اساليب الاقناع في مناظرة مختارة للامام الر ضا عليه السلام: التحليل الديني للخطاب

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الملخص:

في اطار تحليل الخطاب الديني, تدرس استراتيجيات الاقناع في مناظرة مختارة للامام الرضا عليه السلام في مرو, و ذلك للكشف عن مدى عمقها الفكري. و تظهر النتائج مستوى عاليا من العمق الفكري في الأساليب التي استخدمها الامام الرضا عليه السلام لاقناع غير المسلمين بأن الاسلام هو أعظم ممثل للتوحيد و الحق حيث يقتصر تعريفه من خلال أهل البيت عليهم السلام.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

أساليب الاقناع, الامام الرضا عليه السلام, المناظرة, تقنيات, المسيحية, الخطاب الديني

Persuasion Strategies in Imam Redha's Selected Debate: A Religious Discourse Analysis

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Abstract:

Within a religious discourse analysis, persuasion strategies in Imam Redha's selected debate in Marve are scrutinized to reveal the degree of intellectuality in Imam Redha's persuasion strategies. Findings reveal a high level of intellectuality in techniques used by Imam Redha PBUH for satisfying non-Muslims of Islam as the greatest representator of monotheism and truth while it is merely defined by Ahlulbeit peace be upon them.

Key Words: persuasion strategies, Imam Redha, debate, techniques, Christianity, Religious Discourse

Introduction:

Persuasive text is incorporated in numerous types of discourse among which is the religious genre. Cotterell and Turner (1989: 230-248) and Virtanen and Halmari (2005:3) identify that persuasive text extends across cultures, genres and time. Being highlighted in religious discourse is to be considered as a pivotal instrument for convincing the addressees of the variable doctrine.

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Among the persuasive texts in religious discourse are debates between Imam Redha peace be upon him (henceforth PBUH) and leaders of Christianity and Judaism.

Possessing a powerful political view, when Ma'moun Al-abbasy was empowered, he aimed at substituting the capital of Al-abbasy government (Baghdad) for Khorasan where was the center of revolutions. So that he could be capable of suppressing them. While eyes were kept on Imam Redha PBUH in that period, he was expelled to Khorasan by Ma'moun and given the succession by force. Therefore, Ma'moun could obtain two aims: to inspect Imam Redha's activities in one way and to legislate his own government in the other.

Islam by nature permits importing different religions to its domain to the extent that translating international scientific books from Greek Hindi and Persian to Arabic language as the Islamic formal language was commenced in that period. This translation lead to penetrating dogmatism of other religions to the Islamic domain. Therefore, superstitions and deviations found their ways to Muslim society and expanded by groups of naïve youth.

When Imam Redha PBUH came to Khorasan, Ma'moun attempted to hold various sessions of discussions with a TITLE of proofing the high scientific level of Imam Redha PBUH and with the IMPLICATION of downsizing and disgracing him through the debate with other religions. Sheikh al-sadooq states that Ma'moun aimed at this disrespect towards Imam Redha PBUH through these discussions. (عيون أخبار الرضا. ج 2. ص 139)

As a religious discourse analysis, this paper aims to investigate the persuasive strategies adopted in Imam Redha's selected debates with leaders of Christianity and Judaism in Marve. To achieve this aim, it is hypothesized that in the selected debates persuasive strategies witness a high level of intellectuality to convince the addressees and satisfy them of Imam Redha's messages and beliefs.

Procedure:

The study scrutinizes Imam Redha's debate with leaders of Christianity and Judaism in Marve when Ma'moun Al-abbasy was empowered. The paper examines the data quantitatively for the sake of more reliability and validity.

Having investigated the data, it is manifested that the most suitable model for the analysis is adapted from Huggard et al (2006) and Breuer and Napthines (2008)

techniques. The eclectic model is introduced and a diagram revealing results and findings is presented through the analysis.

Limits:

The study acknowledges limitations including the analysis of the original language to keep the essence of the words (Arabic language). Also not all parts of the model trace the related example in the data under study; therefore, some mentioned examples are not from the analyzed text.

The distinctive features of Imam Redha's interreligious debates:

One of the most distinctive features of Imam Redha's interreligious debates is his particular acquaintance of other religion's scriptures; (201 ص ,ج1, 1365 ,الكليني) to the extent that Abasalt one of Imam Redha's close friends mentions "I told Imam Redha that I wonder with your knowledge about all languages, and Imam answered: how could God choose a person as an Imam for people but without understanding their languages?!" (229 ص ,ج2 ,1381 ,أربلي cited in علي, خز)
82 ص ,1396

One of Imam Redha's most important debates takes place in Marv. Ma'moun invited leaders of other religions like Judaism, Christianity and Zoroaster to debate with Imam Redha's and it durated from the sunrise to the sunset that day. (35 ص ,1375 مرتضوي)

Religious Discourse

Cotterell and Turner (1989: 26-33) and VanDijk (1998:317) state that all types of religious discourse follow the same objective of religious communication to reflect the intended ideology to persuade the listener/ reader.

Imam Redha PBUH as the only trustful representative of Islam was considered as the lime light of Ma'moun's government and every one was highly enthusiastic to know the results of the debates held between Imam Redha PBUH and leaders of Christianity and Judaism.

Persuasion

Virtanen and Halmari (2005: 5) define persuasion as "linguistic choices that aim at changing or affecting the behavior of others or strengthening the existing beliefs and behaviors of those who already agree the beliefs and behaviors of persuaders included."

Perloff (2010: 12) who scrutinize human communication identify persuasion as "a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue through the transmission of a message in an atmosphere of free choice."

Mulholand (1993) and van Dijk (2006) note that one distinctive feature of persuasion that characterize it is that the audience is actively free to accept or refuse the transmitted message from the persuader unlike manipulation in which active persuaders impose their own beliefs on 'passive victims' and finally their destiny is to act as the addresser wants. We will notice throughout the paper how Imam Redha PBUH acts and gives freedom to the participants in his process of persuasion.

Techniques of Persuasion

Breuer and Napthine's Techniques

The following are seven techniques of persuasion introduced by Breuer and Napthine (2008: 5-6):

Action:

The speaker excites the audience to cause a specific reaction or feeling.

Example: سل عما بدا لك و اسمع الجواب

Inclusive and Exclusive Language:

In case of inclusive language, the speaker represents himself in the same side of the audience in order to reduce the resistance of the listener by incorporating words as 'we, our and us'; in case of exclusive language, the speaker rejects the listener either implicitly or explicitly. The listener in this technique is excluded.

Example: أنا مقر بنبوة عيسى و كتابه

Adjective:

In this technique a noun is described with adjectives closely related to that noun.

Alliteration and Assonance:

The topical and main points are emphasized in initial consonant or vowel sounds.

Rhetorical Questions:

Audience's attention is attracted with rhetorical questions leading to particular notice while there is no need for the answer.

Example: أو ليس قد صح هذا عندكم؟

Connotations (Association):

Words are often carefully used by the persuaders in a more emotional and effective way.

Generalization:

The speaker generalizes a statement to a large group but without giving any statistics.

Hugard et al Techniques

Persuasive techniques introduced by Hugard et al (2006: 28-33) are mentioned below:

Anecdote:

Anecdotes are brief and interesting narratives that focus on a specific incident. It helps the narrator/ speaker to satisfy the listener and make him receptive to the point.

Example: الا تخبرني عن الانجيا الأول حين افتقدتموه كيف وجدتموه؟

Exaggeration:

Exaggerating the intended point strongly fascinates the listener.

Graphs and Diagrams:

Introducing graphs and diagrams have influence on persuading the addresser.

Irony:

In irony, the explicit meaning is usually not intended. That is the implicit intention, often the opposite, focused on.

Attacks/ Praise:

Attacking or praising an attitude or an idea usually shocks the individual and makes him persuaded.

Example: ما أقل معرفتك بسنن الانجيل و علمائه!

Language Style:

To decide how to incorporate the suitable language style is so effective in persuading and satisfying the individuals.

Metaphor:

In metaphor, the author creates a figure in reader's mind about an idea and then mentions that it is something else. Metaphor creates reader/ listener attention.

Reason and Logic:

Justifications are gradually presented through reason and logic to the point that the addresser is satisfied.

Example: فان كان هذا كما تزعم فلم اختلفتم في الانجيل؟

Repetition:

Repeating sounds, letters, words and phrases add a specific focus on the intended point.

Example: لا تقبل مني حجة الا بما تنطق به التوراة على لسان موسى بن عمران و الانجيل على لسان عيسى بن مريم و الزبور على لسان داوود.

Simile (Analogy):

In simile (analogy), an unfamiliar reasoning is easier to accept when it is compared with a more familiar one.

Evidence:

It refers to the proof accepted by other people as true and logical.

Example: شهد بنبوته موسى بن عمران.

The Model:

The present study utilizes an eclectic model of both groups Bruer and Napthines (2008) and Hugard et al (2006) adapted for the selected sample since after scrutinizing the data under study; it was observed that both models are mostly suitable for the analysis. Below an illustration of the eclectic model is presented:

Table 1: The Eclectic Model of Bruer and Napthines (2008) and Hugard et al (2006)

	Action

	Inclusive/ exclusive
	Rhetorical Questions
Persuasion Techniques	**Anecdotes**
	Attacks/ Praise
	Reason and Logic
	Repetition
	Evidence and Proof

Data Analysis and Discussion of Results:

Action:

The speaker (Imam Redha PBUH) stimulates the listener by making him excited about the debate when he makes the conversation active.

Example: الا تخبرني عن الانجيل الأول حين افتقدتموه كيف وجدتموه؟

The listener is asked to talk about the first Bible when it was missed.

Inclusive/ exclusive:

The speaker includes Prophet Moses' miracles in other Prophet's miracles even if they are not identical in form. All miracles completely resemble since everyone is unable to do them except the Prophet with his heavenly power. This is another way of reducing the resistance of the listener.

Example: أفليس كل من ادعى أنه نبي ثم جاء بما لايقدر الخلق على مثله وجب عليكم تصديقه؟

Rhetorical Questions:

The articulator attempts to lead the listener to a particular notice. Moreover, he evokes sentiments such as anger, agreement, and surprise to persuade the listener.

Example: فان احتججت بانجيلك أتقر به؟

In the above example, there is no necessity for the answer. Therefore, Imam Redha PBUH uses the rhetorical question to intensify that he provides evidence from the Bible, so that the listener may not reject it.

Anecdotes:

Reminiscences of specific incidents through the technique of anecdote makes the addressee more receptive. In addition to illustrating the main points of discussion, anecdote presents concrete examples for the listener.

Example: فان اليسع قد صنع مثل صنع عيسى.

Imam Redha PBUH refers to the miracles by Prophet Elisha resembling those by Christ as walking on water surface and resuscitating who were died, while no one of his people considered Elisha as God; Christian leaders do the oppposite about the Christ. This anecdote makes the listener satisfied.

Attacks/ Praise:

The articulator attacks the listener at the end of the first discussion when evidence was against him so that he should concede defeat.

Example: يا قوم! أليس قد زكاهم و شهد أنهم علماء الانجيل و قولهم حق؟

Reason and Logic:

In monotheism's defence, Imam Redha PBUH exemplifies numerous logical reasons; he suggests that he gets the critical thinking valued.

Example: فان احتججت عليك بانجيلك أتقر به؟

The addresser presents the current selected debate with leaders of Christianity using Bible to be logically more satisfactory and reasonable for the addressee.

Repetition:

Repeated words in the following example, add specific focus on the intended point by Imam Redha PBUH that he would provide evidence in his second discussion with Ra'asoljaloot, exactly from the Bible in Moses', Christ's and David's words. Moreover, it moderates sentimental thinking and enhances rational viewpoint.

Example: لا تقبل مني حجة الا ما تنطق به التوراة على لسان موسى و الانجيل على لسان عيسى بن مريم و الزبور على لسان داوود!

Evidence and Proof:

The following example displays an evidence, which is admitted by people to make the listener more receptive.

Example: اذا جائت الأمة الأخيرة أتباع راكب البعير يسبحون الرب جدا جدا.

Quantitative result:

Quantitative result is demonstrated in the following chart and diagram to guarantee the validity of the analysis.

Table 2: Percentage of Persuasive Techniques

Persuasive Techniques	Percentage
Action	24.79%
Rhetorical Question	22.22%
Evidence and proof	15.38%
Reason and Logic	15.38%
Anecdote	12.82%
inclusive	3.42%
Attacks/ Praise	3.42%
Repetition	2.56%

Diagram 1: Percentage of Persuasive Techniques

Conclusion:

Religious discourse as Cotterel et al (ibid) state reflects the speaker's ideology through which it is intended to persuade the listener. Religious discourse in this paper is manifested through the debate held between Imam Redha (PBUH) in one side and leaders of Christianity and Judaism in the other. Imam Redha (PBUH)

using techniques of persuasion respectively, action, rhetorical question, evidence and proof, reason and logic, anecdote, inclusive, attack and praise and finally repetition presents a fantastic debate on some issues concentrated on topics some of them are as follows:

- God is one, and Christ is a human being selected by God to be a prophet.
- Proving prophet Muhammed's prophecy.

Imam Redha (PBUH) makes the debate active and embraced with evidence and reasons to the extent that the other side of the debate (leaders of Christianity and Judaism) was entirely satisfied

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