

Characteristic features of religious discourse and genres in islam

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Annotation. This article examines the characteristic features of Islamic religious discourse and its main genres, highlighting their linguistic, structural, and communicative aspects. Islamic discourse is based on divine revelation, using classical Arabic and intertextual references to the Qur'an and Hadith. It serves didactic and persuasive functions, guiding believers in their faith and daily lives. The study explores key genres such as khutbah (sermon), du'a (supplication), tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), and fatwa (legal ruling), each playing a significant role in religious education and practice. The analysis reveals how these genres contribute to the dissemination of Islamic teachings and the shaping of religious identity. Additionally, the study emphasizes the oral and performative nature of Islamic discourse, which strengthens communal participation. The findings provide insight into how religious language functions in maintaining Islamic tradition while adapting to contemporary contexts.

Keywords: Islamic discourse, religious language, khutbah, tafsir, du'a, fatwa, intertextuality, persuasion, performative speech, sacred communication.

Характерные черты религиозного дискурса и жанров в исламе

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются характерные особенности исламского религиозного дискурса и его основные жанры, включая их лингвистические, структурные и коммуникативные аспекты. Исламский дискурс основан на божественном откровении, использует классический арабский язык и межтекстовые ссылки на Коран и хадисы. Он выполняет дидактическую и убедительную функции, помогая верующим в их духовной жизни. В статье анализируются основные жанры, такие как хутба (проповедь), дуа (мольба), тафсир (толкование Корана) и фетва (религиозно-правовое заключение), которые играют важную роль в религиозном обучении и практике. Исследование подчеркивает устный и перформативный характер исламского дискурса, способствующий укреплению общинного взаимодействия. Выводы статьи раскрывают, как религиозный язык помогает сохранять исламские традиции и адаптироваться к современным реалиям.

Ключевые слова: Исламский дискурс, религиозный язык, хутба, тафсир, дуа, фетва, интертекстуальность, убеждение, перформативная речь, священная коммуникация.

Islomda diniy nutq va janrlarning xarakterli xususiyatlari

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada islom diniy nutqining o'ziga xos lingvistik xususiyatlari va asosiy janrlari tahlil qilinib, ularning lingvistik, tuzilish va kommunikativ jihatlari o'rganiladi. Islomiy nutq ilohiy vahiyga asoslangan bo'lib, klassik arab tilidan foydalanadi hamda Qur'on va hadislarga bog'liq holda shakllanadi. U jamiyatda didaktik va ishontirish funksiyalarini bajarib,

mo'minlarni e'tiqod va kundalik hayotda to'g'ri yashashga yo'naltiradi. Tadqiqotda xutba (va'z), duolar, tafsir (Qur'on sharhi) va fatvo kabi asosiy janrlar tahlil qilinib, ularning diniy ta'lim va amaliyotdagi o'rni yoritiladi. Islomiy nutqning og'zaki va ijro etish xususiyati jamiyatda diniy muloqotni kuchaytirishga xizmat qiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, diniy til va uning leksik semantic xususiyatlarini anglash islomiy an'analarni saqlab qolish va zamonaviy sharoitlarga moslashishda muhim rol o'ynaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: *Islomiy nutq, diniy til, xutba, tafsir, duo, fatvo, intertekstuallik, ishontirish, ijro nutqi, ilohiy muloqot.*

In the Foucauldian sense, a “discourse” is perceived as ‘an entity of sequences of signs in that they are enouncements (enoncés)’, and an “enouncement”, or a “statement”, is perceived as an abstract matter which enables signs to assign specific repeatable relations to the objects they refer to (or to other subjects or enouncements). It is the sequence of these relations to objects (subjects) and other enouncements that constitute a discourse. The regularities that produce such discourses, called “discursive formations”, aim to describe the relationships that emerge by the analysis of large bodies of knowledge, such as political economy and natural history. In another sense, a discourse involves ‘a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment’ (Hall, 1992, p. 291). Accordingly, the discourse can involve any oral or written text that represents an organized form of human experience, and this representation is established through processes of recitation and interpretation of different events and in different contexts within many domains of experience such as literature, trade, politics, or religion.

Discourse Analysis is the discipline of linguistics which puts into practice a set of systematic methods that approach the relationship between the text and its context, and it involves a diverse selection of quantitative and qualitative approaches that facilitate the way for the discourse analyst to break through the different components of a particular discourse and uncover its messages. Furthermore, discourse analysis shows how a given discourse is constructed on the basis of the accumulated beliefs and ideologies of the discourse maker and his/her society. It is mistaken to argue that there is a unique ‘method’ of discourse analysis, and it is generally agreed that any explicit method in discourse studies may be used to analyse a particular discourse as long as this method can adequately and relevantly produce insights into the mutual relationships between the given discourse and its society.

Harrison states that it could be challenging to propose a clear distinction of what is perceived as “religious” language and what is perceived as “non-religious” or “secular”. In the most general sense, “religious language”, as employed by scholars of religion, refers to the written and spoken language typically used by religious believers when they talk about their religious beliefs and their religious experiences.

Religious discourse, as a form of communication rooted within a specific faith tradition, plays a decisive role in shaping religious distinctiveness, transferring beliefs, and guiding practices. Islamic religious discourse, with its rich history and diverse expressions, is no exception. This article explores the linguistic characteristics that distinguish Islamic religious discourse and determines the various genres in which it manifests, examining how language is strategically employed to convey religious meaning, establish authority, and foster a sense of community among believers. Understanding these linguistic features and genre conventions is essential for comprehending the complexities of Islamic thought and practice.

Islamic religious discourse is characterized encompassing several key linguistic features and we will discuss specific discourse forming characteristics. The use of Classical Arabic as the language of the Quran, holds a sacred status within Islam. Its use in religious texts, prayers, and formal sermons lends an air of authority and authenticity to religious discourse. Even in contemporary settings, where vernacular dialects are spoken, classical Arabic often pervades religious

communication, creating a linking to the historical and textual fundamentals of the faith. This diglossic situation (where classical Arabic and local dialects coexist) significantly shapes the linguistic landscape of Islamic discourse.

Islamic religious discourse employs a particular lexis consequential from the Quran, Hadith (prophetic traditions), and other religious texts. Terms like *Allah*, *Salah*, *Zakat*, *Ramadan*, and *Jihad* carry specific religious connotations and are central to Islamic discourse. Understanding this vocabulary is vital for inferring religious texts and partaking in religious deliberations. Furthermore, the nuances within these terms, often debated by scholars, highlight the importance of linguistic precision in theological discourse.

Moreover, Islamic religious discourse habitually exploits a variety of rhetorical devices such as repetition, parallelism, metaphor, simile and calligraphy to augment its persuasive power and emotional impact. Islamic religious discourse is deeply intertextual, drawing heavily on the Quran, Hadith, and the writings of prominent religious scholars. Quotations from these sources are frequently linked into sermons, lectures, and discussions, demonstrating the continuity and authority of religious tradition. This intertextuality creates a complex web of meaning, requiring familiarity with the primary religious texts to fully understand the discourse.

Furthermore, certain utterances within Islamic discourse have a performative function, meaning they ratify the action they describe. For example, the pronouncement of the *Shahada* (declaration of faith) characterizes an individual's entry into Islam. Similarly, specific expressions used in marriage ceremonies or divorce proceedings have both legal and religious significance.

Islamic religious discourse presents a rich tapestry of linguistic features woven across a diverse array of genres. The use of classical Arabic *fusha* (eloquence), specialized vocabulary, rhetorical devices, and intertextuality are unifying threads, while each genre, from the Quran to personal dua, exhibits distinct linguistic conventions. Understanding these features, in conjunction with the specific conventions of each genre, is crucial for navigating the complex and nuanced world of Islamic religious communication, fostering deeper comprehension and promoting intercultural understanding. The ongoing evolution of Islamic discourse, particularly in the digital age, presents exciting avenues for future research, promising to further illuminate the dynamic interplay between language, faith, and community.

Islamic religious discourse manifests across a diverse range of genres, each with its own distinct linguistic characteristics and communicative purposes. These genres are not mutually exclusive and often interact, influencing and shaping one another. A closer investigation discloses the specific linguistic topographies that define each of them.

The Quran, considered the *verbum Dei* in Islam, occupies a unique position. Its language, classical Arabic, is revered for its divine origin. Linguistically, the Quran exhibits a high degree of *lexical precision*, with subtle variations in morphemes carrying significant theological weight. The *syntax* is often characterized by *parallelism* and *chiasmus*, creating a rhythmic and aesthetically pleasing effect. *Rhetorical devices* such as *repetition*, *anaphora*, and *metaphor* are employed extensively to convey its message with both clarity and power. The *illocutionary force* of Quranic pronouncements is primarily assertive, declarative, and directive, reflecting its divine authority.

The Prophet Muhammad's tradition, also known as the Hadith (modern) or Sunnah (path), is considered in Islam the second source of legislation after the Holy Qur'an. This Tradition, or Hadith, consists of an enormous body of texts that involves a range of laws, principles, and instructions taken from the sayings, actions and approvals (consents) of the Prophet Muhammad. Linguistically, Hadith often exhibits a *narrative structure*, beginning with the *isnad* (chain of narrators), establishing its authenticity and reliability. While still employing classical Arabic, the *lexicon* is generally less ornate than that of the Quran, focusing on conveying the Prophet's message accurately. The *sentence structure* is typically simpler and more direct. The *illocutionary force* varies, encompassing assertive (reporting), directive (advising), and expressive (praising) acts.

The PT brings together a large number of sayings, speeches, and accounts of the Prophet's deeds and approvals which cover about twenty-three years of his life. The PT was narrated in extracts called Sayings, and each Saying is composed of two parts: a 'narrative' (isnad) and a 'body' (matn). The narrative (isnad) consists of the chain of people who narrated the Saying. It involves an ordered list of all those who have recited and transmitted the Saying of the Prophet beginning with the last transmitter in the chain (who is reciting the Saying to the Saying's collector) and ending with the 'Companions' (Sahaabah) who narrated it directly from the Prophet. The second part, the body (matn), involves the actual text of the narration regardless of its nature; it can involve the Prophet's direct speech, accounts of his actions, his ethical values and morals, the actions which were performed before him that he approved (consents), and even his physical description.

Muslims consider the PT an essential supplement to the Qur'an and a clarification of its message. For example, the Qur'an explains in detail several laws and principles that regulate many matters essential to Muslims, such as the laws of household and inheritance; however it does not talk in detail about other matters such as the performance of prayers, the manner of pilgrimage, or the amount of the obligatory charity (zakaat). In addition to the Qur'an, Muslims believe that the PT constitutes an important source of religious knowledge materialized by the large body of laws and principles embodied in the PT. Furthermore, in many instances, the PT involves detailed historical information and stories about the historical peoples and events which were mentioned briefly in the Qur'an. Consequently, the Prophetic Tradition can be considered a source for Islamic history in addition to its function as a source of religious legislation.

The Friday sermon (*khutba*) is a central element of Islamic religious practice. Linguistically, *khutbas* are characterized by a *formal register*, employing a respectful and often elevated tone. *Rhetorical persuasion* is a key feature, with the *khateeb* (preacher) utilizing various devices to engage and inspire the audience. *Scriptural references* from the Quran and Hadith are frequently interwoven, demonstrating the sermon's grounding in established religious texts. *Code-switching* between classical Arabic for scriptural quotations and more accessible, contemporary Arabic for explaining religious concepts and addressing current issues is common. The *illocutionary force* is often directive (exhorting), persuasive (arguing), and expressive (invoking).

Unlike some other forms of prayer, a "dua" is seen as a direct, personal conversation with God, allowing for individual needs and desires to be expressed openly. *Dua*, personal supplication to God, is a deeply personal form of religious discourse. Linguistically, *duas* can vary widely, ranging from highly formalized and structured invocations to informal, spontaneous expressions of need and gratitude. The *lexicon* can be highly personal and emotionally charged. The *syntax* may be less constrained than in more formal genres. *Code-mixing* with vernacular dialects is frequent. The *illocutionary force* is primarily expressive (praying, beseeching) and commissive (promising). "Dua" often includes specific phrases and expressions from the Quran or Islamic traditions, with a focus on humility, sincerity, and reliance on God.

Fatwa (legal edict): is the clarification of Islamic law (legal rulings of God). A fatwa is usually made by a mufti based on evidence (God's ruling) and in response to a question made by a person (an inquirer) on issues of personal or general concern. A fatwa encompasses every aspect of life, such as creed, acts of worship, transactions, the economy, family, politics, governance, arbitration, etc. The main objective of Fatwa is to respond to the questions of an incident or action asked or inquired by a person. The question is always deemed to be ambiguous to the one who is asking about it hence needs elaboration and clarification especially in religious matters. Most questions are mainly on speculative evidences or proofs which may occur severally due to dynamic changes taking place globally with advancement of science and technology. So the major role of fatwa is to make things clear for those not acquainted to religious matters as being instructed by the Almighty Allah in the Qur'an. Linguistically, *fatwas* are characterized by a *formal legalistic register*, drawing on Islamic jurisprudence and legal principles. *Precise terminology* is essential to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation. *Justification and evidence* are provided, citing relevant sources from the Quran,

Hadith, and other legal texts. The *illocutionary force* is primarily declarative (ruling) and assertive (justifying).

Islamic poetry is a literary genre that integrates Islamic ideologies, beliefs, and symbols into its themes and expressions. It often reflects the values of faith, spirituality, and moral lessons, and is characterized by various forms, including the *qaṣīdah*, which is a long narrative poem originating from pre-Islamic Arab traditions. This genre has deep roots in Arab culture and has evolved over centuries, showcasing the importance of poetry in articulating cultural and religious identity. Linguistically, Islamic poetry employs a range of *poetic devices*, such as *rhyme*, *meter*, *imagery*, and *metaphor*. *Symbolic language* is often used to convey complex religious ideas. The *lexicon* can be rich and evocative. The *illocutionary force* is often expressive (praising, lamenting) and representative (describing). Following types of Islamic poetry are particular:

Ghazal: A genre originating in Arabic poetry characterized by its lyrical expression of love and longing, often in couplets. It's widely popular in Persian, Urdu, and other languages.

Qasida: A long, single stanza poem often written in praise of someone or something. It can cover various themes, including love, war, and morals.

Rubaiyat: A form of quatrain (four-line stanza) that explores philosophical and existential themes, famously represented by Omar Khayyám's *Rubaiyat*.

Masnavi: A narrative poem that can tell stories, often with moral or spiritual lessons. Rumi's *Masnavi-ye-Ma'navi* is one of the most important works in this form.

Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, has its own distinctive discourse. Some of the most popular and well-known examples of Sufi practices are the ritual chanting of God's attributes (*zhikr*) and dancing, such as that performed by the whirling dervishes. Linguistically, Sufi discourse often employs *metaphorical and allegorical language* to describe spiritual experiences. *Paradoxical language* is used to express the ineffable nature of divine reality. *Poetic expression* is a prominent form, used to convey mystical insights and experiences. The *illocutionary force* is often expressive (revealing, inspiring) and evocative (suggesting).

Conclusion:

The genres of Islamic religious discourse are diverse and multifaceted, each with its own linguistic characteristics. Understanding these linguistic features is essential for comprehending the nuances of Islamic thought and practice. Further research exploring the interaction between these genres, as well as the impact of social and cultural factors on religious language, would contribute to a richer understanding of Islamic discourse.

In conclusion, Islamic religious discourse presents a rich tapestry of linguistic features woven across a diverse array of genres. From the divinely ordained pronouncements of the Quran, characterized by its elevated style, divine authority, and lexical precision, to the personal supplications (*dua*) expressed in intimate and often informal language, the spectrum of religious communication within Islam is vast. The Hadith, with its narrative structure and focus on conveying the Prophet's teachings, stands alongside the formal pronouncements of the *khutba* (sermon), which skillfully blends classical Arabic with contemporary language to resonate with its audience. Furthermore, genres like *fatwas*, employing precise legalistic terminology, and the evocative expressions of Islamic poetry, often imbued with symbolic language and emotional depth, demonstrate the multifaceted nature of religious expression.

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