

A Cognitive Stylistic Study of AL Imam Muhammad Al-Jawad's Debate

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Abstract

The study analyzes the debate of AL Imam Al-Jawad with Yahya ibn Aktham from a cognitive stylistic perspective. It is limited to text world theory. It aims to find out what constitutes discourse(context) ,text, and sub world of the debate .This debate is divided into eight extracts according to the narrations that are posited.

Keywords: Cognitive-Stylistic, debate, text world theory, discourse, text, sub world.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language includes cognition, perception, memory, anticipation, meaning and emotions (Stockwell,2016:220) .It is seen as a superficial manifestation of hidden, highly abstract, cognitive constructions. Essential to such constructions is the operation of structure projection between domains. Therefore, essential to the understanding of cognitive construction is the characterization of the domains over which projection takes place (Fauconnier, 1997: 34).

For the researcher's best that text world theory has received little attention in analyzing, namely, religious debates. The study attempts to analyze a debate from cognitive-stylistic perspective. Precisely, it is an attempt to acknowledge what constitutes discourse text, and sub world of AL Imam Muhammad Al-Jawad's debate to reveal the mental representation of AL Imam toward certain issues.

2. Cognitive Stylistics

Cognitive stylistic is regarded as a part of the natural development of modern stylistics constantly to enrich and update its methods of analysis (Simpson,2004:38). It is the way in which linguistic analysis is systematically based on theories that relate linguistic choices to

cognitive structures and processes. This provides more systematic and explicit accounts of the relationship between texts on one hand and responses as well as interpretation on the other (Semino and Culpeper,2003:1x).

Gavins (2007:8) states that text world theory is a discourse framework and a model of human language that is based on the mental performance found in cognitive psychology. Text world theory focuses on how the text is constructed and how the context influences its production and reception so the key to a comprehensive examination of discourse is to recognize its complexity and start to formulate an appropriate analytical structure to the particular text.

Text world theory takes some of its basic architecture from possible worlds theories especially, the concept of a 'world' as a representation of a particular state of affairs, it departs from these theories considerably in its own treatment of meaning. Linguistic meaning of the usage-based approach is derived in part from extra-linguistic local and cognitive contexts, Text world theory assumes a rich but (highly) indeterminate structure for the worlds resulting from any particular use of language. Possible worlds, on the contrary, are rigidly specified, minimalistic worlds, which contain only as much information as is needed to solve the particular logical problem for which the worlds have been constructed (Burk 2014:286).

Burk (ibid:287) mentions that the basic premise of text world theory is that whenever one participates in a discourse (defined as a combination of a text and its relevant context) he builds up a networked configuration of conceptual spaces or 'worlds' which correspond to distinct ontological layers of the discourse. Werth (1999) and Gaven (2007) state that all discourses by construction of a set of richly defined conceptualized spaces known as 'worlds'. They state that there are three levels:

1. Discourse is the context in which the discourse consists of two discourse participants which are the writer or speaker and reader or listener and naturally occurring language event such as discourse. It is the immediate, higher – order conceptual space that is inhabited by an author and a reader. The reader's understanding of this world can be found on 'real' external circumstances. This understanding requires direct perception backed up by knowledge of the elements perceived (Werth, 1999 : 17).

2. Text world are the linguistic cues activate relevant general or specific knowledge upon which further inferences about the parameters of the text world space may be drawn. The world building propositions in the text provide deictic and referential information which partially establish the text world's situational variables such as time, location, entities and interrelationship, while function advancing propositions are those which provide information about action, mental spaces, states and attributes of entities in the text world. A text world is a total construct that requires for its understanding memory and imagination, rather than direct perception. Text world as conceptual spaces are defined deictically and referentially, and anchored by references to the world depicted by the discourse (ibid:52).

3. Sub- world can be defined as a deictic shifts or modal shifts away from the matrix world from which they arise (Simpson, 2004: 91). Werth (1999:216) classifies sub-worlds into different broad kinds as :

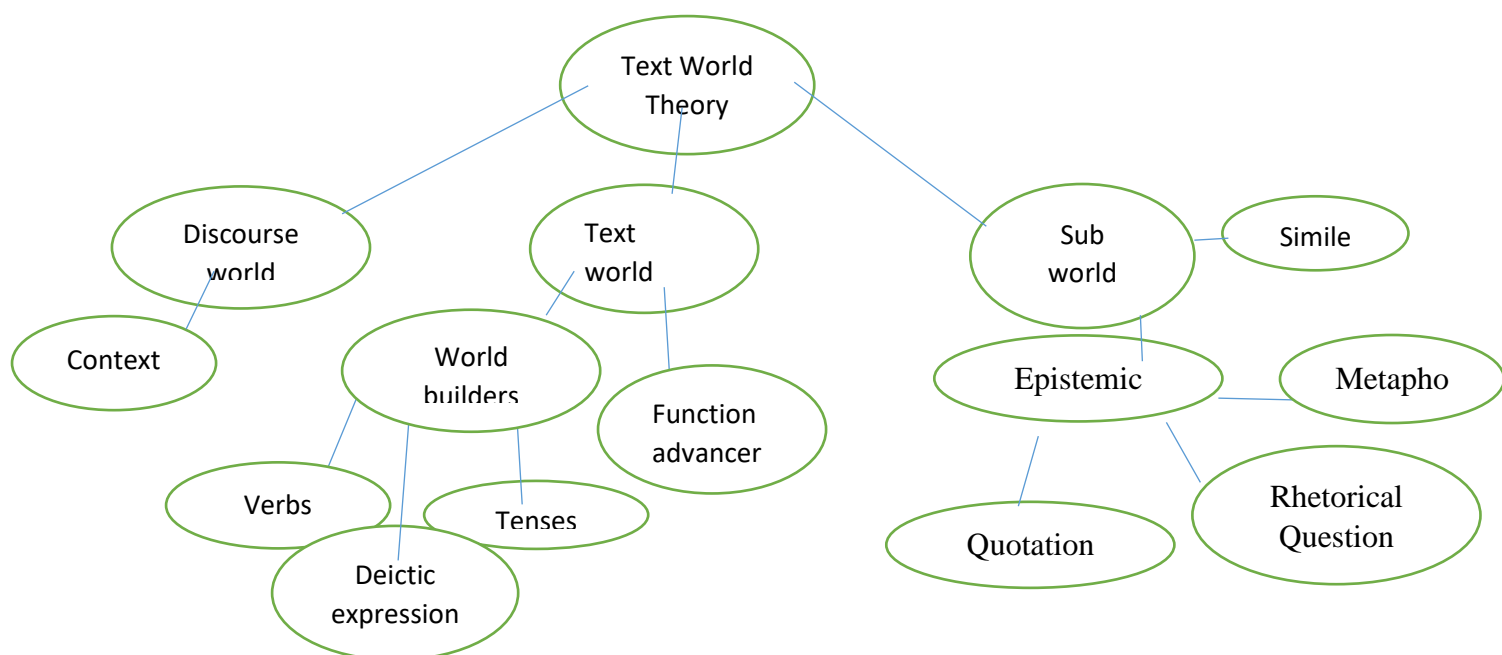
a. Deictic: departures from the basic deictic "signature" of the conceptual world, e.g. "flashbacks", "direct speech", "windows" on to other scenes

b. Epistemic: modalised propositions expressed either by participants or by characters.

Sub – world is established when an addresser projects thoughts and reflections, perhaps through a flashback or prolepsis just to create another conceptual space inside the text world. This projection forms a distinct situation of its own, because it sets up reality outside the parameters of the existing text World. (Simpson, 2004: 91). Werth(1999:216) states the world-building elements are in text world theory. Each text provides information which establishes its world in the minds of participants via two devices: world - builders or world-building propositions (that constitute the text background, participants, time, and place) and function-advancers (which cause the action and events to progress) (ibid).

3. The Model

The present study comprises eight extracts from the debate of AL Imam Muhammad Al-Jawad with Yahya ibn Aktham. The adopted model is Werth's (1999) Text world theory. This model consists of discourse, text, and sub world. Figure (1) sums up all those items.

Figure (1). *The Model of Analysis*

4. Data Analysis

Extract 1

Yahya: It has been reported through sources that the archangel Jibrail once said to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) – ‘O Prophet of God, the Lord sends His greetings to you and says – I am pleased with Abu Bakr, ask him if he is also pleased with me?’ What are your views regarding this tradition?

Imam Jawad (a.s.): I do not deny the merits of Abu Bakr but the narrator of this tradition must definitely have been aware of another tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he (s.a.w.a.) narrated on the eve of his farewell pilgrimage – The number of people who attribute false traditions to me has increased and there will be more such people after my departure. Whosoever narrates false traditions in my name will deserve severe punishment in Hell. Therefore, any tradition recorded in my name must be verified in accordance to the Book of Allah and my Sunnah; if it is in accordance to them accept it, else reject it. The tradition (about Allah inquiring about whether Abu Bakr is pleased with Him) lacks conformity with the Quran because Allah Himself says: And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him, and We are nearer to him than his life-vein (Surah Qaaf (50):

16). (According to the verse Allah is closer to man than his own life vein, so how is it possible that He is not aware of Abu Bakr’s feeling and had to send Jibrail to ascertain if Abu Bakr was pleased with Allah! (Seratonline 2013 and see Al-Shakri ,1998:261).

The Interpretation

The discourse world is seen in the context of this extract. AL Imam Al-Jawad persuades the addressee (Yahya ibn Aktham) that his narration prophetic tradition is false. Thus, he uses world builders which play a crucial role in conceptualizing the text-world of this extract. They are :Verbs as in sends , ask , pleased , have been aware ,increased, accept , must definitely and tense which is fluctuated between past and present. Function advancers are seen in AL Imam’s argument. He does not want people to believe each narration since it is ascribed to Prophet Muhammad.

AL Imam’s beliefs can be seen by sub-world techniques of persuasive. He proves his speech by using quotation. He cites some verses of Quran as in “ And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him, and We are nearer to him than his life-vein .AL Imam also cites the hadith of Prophet Muhammad “Whosoever narrates false

traditions in my name will deserve severe punishment in Hell.”

AL Imam utilizes rhetorical question to say that ibn Aktham’s narration is incorrect. He asks “is it possible that He is not aware of Abu Bakr’s feeling and had to send Jibrail to ascertain if Abu Bakr was pleased with Allah!”

Extract 2

Yahya: It has been narrated that the positions of Abu Bakr and Umar on earth are just like Jibrail’s position in the skies.

Imam Jawad (a.s.): This tradition is also questionable because both Jibrail and Mikaa'il are Allah’s most honourable angels who never ever committed any sin nor were they unmindful of their obedience to the Lord for a moment. But Abu Bakr and Umar were pagans who had spent the majority of their lives in idol worshipping and polytheism. So obviously it does not befit the Lord to compare them with the likes of Jibrail and Mikaa'il. (Seratonline 2013 and see Al-Shakri ,1998:261-2)

The Interpretation

Imam Al-Jawad states that his opponent’s (Yahya ibn Aktham) speech is unbelievable because Abu Bakr and Umar commit sin. They worship god other than Allah thus, they cannot be better than Jibrail and Mikaa'il.

Text world is conceptualized by verbs as in, committed sin , unmindful of their obedience , questionable and tenses are past and present as well as adverbs as in indicated by spatial deictic expressions as in the skies and most honorable

The sub world is seen in the negation of the comparison (simile).AL Imam claims that Abu Bakr and Umar cannot be compared with Jibrail and Mikaa'il.

Extract 3

Yahya: It has been reported that Abu Bakr and Umar are leaders of old men in Paradise. What is your view on this tradition?

Imam (a.s.): This tradition is also not reliable because the dwellers of heaven will be young and not old. This tradition was fabricated by the Umayyids in contrast to the authentic tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) wherein he (s.a.w.a.) has declared Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.) as leaders of the youths of

Paradise."Hasan and Husain are the chiefs of youths of Paradise"(Seratonline 2013 and see Al-Shakri ,1998:262).

The Interpretation

The discourse world of this extract is observed in the Imam’s rejection of Yahya’s saying that “Abu Bakr and Umar are leaders of old men in paradise”.

Spatial, social and temporal deictic expressions are important tool to build text world in this extract as in will be , old, youths , holy prophet since they explicate persons’ position.

Sub- world can be observed in the quotation which is used by the Imam to make his speech effective and reasonable. He says that Yahya’s saying cannot be proved and it is used as a tool of misleading. It is fabricated by the Umayyids.

Extracted 4

Yahya: It has been reported that Umar b. Khattaab is the lamp of Paradise (Seratonline 2013 and see Al-Shakri ,1998:261).

Imam Jawad (a.s.): This report is also doubtful as there are the angels who are near to Allah,Adam, Muhammad and all prophets as well as messengers how is it possible to be not enlighten by all of those and be enlighten by Umer?(translated by the researcher and see Al-Shakri ,1998:262).

The Interpretation

The Imam Jawad rejects Yahya’s metaphorical speech that Umar will be seen as “lamp of Paradise”. AL Imam’s rejection can be seen as discourse world of this extract. According to the sub world of the extract, AL Imam uses quotation technique, an act of question, and metaphor. Rhetorical question is used to state that Umar cannot reach the great position of angles, Adam, Muhammad and all other prophets.

Extract 5

Yahya: It has been reported that tranquility is pronounced on the tongue of Umar (translated by the researcher and see Al-Shakri ,1998:262,).

Imam Jawad (a.s.): I do not deny the merits of Umar but Abu Bakr, who is superior to the former, himself announced from the pulpit – I have a Satan over me who distracts me all the

time, so if you see me deviated from the right path, then correct me (Seratonline 2013 and see Al-Shakri ,1998:262).

The Interpretation

The discourse of the extract that AL Imam rejects Yahya's saying. AL Imam utilizes quotation technique to constitute sub world of the extract. He cites the words of Abu Bakr when he asks other to correct him if he commits error.

Extract 6

Yahya: It has been narrated that the Prophet of God had once said – Had I not been a prophet, Umar would have certainly have been a prophet.

Imam Jawad (a.s.): The Quran is more accurate and reliable compared to this tradition on the matter of prophethood: And when We made a covenant with the prophets and with you, and with Nuh and Ibrahim and Musa and Isa, son of Marium, and We made with them a strong covenant (Surah Ahzaab (33): 7). The verse clearly proves that Allah had made a covenant and took allegiance from all prophets, therefore in this case how is it possible that the Lord changes the allegiance that He Himself has taken? None of the messengers were ever guilty of apostasy (based on the divine covenant), so how is it possible that Allah grants prophethood to someone who spent a major part of his life worshipping idols? Moreover, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) informed – I was a prophet even at the time Adam's creation was suspended between water and clay (Seratonline 2013 and see Al-Shakri ,1998:262).

The Interpretation

AL Imam rejects what he has heard from Yahya that Umar is about to be prophet. And he uses verbs as more accurate and reliable, changes, had made to say that this prophetic tradition is fabricated. He says all messengers and prophet pray Allah only. AL Imam uses sub world cues as quotations as in “ I was a prophet even at the time Adam's creation was suspended between water and clay and question as in “how is it possible that Allah grants prophethood to someone who spent a major part of his life worshipping idols? to support his speech.

Extract 7

Yahya: The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) informed – The chain of prophethood did not terminate in me as I suspected that it continued in Khattaab's progeny (i.e. Umar).

Imam Jawad (a.s.): This report is also doubtful as the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) cannot doubt his own prophethood and its finality because Allah says: Allah chooses messengers from among the angels and from among the men... (Surah Hajj (22): 75) Since prophethood is a divinely bestowed position, there is no question of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) being uncertain or suspicious about it in any manner (Seratonline 2013 and see Al-Shakri ,1998:263).

The Interpretation

AL Imam's discourse world of his speech can be seen in his rejection. He rejects the overstatement of Yahya's to Khattaab's progeny to the greatest degree. Yahya narrates a fabricated tradition in which the last prophet suspects in his prophethood.

Deictic expressions and tenses as in doubt , bestowed, the Prophet can shed light on the text process in this extract.

Sub- world of the text can be seen in quotation as in “Allah chooses messengers from among the angels and from among the men”. It is also seen in Imam's rhetorical question. He asks how it is possible to be prophet and he previously worship woods and stones rather than Allah.

Extract 8

Yahya: Narrations suggest that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had said – If Allah's wrath descended on us, none except Umar would be spared.

Imam Jawad (a.s.): This narration is also inaccurate because the Lord has promised His Prophet: But Allah was not going to chastise them while you were among them, nor is Allah going to chastise them while yet they ask for forgiveness (Surah Anfaal (8): 33). So Allah's Wrath will never descend on the people till the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is with them or so long as they continue to seek forgiveness from Him (Seratonline 2013 and see Al-Shakri ,1998:263).

The Interpretation

AL Imam's rejection to Yahya's narration constitutes the discourse world of the extract.

The referential, tenses ,and deictic expressions as in the Prophet ,chastise, seek forgiveness are crucial to make text world in addition they make rejection more powerful.

Sub world text is seen in AL Imam's quotation of Qur'anic verse But Allah was not going to chastise them while you were among them, nor is "Allah going to chastise them while yet they ask for forgiveness". He wants to say that Allah does not punish people for two reasons: the Prophet and forgiveness.

5. Conclusions

Text world theory reveals the mental representation of the addresser and it is how the context influences its production and is how the text is constructed. All the extracts reveal the deep knowledge of AL Imam. AL Imam rejects the narrations chosen that are posited by Yahya ibn Aktham. He persuades him that his narrations are incorrect. He posits questions which let the addressee himself doubts in his saying. AL Imam's other persuasive way is seen in the number of quotations of Quranic verses and prophetic traditions. Both questions and quotations constitute AL Imam's belief and attitude to what he has heard, then, they constitute the sub world of the extract.

Referential, deictic expressions, verbs, and tenses are linguistic cues to make text world of the extracts. These linguistic cues are used to enlighten the mental states of people who can hear AL Imam's speech. AL Imam's verbs as in ask, doubt let the addressee think once again to acknowledge whether the prophetic tradition is fabricated or not. Therefore, the mental spaces are filled. AL Imam also utilizes tenses to fill his mental spaces. He frequently fluctuates between past and present tenses to make the addressee link what he hears and what is previously stated in Quran and correct prophetic tradition. In the case of deictic expressions, AL Imam is found to guide people to good ways .These ways can remove the ambiguities which cause the mental spaces. He uses spatial, social, and temporal deixes to shed light on the position of stated persons and the reasons of his rejection to the narrations that are posited.

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