

The Relation between the Language of the Qur'an and Science

(A Comparative Approach to the Features of the Language of the Qur'an and Science and Their Important Differences)

GHASEM DARZI¹

Assistant professor, Interdisciplinary Qur'anic Studies Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran.

Article History: Received 2 October 2021; Accepted 25 June 2021

ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

The true interdisciplinary study needs knowledge and mastery in three levels of epistemological, methodological and linguistic requisites. The linguistic level is one of the most important fundamental levels in science, which needs to be considered in interdisciplinary communication. Two major approaches about the language of the Qur'an are considered by researchers till now: philosophic-hermeneutics and textual. Muslim researchers are interested in the former approach and orientalist frequently incline to the latter. Although the relation between the language of the Qur'an and the language of science with text-oriented approach is less frequently taken into account. Considering the foresaid approach in this article, the author studies the differences between the language of the Qur'an and the language of science and classifies them into five categories: 1. The use of ambiguity and linguistic amphibology; 2. The use of analogy, metaphor and metonymy; 3. Holism and polysemy; 4. The application of the language of sermon and dialogue; 5. The application of verbal complexity. The use of these five linguistic features of the Qur'an is to a large extent different from their use in science. It thus causes complexity in the relation between the Qur'an and humanism on the one hand and experimental sciences on the other.

KEYWORDS: The language of the Qur'an; the language of science; ambiguity and amphibology; holism and polysemy; sermon and dialogue; verbal complexity.

1. Corresponding author. E-mail address: gh_darzi@sbu.ac.ir

I. Introduction

The discussion about the language of the Qur'an is an age-old controversial subject in Qur'anic Studies. Clearly by talking about the language of the Qur'an, it does not mean the Arabic language or Arabic dialects used in it. In this article two approaches can be considered to the word "language": the philosophical-hermeneutic approach and the textual approach. In the philosophical approach these are the important questions: Is the language real or symbolic? ordinary or special? contextual or non-contextual? But in the textual approach this is the discussion of the differences between stylistics, textual or intertextual that have importance. Muslims are usually interested in the philosophical-hermeneutic approach and orientalist incline to the other.

We can count important items that take place in the first classification in relation to the language of the Qur'an, as follows: 1. The language of the Qur'an is an ordinary one that is based on the language of comprehension and custom of declamation (al-Khu'i 2015, 281; Maliki Miyānjī 1998, 25); 2. The language of the Qur'an is a special language. This uniqueness can be due to the fact that it is "contextual" and to understand it, one must pay attention to its main context and origin (Izutsu 1989, 5) or caused by being symbolic, i.e., the way that mystics consider the Qur'an (Sells 1996, 224) or because it is the language of guidance and faith (Saidi Roshan 2002, 24); 3. The language of the Qur'an has a combinatorial approach and redaction, news, mystery, allegory, analogy, metaphor, truth and metonymy can be seen in it (Tabataba'i 1996, 3:250-251; 1:256). The philosophic-hermeneutics approach to the Qur'an has the prime of place in the literature, though the textual or intertextual approach is usually discussed to a lesser extent.

However, in relation to the second approach which seeks to discuss different styles of the Qur'an and to express its relation with other texts, Alan Jones explains the relation of the language of the Qur'an with other common styles during the Prophet's era. Hence, he considers four styles in relation to the Qur'an: the style of the soothsayer (Jones 1994, 33-37), the style of the orator (ibid., 38-41) and the style of the story-teller (ibid., 41-42). This study seeks to determine the relationship between the linguistic structures in the Qur'an and the literary texts during the time of the Prophet and in pre-Islamic times. Regarding the relation between the language of the Qur'an and other one needs to consider the history of the Qur'an. This research pursues to find the different utterance styles in this book through discussing the linguistic differences of the disparate sections of the Qur'an. Theodor Nöldeke who was the first scholar to adopt this approach divided the Qur'an into four distinctive styles and into four

periods (Nöldeke 2004). Afterwards, many others demonstrated these distinctive styles in the Qur'an and determined the occasion of revelation of the verses accordingly (Neuwirth 2002, 252-259). When we talk about the language of the Qur'an we should not forget the relation between the language and the textual style of the Qur'an. The strong resemblance between *Surah al-Rahmān* (55) and Psalm 136 needs to be taken into account. Although this is a very new discussion, some researchers have recently addressed the issue (Neuwirth 2004, 473-475).

What is most relevant to this article is the relation between the language of the Qur'an and that of science; something that has not been considered so far. Such an issue is generally addressed within the context of the relationship between science and religion (Barbour 1983, 268). However, these works also generally address philosophical issues, as positivists and interpreters have argued. Considering the text of the Qur'an and emphasizing the propositions that fall into scientific categories, we will try to discuss the style of the Qur'an and compare it with the style of scientific propositions.

Undoubtedly, in order to establish a relationship between the Qur'an and science, it is necessary that the linguistic differences and similarities between the two be well considered and, accordingly, the quality of their relationship be addressed.

2. *The Language of the Qur'an and That of Science*

When the term "language" is used, a different meaning is inferred depending on what other word it is added to. Generally, whenever the word is used without any suffix, "ethnic-national language" is meant; It is a set of abstract and mental systems that are part of the capabilities of the human brain and are used to create communication between human beings (Haghshenas 1977, 12-13). Distinctly, when the term is used in combination, in the form of language of science or language of the Qur'an, it is a special kind of language in which ethnic-national language is its substructure (Pakatchi 2009, 114). "Language" in this sense refers to a particular style of expression that disciplines and experts in each field of knowledge use to find answers to questions. This particular style is distinct from the ethnic-national language used by users of that knowledge. This particular style of expression is used in two situations: the methods of reasoning and justifying theories; the constructing the meaningful propositions and, consequently, creating the parts, chapters and the whole of that knowledge. What is most relevant to the subject of this article is the latter.

2.1. Linguistic Differentiation of Disciplines in Categorization and Structuring

One of the most important linguistic distinctions between disciplines is their accuracy. Although accurate language is used in experimental sciences, the language of humanities is inaccurate. Accurate language means that all propositions are clear, expressive, detailed and unambiguous. Scientific theories in the experimental sciences must have these characteristics, otherwise they will not be acceptable. But in the humanities, especially in disciplines such as literature and mysticism, a completely different language is used. Ambiguity and amphibology are two important devices in literature and mysticism that cause the increasing beauty and rhetorical features of expressions. Consequently, the clarity of the statements is not necessarily an advantage of such disciplines. Generalization is another feature that occurs in texts with inaccurate language and is rarely seen in texts that have accurate language. Generality and ambiguity lead to polysemy in the language of disciplines such as literature and mysticism. This polysemy enables the experts to convey many concepts to the audience through concise texts. In the form and formulating, clear distinctions can also be made between different disciplines. The use of literary devices like sermon, dialogue, analogy, metaphor, ellipsis and verbiage is frequently seen in the humanities, while in the language of the experimental sciences it is less frequently seen. Accordingly, here we address the linguistic features of literary texts and the special form of the Qur'an and express its differences with other disciplines. Understanding these differences and similarities seems essential to accessing interdisciplinary Qur'anic studies.

3. Distinctions between the Language of the Qur'an and Science

Any the researcher of Qur'anic interdisciplinary studies needs to be aware of the current differences between the language of science and that of the Qur'an. In this article we express the features of the language of the Qur'an and clarify its differences with the language of science. When it comes to science, it can cover any area of knowledge, such as the humanities and arts, social sciences, natural sciences and medical sciences. We will now focus on the language of the Qur'an and after stating each of the features, we will determine how it relates to the language of other fields of knowledge. It is necessary to note that the features of the Qur'an are not exclusive to the following features and undoubtedly other features can also be mentioned. In this research we only emphasize on a few features that are less regarded. Also, expressing these distinctions does not

mean that there is no connection between the Qur'an and other human sciences. Rather, these distinctions only indicate that establishing the right communication depends on paying attention to the types of knowledge and trying to create a common language between them. Regarding the attestation of the revocability of scientific propositions as one of their principal properties can be found in some of the Qur'anic verses that may have a common language with science. In fact, a characteristic such as touching upon falsifiability, as the main feature of scientific propositions, is evident in some verses of the Qur'an and the verses can therefore have a common language with science.

3.1. The Language of Ambiguity and Amphibology vs. That of Clarity and Explicitness

In approaching a text, one of the linguistic policies is to use or not to use propositions with ambiguity and amphibology. The language of the exact sciences is at odds with such an approach. The language of science has the characteristics of clarity and is without verbal and semantic Complication. The modern science emphasizes that scientific questions and assumptions should be as clear as possible (Hempel 1958, 46). On the contrary, ambiguity and amphibology play an important role in literary texts, and in particular, the Holy Qur'an¹. Mohammad has been considered as the explanatory (*mubayyin*) of the Qur'an (Q.16:44). Accordingly, Muhammad is considered as an explanatory if the ambiguity in the text of the Qur'an is prominent and this ambiguity also makes the role of the Prophet as its interpreter meaningful.

The rhetoric of a literary text depends on the extent to which the language user uses the literary industries. That is why the existence of different types such as double entendre (*ihām*), advancing and retarding (*taqdīm wa ta'khīr*), opacity (*ibhām*) and brevity (*ījāz*) has been accepted in the Qur'an. All of these types can lead to ambiguity and polysemy of propositions in the text, but no scholar has considered these components as defects of the Qur'an and other literary texts. Indeed, the existence of such components in literary texts implies eloquence. On the contrary, in the language of science, the existence of such devices and figures would be unjustifiable and unacceptable.

1. It should be noted that believing in the existence of ambiguity and amphibology in the language of the Qur'an does not mean denying explicit and ambiguous propositions. Undoubtedly, there are several propositions in the Qur'an that can be explicitly understood.

For example, in *وَتَرْغَبُونَ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ* “you desire to marry them” (Q.4:127) there is a consensus among the Qur'an researchers that the device of ellipsis has been used (al-Suyūfī 2000, 1:641). The ellipsis in this clause is due to the omission of the prepositions, which is always used in conjunction with the verb *رغب* in Arabic, as a result of which two senses are being implied: being interested in (*raghiba fi*) and hating something (*raghiba 'an*). As a result, this phrase is circulating between two antonyms: Do they want to remarry their ex-spouses or they are reluctant to marry them? In the Qur'an (Q.81:17) this ambiguity and polysemy can also be seen. Here, the polysemy of the word *عسعس* ('*as*'*as*) is due to the existence of two opposite meanings in its original form and its contextual meaning. Since there is no significant analogy for choosing one of these meanings, the proposition has two different meanings, it is not possible to prefer and choose one of them.

Unlike the language of science, polysemy and ambiguity are among the important reasons why we encounter an interpretable text in literary texts. In other words, the language of science is translatable, not interpretable, but the language of the Qur'an is interpretable. The language of science must be such that, as much as possible, the capacity for different interpretations is taken away from it. But in literary texts, the possibility of different interpretations increasingly adds to the semantic beauty of propositions.

3.1.1. *The Proposition Ambiguity in Capturing (Hostage Taking)*

One of the most important issues recently discussed in the law and ethics of war is the permissibility of taking hostages and prisoners of war for ransom. Most legal texts that look at this issue from a moral point of view do not allow such a thing. It may be thought at the outset that some verses in the Qur'an (8:67-68) can be a proof of this legal theory: “It is not for a prophet to have captives [of war] until he inflicts a massacre [upon Allah's enemies] in the land. Some Muslims desire the commodities of this world, but Allah desires [for you] the Hereafter. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise. Had it not been for a previous ordainment from Allah, a severe penalty would have reached you for the (ransom) that ye took.”¹

But these verses have a fundamental ambiguity that makes it difficult to relate them to legal theory, since a completely different meaning from the first meaning is also obtained from these verses. According to the second reading, no prophet is allowed to have captives in exchange for ransom

1. The English translation of the verses is by Yusuf Ali (Ed).

until the fire of war has subsided [and the enemy needs to be dealt with during the war]. This reading is completely contrary to the meaning we mentioned at the beginning of this discussion (al-Ṭūsī 2002, 5:155-158; al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 4:858). But both of these meanings are derived from the verse. The ambiguity in this verse leads to the above-mentioned polysemy and makes it difficult to apply it alongside legal theories.

3.1.2. *Ambiguity in the Meaning of "Heaven" in the Qur'an*

Another instance of ambiguity leading to deep amphibology and polysemy includes the use of the word "heaven" in the Qur'an (Rohani Mashhadi & Maaref 2016, 151-180). Verses related to this term have generally been used by researchers interested in cosmology. But cosmological readings will not be fruitful unless an explicit meaning can be provided for it. In some applications, the word has a close meaning to cloud, "*And We have sent the fertilizing winds and sent down water from the sky and given you drink from it. And you are not its retainers*"¹ (Q.15:22). Sometimes it means a space that surrounds the earth's surface and is always visible to the naked eye, "*Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky?*" (Q.14:24). Some applications also seem to refer to spheres and celestial classes: "Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, "*Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion.*" They said, "*We have come willingly.*" and He completed them as seven heavens within two days and inspired in each heaven its command. And We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps and as protection" (Q.41:11-12). A few uses also suggest the meaning of rain "*And O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in showers and increase you in strength [added] to your strength. And do not turn away, [being] criminals*" (Q.11:52). The ambiguity, amphibology and polysemy in this term cause it to be fundamentally different from the applications of the word "sky" in cosmology. This linguistic distinction also makes its application to cosmological interdisciplinary studies complex.

3.1.3. *Advancing (Taḡdīm) and Retarding (Ta'khīr), Brevity (Ījāz) and Redundancy (Iṭnāb)*

Other literary figures that add to the ambiguity and amphibology of the text and its further interpretability are "advancing and retarding" and

1. The English translation is in Sahih International. Unless otherwise stated, the translation of the verses is from the same source.

“brevity and redundancy.” Regarding the former, al-Suyūṭī provides a list of Qur’anic propositions and verses to its audience that displacement of the components of the phrases and the disruption of the main order of the proposition has caused ambiguity and problems in the meaning of the phrase (al-Suyūṭī 2000, 1:622-624). For example, in verses (Q.18:1-2) we are confronted with two contradictory adjectives for a subject: “*Who has sent down upon His Servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance and straight.*” If the order of the verse is to be the same, “deviance” and “straight” are considered as “object” for “has not made therein,” we are confronted with a contradictory and ambiguous meaning. But in the real order, “straight” is an adverb of manner for the “book” and has slipped out of its original place. In the scientific language, such an advancing and retarding are not allowed, but literary texts are full of such devices. In the figure of brevity and redundancy, we are also faced with cases in which the omission or addition of words or phrases causes ambiguity, conciseness, or even amphibology and polysemy of the proposition. One of the notable issues in the discussion is the brevity of the omissions that occurred in the process of narrating the stories and events in the Qur’an. For example, when God narrates the quality of the encounter between “the people of hell and the that of heaven,” He uses a conditional sentence whose conditional answer is omitted: “*But those who feared their Lord will be driven to Paradise in groups until, when they reach it while its gates have been opened and its keepers say, ‘Peace be upon you; you have become pure; so enter it to abide eternally therein,’ [they will enter]*” (Q.39:73). The answer to the condition is omitted here and it is not clear exactly what happens when the gates of heaven are opened. This omission is an example of the ambiguity and amphibology in literary texts. Ellipsis here allows the audiences, themselves, to place the answer to the condition and complete the image drawn by the Qur’an. Each audience draws the highest rewards for the dwellers of the paradise according to their cultural presuppositions and interests. Such instance of ellipsis and ambiguity in the phrase has caused this narrative to follow a cross-cultural pattern. In the plot of the narration of the king’s butler encounter with Joseph, we are also confronted with appealing instances of ellipsis. We see the whole narrative plot in one statement: “*So send me forth Joseph, O man of truth*” (Q.12:45-46). The statement uttered by the butler is addressed to the king whose permission is sought to go to Joseph to have his dream interpreted. But Joseph addresses the king’s butler when the king grants his request and sends him to prison to receive the interpretation of the dream. It is clear that a few sentences have been omitted from these two propositions,

and without considering these omissions we will encounter a fundamental ambiguity in understanding the narration. The scientific language, on the contrary, must be clear and expressive. Any omission that disrupts the meaning is unwarranted, so is the brevity that annoys the audience. But we are allowed in literary and rhetorical language to consider the audience have an effective role in completing the meaning. Such a role is more prominent in analogy, metonymy and metaphors. In the next section, we will discuss the application of these features in the language of the Qur'an as well as the language of science.

3.2. *Application of Analogy, Metonymy and Metaphors*

The second characteristic of the language of the Qur'an, which distinguishes it from that of science, is the extensive use of literary figures such as analogy, metonymy and metaphor. Analogy is one of the most repetitive literary-rhetorical figures in the Qur'an. Qur'anic researchers also use other titles such as "parables" (*amthāl*) to express analogy. The purpose of using analogy in speech is to bring an abstract concept closer to the mind. In other words, in this way, we identify what we know less (vehicle) by relating it to what we know more (tenor). We also term the relationship between likened and compared the quasi mode. The use of analogy does not necessarily mean facilitating understanding. There are cases in the Qur'an that have encountered us to complex and difficult meanings. For example, God uses the analogy of light to define what Allah is.¹ The compound nature of this analogy has made it difficult for commentators to understand its quasi-mode and purpose. Such compound similes, which are difficult to understand, abound in the Holy Qur'an (e.g., 24:39; 14:18; 10:24).

In metonymy and metaphors, complexity and ambiguity become deeper and more serious. Metonymy and metaphor are types of similes that are only one of the elements of the simile and the rest is omitted. In these two types, either tenor (*mushabbah*) or vehicle (*mushabbahun bih*) is mentioned. The degree of ellipsis in metonymy and metaphor is almost indiscernible. It is not easy to distinguish between the real or metaphorical nature of some propositions.

1. Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things (Q.24:35).

Qur'anic examples such as *و الصبح اذا تنفس* “*And by the dawn when it breathes*” (Q.81:18); *و تركنا بعضهم يومئذ يموج في بعض* “*And We will leave them that day surging over each other*” (Q.18:99); *فجرتنا الارض عيوننا* “*And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined*” (Q.54:12) have such characteristics and their metaphorical nature are indiscernible at the first glance.

One of the most important functions that similes and metaphors have in the language of the Qur'an and literary texts is the powerful imagination with which it is created in the text. When the God stated, “And We will leave them that day surging over each other,” this analogy provides an image of humans riding and moving like a sea wave over a large population. Such fascinating imagery has been created using effective metaphorical capabilities in the text, adding multimedia dimensions to the text.

The point that draws to attention the use of metaphor in relation to the distinction between the language of the Qur'an and science is that the greater the degree of omissions, ambiguity and complexity in the simile and metaphor, the more eloquent value emerges. That is why the hidden metaphor (*isti'arah al-makniyyah*) has more rhetorical value than the obvious metaphor (*isti'arah al-tasrihiyyah*) (al-Suyūṭī 2000, 2:55). In fact, the more the audience is forced to try to understand the semantic relationship between the real and metaphorical meaning, the more authoritative and rhetorical it will be, since it targets a more educated audience. Conversely, the simpler the simile, the metonymy and the metaphor, the more vulgar and popular it will be. Therefore, the language of a literary text needs to have the feature of complexity. But in scientific language, complexity has no place.

The distinction between metaphors in the language of literary texts, in particular the Qur'an and metaphors in the language of science is in the degree of their complexity. Complexity is an important component of simile and metaphor in the language of the Qur'an, but metaphors used in scientific texts not only do not complicate matters, but also help to clarify and remove barriers to understanding complex concepts. For example, physicists use the metaphor of the solar system to understand the relationship of atomic components. No one has seen the atom and its components, but the model used to draw is that of the solar system – the sun is at the center and the rest of the planets are orbiting it. In the atomic model, the atom also has a central nucleus, and electrons revolve around it. All the metaphors used in science have the feature of clarity and clarification and also cause their own perspicuity. However, metaphors in the language of the Qur'an, as well as in the language of literary texts, the more complex and ambiguous, the more valuable they become.

3.3. *Holism and Polysemy*

Another fundamental difference between the language of the Qur'an and the language of science lies in their holistic and partial approaches to phenomena. Holistic approach to the phenomena has led to the emergence of polysemy in the language of the Qur'an. But the emphasis of the language of science on the partial atomic approach has eliminated the possibility of polysemy. Contrary to the language of the Qur'an, and more generally, literary texts, general and holistic propositions (with ambiguity) in the language of science are not recommended. Such statements are considered incorrect and unwarranted in the language of science.

The most important general concepts used in the Qur'an are the following: invitation to monotheism and denial of polytheism; invitation to establish social justice; acceptance of the invitation of the prophets and avoidance of denying their invitation; paying attention to the origin and resurrection; relating the stories of earlier prophets and nations; paying attention to the common mottos and themes of all religions; expressing the individual and social rules of Muslims. What shows the universality of the Qur'an's approaches to categories, is the approach of this divine book to the rules of jurisprudence and the branches of the rules of religion. It is clear that rulings such as prayer, fasting, Hajj and alms tax must be expressed in detail and in the form of expressing the pillars and conditions of authenticity and invalidity. None of these pillars and conditions for the subordinate religious rules can be seen in the Qur'an. Prayer, which is the most important religious duty for every Muslim, is stated in the Qur'an in a general way and without giving any details. The narrations of the infallible are quite decisive in explaining the details of religious rulings. Other subdivisions of the rulings have the same feature of universality.

We know that the expression of the rules and news related to religion and the guidance of human beings are the first priority in the text of the Qur'an. When we encounter general language in expressing sub-rules and news related to human guidance, we also encounter such an approach in expressing scientific content in the first place. We should not expect the Qur'anic propositions, which are in some way related to the concepts and propositions of the experimental sciences or the humanities, to be expressed with the same characteristics as those presented in the language of science. These propositions in the language of science have the characteristics of clarity, partiality and distinction.

3.3.1. *Distinction between the Law of Gravity in Physics and the Related Verse in the Qur'an*

Newton's law of gravitation in physics is defined as follows: "The gravitational force between two particles is directly proportional to the product of the masses of the two particles and inversely proportional to their distance from each other" (Newton 1729, 392). It is because of this force that the object that is at a distance from the ground falls to the ground and the object that is on the ground is pulled towards the ground. Clearly, this definition is quite distinct, clear and partial to gravity. But when we refer to the Qur'anic propositions that the claimants consider to be an equivalent to Newtonian attraction, we are not at all faced with such clarity, distinction and detail. Note the verse (Q.13:2): "It is Allah who erected the heavens without pillars that you [can] see..." In this verse, we are confronted with the similitude of the heavens and their creation into a structure and the way it is raised. Just as a structure needs columns, so do the heavens need columns, but those that cannot be seen. When the quasi-mode is omitted from the simile, it will be possible for people with different attitudes to consider the quasi-mode according to their assumptions. To consider Newtonian gravity as the intended meaning of this Qur'anic phrase is only one of the possible assumptions and of course many other cases are also possible. Therefore, the Qur'anic proposition, unlike the scientific proposition, has the characteristics of ambiguity, universality and polysemy.

3.3.2 *Ambiguity in Political Action or Religious Action*

One of the socio-political issues that these days is of great interest to religious intellectuals and reformers is the question of the will of nations to change their social destiny (Quṭb 1991, 4:2049-5020; Tabataba'i 1996, 11:309; Makarem Shirazi 1995, 1:145-148). Verse (Q.13:11) is generally used to prove this claim:

"For each one has been appointed successive [angels] before and behind him who protects him by the decree of Allah. Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron." However, before the modern era, a completely different meaning of this verse was understood (al-Ṭūsī 2002, 6:228; al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 6:430). Two different exegeses will be mentioned below in this regard. The first commentary refers to a reading that has been considered by the commentators of the Qur'an almost throughout

history. However, But the latter has been brought by religious reformers such as Sayyid Quṭb in the realm of Qur'anic exegesis:

1. God does not send punishment on a people unless because of the sins they commit.
2. God does not reform the condition of the people unless they themselves do something to reform them.

As it is clear, the existing ambiguity has caused the verse to tolerate different and polysemous readings. It should be noted that the second meaning, which is an interdisciplinary meaning and has arisen from the connection of the Qur'anic studies with socio-political sciences, would be incomplete and ineffective if it were to be used without considering other and probable meanings of the verse. Therefore, it should be said that the ambiguity and universality of the Qur'anic propositions create the ground for the emergence of polysemy. Therefore, holistic approach to the language of the Qur'an should be considered an important feature that fundamentally differs from the language of the Qur'an. This fundamental distinction in the language of the Qur'an and science complicates the communication and dialogue between them.

3.4. The Language of Sermons and Dialogues

Another important feature of the language of the Qur'an that is not seen in the language of science is the rhetorical approach and dialogue. A sermon is a one-way speech that is given to motivate the audience to act upon or avoid something. But in contrast, dialogue is a bilateral conversation. Speech and dialogue play an essential role in literary texts, especially the language of the Qur'an where it is attested to a large extent. In contrast, sermons and dialogues are defects in a text written in the scientific language.

3.4.1 Sermons and a Distinct Approach to the Language of the Qur'an and That of Science

Sermon is one of the five categories in logic.¹ Rhetorical syllogism (*qiyās al-khiṭābī*) is made of acceptable statements (*maqbulāt*), presumptions (*maznūnāt*) and those based on principles (*mashhūrāt*) (al-Ḥillī 1991, 403). The purpose of the sermon is to convince the audience of what is expected

1. The devices of the five crafts or arts in logic are proof, dialectic, sermon, poetry and fallacy.

to be approved by them (*idem*). Therefore, in speech, all persuasive methods that affect the audience in some way can be used. The sermons in the Qur'an are both general and specific. General sermons are often accompanied by words such as "O people," "O you who believe," and "O you who disbelieve." Special Sermons are used with titles such as "O Prophet," "O wives of the Prophet," and "O Messenger." In Qur'anic sermons, various Rhetorical techniques such as: story, oath, etiquette, ellipsis, persuasion, threat, allegory, melodic sentences, etc. are used to have a greater impact on the audience and also to create diversity in speech and prevent the listener's fatigue. The main purpose of the Qur'an is to guide its audiences and in order to achieve this goal, the sermon is very efficient and worthy of attention. But what is more important in the language of science is the presentation of honest and justified propositions. Truthfulness (*ṣidq*) and justification (*tawjīh*) are the two main features of propositions in the language of science that can only be obtained through reasoning and inference. These characteristics are independent of whether the general public is convinced of these arguments. The main target audience for the language of science is the elite in the same scientific field. To explain the audience there is no need to sermon. Consider the following examples of how controversial arguments or popular allegories have been used to persuade the audience.

3.4.2 *House of spiders and Linguistic Distinction between the Qur'an and Science*

One might think that verse (Q.29:41) states the opposite of scientific propositions. However, the noble verse is organized according to its acceptable statements (*maqbulāt*) and those based on principles (*mashhūrāt*), and it still has considerable persuasive power:

"The example of those who take allies other than Allah is like that of the spider who takes a home. And indeed, the weakest of homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew."

In this noble verse, the house of the spider is mentioned as the weakest house. We know that in modern science, spider webs are among the most resistant tissues available and the spider's web is highly resistant. However, there is no conflict between these scientific propositions and the Qur'anic proposition, since here the language of the Qur'an is organized from the language of rhetoric and using acceptable statements and those based on principles. However, the language of science in this field follows a precise and detailed language.

3.4.3 *An approach to Gender and Linguistic Distinction between the Qur'an and Gender Studies*

Gender, is another situation in which the Holy Qur'an has used acceptable statements and those based on principles to increase its persuasive influence. In the Qur'an (Q.53:21-22), in response to the polytheists' God considers an act of choosing sons for themselves and attributing females to Him an unfair division. According to the assumption that a male is preferable to a female, this division is unfair. This presupposition, with which the Qur'anic proposition has been sympathized with, has been among the acceptable statements of the Prophet's time. In the category of "witness" (Q.2:282) we also see empathy with the acceptances of the Prophet's time. In this verse, God considers the witness of two women to be equivalent to the witness of a man: "And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses - so that if one of the women errs, then the other can remind her. And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon..." Such a ruling is interpreted to mean that if one of the women errs (through forgetfulness), the other will be reminded of the forgotten matter. It seems that such a reasoning was made in order to convince the audience and using eminent, so it proves the rhetorical dimensions of the Qur'an. However, in modern scientific disciplines, it is not acceptable to use such a language to persuade the audience.

3.4.4 *Equivocation (Tawriyah) in the Qur'an is an Example of the Use of a Sermonic Approach*

The use of the equivocation in the Qur'an perfectly illustrates its rhetorical approach. There are two significant examples in this regard in the encounter of Abraham with the polytheists and Joseph with his brothers. When Abraham became responsible for the protest of the polytheists against the destruction of their idol, he rejected this accusation and considered it as the act of the great idol. "They said, 'Have you done this to our gods, O Abraham?' He said, 'Rather, this - the largest of them - did it, so ask them, if they should [be able to] speak'" (Q.21:62-63). However, Abraham himself was responsible for the shattering the idols and thus he wanted to make them aware of the powerlessness of the idols. In another instance, Joseph places a cup in the baggage of the camels of his brothers and then accuses them of stealing: "So when he had furnished them with their supplies, he put the [gold measuring] bowl into the bag of his brother. Then an announcer

called out, 'O caravan, indeed you are thieves'”(Q.12:70). Clearly, such accusations by Joseph are only to make his brothers realize the evil of their theft in their childhood. Such a thing follows the pattern of the sermon and contains the rules of the spoken language. The use of such a language in scientific propositions will not be acceptable at all. Scientific language cannot use the language of irony and extension to express its purpose. Scientific language must be clear and distinct.

3.4.5 Dialogue and Distinctive Approach to the Language of the Qur'an

Dialogue is in complete contrast to sermon. The former is based on bilateral conversation. Although the language of science is that of argument and inference, but dialogue is generally not used in the written language of science.¹ However, the Qur'an, so that to have a greater impact on the audiences, applies this style of expression. Accordingly, just as the language of writing can be well observed in the Qur'an, the spoken language can be found in it.

Conversation and dialogue in the Qur'an include a wide range of cases. Including God's dialogue with prophets and ordinary human beings, as well as human dialogue with each other or even human dialogue with animals. The beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an with God's conversation with His Prophet in the Cave of Ḥirā' shows the great importance of dialogue in the language of the Qur'an. Also, the beginning of some chapters of the Qur'an with the keyword “say,” shows that the nature of these chapters is conversational. But apart from the chapters that begin with “say,” God has spoken to His prophets on several occasions. God's words to Moses on the mount of Torah and to Zechariah about having children, are good examples of this. He has also spoken to other human beings on several occasions, apart from the prophets. God's Conversation with the people of the Book (Q.2:136), the polytheists (Q.46:4; 6:148), Anti-resurrectionists (Q.36:78-82; 19:66-67), etc. should be considered as examples of God's conversation with the opposition

In the Qur'anic examples of dialogue, the story is generally told through the tools of conversation. Conversation is the most prominent element and component of fictional narratives in the Qur'an. It is clear that stories and tales have no special place in the language of science. Therefore, it can be considered as one of the basic distinctions between the language of the Qur'an and the language of science, which shows the element of dialogue and conversation in this holy book.

1. To be informed about the written and spoken language, see: Nekounam 2000, 21-38.

3.5 Using Verbal Complexity

One of the important distinctions between the language of literary texts and the language of science is in the application of verbal complexity. Verbal complexity occurs when advancing and retarding make the propositions difficult to understand (Shams al-'Ulamā' 1910, 7). Although some rhetorical scholars have considered the existence of verbal complexity as an error in eloquence (al-Jurjānī 1987, 82-86), but, generally in Qur'anic sciences, it is considered as one of the rhetorical devices in the Qur'an (e.g., al-Suyūṭī 2000, 623-624). For example, in verse (Q.20:129): "And if not for a word that preceded from your Lord, punishment would have been an obligation [due immediately], and [if not for] a specified term [decreed]." From a syntactic point of view, it is not possible to add the "a specified term" to "obligation" and if so, the meaning of the phrase will be completely incorrect and incomprehensible. In fact, "a specified term" must be added to the "word." In fact, the "formal deadline" must be reverted to the "word" but in the current structure it has been omitted from its original place and this retarding can disrupt the meaning of the phrase. In verses 18:1-2, the retarding of words has caused ambiguity and challenge in the meaning of the phrase: "Who has sent down upon His Servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance." In this verse, if "guardianship" is supposed to be a passive object for "made therein" like "deviance," we will face a contradiction. It is clear that this contradiction is due to the fact that the "guardianship" has been postponed from its original position. In fact, "guardianship" is now for "the book" and the meaning of the passage with this new structure has no ambiguity or problem.

The Qur'an uses such advancing and retarding in its style of storytelling. One of the most prominent examples in the Qur'an is the story of cow in *Surah al-Baqarah* (2). God starts the story with the sentence "*Allah commands you to slaughter a cow*" (Q.2:67). But we know that God's command to the Israelites to slaughter *Baqara* is in the middle of the story. The beginning of this story is actually this sentence: "*And [recall] when you slew a man and disputed over it*" (Q.2:72). Here also, we are confronted with a postponement in the narration of the story, which, if one is not aware of the course of this story, will be a major challenge for understanding it in the Qur'an.

The existence of challenging instances of precedence and postponement is one of the characteristics of literary texts. Creating a challenge and motivating the audience to overcome these challenges is one of the characteristics that makes a literary text have the maximum participation of the audience in interaction with itself. Also, overcoming these challenges

and obstacles is a kind of artistic pleasure in itself. However, the existence of such challenges in a text in scientific language is never recommended. A scientific statement must be explained to the audience in the simplest language. The existence of any precedence and delay that creates semantic confusions in the word is considered a defect for that scientific text.

4. Conclusion

Disciplines are very distinctive in terms of language. In particular, the literary and artistic disciplines are very different from other types of knowledge. Unlike other types of science, artistic taste and sense play an important role in justifying theories of literary studies and art. The language of the Qur'an has generally used the same common linguistic features in the language of literary, artistic and mystical texts. The language of the Qur'an bears the closest resemblance to the humanities, especially literature and mysticism. Experimental humanities in the next stage and natural sciences are the most distant from Qur'anic studies. The main features of the language of the Qur'an that make it fundamentally different from other sciences are the following: 1. The application of ambiguity and linguistic amphibology; 2. Application of simile, metaphor and metonymy; 3. Holism and polysemy; 4. The use of sermonic language and dialogue; 5. The use of verbal complication. In these five features, one can clearly see the difference between the language of the Qur'an and the language of science. These five features show the obvious differences between the language of the Qur'an and that of science. It is necessary to pay attention to these differences in the interdisciplinary integration of the Qur'an and other sciences.

Bibliography

- Barbour, E. (1983). *‘Ilm wa Dīn (Science and Religion)*, Trans. Khurramshāhī, B. Tehran: Nashr-i Dānishgāhī.
- Biglan, A. (1973a). The Characteristics of Subject Matter in Different Academic Areas. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57(3), 204-213.
- Biglan, A. (1973b). Relationships between subject matter characteristics and the structure and output of university departments. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57(3), 195-203.
- Haghshenas, A. M. (1977). *Awāshināsī (Phonetics)*. Tehran: Āgāh.
- Hampel, C. (1958). The Theoretician's Dilemma. In Feigl, H. et al (Eds). *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- al-Hillī, Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf (1991). *al-Ghawā'id al-Jalīyyah fī Sharḥ al-Risālah al-Shamsiyyah*. Qom: Nashr-i Islāmī.

- Izutsu, T. (1989). *Khudā wa Insān dar Qur'ān (God and Man in the Qur'an)*, Trans. Ārām, A. Tehran: Farhang-i Islāmī.
- Jones, A. (1994). The Language of the Qur'ān. *The Arabist*, 6-7, 29-48.
- al-Jurjānī, 'Abd al-Ghādir (1987). *Asrār al-Balāghah*, Trans. Tajlil, J. Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tih-rān.
- al-Khu'ī, A. (2015). *al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Qom: 'Ilmī.
- Makarem Shirazi, N. (1995). *Tafsīr-i Nimūnah*. Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah.
- Malikī Miyānjī, M.B. (1998). *Nigāhī bih 'Ulūm-i Qur'ānī (A Glance at Qur'anic Sciences)*. Qom: Khurram.
- Sells, M. (1996). Bewildered Tongue: The Semantics of Mystical Union in Islam. In Idel, M. & McGinn, B. (Eds). *Mystical Union in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 87-124. New York: Continuum.
- Nekounam,, J. (2000). "Spoken or written language of the Qur'an", *Journal of Philosophical Theological Research*, 1(3), pp. 21-38. doi: 10.22091/pfk.2000.517
- Neuwirth, A. (2002). Form and Style of Qur'an. In: McAuliffe, J.D. (Ed). *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, 245-266. Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Neuwirth, A. (2004). Rhetoric and the Qur'an. In: McAuliffe, J.D. (Ed). *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, 461-476. Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Newton, I. (1729). *Principia*, Trans. Motte, A. London: Benjamin Motte.
- Nöldeke, T. (2004). *Tā'rikh al-Qur'ān (Geschichte des Qorāns)*, Trans. Tamer, G. et al. Beirut: Almaz.
- Pakatchi, A. (2009). Linguistic Requisites of Interdisciplinary Studies. *The Quarterly Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities*, 1, 111-135.
- Rohani Mashhadi, F., Maaref, M. (2016). 'Defining the Nature of "Seven Heavens" Based on the Theory of "Khalq" and "Amr" in the Qur'an', *Researches of Quran and Hadith Sciences*, 13(2), pp. 151-184. doi: 10.22051/tqh.2016.2355
- Saidi Roshan, M.B. (2002). Zabān-i Qur'ān yā Zabān-i Wizhah-yi Hidāyat (Language of the Qur'an or the Special Language of Guidance). *Qur'anic Doctrines*, Razavi University of Islamic Sciences, 4, 21-40.
- Qutb, Sayyid (1991). *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq.
- Shams al-'Ulamā' Gurgānī (1910), Muḥammad Ḥusayn. *Abda' al-Badā'i'*. Tehran: Jam.
- al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn (2000). *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī.
- Tabataba'ī, M.H. (1996). *al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Qom: Jāmi'ah-yi Mudarrisin.
- al-Ṭabrisi, Faḍl ibn Ḥasan (1993). *Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Tehran: Nāṣir Khusrāw.
- al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan (2002). *al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī.