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A pragma- linguistic Study of Hyperbole in Prophetic Traditions with its Realization in English

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Abstract

This research examines the use of hyperbole as a rhetorical device in Prophetic Traditions. Hyperbole is a common feature in these traditions, and this research aims to clarify its positive side through an analysis of fifteen selected Hadiths.

To analyse hyperbole in Prophetic Traditions, this research employs both linguistic and pragmatic analysis. The linguistic analysis focuses on the grammatical aspects of hyperbole, while the pragmatic analysis examines its function in different contexts. The data selection criteria for this research are based on the forms and functions of hyperbole. Then, this research presents some conclusions and references.

Keywords: Hyperbole, Conversational Implicature, Grice maxims, Indirect speech act.

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دراسة تداولية لغوية للمبالغة في الأحاديث النبوية مع تحقيقها في اللغة الإنجليزية

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الـمـسـتـخـلـص

يتناول هذا البحث استخدام المبالغة كوسيلة بلاغية في الأحاديث النبوية. و المبالغة سمة شائعة في الأحاديث النبوية، ويهدف هذا البحث الى توضيح اثر المبالغة الإيجابي من خلال تحليل خمسة عشر حديثا مختارا. ولتحليل المبالغة في الأحاديث النبوية، يستخدم هذا البحث كلا من التحليل اللغوي والتداولي. ويركز التحليل اللغوي على الجوانب النحوية للمبالغة، في حين يدرس التحليل التداولي وظيفة المبالغة في سياقات مختلفة. تعتمد معايير اختيار البيانات لهذا البحث على اشكال ووظائف المبالغة. يقدم البحث بعد ذلك الاستنتاجات والمصادر .

الكلمات الدالة: الاحاديث النبوية ، المبالغة ، التحليل .

Introduction

Hyperbole is a rhetorical device used to represent exaggeration, as defined by Fussell and Krueuz (1998: 94) and Gibbs (1999: 17). It is a common feature in religious discourse, particularly in Prophetic Traditions. Hyperbole is used to intensify or emphasize the force of an issue and focus attention on the speaker's emotional involvement (Claridge, 2011: 12).

The speaker, by achieving his aim, 'emphasis or something else' flouts the

conversational maxims, as Grice (1975: 45) claims, in general and the maxim of

quality in particular.

Characteristics and Functions of Hyperbole

Hyperbole, derived from the Greek word for "exceed," is a common literary and rhetorical device used to emphasize a point by exaggeration. According to Wales (2001: 190), hyperbole is distinct from lying as it is not intended to deceive, but rather to convey the intensity of an event or emotion.

Quintilian (cited in AlMawla, 2018:9) describes hyperbole as a "tasteful exaggeration of the truth" that can be used to present things as bigger or smaller than they are. This paper will focus on the first type.

Hyperbole violates the maxim of quality, according to Clark (1996: 143), which often leads to conversational implicature. Hyperbole shares this feature with irony, although the intended meaning in irony is different from hyperbole. In irony, the meaning signifies the opposite of what was literally said, whereas in hyperbole, the difference is one of degree. In such cases, the corrective response is to up- or downscale the assertion to accord with reality

… not one of kind, but of degree, the corrective response is to up- or downscale the assertion to accord with reality (the listener who hears I almost starred to death when I stayed at my aunt's house! 'Correct' it is something like my aunt was very mean with food, did not feed me nearly enough so I was hungry. (McCarthy and Carter, 2004: 158)

One of its characteristics that it is associated with emotions, feelings and attitudes of the speakers,

… while the speaker is certainly not bound to the literal meaning of his utterance s/he is committed to the deeper emotional and interactional, thus social, truth of the statement. (Claridge, 2011:12)

Vagueness is another characteristic of hyperbole. Words like "age," "load," or "million" are used in hyperbole to exaggerate without referring to an exact amount. This vagueness can be advantageous to the speaker (Claridge, 2011: 209.(

Hyperbole serves two primary functions: emphasis and evaluation. By describing entities and events extremely, hyperbole can emphasize a point or idea (McCarthy and Carter, 2004: 157). Furthermore, hyperbole can convey emotions and evaluations, making it a suitable tool for acts of criticism or praise (Henkemans, 2013: 4-5.(

Al Mawla (2018: 11-13) also notes three other functions of hyperbole: surprise, contrast of differences, and aesthetic function. Surprise arises from the contrast between what is expected and what happens. Contrast of differences is created by hyperbole to make them more extreme, and in this case, it is easy to observe. The aesthetic function of hyperbole is to convey the message in a more engaging and memorable way.

Hyperbole can take various forms, such as likeness ("He is as skinny as a toothpick"), superiority ("Whiter than snow"), or impossibility ("That joke is old, the last time I heard it, I was riding a dinosaur") (Spincer, 1998: 191-192).

Hyperbole can be expressed using various lexical devices such as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, as well as grammatical and lexico-grammatical forms like comparative and

superlative degrees, similes, metaphors, and complex modifications (Norrik, 1982: 170; Hassan, 2014: 824; Spitzbardet 1963: 27).

Another aspect of hyperbole is vagueness that is used to for persuasive purposes.
Vagueness in age, load, number or generalization (claridge, 2011: 209).

Hyperbolic Forms

According to Claridge (2011, pp. 40-41), there are two types of hyperbole: basic and composite. Basic hyperbole involves exaggeration that does not exceed the intended domain, such as in the example "It's so cold, I'm freezing." In this case, the hyperbolic language relates to the same field of temperature. On the other hand, composite hyperbole combines hyperbole with other rhetorical figures of speech, such as metaphor, and exceeds the intended domain. An example of composite hyperbole is "When I saw him, I was petrified," where the qualitative substance is changed from the domain of being afraid.

Spitzbardt (1963, p. 287) and Claridge (2011, pp. 46-68) have identified several forms of hyperbole. These include single-word hyperbole, phrasal hyperbole, clausal hyperbole, numerical hyperbole, comparatives and superlatives, similes and metaphors, and repetition. Single-word hyperbole is the most commonly used form and includes all lexical word classes, especially nouns and adjectives. Nouns often express quantities, such as "ages," "loads," and "miles," as in the example "He saw his childhood friend after ages." Adjectives are often overused in hyperbolic expressions, such as "She checked her watch for the umpteenth time." Adverbs can also intensify hyperbolic meaning, as in "The weather was so hot that literally everything was on fire." Verbs are less common, but some hyperbolic verbs include "hate," "die," "like," "kill," and "love," such as in the example "Their boy was dying to get a new bag."

Phrasal hyperbole involves the combination of words and senses and is expressed by noun phrases, adjective phrases, adverb phrases, verb phrases, and prepositional phrases, as in the example "This home costs my entire money." Clausal hyperbole refers to the combination of two or more clausal constituents, such as in "Nobody ever learns anything." Numerical hyperbole is expressed by single-word classes, such as "thousands," "millions," and "hundreds," and their singular forms, as in "I told him to clean his room a million times!" Comparatives and superlatives involve excessive exaggeration, as in "He was sweeter than honey" or "It is the cheesiest thing that I have ever heard." Similes and metaphors can also express hyperbolic meaning, such as in "He was tall as a hill" or "The sky was crying like a waterfall." Finally, repetition involves the co-occurrence of the same expression in conversation without any interruption by any materials, such as in "This happens over and over and over."

The Model of Analysis
The Eclectic Model

In this study, we will be analyzing the language and pragmatics through the Eclectic Model, utilizing the works of Spitzbardt (1963) and Claridge (2011) for linguistic analysis and speech act theory for pragmatic analysis, specifically Searle's taxonomy of indirect speech act model and Grice's conversational implicature model.

Speech act theory, developed by Searle, expands upon Austin's taxonomy of speech acts by introducing a new set of felicity conditions. There are five types of speech acts: representative (assertions, claims), commissives (promises, invitations, swearing, threats), directives (requests, warnings), expressives (criticisms, praises), and declarations (marriages, announcements). Another classification of speech acts, according to Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), talks about locution (the act of saying something), illocution (the act done in saying something), and prelocution (the act performed by saying something.(

According to Stelmann (1982: 279), linguistic communication involves the speaker saying something with an intention in a certain context, with the listener recognizing the intentions. Furthermore, speech acts can be classified as either direct or indirect. In direct speech acts, the constructions are compatible with their meaning, such as interrogative constructions for questions, declarative constructions for statements, and imperative constructions for orders. In contrast, indirect speech acts are expressed through constructions that are not compatible with their meaning, such as using a declarative sentence as a request.

Grice's cooperative principle and its maxims play a crucial role in conversational implicature, which is the intended meaning understood by the hearers, even if the speakers do not express their intentions directly. The cooperative principle consists of four basic rules called conversational maxims: quantity maxim, quality maxim, relevance maxim, and manner maxim. According to Grice (1975: 159-60), devices such as exaggeration through metaphor, indirect requests, irony, and hyperbole are obviously false and flout the maxim of quality.

To verify the existence of ellipsis, we utilize Quirk et al.'s (1989) model. Ellipsis is the act of omitting one or more words that can be understood by the rest of the sentence. There are various types of ellipsis, and in this study, we focus on ellipsis of the subject, auxiliary, and prediction. For example, ellipsis of the subject can be seen in the sentence "Peter ate a cheese sandwich and (Peter) drank a glass of juice." Ellipsis of the auxiliary is demonstrated in the sentence "John should clean the shed, and Peter (should) mow the lawn." Finally, ellipsis of the prediction can be seen in the sentence "George will take the course, and Bob might (take the course) too."

Data Analysis

For the linguistic analysis of the hadiths, we will adopt an eclectic approach,

drawing on the models of Spitzbardt (1963) and Claridge (2011). To carry

out the pragmatic analysis, we will use the frameworks of Grice (1975) and Searle (1969).

1- The Messenger of Allah said: "...he really spoke the truth, although he is an absolute liar..." (Al Bukhari, 1997, vol. 3: 289)

a- The linguistic analysis

The word "Kathoob" (absolute liar) in this hyperbolic hadith is a single noun that reflects the hyperbole of quantity.The pragmatic analysis

b- Pragmatically, despite the hyperbolic expression used in this hadith, the maxim of quality is not violated. The evidence of the truthfulness of this revelation from God is the fact that it is a hadith. The intended meaning (CI) of the full hadith is that regular recitation of Ayat Al-Kursi in the house offers protection and refuge against Satan, and it should be practiced regularly. This advice is given by Satan himself, who appears as a normal man to a companion of the Prophet PBUH. The ISA is assertive, as the Prophet PBUH confirms that the regular recitation of Ayat Al-Kursi in the house offers protection against Satan.

2- The Messenger of Allah said: "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although both are good..." (Al-Khattab, 2007, vol. 7, p. 40)

a- The linguistic analysis

This hadith consists of single and comparative adjectives, which clarify the difference in degrees between strong and weak believers. The pragmatic analysis

b- The pragmatic analysis

The intended meaning (CI) of this hadith is to emphasize that a believer with a strong faith and determination, who enjoins good, forbids evil, and endures difficulties, is better than a weak believer whose faith only exists in his heart and is not reflected in his actions. The ISA is directive, as this

hadith serves as advice for Muslims to be courageous in fulfilling good deeds.

3- The Messenger of Allah PBUH said: "The best remembrance is: There is none worthy of worship except Allah (La Ilaha Illallãh)' and the best supplication is: praise is due to Allah (Al- Hamdulillah)." (Abu Khaliyl, 2007. vol.6 : 111)

a- The Linguistic analysis

Linguistically, the word 'best' is a representation of the superlative adjective and it is one of hyperbolic forms.

b- The pragmatic analysis

The intended meaning (CI) of this hadith is to emphasize that Allah is the only one worthy of worship and praise. When someone praises Him, He rewards them in this life and the Hereafter. This is why "Al-Hamdulilãh" is considered the best supplication. The ISA is directive, as the Prophet PBUH advises Muslims to abide by the remembrance of Allah and praise Him for His blessings.

4- The Prophet said, "Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with one's own hands. The Prophet of Allah, Dawud (David) used to eat from the earnings of his manual labour." (Khan, 1997. vol.3 p: 168)

a- The linguistic analysis

The word 'ever' is an adverb, it comes here to refer to the single word of hyperbolic forms.

b- The pragmatic analysis

The CI or the intended meaning of this hadith is to confirm (by the word ever) the idea of eating of one's own work and not to be a burden on society.

The ISA is assertive, since the prophet PBUH affirms the truth that there is no better than eating from one's earning.

5- Minor word classes

The Prophet PBUH said: "Whoever suppresses his rage while

he is able to unleash it, Allah will call him <u>before</u> the heads (leaders) of creation on

the Day of Judgement, so that he can inform Him of which of the Hür he

would like." (Abu Khaliyl, 2007. vol.4 p: 105)

a- The linguistic analysis

The minor word class consists of prepositions, numerical expressions and

quantifiers.

Here, the preposition 'before' comes to reflect hyperbole.

b- The pragmatic analysis

The CI in this Hadith, emphasizes the idea that a person who can suppress his

rage just for the sake of Allah, although he is

able to unleash it, richly deserves the reward in the Hereafter, in a manner that

Allah will call him in the midst of all those present and say: "0 my

servant, in return for the way you sacrificed your desire for My sake,

choose anyone of the Hur of Paradise.

The ISA is commissive, since the prophet PBUH promises the righteous (who

control their anger) that they will deserve this honour, in the hereafter,

from God.

6- The Messenger of Allah PBUH said "My Lord promised me that

<u>seventy thousand</u> of my Ummah shall be admitted into Paradise without a reckoning

against them, nor any punishment. With every thousand, are seventy thousand

and three measures from the measures of my Lord." (Abu Khaliyl, 2007.

vol.4 p: 447)

The linguistic analysis

Linguistically, numerical expression of the underlined words, is one of hyperbolic

forms. Arabs have become acquainted with the use of special numbers by which they

want to increase, inflate or other rhetoric aspects without wanting its real meaning.

The most used of these numbers is that of the seven and their derivatives.

Abu- Hayaan (745. vol. 1 p: 219) said, "Seven, and seventy is an indication of doubling strength and intensity, as if it were doubled seven times. Arabs would exaggerate the number seven and seventy because of the meaning of the multiplication it mentions."

a- Pragmatic Analysis

The CI is 'Allah's measure' is a measure that befits His Majesty and Glory. And just as we cannot comprehend Allah's person, we cannot also comprehend the exact nature of His 'measure'. If Allah wills, He can contain all the virtuous souls in a single measure and admit them into Paradise.

The kind of ISA is commissives since Allah promises the prophet PBUH that this number of his Ummah shall be admitted into Paradise.

7- "The Messenger of Allah said: 'The most affluent of the people in this world, of the inhabitants of the Fire, (who will be) will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and dipped once in the Fire. Then it will be said: 'O son of Adam, did you ever see anything

good? Did you ever have <u>any</u> pleasure?' He will say: 'No, by Allah, O Lord.' Then the most destitute of the people in this world, (who will be) of the inhabitants of Paradise, will be brought and dipped once in Paradise, and it will be said to him: 'O son of Adam, did you ever see anything bad? Did you ever experience <u>any</u> hardship?' He will say: 'No, by Allah, O Lord. I never saw anything bad and I never experienced <u>any</u> hardship." (Al- khattab, 2007. vol.7 p: 206- 7)

a- Linguistic analysis

According to the hyperbolic forms, here, the quantifier 'any' comes to express the hyperbole.

b- Pragmatic analysis

The CI of this Hadith is that whatever a man sees joy in this world and he is at the same time unjust one, when he is dipped once in the fire he will

forget all these types of joy that he saw in this world. And vice versa for the righteous.

The ISA is directive, the prophet PBUH advises people to work for their hereafter and not only for this world.

8- The Messenger of Allah said: "The believer is to the believer <u>like</u> parts of a building, each one of them supporting the other."

(Abu Khaliyl, 2007. vol.4 p: 43)

a- Linguistic analysis

Here, simile that is one of lexico- grammatical structure in hyperbolic forms, is obvious. Simile and metaphor, according to Al- Tufaili & Al- Jobori (2016: 49) are devices of exaggeration.

b- Pragmatic analysis

The CI is Just like the bricks of a structure which, when joined together, turn into a strong structure, the believers, together are also a strong fort where each member of the community is like a brick. They must, therefore, have the same relationship with each as the bricks have with one another in a structure in-as-much as each one of them aids and supports the other.

The ISA is directive since the prophet PBUH advises believers to help each other.

9- The Messenger of Allah said: "There are three things for which whomever has them, then he has <u>tasted the sweetness of faith</u>: The one for whom Allah and His Messenger are more beloved to than anything else; whoever loves someone and he does not love him except for the sake of Allah,…

(Abu Khaliyl, 2007. vol.5 p: 32)

a- Linguistic analysis

Just like simile, metaphor is one of lexico- grammatical structure in hyperbolic forms. Simile and metaphor are devices of exaggeration. (Al- Tufaili & Al- Jobori,2016: 49).

b- Pragmatic analysis

The CI One's being pleased and delighted by performing good deeds and abandoning evil deeds is a taste and sweetness of Iman. Such desire and interest in the matters of religion, as a hunger is cured from food and thirst from cool water, only that person will gain who has absorbed in himself the love of Allah and the Messenger and he loves Allah and His Messenger more than anything that is dearer to him.

The ISA is commissive since the prophet PBUH promises them that who loves Allah and His messenger than anything else and some other things, then he will win the proximity to Allah that is the taste of Iman.

10- The Messenger of Allah said: <u>'Two words which are light on the tongue and heavy in the Balance, and beloved to the Most Merciful</u>: Subluin-Allah wa bi hamdihi, Subhan-AIlah al-'Azzm

(Glory and praise is to Allah, glory is to Allah the Almighty)

(Al- Khattab, 2007. vol.5 p: 84)

a- Linguistic analysis

It refers to complex modification that is one of hyperbolic aspects.

b- Pragmatic analysis

The CI of this hadith is that all the underlined words are used to express and emphasize the notion of the remembrance of Allah.

The ISA is directive. The prophet PBUH advises them to use this remembrance because it is good to be weighed heavily on the Day of Judgement.

11- The Prophet stood in prayer until his feet became swollen and they said: 'Allah has forgiven your past and future sins.' He PBUH said: 'Should I not be <u>a thankful slave</u>?

(Al- Khattab, 2007. vol.7 p: 220)

a- Linguistic analysis

The type of hyperbole in this hadith is a phrasal one.

b- Pragmatic analysis

The CI of this Hadith is to be a grateful person to Allah and not to leave the relation with Allah in all cases.

The ISA in this Hadith is expressive since the prophet PBUH expresses his thank to Allah through prayer.

12- "The Hour will not be established till: Two big groups fight each other whereupon there will be a great number of casualties on both sides and they will be following one and the same religious doctrine, … (Khan, 1997. vol.9 p: 153)

a- Linguistic analysis

Linguistically, this hadith reflects the clausal hyperbole.

b- Pragmatic analysis

The CI of this Hadith is that the prophet PBUH states what will happen before the Day of Judgement. He PBUH wamts to emphasize the idea of such events as marks of the Day of Judgement.

The ISA is assertive because the prophet PBUH states these events as marks of Resurrection.

13- The Prophet PBUH said: "May his nose be rubbed in the dust, may his nose be rubbed in the dust, may his nose be rubbed in the dust." It was said: "Who, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "The one whose parents, one or both of them, reach old age during his lifetime and he does not enter Paradise."
(Al- Khattab, 2007. vol.6 p: 420)

a- Linguistic analysis

Repetition here, is obvious as an aspect of hyperbole.

b- Pragmatic analysis

The CI here, is to emphasize the idea that one should be dutiful to his parents especially when they are old.

The ISA is directive since the prophet PBUH warns people of the

disobedience to parents.

14- The Prophet PBUH was asked by his wives about the Jihad and he replied,
"The best Jihad (for you) is (the performance of) Hajj ."(khan, 1997. vol.4 p:
89- 90)

a- Linguistic analysis

In this Hadith there is ellipsis. Originally this Hadith is the best Jihad for you is
the performance of Hajj. When these expressions were deleted the speech
became better rhetorically. Besides, the words jihad and Hajj became
close to each other which strengthens the meaning that the prophet PBUH
wants (Ma'roof, 2010: 99).

b- Pragmatic analysis

The prophet PBUH emphasizes the notion that the jihad of women is Hajj.

The ISA is assertive since the prophet PBUH states that the best jihad for women
is Hajj.

15- The Messenger of Allah PBUH said: "Whoever calls people to true
guidance, will have a reward equal to that of those who follow him, without
that detracting from their reward in the slightest. And whoever calls people
to misguidance, will have a (burden of) sin equal to that of those who follow
him, without that detracting from their sins in the slightest.'

(Al- Khattab, 2007. vol.1 p: 212)

a- Linguistic analysis

The underlined words refer to vagueness as a form of hyperbole.

b- Pragmatic analysis

The CI in this Hadith is that the prophet PBUH wants to focus on the idea of the good
model and bad model in the society.

The ISA is directive since the prophet PBUH advises people to call others to good deeds because they will have a reward equal to that of those who follow them. And warns them not to call for bad deeds because they will have a (burden of) sin equal to that of those who follow them.

Conclusions

1- Hyperbole in these Hadiths is used to focus on different aspects positively.

2- There is no floating of quality in Hadiths although the expressions are hyperbolic ones.

3- Assertive and directive classes are the most frequent used of ISA.

4- Data analysis manifests that the IC plays a staggering role in identifying the intended meaning.

5- In these Hadiths, Hyperbole occurs implicitly in metaphor and simile.

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