

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

TOLERANCE IN ENGLISH-ARABIC RELIGIOUS TEXTS:  
A CRITICAL STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

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## Abstract

Within the framework of critical stylistics the current work detects the concept of tolerance in English and Arabic religious texts. Critical stylistics sets forth ten textual-conceptual tools of analysis for extracting hidden ideologies out of texts. This study employs one tool of analysis to extract tolerance as an ideology in English-Arabic religious texts. The model of analysis employed is that of Jeffries's (2010) critical stylistics. The data selected for analysis comprises of selected speeches of Jesus and Imam Ali. The aim of the study is to see the applicability of Jeffries's model of Analysis on religious texts. The study came to the conclusion that the textual conceptual tool *Implying and Assuming* can be applied on religious English and Arabic texts. The concept of tolerance as one ideology in religious texts is brought into surface by means of the tool *Implying and Assuming* provided by Jeffries's (2010) Critical stylistics model of analysis.

**Key Words:** Tolerance, ideology, critical stylistics, religious, implying and assuming

## التسامح في النصوص الدينية الإنجليزية والعربية: تحليل أسلوبى نقدي

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### المستخلص

يبحث العمل الحالي مفهوم التسامح في النصوص الدينية الإنجليزية والعربية في إطار الأسلوب النقدي. يحدد الأسلوب النقدي عشرة أدوات تحليلية نصية - مفاهيمية لاستخراج الأيديولوجيات المخفية ضمن النصوص. تستخدم هذه الدراسة أداة تحليل واحدة لاستخراج التسامح كأيديولوجيا في النصوص الدينية الإنجليزية والعربية. نموذج التحليل المستخدم هو الأسلوبية النقدية للمنظرة جيفريز (2010). بيانات التحليل تتضمن خطب مختارة ليسوع والإمام علي (ع). الهدف من الدراسة هو معرفة إمكانية تطبيق نموذج جيفريز للتحليل على النصوص الدينية. توصلت الدراسة إلى استنتاج مفاده أن الأداة المفاهيمية النصية الضم والافتراض يمكن تطبيقها على النصوص الدينية الإنجليزية والعربية. يظهر مفهوم التسامح كأيديولوجية في النصوص الدينية عن طريق الأداة الضمنية والافتراض التي يوفرها نموذج الأسلوب النقدي الذي وضعته جيفريز (2010).

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التسامح ، الأيديولوجيا ، الأسلوب النقدي ، الديني ، الضم والافتراض

## Introduction

This study employs the framework of critical stylistics in English and Arabic religious texts in order to investigate tolerance as an ideology in texts. Critical stylistics is proposed by Jeffries (2010) as a model of analysis which contains ten tools of analysis investigating the hidden ideologies by means of the formal linguistic aspects. The applicability of this model has been investigated more in political and literary contexts and less in religious texts. The study aims at extracting the hidden tolerance as an ideology in religious texts. It is hypothesized that the textual conceptual tool of analysis *Implying and Assuming* is forceful enough to bring the hidden ideologies underneath texts to the surface. This work also hypothesizes that this model of analysis is applicable on religious texts. The model of analysis is Jeffries's (2010) Critical Stylistics with the employment of one textual conceptual tool of analysis *Implying and Assuming*. The English data selected for analysis comprises of selected speeches of Jesus while being crucified as well as some selected speeches from the holy Bible. Arabic data contains Imam Ali's last will before his martyrdom as well as a letter of advice to his son Imam Hassan. The data selected tend to be equivalent in terms of propositional content and thus the ideological significations.

### Tolerance: An Ideological Concept

Viewing tolerance as an ideology in religious contexts can be identified in Eagleton's (1991:1-6) term through a number of proposed definitions:

1. a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class;
2. a process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life;
3. identity thinking;
4. the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world;

Tolerance provides a sense of endurance and acceptance which is not necessarily linked to religious contexts. The noun "tolerance" can be derived into the verb "tolerate" signifying those who can tolerate all sorts of negativity. It carries a sense of acceptance or endurance. Those who can tolerate others' ill-temperedness and bad manners can surely endure and accept them.

There are two general senses of tolerance in terms of recency: traditional or classical sense versus the new\pluralistic sense of tolerance. The former, as supposed by Webster and others, signifies accepting the beliefs and customs of others even if they are different from our own. In this sense, tolerating signifies permitting, allowing as well as respecting the beliefs and custom of others. The latter sense of tolerance, on the other hand, which goes beyond the classical sense, is that of pluralistic. To this sense, all beliefs and ideas are equally accepted because it perceives them all to be true and valid. Truth is relative and therefore it is weakened. The state of truth vanishes in culture and society and thus it is on the part of individuals to judge what is valid and what is not. This leads to a problem of subjective judgment where individuals make judgments on the appropriateness of others' opinions, ideas, or behaviors.

Where there is tolerance there is disagreement. Logically, there would be no tolerance in case all opinions and ideas are agreed upon. In contrast, an opposing view must exist for tolerance to show up. In other words, the act of tolerance requires believing that the

view of opposing party is not right yet accepting it as it is. The recent sense of tolerance is said to be self-defeating. Not all ideas can be accepted to be valid and equal and this produces conflict and resistance. Thus issues need to be weighted as right or wrong; or else, extremist opinions become justified and valid. Such right-wrong boundaries are prominent in the traditional sense of tolerance while the new sense tends to diminish those limitations and thereby everything is tolerated (Newman, 1978: 187-195).

### **Traditional Tolerance: A Biblical Response**

The holy Bible views tolerance in that it demands Christian to love one another as well as living peaceably, with all. It doesn't claim, nor can it accept, the view that all opinions are valid and equal. Josh McDowell (16-17) cited in Hindson (2008) proposes a number of strategies which go in line with the instructions of the holy Bible set forth for Christians which are compatible with the traditional sense of tolerance.

1. The legitimate rights of others must be protected and respected even with those whom you disagree.
2. We have to listen and learn from the culture, perspective, and background of others.
3. Regardless of the differences, we need to live peacefully beside each other.
4. We have to accept others regardless of their nationality, gender, race, etc.
5. Accepting, valuing, and respecting others even though not sharing our views (472-3)

### **Tolerance in Islamic tradition**

Islamic tradition refuses withdrawal from what is regarded as truth, nevertheless, opposing ideas and views are endured as well as certain levels of misbehavior. This is perceived as tolerance. For its general meaning Oxford Dictionary provides a number of definitions:

1. The willingness or capability to tolerate the presence of opinions or behaviour that one disagrees with or dislikes.
2. Enduring ceaseless subjection to certain issues like environmental conditions or drug showing no opposing reaction.
3. co-existing with variations of a particular amount of people (Tolerance 2018)

The aforementioned points lead us into the following conclusions: The presence of tolerance in its general sense carries a number of significations including the existence of diversity and difference, the promineny of beliefs clash and dissatisfaction, and finally not to oppress others while being in power and domination. With regard to the meaning of tolerance, endurance holds two significations: Tolerance belief which is located at the doctrinal sphere, and tolerance in behaviour which is positioned at the scene of practice (Nafisi, 2018). Islamic and Christian traditions meet at various points in terms of viewing tolerance. The prominent sharing point lies in enduring others' differences as well as co-existing with others' diversities.

### **Religious Discourse**

Fairclough (1992) regards discourse as a constitutive entity which not only reflects /represents things but also constructs them. To him there are three issues which can be

constituted in discourse. They are social identities or ‘subject positions’, social relationships, and finally systems of knowledge and belief (ibid: 3). Religious speeches aiming at social effectiveness are regarded to be valuable resources in for religious societies and communities. Religious discourse is a strategic tool for establishing, representing and altering a religious community. Religious speech is adopted by religious societies to transmit their knowledge, to exchange their norms and values and to associate with other religious as well as non-religious communities.

Principally, the rhetorical situation holds a social situation where every public speech is targeted to a particular community. This community does not simply build the framework of the speech; rather, a group of listeners is generated, legitimized and altered into a community as a result of that speech. This situation applies to religious speech as well, to preaching in particular. Every actual verbal sermon occurs before, in and for an audience or religious community. This is not dependent on the structure of this audience or community (Conard and Roland, 2020: 165-195).

It is worth adding that religious texts have the capacity to juxtapose contrasting elements in order to construct a particular argument and consequently to reflect a particular ideology. This is regarded as a marker, as named by Chruszczewski (2003: 17-19) along with many other textual markers. Chruszczewski proposed a number of markers of religious texts which the current work finds helpful to consult in the analysis of selected data to extract the hidden ideology i.e. tolerance. The markers include emotions which expose emotional aspects of text; marker of recency i.e. recent or remote history; a marker of intersexuality which relies upon quotes from sources; and other markers. This work utilizes juxtaposition in religious texts selected for its facilitating nature which help in extracting tolerance in text since it parallels two contradictory states or pictures in order to create a worldview in the receptor’s mind in which vice and virtue, tolerance and intolerance are clearly distinguished. More details can be traced in (Szudrowicz-Garstka, 2012).

### **Critical Stylistics**

As a framework of analysis, Critical Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics appeared at Huddersfield University. It is proposed by the researcher Lesley Jeffries to present the missing link (i.e. ideology) between Stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. Critical Stylistics aims at showing the general functions of texts in demonstrating realities through presenting a set of tools. Stylistics present tools of analysis for comprehending the way texts operate in terms of linguistic choices in texts; critical discourse analysis presents theories which elucidate the influence of texts in terms of social, as well as political contexts where texts are constructed. Critical Stylistics can be regarded as a progress of both approaches. Therefore CS attempts to bond the gap between Critical Discourse Analysis and Stylistics through bringing a systematic as well as comprehensive analytic toolset as an approach to text analysis advanced from Critical Linguistics. The toolset of analysis help the researcher to extract the hidden ideologies underneath the formal aspects of language. In other words, the text producer makes linguistic choices to construct a worldview for the reader (Jeffries, 2010: Ch1; see also Al-Timimy, 2018).

### Implying and Assuming: the Analytical Toolset of Analysis

The function of this textual-conceptual tool of analysis, implying and assuming, is associated with Gricean implicature proposed by Grice (1975) within the frame of pragmatics as well as Levinson's presupposition set forth by Levinson (1983) within the frame of semantics respectively. One major power of language lies in text producer's ability to employ implicature and assumption for the purpose of creating ideologies in texts since ideologies are not explicitly projected. This is to influence other's world view (Jeffries, 2010: 93)

There are two major classifications for presupposition:

1. Existential presupposition: there is no persuasion or manipulation and it draws on the shared general knowledge between the participants, structurally acts as a definite noun phrase (the NP)
2. Logical presupposition: shows up with a number of triggers:
  - Change of state verbs
  - Factive verbs
  - Cleft sentences
  - Iterative words
  - Comparative

Presupposition unlike implicature is uncancelable under negation. The crucial issue here is to identify the presuppositions (assumptions) as well as the implications made by the text.

Ideological impacts of presupposition vary from that of implication in different contexts and text contents. The common ground shared by the two is the influence they have on the perceiver since the hidden meaning leaves the information given unquestionable and unarguable (Al-Timimy, 2018: 78).

This work shifts its focus upon the first type which is existential presupposition since the data showed no triggers for the second type i.e. logical presupposition.

### Methodology and Data Selection

This work employs Leslie Jeffries's (2010) model of Critical Stylistics which provides ten textual-conceptual tools of analysis: Naming and Describing; Representing Actions/Events/States; Exemplifying and Enumerating; Prioritizing; Negating; Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of Others; Equating and Contrasting; Implying and Assuming; Hypothesizing; Representing Time, Space and Society (ibid: 15). One tool of analysis '*Implying and Assuming*' is employed to analyze the data selected. The English data selected for analysis comprises of selected speeches of Jesus while being crucified as well as some selected speeches from the holy Bible. Arabic data contains Imam Ali's last will before his martyrdom as well as a letter of advice to his son Imam Hassan.

Extract 1

***Feed him (ibn Muljim; Imam Ali's killer) from what you eat, quench him from what you drink, treat him with tolerance. ... keep this prisoner (Ibn Muljim Al-Murady) in captive, feed him, water him, and treat him well, if I survive I'm prior to deal with what he did to me, I would either punish or forgive, and If I die of this stroke of his, kill him with one similar stroke. Do not mutilate him! I have heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, say: 'Mutilate not even a rabid dog.'***" (Ahlulbayt Blog, 2015)

أطعموه مما تأكلون, واسقوه مما تشربون, الله الله في أسيركم. وعن الإمام الباقر(ع): إن علي بن أبي طالب (ع)

قال للحسن و الحسين(ع):إحبسوا هذا الأسير- يعني ابن ملجم المرادي- و أطعموه و اسقوه،و أحسنوا أساره،فإن عشت فأنا أولى بما صنع فيّ،إن شئت استقدت و إن شئت صالحت،و إن مت فذلك إليكم،فإن بدا لكم أن تقتلوه فلا تمثلوا به، فأني سمعت رسول الله ينهى عن المثلة ولو بالكلب العقور.

### Data analysis

Implying is traced through the floating of relevance maxim while mentioning the prophet's saying *Mutilate not even a rabid dog*. The quote, at first, seems to be irrelevant to the whole speech whereas it is related to the core of the proposition as a whole. In Islamic religious contexts human rights are stressed upon. This speech lists a number of human rights which should be followed when dealing with a prisoner (a convict). The implied relevance between the prophet's saying and the rest of the speech is that certain violent treatments are forbidden to be done to any creature not even to a rabid dog; let alone towards human beings. Another implication reflects Imam Ali's virtuous temper not only with ordinary people but with the very individual who assassinated him. Imam Ali refused to deal with his assassinator (Ibn Muljim) the same way and this is called tolerance.

The whole speech brings about an assumption that there is such an inhumane way of dealing with a prisoner at that time which Imam Ali refused to employ since this is against the laws of Islam. It is logically presupposed that an assassinator can be mutilated when arrested and can receive inhumane treatment. Thus, Imam Ali advises his son not to violate the human rights for the criminal individual who violated Imam Ali's human rights and gave him a stroke of poisonous sword while praying.

Drawing upon the historical background of the incident which is not mentioned in the data selected, the text proposes a juxtaposition i.e. Ibn Muljim killed Imam Ali while praying at the Mihrab and this is a clear human right violation; while Imam Ali chose to keep the rights of his killer regardless of his inhumane deeds. Imam Ali is totally capable of punishing his killer yet he chooses to tolerate. This juxtaposition leads the reader to assume a world view with two opposite poles of intolerance and tolerance.

Extract 2

***Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.***

The historical context of the crucifixion incident holds that Jesus prayed for the Roman soldiers who crucified him and this praying is known as "The Word of Forgiveness". This quote, holding a similar proposition to that of the previous one, brings about in minds the assumption that the sins committed by the Roman soldiers summon up God's punishment and Jesus's prayer for forgiveness is an attempt to prevent that punishment. Again, the juxtaposition measures two states of tolerance of Jesus versus intolerance of his killers.

The implicature arises from the floating of the maxim of quantity; the text producer (Jesus) relies upon the receptor's background knowledge and hasn't mentioned the whole scenario and this leaves the receptor judging the situation themselves. Neither adequate information is provided for the performers of crucifixion, nor even the act of crucifixion mentioned. Like the only thing matters is that there is a sin committed (presupposed depending on the context) which is to be forgiven. The existential presupposition guides the reader to assume the aforementioned content.

## Extract 3

***Romans 12: 20: if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink,***

***Roman 12:14: Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not***

***Luke 6: 44: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you***

***Luke 6: 27-28: Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. (Hartman, 2010: 31)***

The above mentioned quotes share almost the same proposition with extract 1. Again a juxtaposition provided summons up two pictures of evil and good i.e. intolerance and tolerance. The listed quotes hold implicature due to the floating of quantity maxim. There is no adequate information provided to clarify all the aspects of issue and therefore the reader is left with their background knowledge to infer the unmentioned intended proposition. The identity of enemy and their deeds are not fully identified. This can be attributed to the tendency to stress upon the idea of facing vice with virtue no matter how vicious the deeds are. Such way of implicature guides the receptor to focus upon tolerance regardless of the vicious opposite deeds. The indirect way of implying ideas leads into ideological implantation unconsciously and thereby ideas are accepted with little or no room for argumentation.

The quotes assume that the existence of tolerance presuppose the presence of evil deeds to be tolerated. Thus, the receptor is left with the two opposite states of rejected viciousness against virtuous tolerance. Each act of hatred should be faced with love and tolerance and thereby gain God's blessings.

## Extract 4

***John 8:7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."***

One of the senses of tolerance discussed is to accept others regardless of their differences. The extract shows violation in relevance implicature where at the first glance it seems that the speech is irrelevant to the action intended to be done i.e. stoning an apparently sinned woman. The answer given by Jesus seems to be irrelevant to the question raised. The relevance is left to the receptor to infer that all of those who tend to stone the sinned woman deserve to be stoned because they are all sinners. This is a promotion for tolerance and not judging others because we are all sinners and no one is purified.

The assumption logically presupposes that all of those who were ready to stone the sinned woman were themselves sinners and the only purified individual i.e. Jesus refused to throw a stone. This raises the assumption that no human being has the right to judge or punish another and tolerance is favored whenever possible.

## Extract 5

***O my child, make yourself the measure (for dealings) between you and others. Thus, you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself. Do not oppress as you do not like to be oppressed. Do good to others as you would like good to be done to you. Regard bad for yourself whatever you regard bad for others. Accept that (treatment) from others which you would like others to accept from you. Do not talk about what you do not know even though what***



*you know be very little. Do not say to others what you do not like to be said to you.*

(India News Association, 2018)

يَا بُنَيَّ اجْعَلْ نَفْسَكَ مِيزَانًا فِيمَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ غَيْرِكَ، فَأَحْبِبْ لِعَيْرِكَ مَا تُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِكَ، وَاكْرَهُ لَهُ مَا تَكْرَهُ لَهَا، وَلَا تَظْلِمْ كَمَا لَا تُحِبُّ أَنْ تُظْلَمَ، وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا تُحِبُّ أَنْ يُحْسَنَ إِلَيْكَ، وَاسْتَفْبِحْ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ مَا تَسْتَفْبِحُهُ مِنْ غَيْرِكَ، وَارْضَ مِنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا تَرْضَاهُ لَهُمْ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ، وَلَا تَقُلْ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ إِنْ قَلَّ مَا تَعْلَمُ، وَلَا تَقُلْ مَا لَا تُحِبُّ أَنْ يُقَالَ لَكَ

This piece of text lists a number of advices given by Imam Ali to his son Imam Hassan after returning from the battle of Siffein. What is noteworthy is the content of the letter which suits all the ages all through the ancient times. Tolerance can be reviewed as respecting others' legitimate rights even if we don't agree with them. The assumption is that there are certain undesirable behaviors from others which need to be endured and tolerated; this is stated implicitly. The presupposition holds that unstated negative behaviors are rejected by means of explicitly cherishing and praising positive manners. Furthermore, the existential presupposition illustrates that those who do not follow the listed pieces of advice will not be regarded as tolerant. Thus the sentences, *you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself*, for instance, regard such selflessness in human being to be positive with yet otherwise negative implications.

#### Extract 6

*Matthew 7:12 So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

The content of the extract is not different from that of the one discussed in extract 5 as they both carry almost the same proposition. Tolerance is viewed as a positive feature which is implicitly assumed by the receptor to infer the intended meaning. It is assumed that there are certain desirable behaviors whose performances are features of prophets. The assumption is that following the virtuous manners would resemble one to prophets and this is an honorable issue good people long to achieve. In terms of presupposition, it is assumed that there are certain vicious behaviors which are detested mirrored by certain virtuous desired manners to be followed. Ideologically, this extract reflects manners of a whole religion i.e. Christianity, which instructs its followers to do good to others and be virtuous same as they wish others to treat them. This is not explicitly stated nevertheless can be inferred through the context. This ideology is shared by extract 5 with more explicitness enfolding more details about Islam and tolerance in Islam.

#### Concluding remarks

Tolerance as an ideology in English and Arabic religious text can be brought into surface through textual-conceptual tool of analysis *implying and assuming*. This tool of analysis proposed by Jeffries (2010) within the frame of critical stylistics extracts the hidden ideologies in texts. The analysis of selected data exposes that English and Arabic religious texts imply almost the same implications. English Arabic religious texts imply the ideology of tolerance through juxtaposing vice and virtue implicitly to draw in receptors' mind a world view in which vicious behaviors are rejected through praising virtuous behaviors. The implicit manner of presenting ideas is an influential way of implanting ideas in receptors' minds in an unconscious way. This implicitness leads into naturalizing the text producer's ideas.

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