
Linguistic influences of the Holy Quran

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ABSTRACT

The Holy Quran was revealed in the spoken language of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the dialect of the Quraysh known as “Classical Arabic” and it has been used in the poetry since earlier than Muhammad (PBUH)’s day. It is interesting to note that poetry of the Pre-Islamic was the Register of the Arabs. It has been suggested by Abdullah bin Abbas (R.A.), a prominent companion of the Prophet (PBUH) that when any word or sense of the Holy Quran does not come to understanding then one should search for it in the ancient Arabic poetry¹. I have divided my topic in two sub-chapters. First chapter deals with the language of the Holy Quran and the 2nd sub-chapter will focus on the linguistic influence and outcomes of the Holy Quran which is sub- divided in five more parts like; morphology, syntax, Quranic Phonetics and Rhetoric and bibliography.

Keywords: Holy Quran, classical Arabic, Morphology, Syntax, Phonetics.

1-Language of the Holy Quran

In the context of the language of al-Quran, it is very well known that the text of the Holy Quran has contained the highest form of rhetorical achievements as it has been observed from the verses of the Holy Quran that the revelation of the Quran was in “Clear Arabic Speech”² (لسان عربي مبين). The Holy Quran says:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ³

“We have revealed this Quran in the Arabic language so you may have understand its meanings”⁴

And

بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ⁵

“In a plain Arabic language”⁶.

Encyclopedia of Islam suggests that Arabic in the expression “Clear Arabic speech” refers to the “arabiyya”, the literary language of the Bedouins⁷. So, we can say that the language of the Holy Quran is, undoubtedly pure classical Arabic. It is generally agreed that during the Prophet (PBUH)’s life time; the language of poetry was not the spoken language of the poets or the dialect of any tribe, but a literary language that was understood by all the tribes.

Foreign vocabularies came into Arabic through the ancient Arab contacts with other languages in foreign travel and commercial affairs, but they had been thoroughly Arabicized by the time of the Prophet (PBUH). While Arabism was continuing, about one thousand foreign vocabularies were added to Arabic language and in this context; the Pagan Arab had a

great deal contribution to Arabicize foreign words from other languages like Persian, Sanskrit, Ethiopian, Roman, Greek, Hindi etc.

It has been further informed that about 275 words, other than proper names that have been included in Arabic from foreign languages, but Prof. Ahmed Hassan Zayyat referred to this context that more than one hundred non-Arabic words came in the Quran from Persian, Roman, Nabataea, Abyssinian, Hebrew, Syrian, and Coptic languages. It is worth mentioning that the Arabs adopted innumerable foreign words and formed them with the measure and mode of Arabic expressions, which resulted in the appearance of foreign loan words in the Arabic vocabularies.⁸

2-Linguistic Influence and Outcomes of the Quran

The holy Quran, as a book of law and the main source of Islam was necessary to learn by the new converts belonged to foreign extraction or non-Arabs. Prof. Huart says: “The interpretation of the Quran and the necessity for explaining the difficulties of its text, gave rise to inquiries ultimately continued for the sake of their intrinsic interest, and which resulted in the final organization of the lexicography of the language, and the restoration of its ancient literary monuments.”⁹

It is known that the Arabs boasted and delighted of their noble language and they gave equally importance to their religious beliefs to take final measure for having the correct pronunciation and interpretation of the Arabic Quran which led them to formulate the rules of Arabic Grammar. We learn from ‘The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam’ that: “It was Ali(R.A) who firstly laid down the rules of formal Arabic grammar, notably describing language as made up nouns verbs, and particles.”¹⁰ While the ecological atmosphere of Arabic language made him bound to have the foundation of Arabic grammar, ‘Ali (R.A) directed his pupil Abu al Aswad

al-Duali to prepare a grammar book. In addition to this, once he heard a man to recite the following passage out of the Quran:

"أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ لَا وَرَسُولُهُ"¹¹

“...that Allah and His Rasool do hereby dissolve treaty obligations with the mushrikin”¹²

But the reader pronounced the last word as rasulih. Then he returned it' Ziyad and informed him to carry out his earlier order for preparing a manual of Arabic Grammar.¹³

Under such circumstances, Abu'l-Aswad did it successfully which was the first work of some pages on Syntax (nahw) but it did not survive. Thereafter two other grammatical books namely Al-Jami and AL- Ikmal were compiled by 'Isa bin Umar Al-Thaqafi' of Arab who had learnt grammar from a number of Al-Duali's pupils' pupils. It is known that these two books were lost, but later on, merged in other grammatical works undertaken by the pupils of 'Isa bin Umar', one of whom was the celebrated scholar of Basra Al-Khalil bin Ahmad who was the first to compile an Arabic dictionary entitled, "Kitab ul Ain" (كتاب العين). It is well known that the first systematic text book on Arabic grammar was compiled by his Persian pupil, Sibawayh (سيبويه) under the title of Al-kitab (The Book). Then Al-Mubarrad compiled a book named Al-kamil (الكامل) which was a complete study on Arabic grammar.

It has been observed that Al-Khalil was the first man who systematized the lexicography of the Arabic language and literature. The name of Ibn Durayd also appears as a distinguished Philologist who

flourished under the Caliph, Muqtadir. He compiled a voluminous lexicography entitled : “Jamhara fil lugha”(جمهرة في اللغة)¹⁴

Abu Amar al-Shaybani was born at Kufa, but brought up and educated at Baghdad, who had a great reputation in poetry, literature and philology. He compiled a work on philology entitled: “ Diwan ul sher wal lugha” (ديوان الشعرواللغة)and his later compilation named: “Kitab ul Jeem”(كتاب الجيم) was warmly accepted with a great name and fame by all.

Apart from these scholars, Abu Mansur Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Azhar; a great scholar of religious science and philology compiled a book on philology, entitled “kitab ut tahzib”(كتاب التهذيب) following the model of Khalil bin Ahmad. Then Abu Nasr Ismail bin Hammad Al-Jawhari developed the domain of philology with a compilation entitled “kitab ul siyah”(كتاب الصحاح). From Spaniard scholars, Ibn e Sayda wrote a book named “kitab ul Muhakkam”(كتاب المحكم)and Ibn Faris compiled a book on lexicography entitled “kitab ul Jamal”(كتاب الجمال).These are the important works which have laid down the basis of lexicography.

It is evident from the above discussion that the study of the Holy Quran and the necessity of expounding it gave rise to the major disciplines of Islamic learning and led to the proliferation of literature in each branch. Further it is seen that the science of the Arabic language, from lexicography to grammar and grammar to rhetoric, have been developed with a view to arriving at a precise and accurate understanding of the Quranic text. Especially in matters of Arabic language, the outcomes of the

Quran have been designated here to individually discuss each of the branches of linguistic sciences as follows:

1-Ilm-us-Sarf (Morphology):

Ilm-us-Sarf (Morphology) concerns with such a portion of Arabic grammar, which leads to the study of the forms of Arabic words and their all types of structure. Literally the term means “averting”, “divergence” and technically it has been familiar to understand the science of “morphology” as a synonym with “Tasreef”. It is known that in the early stages of the Arabic grammar, the term was used completely in two different senses. The grammarian Sibawayhi made a remark on the term, sarf in his book entitled “kitab” that it is almost connected with the verb insarafa (انصرف) in the sense of “to be fully declined” or “to turn away”.

The discussions made in the book, named “kitab” are typically morphological problems, in which the test of the proper names is used as a device to find out what the status of a word is and to which category it belongs. These problems have nothing to do with the relations of Syntax within the sentence, since dipodic words, even though they have only two endings, are syntactically used in all three cases. This may explain why in later grammar sarf was used as a synonym for tasreef and became one of the normal terms for “Morphology”. It is worth mentioning that “Morphology” exists just because of the sacred book “AL-Quran”.

2-Ilm un Nahw (Syntax):

The literal meaning of Nahw (نحو) is” path, way” while in the figurative sense it is known as” fashion, manner”. It acquaints with the state of the

final letter of words in accordance with the arrangement of sentences and also comprehends the matter of declension or in declension of words.

After the spread of Islam, when different nationals came in contact with the Arabs, there arose grammatical mistakes in their speaking of Arabic language. In such a condition, ‘Ali Ibn Ahi Talib (R.A.), the fourth Caliph of Islam invited Abu ’l-Aswad al-Du’ali to form late grammatical rules for the Arabic language. Moreover, the Caliph submitted a collection of grammatical rules to him and said: (انحو هذا النحو) “follow this path”. As a result of which, the subject has been entitled as (علم النحو) ‘Ilm al-Nahw in the realm of Arabic language.¹⁵ Abu ’l-Aswad Du’ali wrote a book named “Al- kitab”. Afterwards, he encouraged his pupils to develop this subject ‘Ilm ul-nahw’. It is interesting to note that among all of his disciples; Sibwaihi surpassed all of his predecessors, because; he investigated thoroughly into the components and problems of ‘Ilm ul-nahw (The Science of Syntax) and made a perfect work on the Syntax, entitled “kitab fi nahw”(كتاب في النحو).

Then in 2nd/8th century, Al-Farra, a distinguished grammarian of Kufa, followed the work of Sibwaihi and produced another work on his footsteps, named Hudud al-Nahw (حدود النحو). Both the works were drawn from the Holy Quran and per-Islamic.¹⁶ In the 3rd / 9th century, Al-Mubarrad of Baghdad; composed a complete treatise on syntax titled :”Alkamil”(الكامل) and Thalab from the same city Baghdad wrote “Kitab Al- Muktadah” which is actually a simplified version of kitab of Sibwaihi. While, in the golden period of Nahw; 4th/10th century, In the first half of this century, Ibn ul-Sarraj , the youngest pupil of Al-Mubarrad, compiled

“the kitab ul-usul” (كتاب الاصول) and its concise version, the kitab al-mujaz (كتاب المجاز). In the second half of the 10th century, Al-Sirafi made a commentary on the work, kitab. Al-Farisi wrote the “kitab al-idah wal Takmila”; Al-Rummani also made a commentary on the kitab, Ibn Jinni carried out a manual entitled kitab al-luma ‘ and three other important works namely kitab ul-Munsif (كتاب المنصف), kitab ul-khasais (كتاب) (كتاب سر صناعة الاعراب) and kitab sirr sinaat al-iraab (كتاب سر صناعة الاعراب). Undoubtedly, he is known as the greatest grammarian of the 10th century due to his great contributions on “Ilm ul-nahw and sarf”.

In the next century; 5th/11th, Al-Jurjani, whose famous book on the Arabic Syntax named “kitab ul Awamil Almia” (كتاب العوامل المائة); was translated into the Latin language by Arrhenius at Leiden in 1617 A.D. In the 6th / 12th century, Allama Al-Zamakhshari’s book “Kitab ul Mufasssil” (كتاب المفصل) and kitab ul misbah of Persian scholar Al-Mutarrizi are considered masterpiece of Arabic Syntax. Furthermore, in 7th/13th an Egyptian distinguished grammarian; Ibn ul Haajib wrote kitab ul kafia (كتاب الكافية). A Syrian Grammarian Ibn e Malik’s two books kitab Tasheel il Fawaid (كتاب تسهيل الفوائد) in prose and kitab ul alfia (كتاب الالفية) composed of thousand verses are unforgettable work in the Arabic Syntax. In 8th/14th century, an Egyptian Grammarian Ibn e Hisham; wrote two books entitled kitab al-mughni (كتاب المغنى) and kitab al-iradi (كتاب قطر الندى) and a book on Arabic Syntax (كتاب المغنى) was considered a standard manual for syntactical knowledge of

Arabic language.¹⁷ All of the above grammarians took the Holy Quran; a major source for their compilations by giving references from the sacred book of Almighty Allah.

3- Quranic Phonetics(ilm ut Tajweed)

It is a notable factor that the aforementioned pronunciations of the Arabic alphabet can be properly acquired from the lips of the Arabic speaking people. The non-Arab people are not lagging behind to have the correct pronunciation of the Arabic alphabets with the proper practice of ilm al-Tajweed everywhere in the world. The subject of Phonetics (صوتية) has been created in the modern period, but ilm al-tajweed has come down to us from the period of the Holy Quran's revelation, of which testimony appears in its contents as follows:

"وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً"¹⁸

“and recite the Quran with measured tone”¹⁹

And

"وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلاً"²⁰

“And with measure have we revealed it.”

Tarteel; lexically means to recite with pausing and technically to accomplish Quranic recital with the appropriate articulations of Arabic alphabet and accurate pronunciation be made from the actual place of makhraj (the places where from the sound of Arabic letters originates). Concerning the Quranic phonetics, it has been informed that there are fourteen makharij for the articulations of Arabic alphabet but some

scholars made converse statement that there are sixteen to seventeen makharij.²¹

The letters of all these makharij are divided into five classes according to the operation of pronouncing organs which are as follows:

1- The Guttural letters (الحروف الحلقية) are six in number: ء،ه،ع،ح،غ،خ

2- The Labial letters (الحروف الشفوية) are four in number: ب،ف،م،و

3-The Lingual letters are six in number: ر،ز،س،ش،ص،ض

4-The Dental letters are eight in number: ت،ث،د،ذ،ط،ظ،ل،ن

5-The Palatal letters are four in number: ج،ق،ك،ي

It is evident from aforementioned discussion that Quranic phonetics are the essential elements for Arabic writing and pronunciation along with them vowels and other orthographical signs also have made excellent contributions to the development of the Arabic language and literature.

4-Rhetoric (Ilm ul Balagha)

Balagha is an abstract noun which means eloquence that is very much necessary to draw the attention of the audience and to attract their hearts and minds with the excellent oration of the speaker whose speech reaches to the core of their hearts and minds. The Holy Quran says:

"وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا"²²

“And speak to them with effectual words which may go deep into their hearts”²³

In this era, the rhetorical science is said to mean the scientific art of effective uses of language in the literary point of view as the benefit of this science is comprehensive in the coherent writing as well as eloquent

proclamation. There are three dimensions of the rhetoric, namely Ilm ul Bayan, Ilm ul maani and Ilm ul Badee.

(i) Ilm ul Maani

The term (معاني) plural of (معنى) lexically means “idea, sense, circumstance, object” etc. Technically ‘Ilm ul Maani acquaints with the circumstances of Arabic words in agreement with required condition. Amar bin bahr known as Jahiz is considered as the pioneer of this branch of rhetorical science with his praise-worthy work in the form of his book Albayaan wa Attabyeen (البيان و التبيين) in which he dealt with the various dimensions of Ilm UL maani. Another well known and worth mentioning name in the field is Abdul Qahir Aljurjani in the form of his book Daalail ul Ijaz (دلائل الاعجاز) which comprises all the required discussion on the maani and it is said by the scholars that Jurjani established the foundations of Ilm ul Balagha focusing on Ilm ul Maani.

Furthermore, Abu Yaqub Al-Sakaki paved the foundations of Ilm ul Maani by compiling his esteemed publication “Miftah ul Uloom” (مفتاح العلوم). His work has been divided in three parts deal with twelve numbers of linguistic sciences like morphology, syntax, logic, prosody etc. and the writer has brought the specific discussion of rhetoric into the consistency of the third part of his work which has undoubtedly achieved an excellent reputation and credit in the dominion of rhetoric.²⁴

(ii) Ilm ul Bayaan

The lexical meaning of the term “Bayan” is ‘manifestation or ‘statement’. Technically “Ilm ul-Bayan” has been defined that it is such a part of rhetorical science which expresses the thought of mind with correct and

lucid statement. It gives an especial mode of expression, which increases beauty and elegance for word and meaning in the Arabic language. This branch of rhetoric beautifies human expression cum writing diction to a great extent. In fact, Allah has endowed the human being with the power of Bayaan of which testimony appears in the verse of the Holy Quran as Allah says:

"الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ"²⁵

*"The compassionate (Allah), Who taught the Quran, created man and taught him how to convey his feelings and thoughts"*²⁶

A pupil of Sibawayhi, Khalil bin Ahmed and Yumus bin Habib: Abu Ubayda carried out the first and foremost work on Ilm ul Bayaan entitled "Majaaz ul Quran" which was, as far as treasured with all kinds of Quranic styles. Later on; a great contribution in the field of Ilm ul Bayan by a great rhetorician; Abu Ali Muhammad Al- Hatimi in the form of "sirr us sina wa israar ul Balagha" (سرالصناعة و إسرار البلاغة) will ever be remembered which furthermore paved the way for Shams Al-Maani Qabus to compile his book "Kamaal ul Balagha" (كمال البلاغة) in the field of Ilm ul Bayaan.

The above mentioned compilations extended the scope of Ilm ul Bayaan. A famous compilation titled "Talkhees ul Bayan un Majazaat il Quran" (تلخيص البيان عن مجازات القرآن) by Abu Al-Hassan bin Al-Tahir Al-Masuni who dealt with metaphorical figure of speech of the Holy Quran and Hadith along with a brief speech of the Holy Prophet(PBUH). Likewise the book of Abu Mansoor Abdu l Malik bin Muhammad Al-Thaalabi entitled "Sahar ul Balaagha wa SIRR ul baraaah" (سحرالبلاغة و سر البراعة) has played an important role in the field of Ilm ul Bayaan.

Finally, it is worth mentioning about the great compilation of Abdul Qaahir Al-Jurjani in the field of Ilm ul Bayan entitled “Israar ul Balaagha” (اسرار البلاغة), it covers all of the chapters of rhetoric specially Ilm ul Bayaan.

Furthermore Allama Jaar Ullah Al- Zamakhshari made an important work in Ilm Ul Bayaan in the form of “Asaas ul Balaagha” (اساس البلاغة) which has been acclaimed as the finest work in the domain of the Arabic Language and Literature.²⁷

(iii) Ilm ul Badee

Lexically the term “ Badee”(بديع) means wonderful or new created thing. In rhetorical science; Ilm Ul Badee studies the figure of speech of the Arabic language. It is indicated in the Holy Quran as :

” بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ”²⁸

“He is the creator of the heavens and the earth”²⁹

Badee is one of the attributory names of Allah who has created the heavens and the earth. As for; technical definition is concerned, it acquaints with beautification of speeches. The main purpose of this branch is to beautify speeches adequately with agreement of suitable language for the expression of idea of mind in inflated manner.

It is unanimously said that Abdullah bin Mutaz, who composed first an important work on Arabic poetics comprising of seventeen kinds of figure of speeches is considered the pioneer to carry out Ilm ul Badee under the entitlement of Kitab ul Badee (كتاب البديع). Later on Qudama bin Jaffer completed thirty figures of speeches which he mentioned in his “Naqd ul Nasr”(نقد النثر) which also deals with Ilm ul Badee. Moreover, his works

namely “Naqd us sherr”(نقد الشعر), “Jawahir ul Alfaaz”(جواهر الالفاظ)and “Sinaatain”(صناعتين) are prominent contributions in the field of rhetoric.

A versatile book “Ejaz ul Quran”(اعجازالقرآن)of Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Al- Tayyib Al- Baqilani, deals with rhetoric illustrating with the Quranic verses which increased its beauty and importance. Moreover it also includes the views of former scholars along with the writer’s own absolute opinions on the causes of miracles of the Holy Quran. It also highlights many other aspects of Arabic poetry. It is worth mentioning that two well distinguished rhetoricians; Hassan bin Rasheeq and Sharf ud Din made an extension to the kinds of figure of speeches completing seventy in earlier numbers. Hassan bin Rasheeq wrote an important book entitled “AlUmda fi Mahaasin Assher wa Aadabihi”(العمدة في محاسن الشعر و آدابه). AlUmda deals with a detailed discussion on all the aspects of poetic and rhetoric chapters.

Ibn Alasba was another rhetorician who added twenty figures of speeches more than the earlier numbers carried out by his predecessors. Furthermore; Ibn ul Munqidh mentioned ninety five figures of speeches in his book “Altafree fil Badee”(التفريع في البديع). In addition to this, Safi ud Din Alhilli quoted one hundred and forty figures of speeches in his work entitled “Anwa ul Badee”(انواع البديع). While in the competition of figures of speech;Sheikh Ibn Hujja Al Hamawi added one hundred and forty two figures in his compilation “Khazan tul Adab”(خزانة الادب).³⁰

In short, we can conclude from the foregoing discussion that “Ilm ul Balagha” is comprised of three branches namely Ilm ul Maani, Ilm ul Bayan, and Ilm ul Badee and all of these have been developed by the

different rhetoricians in order to evaluate literary value of the Holy Quran as well as Arabic language and literature. In this connection, some rhetoricians also highlighted the rhetorical value of the Prophetic Traditions as an excellent prose variety next to the Holy Quran.

Conclusion

After a thorough study of the topic “Linguistic Influences of the Holy Quran”, we may draw the conclusion that the language and literature play the most important role for the progress and prosperity the entire society. Similarly we find scholars of outstanding caliber produced remarkable works on linguistic in the light of the Holy Quran. The great body of Arabic literature includes works produced by Arabs and Non-Arabs. After the advent of Islam being influenced by the Quran, it reached to the climax of its development in the Golden Age and it holds a premier position in the domain of world literature. The literary history shows that the Arabic language and literature, has been originated from the holy Quran and developed by virtue of its linguistic and literary styles. It is not an exaggeration to say that the linguistic model of the Quran has set the standard of the Classical Arabic which is followed closely everywhere in the Arab world. The Holy Quran is a unique literary guide and linguistic authority of the Arabic language and literature. As a whole, the literary contributions related to religious, linguistic and intellectual sciences have been originated from both the Quran and the Hadith. It is well known that the language of the Holy Quran is the clear Arabic speech which has contained the highest form of rhetorical elements. It bears a fascinating style in matters of its distinct expressions, definite meaning of words,

excellent figure of speech and metaphor. The language of the Holy Quran is unapproachable to imitate it and this character of inimitability has been known as Al-Ijaz. Besides that the development of the Arabic Grammar (Morphology and Syntax) and Rhetorical science (Maani, Bayaan and Badee), Quranic Phonetics (Ilm Ut Tajweed) have been evolved by the influence of the Holy Quran.

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