparing them for the sovereignty of reason “(Encyclopedia Britannica 1980; see also Lanser 1981). So , ideology can be defined as the cognitive and social systems of beliefs that the group has towards a given issue. They are the systems that control and organize social complex group attitudes which in turn consist of a set of personally and socially based opinions. These ideologies are based on social shared norms and values. Accordingly, ideologies can not be seen by the individual’s eye (the worm-eye-view) but by the party’s eye (the bird-eye-view) (Ibid).

## 2. Ideology, the Orator and the Orations

The main aim of the orator in the mosque orations is to give a high normal and disciplinary lessons. The lessons are given to individuals as a solid basis for the whole society. The underlying / infra-ideology is that virtuous societies start from virtuous individuals. This emerges from Al-Hadith 'Everyone of you is a shepherd of some sort. A man is a shepherd of his family'. Through strategies, a new set of ideologies are established on the basis of already established ones (cf Lambert and Lambert 1964: 67). In other words, the orator is trying to build, reformulate, enhance, or cancel a specific set of ideologies on the basis of already-existing ones. In this sense, we are trying to show how the structure of discourse is related to the structure of society, i.e. how units, levels, and strategies of discourse could reflect social cognition.

The orator is responsible for getting the audience to achieve the reality-establishing-process of self-awareness (Cf Halliday 1985: 94). Then, it is the audience who should shape a new phase of reality and change their ideologies depending on the Orator's ideologies and on their already-existing ones.

It is taken for granted that Islamic-religious gatherings, which are full of pragmatic routines, supply some pieces of evidence for socio-cultural pre-patterning. Within such settings different sets of strategies can be captured through mosque orations. Such strategies are utilized to establish, affect, or enhance audience's ideologies. The oration can be taken as a kind of argumentation. It is a dynamic redundant interaction, that the orator and his audience are postulated to be active. Audience's facial expressions, nodding, their complaint and silence are supposed to strategies for the orator to proceed. Silence is a strategy whereby the audience offers the speaker the ground (Cf Nuyts 1989: 116 ).

Accordingly, three oral Friday –mosque orations have been chosen to be the data analysed here . But due to limitation of space and time, some samples only are selected and translated for the purpose of the study.

### **3. The Strategies Used:**

There are more than one strategy by which the orator is able to reflect his (social-shared-cognitive) ideologies. And since the orator sincerely intends to transfer this ideology to his audience, it is not difficult for the audience to realize his ideologies and consequently it is not difficult for us to grasp these ideologies and to know how they are reflected in the language used. These strategies include:

#### **3.1. Pragmatic Strategies: These include:**

##### **3.1.1. Speech Acts:**

Depending on Leech's (1984) taxonomy of speech acts, we may realize more than one type of speech act in oration. Mostly oration takes a form of advice (Directive speech acts) whereby the speaker advises himself, the present audience and the absent ones to reform themselves. Although the orator is in a high position, he puts himself on the same line as others and advises himself as well as others by saying:

(1). “?asalukum wanafsi bitaqwa^llah”

(I ask you and myself to be pious).

The orator has given no dominance although he has the authority to advise others taking himself outside the circle. The orator wants to transform the ideology of equality. He is saying that all of us are wrong-doers (including the speaker himself), so he has used the directive speech act to achieve such a goal.

Within the directives we may find requests like:

(2). “xafara^ llahu li waliwalidayya walakum walikaffati^ lmu?minin”

(May God forgive me, my parents, you and all believers).

(3). “?aqulu qawliya hadha wa?astaxfiru llaha li walakum”

(I say this and may God forgive me and forgive you).

(4). “liyarhamani walyarhamakum^ llah”

(May God bless me and you).

(5). “waradiya^ llahu anni waankum waani^ lmu?minina kaffa”

(May God be gracious to you, me and all believers).

These utterances presuppose that the orator himself is a wrong-doer, and he himself, thus, is in need of abolition and forgiveness. The orator is scattering his inner-self in order to achieve his goal, i.e. he is using the self-scattering ideology to enhance others ideology. In this regard, the reformulation of society starts with the speaker himself, then the circle is enlarged to enclose the orator's parents, the present audience and the whole community. In this example, the speaker dedicates du'a'a to himself first since a du'a'a is a plea of forgiveness directed to God, next to his parents and then to the audience.

Also the oration cited takes the form of valued commands.

(6). “?ittaqu llaha rabbakum wasariu ?ila maxfiratin minhu wajannatin arduha ssamawatu wa^I?ard ?uidat lilmuttaqin”

(Be pious and hurry to a Paradise which is as large as the earth and sky prepared for those who fear God).

The orator has the ability to order the hearer to do something since he has a religious power.

Commissive speech acts could take the form of oaths:

(7). “wallahi layu?minu ?ahadakum hatta yuhibba li?akhihi mayuhibba linafsih”.

(I Swear that one can not be called a believer unless he likes things for his brother just like himself).

Here also the orator is calling for uniting the society into a single family where the Muslim should consider the others his brothers. Any kind of racism, prejudice or inequality should be removed away altogether. The same applies to:

(8). “ʔinnamaʔ lmuʔminuna ʔikhwa”.

(Believers are brothers).

Expressive speech acts can be found as well:

(Thanks): “ʔalhamdu lillah ʔalladhi layuhmadu ala makruhin siwah”.

(Thanks to God whom none is thanked for misfortune but Him.)

(Congratulations): “kulln amin waʔantum bikhayr”.

(Happy New Year).

Assertive speech acts are frequently found in oration specifically with the descriptions.

(9). “jaʔa rajulun ʔilaʔ lmadinati yawman wasaʔala, ...”

(One day a man came to Al-Madina and asked ....).

If we take Searle’s (1969) felicity conditions of speech acts, we will realize that all the previously mentioned examples are valid speech acts. Since the orator has the religious power referred to above, his speech acts are valid depending on preparatory conditions. The author is sincere since he is saying no lies at all. The orator is always sure that his hearers have the ability to do the action he is asking for and thus, he is answering the essential conditions.

Within any single speech act, there must be an illocutionary force that the speaker intends his hearer to realize. However, all these speech acts can be subsumed under a single macro speech act and one single illocutionary force, reformulation (Cf Van Dijk 1977a, 1977b, 1980). For

the term ‘speech act’ see Searle 1979, 1991, Leech 1983, Lyons 1977, Clark & Clark 1977, Austin 1971, Levinson 1983, among others.

### 3.1.2. Politeness:

One of the questions which is raised in the study of oration is: Does the orator speak politely and to what extent?

Depending on Leech’s PP (Politeness Principle) and Grice CP (Cooperative Principle), positive and negative presentation of self can be referred to here. (See Leech 1983 and Grice 1975). The orator may present himself and others positively and negatively. Two cases can be established:

1. Orator + His Fellows → Negative Presentation
2. Orator + His Fellows → Others



US                      THEM

Positive Presentation      Negative Presentation

In formula one, the orator considers himself to be, just like others, a wrong-door and thus, he (and all of us need forgiving:

(10). “liyarhamani walyarhamakum^llah”

(May God have mercy on me and you).

(11). “walyaxfira^llahu li walakum”

(May God forgive me and you).

In this case, the generosity maxim of Leech is violated since the orator is not minimizing benefit to self.

At the same time, the orator may mention the other at the beginning as a matter of politeness but he comes back to use Me-First Convention (See sec. 3.1.3). This is one of the most interesting foundation frequently found in oration.

(12). “?usikum wanafsya?awalan bitaqwa^llah”

(I charge you and myself to be pious).

At the very beginning, the orator is foregrounding the others and thus, he is polite according to Leech's Maxim(2), generosity maxim (See Leech 1983: Ch. 6). However, the orator violates this maxim in the same example when he uses the Me-First Convention by uttering “?awaln” (first). Concerning the other maxims, the orator is always breaking these rules. He never seeks to minimize cost to others. On the contrary, he tries always to push his audience directly to the intended message (See the Tact Maxim, Leech 1983: Ch-6).

The orator, further, tries always to follow the truth even if he is dispraising others. His intention is not to speak politely with others, but to increase the inner-self-conflict within the hearer's mind. He has full power over his audience, i.e. he can order them.

The orator praises neither himself nor the audience. The context of situation is not appropriate for praising at all. Instead, praising is directed to these great persons like the prophets, and the good people prominent in history. In the same way, the orator has no right to agree with his audience about anything, he should agree with the social cognition only, not with the individual one (Cf Hollander 1981: 152-153).

Also, there is no room for sympathy in oration. Anyone (including the speaker himself) who has done something wrong deserves punishment and vice versa.

On the contrary, oration is per excellence example of Grice's CP. The orator is informative, precise (See Sec. 3.1.1), and sincere and does not lack adequate evidence, relevant and perspicuous. (Grice 1975 and Leech 1981).

The second formula establishes the orator and his followers as the positive side and the enemies as the negative side. The orator may refer to his group using such positive-valued terms:



“ʔikhwati fi 1ʔislam” (My brothers in Islam), “ʔahibbaʔi” (Dears), “ʔummata muhammad” (Mohammed’s nation), “ʔayyuhaʔlmuslimun” (Muslims), “ʔayyuhaʔlmuʔminun” (Believers) ... etc... While he uses negative-valued terms to refer to the negative group as in:

“ʔadaʔaʔllah” (God’s enemies), “ʔadaʔa 1ʔinsaniyya” (Humanity’s enemies) ... etc. The use of such terms reflects the ideological position the orator is holding. He is on God’s side. Holding the power he has, he can identify himself and his group as the dominant group which controls the society and destroys the other groups if possible.

If politeness is referred to at all in the oration, it could be represented by:

- i. Honorifics: “ʔahibbaʔaʔ lmustafa” (Lovers of Al-Mustafa (Mohammed), “ʔaʔssalafuʔssalih” (The good Predecessors) (See Sec. 3.1.4.).
- ii. Indirect Speech Acts: Although the audience may include members who belong to the negative group, the orator does not refer to them directly. However, the use of the third participant is frequent in such a case. The audience is taken to belong to the positive group who may do something wrong and thus they need enhancement.
- iii. The use of politeness markers like adverbs and requests: These adverbs are used only when praying to God:

(13). “nasʔaluka ʔan tarfaʔa anna dhunubana”

(We ask you to forgive our sins).

(14). “narjuka yaʔallah ʔan tarhamana”

(Please God have mercy on us).

(15). “ʔallahumma xfir warham waʔanta kharuʔ rrahimin”

(God, forgive and bless (us) and you are the greatest blessing).

Such a plea like the final one should be considered as a request rather than a command due to the great authority God has over the speaker.

Iv. The use of plural pronouns: The orator never uses single pronouns like (I) unless it is combined with the others .

### **3.1.3. Me-First Convention:**

Binomials are those expressions which consist of two terms, the first of which refers to the prototypical speaker, and the second refers to the second speaker who is not prototypical. The first term occupies (P1) and the second (P2) (See Cooper & Ross 1975: 67). So in P1 anything that is to the advantage of the prototypical speaker can be found:

e.g. you and I should leave now.

Such kinds of expressions are culture specific. The Englishman may start with ‘you’ and then ‘I’ (if he is not affected by any other constraints), as a matter of politeness.

In the oration, the orator may make use of such a device to reflect something specific.

(16). “ʔasʔalukum wanaʔsiya ʔawalan bitaqwaʔ llah”

(I charge you and myself first to be pious).

(17). “qumu ʔila salatikum yarhamni wayarhamkumuʔ llah”

(Let’s go to pray, may God bless you and me).

In these examples, the orator is advising himself first and then the others and this is referred to by “first”, to emphasize that he himself is the first to need advice just like the others. Here the orator is trying to scatter his own-self to be on the same level as others. The most close people to the speaker being blessed as well, the orator’s parents. The principle of mercy directed to the self, parents, and to the whole community is very clear here since Muslims are asked for invocation for

forgiveness for themselves first, their parents, and at last the whole group. Relations of mercy are being established here for the benefit of the group.

### 3.1.4. Honorifics:

Honorifics are linguistic forms that reflect social distances. They are “forms of social Dixie’s engaging linguistic structure with social function”. (Irvine 1995). They are related to meaning to show social deference, and they are culture specific.

Such forms are used here and there in oration to refer to those people who are believed to be of high social status. Thus, the orator is putting the reality of being among those good people and consequently asking the hearer to raise himself to this high social status.

For instance, many honorifics are used to refer to the Prophet; each shows the role Mohammed has in the Islamic society:

“ʔaʔrrasuluʔ lkarim” (The generous Prophet), “ʔaʔshshafiuʔ lmustafa” (The chosen intercessor) “ʔaʔnnabiyyuʔ lkarim” (The generous Prophets master), “ʔalqurashiyyuʔ lhashimiyy” (Qurashi Al-Hashimi), ... etc. These are but few of the expressions used to refer to prophet Mohammed. Everyone of which refers to a specific characteristic Mohammed had and he was (and we are) proud of.

Some good people were referred to also by honorifics:

“sayyiduna radiyaʔllahu anh” (Our master Ali God bless him)

“sayyuduna ʔalhusyan sayyidu shababi ʔahli ʔljanna” (Our master Al-Hussein the master of the Paradise’s youth), “ʔayyuha lʔikhwa” (Dear brothers).

According to the samples cited those honorifics seem to help the orator establish a social relation of deference between himself, the audience, and those great people referred to above. Ideology of equality

and friendship among the audience has been established to create a tendency of unity through language.

### 3.1.5. Metaphors:

The term “metaphor” refers to a figure of speech which denotes the use of a property of an object to refer to another object. It adds a sense of eloquence to the text at hand (See Davies & Bentahila 1989).

e.g. John is a lion.

Here the property of braveness the lion is characterized by is taken to describe John as brave. Metaphors, like honorifics, are said to be culture specific.

In oration, such a device do exist but rarely. The orator always puts in mind that his audience are of different levels of education which makes pragmatic inferences somehow unlikely to be used. Let us look at the following invocation:

(18). “ʔallahumma ʔinna nasʔaluka ʔan tunzila biʔadaʔina yawman ʔaswada kayawmi firawna wahamana waqaruna”

(God, we ask you to show our enemies a black day like that of Phyrion, Haman and Qarun).

The black day has a very evil connotation of being a bad day; that of disasters and delima. This negative connotation is taken from the word “black” which has a culturally –evil connotation.

(19). “ʔallahuma ʔinna nasʔaluka ʔan tarfaa anna^ lhisara^ jaʔir”

(God, we ask you to lift that tyrant blockade).

Here the orator has used the word blockade and not boycott to show his ideological stand-position. Also, he has nominalized this word and thus referred to it by (Tyrant).

Through such metaphors and others the orator is transferring his social ideology to his audience. He is showing them how bad it is to be on the negative side and God himself is fighting them.

### 3.2. Extra-Para-Linguistic Features:

Two kinds of features can be identified in the oration the function of which is to increase the influence of the language used to persuade the audience.

#### 1. Prosodic Features:

The orator often uses modulation which can be defined as “the inflection (varying, changing) of the stress on the pitch of the voice depending upon which word is stressed”.

(20). “firru min dhunubikum ?ila^llah”.

(Run away from your sins to God).

The word “?allah” in the previous example has been modulated. It has acquired a kind of double stress to emphasize it. Long vowels, as well, could be used to emphasize words.

Sometimes, the orator uses modulation, long vowels, rising intonation which is followed by a long pause, in a plea where a pause is inappropriate, to draw the audience’s attention to something very important.

(21). “ya?ayyuha ^nnas ?ittaqu ^llah-?alladhi khalaqakum nim nafsin wahida”.

(People be pious to God who created you from only one person).

Assonance can be used, as well, to add some eloquence to the oration and to add a kind of emphasis.

(22). “?allahu ?alladhi yasmau dabiba ^nnamlati ^ssamra? Fi ^ssakhrati^ ssamma fi ^llaylati ^zzalma?”.

(God who hears the low voice of the black ant in the deaf stone in the dark night).

This topic is handled in Arabic, by the way, under the topic of “Al-Bade”, under the pronunciation part (See Al-Qazweeni : M. D. P.).

## **ii. Pragma-Linguistic Features:**

Included here are the gestures of the body, eye-contact and the movement of the head. In all cases, the audience should recognize a kind of confidence .The speaker’s confidence has a great impact on the hearer’s mind. One of the most important body-movements is the movement of one of hands vertically, raising the plum up and closed and leaving the second finger free and vertical. This situation is taken when a person is swearing to say a truth in front of a judge. This indicates that the orator is sincere in front of his audience and accordingly, he is standing just like a witness in front of him judge to say the truth. The same situation is taken when a person intends to say his faith (See Lambert and Lambert 1964)..

(23). “?ashhadu ?an la ?ilaha ?illa^llah wa?ashhadu ?anna muhammadan rasulu^llah”.

(I witness that there is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger).

The last two conventions which can be mentioned here are the holding of a sword during the oration and sitting in the middle of the oration. Both of these conventions were first established by the prophet Mohammad. The first indicates that the orator has a full power over bodies and minds acquired by his knowledge of God’s word. This power has been symbolized by the sword. The second convention has three functions: Sitting in the middle of the oration gives a chance for the orator to take his breath and to rebuild his flow of ideas. The main topic

of the oration, as well, is signaled nonverbally by sitting in the middle of the oration to mark such a shift. In addition, such a pause gives the audience a chance to think about the preceding tokens and to utter their invocations in a whispering manner. Sometimes, the Mu'adhah is invited to utter a general invocation loudly for the whole present.

#### **4. Conclusions:**

Oration is found out to be a pre-planned discourse. It takes the form of five phases: Du'aa', pragmatic initiation (either a gambit or a question), the body (the main topic, a pause, and the subtopic), Du'aa' and discourse-closing markers.

The paper proves the idea that the mass could be controlled by using a specific set of strategies if their ideologies can be inferred from the discourse. However, all could be enrolled to take the society to the safe side. There is a specific set of ideologies held by the representatives of social cognition. These representatives' aim is to transfer such a set to the audience in an attempt to clarify their society. Nonetheless, their goal is just to get the audience to achieve reality-establishing process of self-awareness, and then it is the hearers' task to shape a new phase of reality and to change their ideology.

It has been found that the ideology-change process is achieved here through the use of some strategies like: Pragmatic strategies, and paralinguistic strategies. Within the pragmatic strategies, the following strategies can be established: Speech acts, politeness, the Me-First convention, honorifics, and metaphors.

The paper also proves the idea that the mass could be controlled by using a specific set of strategies if their ideologies can be inferred from the discourse. However, all could be enrolled to take the society to the

safe side. There is a specific set of ideologies held by the representatives of social cognition. These representatives' aim is to transfer such a set to the audience in an attempt to clarify their society. Nonetheless, their goal is just to get the audience to achieve reality-establishing process of self-awareness, and then it is the hearers' task to shape a new phase of reality and to change their ideology. So it can be taken that such a process depends on two roles, one of the speaker and the other of the hearers. Thus, some lines of the theory of ideology-change process have been shaped. Still such a goal needs a lot work.

The speaker, further, achieved more than his goal; i.e. the ideology-change process. In a sense, he was able to establish the sense of unity, he was able to control the members of the society, called for equality among different classes of the society as well as handling some general social, political or economic problems.

In the traditional sense of the terminology rhetoric, our speaker can be characterized by the adjective "rhetorical". He is able to use any possible stylistic device available in order to transfer his ideas elegantly to his audience. An analysis of a complete oration may reveal a lot about the stylistic devices the orator uses to achieve his goals.

Another way of looking at the term politeness has been recognized. The speaker always violates the politeness maxims of Leech (1983). However, he cannot be considered impolite because of his religious position.

All in all, drawing a satisfactory set of conclusions seems to be difficult (if not impossible). The paper is just a key to the analysis of some kind of texts which have a great role to play in the Arab society since they have real contact with the mass-ideology and the way of persuading them to enhance specific actions.



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