A pragma-Linguistic study of Exaggeration in selected verses of the glorious Quran and the Bible
A Contrastive study

المبالغة في القران والكتاب المقدس– دراسة لغوية تداولية مقارنة

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المستخلص

الهدف الأساسي من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة المبالغة في آيات القرآن الكريم والكتاب المقدس. من وجهة نظر براجماتية، لم تحظ المبالغة في اللغة باهتمام كبير. ونتيجة لذلك، فإن الغرض من هذا البحث هو تقديم نموذج براجماتي لتحليل المبالغة. يبحث البحث الحالي في المبالغة البنيوية في القرآن الكريم والكتاب المقدس، وكذلك إمكانية ترجمة هذا الأسلوب البلاغي إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. في البداية، أحاول تقديم بعض الملاحظات الأساسية حول الموضوع المطروح، مثل المنهجيات المستخدمة من قبل اللغويين والبلاغيين العرب وغير العرب لوصف فكرة المبالغة بشكل عام. علاوة على ذلك، تبحث هذه الدراسة في نوع المبالغة في القرآن الكريم والكتاب المقدس، موضحة التمييز باستخدام مقاطع محددة من الكتاب المقدس والآيات القرآنية. أهداف الدراسة هي إظهار كيف يمكن التعرف على المبالغة وقبولها في الممارسة العملية، حتى لو كانت مستحيلة حرفيًا؛ وفهم الجوانب البراجماتية للمبالغة في القرآن الكريم والكتاب المقدس؛ هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على الألفاظ التي يمكن أن تدل على معاني المبالغة، والتعرف على أكثر مظاهر المبالغة شيوعاً في الكتاب المقدس

والقرآن الكريم، ومن ثم تم اتباع الأساليب التالية: دراسة النصوص التي وردت فيها المبالغة، وبيان دلالاتها البراجماتية، وتوضيح التناقضات بينها. وقد سلطت نتائج هذه الدراسة الضوء على معاني الآيات الكتابية والقرآنية.

كلمات مفتاحية: القرآن، المبالغة، الكتاب المقدس، البراجماتية، أفعال الكلام.

Abstract

The primary goal of this study is to address exaggeration in Holy Quran verses and Bible writings. From a pragmatic standpoint, exaggeration in language has received little attention. As a result, the purpose of this research is to provide a pragmatic model for analyzing exaggeration. The present research examines structural exaggeration in the Quran and the Bible, as well as the feasibility of translating this rhetorical trope into English. At first, I attempt to make some basic observations about the matter at hand, such as the methodologies used by Arab and non-Arab linguists and rhetoricians to describe the idea of exaggeration in general. Furthermore, this study investigates the type of exaggeration in the Holy Quran and the Bible, explaining the distinctions using specific Bible passages and Quranic verses. The study's goals are to demonstrate how Exaggeration can be recognized and accepted in practice, even if it is literally impossible; to understand the pragmatic aspects of hyperbole in the Quran and the Bible; to highlight the words that can indicate the meanings of Exaggeration; and to identify the most common aspects of Exaggeration used in the Bible and the Quran. As a result, the techniques followed are: studying the texts in which Exaggeration appears, explaining its pragmatic implications, and clarifying the contrasts between them. This study's findings provide light on the meanings of biblical passages and Holy Quran verses.

Keywords: Quran, Exaggeration, Bible, pragmatics, speech acts.

1. Introduction

Western scholars (i. e, rhetoricians / stylisticians, semanticists, linguists, cognitive psychologists and philosophers) have mainly concentrated upon the Exaggeration of comprehending this figure of speech and not to be taken literally. Muslim Arab rhetoricians and exegetists, on the other hand, have viewed the notion of hyperbole as a semantic content treated as a necessary step to understand what is exactly meant by the Quranic text in question. They judge the non-human character of hyperbolic descriptions in the Quranic text in a semantic, rhetorical, and legal (juridical) manner, which Muslims completely embrace. Their profound interest in this topic, as with other rhetorical difficulties, stems from the desire to provide a better comprehension of Quranic verses, particularly when they are directly or indirectly relevant to Muslims' daily lives. As a result, the approach to the problem of exaggeration by Arab and Western scholars is highly sophisticated. Because humans frequently employ indirect and metaphorical language, resulting in one and the same phrase being stated with very diverse communicative outcomes, pragmatic speech act theory must be brought to the forefront to address the issue. However, in semantics, "the principle of compositionality" emphasizes that the meaning of a complex utterance is determined by the lexical meanings of its components, their grammatical meanings, and the overall syntactic structure. The speech act level will be referred to as communicative meaning, which, unlike expression meaning, is beyond the scope of semantics. Rather, this level of comprehending such a hidden/communicative meaning is of primary relevance to pragmatics, which is why pragmatics was chosen for the current research. Furthermore, acknowledging that there is no clear-cut decision on such pragmatic aspects as which type of speech acts a speaker makes in a situation; is it solely a direct speech act or a two-fold one that prompts a concomitant indirect one? and whether the speaker violates, flouts, or infringes on

some conversational maxim(s). After all, this is something abstract and buried with their aim within the mind. Still, depending on some signals, context, and other factors, probability in reading and evaluating plays a critical part in determining the best evidence available to support the researcher's position.

2. What is Pragmatics?

Each level of linguistics has its own analyses and research, as well as diverse theories, academics, and schools that have been established and disseminated across the world over the ages. This diversity, by all means, crystallizes and confirms the profundity and essential relevance of linguistics to humans, whose means of communication and participation in the social fabric are, first and foremost language (Sampson, 1983). Aside from syntax and phonology, the physical aspects/levels of language, the attention here is on the most contentious issue in linguistics, meaning. Approaching and dealing with meaning is such a difficult endeavor that one cannot avoid the maze that exists between semantics and pragmatics. More precisely, the emphasis here is on pragmatics, whose area of study is communicative or contextualized meaning, rather than semantics, which is concerned with literal, decontextualized meaning (Löbner, 2013).

Morris (1938), a philosopher interested in semiotics/semiotic—the study of signs, proposed a trichotomy comprising syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, the latter of which was philosophical in nature. Thus, syntax refers to the formal connections between signs, semantics to the ties between signs and the objects they refer to, and pragmatics to the links between signs and interpreters (Levinson, 1983).

On the one hand, the term pragmatics is still used in book titles covering issues as diverse as the psychopathology of communication and the development of symbol systems since Morris intended it to have a fairly broad connotation. Even in this context, there has been a tendency to refer to pragmatics as a subdivision of language semiotics, rather than as having anything to do with sign systems in general. The word is still most often used on the Continent in this wide definition that covers sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics,

and other topics ((Levinson, 1983, p. 2).

Conversely, pragmatics' definition has increasingly become more limited, particularly in analytical philosophy. If an inquiry explicitly refers to the speaker, or more broadly, to the language user, then pragmatics is the field to which the study belongs. Semantics is the study of language usage when we remove the user from the equation and focus just on the statement and its designata. Lastly, we are in (logical) syntax if we remove the designata as well and focus just on the relationships between the expressions (Levinson, 1983, pp. 2, 3)

Further interpretation of this trichotomy is possible in accordance with Stalnaker's "Syntax studies sentences." Propositions are studied by semantics. The study of language actions and the situations in which they are used is known as pragmatics (Stalnaker, 1972, p. 383) .

According to Birner, understanding a speaker's meaning when they speak requires more than just understanding the words they used and how a sentence is put together (syntax); we also need to know who said the sentence and in what context, as well as be able to deduce their motivation and the meaning they wanted us to take away. The sentence "There's one piece of pizza remaining" can be read as an offer (Would you want it?), a warning (It's mine!), or a rebuke (You didn't complete your supper), even if the remarks in parentheses are never stated. People often mean far more than they say out loud, and any hidden meanings are left for the intended receivers to figure out. The "slippery" type of meaning that pragmatics studies is hence lexical meaning, which is not found in dictionaries and may vary based on the situation. The same statement will imply different things to different people under different situations(Birner, 2012, p. 1).

Because it is impossible to account for all of deixis, conversational implicatures, presuppositions, speech actions (SAs from now on), and discourse structure, according to Crystal, no single pragmatic theory has been developed. The potential scope of the issue has given rise to a number of conflicting definitions. Pragmatics, in a limited linguistic perspective, only addresses context, which is a component of a user's pragmatic competence

and is technically stored in a language's structure. "We incorporate topics which involve how the identities and relationships of speakers influence their linguistic choices and how they are interpreted," Wardhaugh and Fuller continued (Crystal, ٢٠٠٨, p. ٢٤٨).

Furthermore, context was described by Leech (1983) as "the pertinent elements of an utterance's physical or social setting." The shared background information facilitates mutual understanding between the speaker and the listener (Leech, 1983, p. 13). Therefore, in both spoken and written language, context is crucial. Its goal is to support the delivery and understanding of an utterance by the writer and reader, or speaker and listener (al-Houri, 2023).

3. Exaggeration in general meaning

Exaggeration is the portrayal of anything in an overly dramatic way in order to draw attention to it or to make it appear bigger, better, or worse than it actually is (Aristotle, 1976, p. 165). That is, to exaggerate is to say something beyond the restrictions of truth. As such, language users usually employ exaggeration to say or write things that should not be taken literally. Consequently, certain pragmatic exaggerated devices are more often appealed to by exaggerators in order to be effective in conveying what they intend to achieve (Leech, 1983, p. 146). asserts that exaggeration is a typical aspect of language use in daily life. Its description, comprehension, and assessment of an event constitute a significant emotive component. One definition of exaggeration is the process of making someone or something appear larger, better, worse, more, etc. than they actually are. Although it creates a meaning that is at odds with reality, it is still seen and responded to naturally, without being seen as false or counterfactual. The pragmatic approach to exaggeration is the focus of this study. Even though hyperbole is widely used, seen, and affected in informal languages, it has not received enough attention since it is often associated with figurative and formal language (al-Houri, 2023, p. 1).

You might be good or awful at exaggeration. It is beneficial

when someone else draws attention to the suffering of a third party with greater consideration. Moral principles are demonstrated here. A mother's devotion constantly leads her to exaggerate her children's suffering. Here, the excess of affection turns it into gluttony. Man serves and fulfills his emotions through exaggeration. Numerous guys, numerous brains. Different minds satisfy themselves in different ways. They do differ in dimension and degree as well. Expression via exaggeration reveals one's identity (Pal, 2011, p. 76)

Exaggeration as "an exaggerated statement that is made for special effect and is not meant to be taken literally". This understanding is reflected by examples such as:

- I have invited millions of people to my party.
- I have written thousands of books on this topic.

Roberts provides a much shorter definition saying that "overstatement or hyperbole is exaggeration for effect", as can be shown in:

- I have told you once, I have told you a million times. (Roberts, 1964, p. 167)

(Oliphant) offers a more detailed explanation of exaggeration that is fundamentally similar to the above definitions but goes beyond, defining it as "a greatly exaggerated statement not intended to be taken literally, but used for effect in style" as demonstrated by the following examples:

- I have had dozens of teeth taken out (Oliphant, 1966, p. 169).

The majority of the meanings of the technical word "exaggeration" that have been proposed by linguists, rhetoricians, and stylisticians during the course of the twentieth century have been somewhat similar to the ones listed here. All of them emphasize that hyperbole is an exaggeration and a figure of speech that should not be interpreted literally. The idea that exaggeration is clear hyperbole that is intended to add emphasis, rhetorical impact, or stylistic effect has also been underlined.

4. Exaggeration in Quranic verses

Exaggeration, according to Leech, is "incredible because it is at variance with the known facts." If we are aware that the area described is no more than one acre, then the statement "He's got acres and acres of garden" is exaggerated. At that point, we may conclude that the speaker is only trying to say, "He has a very large garden." In terms of the current state of affairs, it appears to me that everything that has just been said is entirely accurate (Leech, 1969, p. 167). However, Muslim exegetists contend that neither the Quran nor any other sacred (divine) source contains the sense of hyperbole that Leech and others have adopted. The belief held by Muslim exegetists is that Allah Almighty employs a variety of hyperboles throughout the Quran, each of which can be employed to further subtle purposes. Rhetorical (stylistic) interpretations, schemes, and tropes are all possible in Quranic verses. They belong to a highly particular textual category that is distinct from all other non-divine text categories. We will endeavor to demonstrate through empirical means that the majority of exaggeration types found in Quranic verses are employed to depict events and subtle hints of meaning that are applicable to actual life. Consider, for instance, the following Quranic verse:إِنَّـكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ (الْجِبَالَ طُولًا وَلا تَمْشِ فِي الأَرْضِ مَرَحًا (سورة الاسراء:37

And walk not in the earth exultant. Lo! thou canst not rend the earth, nor canst thou stretch to the height of the hills. (surah Al-Israa: 37)

Because of the image›s extreme expressiveness, a realistic representation of a human›s size in relation to mountains or the world as a far larger physical entity has been produced. Without this contrast, which is entirely predicated on a very well-constructed negative exaggeration framework, the already surprisingly stunning picture would never come to life and be portrayed in this manner. In this scenario, the emphatic operational syntactic particle «is crucial since it gives the entire structure emphasis, which strengthens and convinces the hyperbolic domain. The Quran contains too many other instances concerning the type of hyper-

bole which is termed as the acceptable ghulu. Consider the following Quranic verse:

(يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ) 35: سورة النور)

(Whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it.) (surah: A noor: 35)

The over - exaggeration in its absolute positive sense in this short Quranic verse is quite subtle. It cannot be completely figured out unless we are familiar with the lexical semantic features of the Arabic model verb "يكاد" which is equivalent to the English modal auxiliary "would" follow by the English adverb "almost". A straightforward semantic examination of this passage would reveal that light cannot be produced by oil or any type of oil-powered lamp without coming into contact with fire. The scripture quoted above does not contradict this well accepted truth. That is to say, the occurrence of this state (i.e. having a fire without a direct contact with a certain sort of fuel) is still logically impossible but with the use of the modal verb "يكاد" it becomes hyperbolically closer to be possible. This sort of hyperbole is termed as an acceptable ghulu in Arabic rhetoric (AL-HAJJAJ, 2012, p. 12).

5. Exaggeration in Bible texts

Definition of exaggeration: In everyday conversation, we frequently employ the figure of speech known as exaggeration, also referred to as overstatement. To emphasize our points or to make our argument visually striking and memorable, we exaggerate what we mean to say. Usually, our discussion partner picks up on the overstatement right away and interprets it without thinking. We acknowledge it as a typical part of our correspondence. Exaggeration is a common occurrence in the Bible as well, but because of our disassociation from biblical language and culture, we are more likely to overlook this figure of speech and interpret it literally. Consequently, we misinterpret yet another passage from the Bible. We could require assistance in recognizing exaggerations and differentiating them from accurate expressions of truth. Jesus was making a point by exaggerating.

Matthew 23:24 24You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

It was characteristic of the scribes and Pharisees to strain out the gnat and yet to swallow the camel. They would be very careful in avoiding minute formal improprieties, while they committed great sins without compunction.

Some have taken literally the Exaggeration statements of Jesus about gouging out an eye or cutting off a hand (Matt. 5:29-30) or about self-castration (Matt. 19:12), with tragic results. Jesus is emphasizing the value of fighting sin by employing exaggeration, as opposed to placing the blame for our transgression on our capacity for sight, touch, or reproduction.

Identifying Exaggeration in the Teaching of Jesus

Several criteria are put out by Robert H. Stein that help us recognize comments attributed to Jesus as hyperbolic expressions. These are the things we should commit to memory and use if we think Jesus is being dramatic.

If taken literally, is the statement impossible?

Overstatement and exaggeration are distinguished by Stein. Hyperbole, according to him, is exaggeration that is genuinely impossible. A less extreme exaggeration that is literally conceivable but unlikely is called overstatement. Having a log protruding from your eye (Matt. 7:3-5) is hyperbole. Forgiving your brother seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22) is overstatement.

If taken literally, does it conflict with what Jesus says elsewhere?

For example, Jesus teaches you must hate your parents or you are not worthy to follow Him (Luke 14:26). Yet He criticizes the Pharisees and teachers of the law for allowing people to devote funds to God that they would have used to support their parents (Mark 7:9-13). This confirms that Jesus believed in loving one's parents in a very practical way, and His attention to the needs of His mother while on the cross (John 19:25-27) He shows her how much He loves her. The exaggeration that you should "hate" your parents highlight how important it is for you to prioritize loving Him above all else in your life as His disciple. Even your closest and most natural affections are sub-

ordinated to it. What makes what Jesus is saying here so significant that He would use such technical language is something we should consider asking ourselves. What is it He wants me to keep in mind? You will have advanced in your understanding of Christ's thoughts after you have ascertained the response (Pease, 2021, p. 1).

6. Conclusions

The most important conclusions, which have been arrived at in this limited study, are the following:

1. Exaggerated vocabulary is used frequently in the texts of the Bible and the verses of the Holy Quran to indicate meanings that clarify and confirm the context of speech.

2. Western scholars (i. e, rhetoricians / stylisticians, semanticists, linguists, cognitive psychologists and philosophers) have mainly concentrated upon the Exaggeration of comprehending this figure of speech and not to be taken literally. Muslim Arab rhetoricians and exegetists, on the other hand, have viewed the notion of hyperbole as a semantic content treated as a necessary step to understand what is exactly meant by the Quranic text in question.

3. One definition of exaggeration is the process of making someone or something appear larger, better, worse, more, etc. than they actually are.

4. Despite the fact that Exaggeration is typically irrational, counterfactual, or false, it can be pragmatically acknowledged and accepted. It is also important to remember that this occurs and is justified by the human capacity for cooperative interaction and communication, as well as by certain processes of interpretation like meaning transfer and the ability to reconcile the absurd and illogical with the real and logical.

5. Rhetoricians, Arab and non-Arab, have reached a unanimous consensus about the purposes served by exaggeration texts. They both concur that exaggeration is employed to draw the reader's attention by explaining, emphasizing, or foregrounding particular language or non-linguistic elements, traits, and imagery.

6. Quranic Exaggeration is of the first type in Arabic rhetoric, namely? almubłaghah (exaggeration) whereas? al-ghulu (over-exaggeration) and? al-ghulu (extreme-exaggeration) have no place at all in the verses of the Quran since they contradict the widely accepted and theologically established truths. These two forms of exaggeration, however, are only permitted in Quranic verses if they are connected to one of the syntactic particles in Arabic, namely would almost, if not, if, as if, and so on. Respectively.

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