Sound Devices in Selected Religious Texts: A Phono-stylistic Analysis

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Abstract

This paper examines how sound elements are used in certain religious writings by looking at phono-stylistics, which is a study of sound patterns in language. The aim of the study is to find common sound elements in religious writings and to explore their important roles in such contexts. The data is limited to selected verses from both Holy Quran and Bible. It is suggested that the chosen verses from the Holy Quran contain more phono-stylistic features compared to those from the Bible. In this study, qualitative research design will be adopted. The researcher will follow Leech (1969)'s model. It has been noticed that sound elements in religious writings fulfill different purposes within culture and human life. Hence, sound devices are able to create a sense of rhythm, melody, and coherence that attracts the reader or listener.

Keywords: Alliteration, rhyme, the Bible, the Quran, rhyme, rhythm, style

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الأجهزة الصوتية في نصوص دينية مختارة: تحليل صوتي أسلوبي

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الملخص

تبحث هذه الورقة البحثية في كيفية استخدام العناصر الصوتية في بعض الكتابات الدينية من خلال النظر إلى الأسلوبية الصوتية، وهي دراسة أنماط الصوت في اللغة. تهدف الدراسة إلى إيجاد العناصر الصوتية المشتركة في الكتابات الدينية واستكشاف أدوارها المهمة في مثل هذه السياقات. تقتصر البيانات على آيات مختارة من القرآن الكريم والكتاب المقدس. ويُقترح أن الآيات المختارة من القرآن الكريم تحتوي على ميزات صوتية أسلوبية أكثر مقارنة بتلك الموجودة في الكتاب المقدس. في هذه الدراسة سيتم اعتماد تصميم البحث النوعي. وسوف يتبع الباحث نموذج ليتش (1969). لقد لوحظ أن العناصر الصوتية في الكتابات الدينية تحقق أغراضًا مختلفة داخل الثقافة والحياة الإنسانية. ومن ثم، فإن الأدوات الصوتية قادرة على خلق شعور بالإيقاع، واللحن، والترابط الذي يجذب القارئ أو المستمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجناس، السجع، الانجيل، القران، القافية، الإيقاع، الأسلوب.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sounds-sense relationship are a crucial method that attracts scholars from the early time. Religious texts can be found to produce sound devices where all words link to them. The words are actually not randomly organized. Rather, they are selected to have certain impact on the part of the listener to pertain wide range of feelings in relation to its theme. The correct selection of segments and their combination regards as one way of this creative effort. Approaching this creativity is related to phono-stylistic analysis (Wales, 2011: 78). However, the following sub-sections are worth mentioning:

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This paper is concerned with sound elements that are used in certain religious writings by looking at phono-stylistics, which is a study of sound patterns in language. It seeks the gap that is existed in selected texts derived from the holy Quran and Bible in terms of sound devices.

This research aims to explore the gap in the application of sound devices in selected religious texts, examining their usage, effects, and implications. It also aims to explore the sound devices utilized in selected religious texts through a phono-stylistic analysis, shedding light on how auditory features contribute to the overall meaning and aesthetic quality of these texts.

It is hypothesized that the chosen verses from the Holy Quran contain more phono-stylistic features compared to those from the Bible.

It has a crucial role in enhancing the aesthetic quality of literary texts, including religious scriptures. Hence, these phonetic features not only contribute to the rhythm and musicality of the text but also underscore thematic elements and emotional resonance. Such devices are effective in bringing imagery to life and engaging the reader's auditory senses. They also serves to create musicality in language and can reinforce specific themes or ideas within the text.

In the present paper, it is a descriptive qualitative method is used since the analysis is conducted solely by the researcher. As for the sample of data, the data sample is selected randomly. Random data helps researchers get a representative one, which is essential for making results more accurate. However, this section analyzes selected verses of both Holy Quran and Bible in terms of phono-stylistic aspects. The analysis is heavily based on Leech (1969)'s model (see section 2.4).
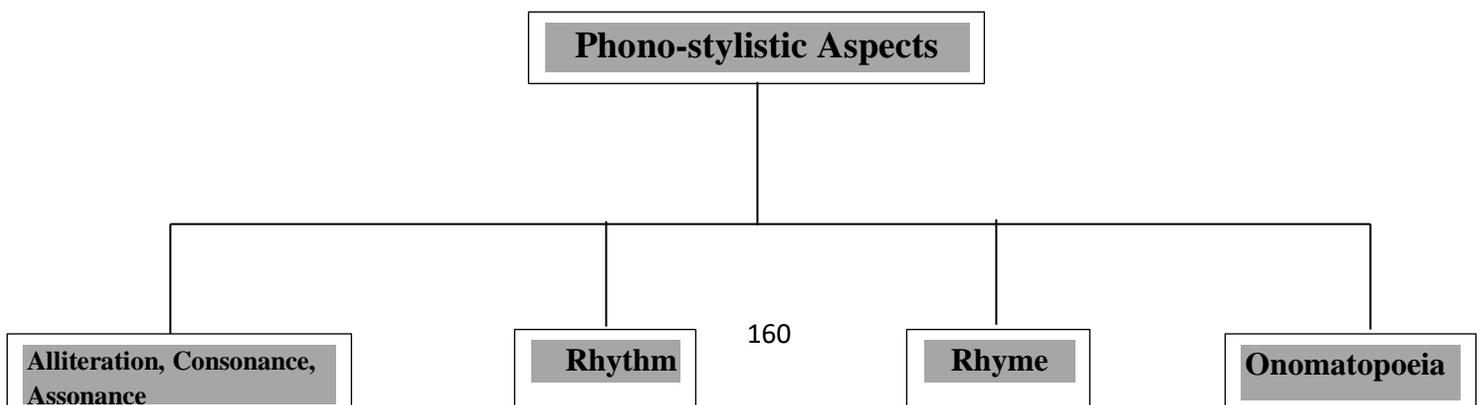
Phono-stylistic Aspects

Alliteration, Consonance, Assonance   **Rhythm**   **Rhyme**   **Onomatopoeia**

Figure (1) Model of Analysis

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will examine concepts, i.e., phonology, stylistics, religious language, phono-stylistics and its aspects.

2.1 Phonology

Phonology refers to the discipline of linguistics that examines the sound systems of all languages. Only a small fraction of the sounds made by the human vocal tract and studied by phonetics are used exclusively in any one language. These sounds are arranged into a system of contrasts that are investigated in terms of phonemes, differentiating characteristics, or other phonological units in accordance with the theory that is being applied, (Crystal, 2011: 365).

The goal of phonology, according to Crystal (2011: 365), is to make the particular sound patterns found in a language and making generalizations about the nature of sound systems across all languages worldwide. To sum up, phonology is "the study of the sound systems found in human languages," (Carr, 2008: 130). Some linguists describe phonology as "the study of the functions of speech sounds" and others view segment systems as mental objects and approach phonology from a more cognitive perspective.

2.2 Concept of Stylistics

According to Nrgaard et al. (2010: 1), stylistics is the study of how meaning develops in literary works. In order to describe and explain how and why a text functions as it does, as well as how one can infer different meanings from the same words, stylistic analysts utilize linguistic models, theories, and frameworks as analytical tools. The phonological, lexical, grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, or discoursal characteristics of texts, as well as the cognitive elements of the reader's processing of those qualities, are typically the focus of research. These characteristics may also be examined in various combinations. Stylistics, on the other hand, is defined by Widdowson (1978: 4) as the linguistic examination of literary discourse. He continues by saying that because stylistics serves as a sort of link between linguistics and literary criticism, it stands apart from both of them. For the purpose

of interpretation, stylistics closely examines the text and examines its important linguistic structures (Abdulla & Salih, 2020: 87).

2.3 Religious Language

The term "religious language" refers to statements or arguments made about God (Stump, 2003: 53). In making one's petitions called to God, *one requires a specific form of language* for a language. Such language is differentiated from other forms of language like political, literary, scientific, etc. The language of religion involves prayers, sermons, sings, and divine texts, e.g. Holy Quran and Bible. Since the current study is concerned with Quranic and Biblical verses, the focus is on the language of the Quran and Bible.

According to Grimes (1994:44), there appears to be a linguistic divide between common speech and religious language, yet this gap is not confusing to regular participants in religious conversation. In conclusion, it is said that religious discourse is heavily regimented in sacred traditions. The language is classified by linguists as metaphorical, mythical, eschatological, pragmatic, paradoxical, contextual, performative, factual, ludicrous, weird, and instructive. Hill (2000: 90) states that the way words are arranged affects how religious texts are understood. As a result, the relationships between words affect the range of possible meanings. More specifically, poetic and metaphoric imagery is used in biblical and Quranic language.

2.4 Phono-stylistics

Ullman (1966: 67) defines phonstylistics as the "stylistics of sounds." It examines a language's sound system and describes formal pronouncing norms that have predetermined effects. This concept is known as Phonestheme. This term denotes the meaning of phono-stylistic use and it emphasizes the cognitive goal behind it. Thus, Phonostylistic analysis entails identifying the salient phonetic elements that contribute to the theme of the relevant data relying on semantics. According to Magnus (2001: 98), the phonological variants of words correspond to phonesthemes. Words can have varied meanings depending on the context in which they occur, and their phonological forms can also have a variety of phonesthemes to correspond with the themes and literary style of Quranic and Biblical verses. Nevertheless, Leech (1969: 92) mentions that phono-stylistic aspects can be

classified into *Alliteration, consonance, assonance*, *rhythm, onomatopoeia* and *rhyme*. The following sub-section will illustrate these aspects.

2.4.1 Alliteration (السجع), Consonance (الاصوات الصوامت) and Assonance (الاصوات الصوائت)

Alliteration, according to Abrams and Harpham (2012: 11), is the reiteration of an uttered sound among subsequent words. The expression is typically only used with consonants and only when the repeating sound serves as the beginning of a word or a stressed syllable within a word. For example**:** "***Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.***" As opposed, this feature exists in Arabic at the end of words, like, صال وجال where the letter (ل) constitutes this phenomenon. Furthermore, words, such as, "*sound, text, lamp, calm*" are examples of **consonance**, which is the recurrence of a cluster of two or more consonants existed at the end of words. The same idea also exists in Arabic, as in, طرق، بلبل، النفس، جنتي. Moreover, **assonance** is sometimes described as the repetition of comparable or identical vowels in a subsequent of close words, particularly in stressed syllables, like, *soul, sole, rose*. For Arabic, this feature is not clear-cut since it includes three short diacritics, i.e. (ُ، ِ، َ), and three long diacritics, i.e., " الالف، الياء، الواو" , (Abrams and Harpham, 2012: 11, Hassan,2013: 65).

2.4.2 Rhythm (الايقاع)

The perceptual pattern of accented or stressed and unaccented or unstressed syllables in a language is called rhythm in phonetics and prosody (Wales, 2011: 372). Stressed syllables recur at almost similar intervals in both spontaneous and deliberate speech, and the uniformity is increased in poetry and verse to establish metrical patterns. For instance: " قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاس (1) مَلِكِ النَّاس (2) إلَهِ النَّاس (3)"

In this verse, the phono-stylistic feature of rhythm can be found in (قُلْ أَعُوذُ) where it is omitted from other verses since it can be interpreted as قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِمَلِكِ النَّاس and قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِإلَهِ النَّاس .

2.4.3 Rhyme

Rhyme is an important phonological component of English. It happens when two or more lines or verses where the nucleus and coda match (final consonants) are arranged in the same way. Besides, Richards and Schmidt (2010: 500) maintain that rhyme refers to the nucleus plus coda of a syllable, for instance, the /eɪn/ of r<u>ain</u>. This also exists in Arabic, as

in, the sounds ار in (سارَ). Furthermore, the unit for rhyming is the metrical foot, with any onset consonants ignored, so that *city* rhymes with *witty* (Carr, 2008:150).

2.4.4　Onomatopoeia

According to Richard and Schmidt (2010: 409), onomatopoeia refers to words that are typically thought of as mirroring nature, that have an acoustical quality similar to the thing they are referring to or the sound that it creates, such as Arabic onomatopic terms: اوو ،ooo, اوف, off , هاها, hahaha etc.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

3.1 Analysis of Selected Verses of Holy Quran

"الرَّحْمَنُ (1) عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ (2) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ (3) عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ (4) الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ (5) وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ (6) وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (7) أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (8) وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ (9)"

In these current verses, there are some phono-stylistc features that exist as shown below:

Alliteration

All. الرَّحْمَنُ ،الْقُرْآنَ ،الْإِنْسَان، الْبَيَانَ ، بِحُسْبَانٍ يَسْجُدَانِ، المِيزان It can be observed via the words these words ends with the same letter (ن). Alliteration has several functions. It beautifies the text, helps people remember it, emphasizes important divine messages, and adds depth to the spoken tradition. This showcases the high quality of language in the Quran and also increases our understanding of effective communication in the rhetoric of classical Arabic.

Consonance

From the above verses, it can be found that the words ، عَلَّم، خَلَقَ، الشَّمْسُ ،الْقَمَرُ النَّجْمُ ،الشَّجَرُ (الصوامت) السَّمَاءَ ،وَضَعَ ، الْوَزْنَ ، الْقِسْطِ, represents the phono-stylistic aspect of consonance since the recurrence of a string of two or more consonants existed at the end of these words. Through deliberate repetition of consonance, these verse captures the listener's aids, attention memorization as well as deepens emotional resonance.

Assonance

In relation to the preceding verses, it is observed that these words تَطْغَوْا ،أَقِيمُوا، تُخْسِرُوا، رَفَعَهَا (تَطْغَوْا ،أَقِيمُوا، تُخْسِرُوا) represent both short diacritics, i.e. (رَفَعَهَا), and long diacritics, i.e.,

Rhythm

- *"Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!"*

In this verse, the phono-stylistic feature of rhythm can be found within these stressed syllables repeating at nearly equal intervals ز

Rhyme

The words " الْقُرْآنَ، الْإِنْسَانَ، الْبَيَانَ، بِحُسْبَانٍ، يَسْجُدَانِ، الْمِيزَانَ " involve such feature. That is, the vowel (الالف) and the consonant (النون) are arranged in the same way and occurred at the end of the verse. Another example:

"سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَ الثَّقَلَانِ (31) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (32) يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ (33) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (34) يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِنْ نَارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ (35) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (36) فَإِذَا انْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ (37) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (38) فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ"

As far as the current verses are concerned, the feature of rhyme is also occurs. Thus, the words: " الثَّقَلَانِ، تُكَذِّبَانِ، سُلْطَانٍ، تَنْتَصِرَانِ، الدِّهَانِ، جَانٌّ " involve such feature. That is, the vowel (الالف) and the consonant (النون) are arranged in the same way and occurred at the end of the verse. Thus, rhyme emphasized on the broader general and cultural knowledge dimension in both written and spoken tradition.

Onomatopoeia

"فَالْمُورِيَاتِ قَدْحًا"

The word ‘"قَدْحاً" is utilized here pronounce a sound that develops the meaning of this image, the proximity of the Arabic letters ‘**da**al’ and the ‘**h**a’ is responsible for this sound.

"فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاخَّة"

The word for ‘deafening noise’, ‘الصاخة,’ selected here creates a sound hedging to its sense. The Arabic letters ‘kha’ connected with a ‘ta’ regenerate "harsh sounds" which adapt to the meaning of the text.

3.2 Analysis of Selected Verses of Bible

-"*Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers*"

Alliteration

It can be observed the feature of alliteration through the following words: (*filled, fornication, full*) which begin with the sound /f/. As for the words (*debate, deceit),* they begin with the sound /d/. Finally*, the words (**w**ickedness, **w**hisperers*) begin with the sound /w/.

This device performs a meaning of rhythm and can focus certain themes. An instance is existed in "*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*" The initial "s" sound ensures the protective and reassuring imagery.

Consonance

- *nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Concerning the above verse, it can be found that the words *de**pth**, **ab**le, Chri**st**, Lo**rd**,* represent the phono-stylistic aspect of consonance, that is, /pϴ/, /bl/, /st/, rd/ respectively since the recurrence of a cluster of two consonants existed at the end of these words (Leech, 2006). Another example can be found in: "*The tongue of the wise brings healing, but the mouth of the fool brings ruin*." The repetition of the 'b' and 'g' sounds makes a distinction between folly and wisdom. Hence, readers gain a deeper appreciation of the artistry of Bible and its spiritual message.

Assonance

- *"Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents"*

Regarding the above verse, the words *par**e**nt, disobed**i**ent* represent the phono-stylistic aspect of assonance because of the repetition of comparable vowels in a subsequent of close words (Leech, 2006). This device ensures the reflective and meditative nature of biblical poetry. By using certain vowel sounds that like each other, the verses make a musicality that entails readers both emotionally and intellectually.

Rhythm

The rhythmic structure showcases a keen awareness of metrical patterns. For example:

"Blessed are those whose ways are blameless,
   who walk according to the law of the Lord.
Blessed are those who keep his statutes
   and seek him with all their heart—
they do no wrong
   but follow his ways.
You have laid down precepts
   that are to be fully obeyed.
Oh, that my ways were steadfast
   in obeying your decrees!"

The rhythm that is found in the above texts is both aesthetic and utilitarian. While it makes the Bible more interesting and memorable, the rhythm also illustrates a deeper spiritual order that the scriptures promote, closely in alignment with Jewish practices of oral recitation.

Rhyme

- *"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers"*

The words "*unrighteous**ness***, *wicked**ness**, covetous**ness**, malicious**ness**"* exists in the above verse of Bible involve rhymic feature. That is, the concerned words have the stressed syllables sharing identical sounds.

Onomatopoeia

-*"And Balac being angry against Balaam, clapped his hands together and said: I called thee to curse my enemies, and thou on the contrary hast blessed them three times".*

The word "clapped" indicates onomatopoeia as one aspect of phono-stylistics. It is used to imitate the sound of hands when they close to each other making clap.

4. RESULTS

The phono-stylistic analysis stresses that even when there is linguistic and cultural difference, religious texts make use of sound devices to build up their holy messages. The devices help oral transmission, underscore theme matters like divine greatness or human humility, and generate emotional responses. It also demonstrates the universality of sound devices in religious literature, validating their functionality and aesthetic appeal.

In the context of phono-stylistic analysis, several sound device studies can be focused. El-Shafei (2019), for example, examined the use of alliteration in the Quran. There is proof that alliteration not only contributes to the aesthetic pleasure of recitation but also serves to underscore key theological concepts. Another study is conducted by Smith (2019) examined the application of rhyme in religious poetry, particularly Hindu scriptures. The study revealed that the use of rhyme enhances memorization of holy verses as well as agreement and harmony in the text. Moreover, Barova & Trofimova (2021) investigated that every rhythmic intonation technique ends up being meaning-forming, meaning it expresses a certain notion or meaning and influences the reader as a result.

For the present study, it can be observed that the manipulation of phono-stylistic aspects are adopted in most the concerned data. This partially verifies the hypothesis that is stated earlier since the Holy Quran is more informative with these aspects than in Bibles. Besides, the concerned sound tools are able to create a sense of rhythm, melody as well as coherence that attracts the reader or listener.

5. SUGGESTIONS

This research has explored a kind of contradiction among researchers dealing with this topic, thus, it is suggested further studies to explore the exact reasons associating this gap:

1. Identify various sound devices in selected religious text, such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, and rhythm.

2. Explain how the sound devices enhance the emotional depth and thematic significance of the texts.

3. Offer cultural and historical context of the selected texts and their sound devices.

6. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the findings, this study has come up with phono-stylistics which refers to an approach of studying the stylistic devices employed on   the   phonetic   level. Phono-

stylistic analysis can also be achieved through employing different phonetic devices, i.e., rhyming word, assonance, alliteration and consonance. Additionally, the use of sound devices in religious texts like the Quran and the Bible contributes a great deal towards making and enhancing the verses to be more effective. Through rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and consonance, such texts are able to create a sense of rhythm, melody, and coherence that attracts the reader or listener. Phono-stylistic analysis allows us to appreciate the art and craftsmanship of these sound devices, which in turn allows us to investigate further the literary and religious significance of these timeless texts.

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