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A Multidimensional Study of Resistance and Power Dynamics in Zainab's Speech in Yazeed's Court

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Abstract: This study explores the multidimensional aspects of Lady Zainab's (peace be upon her) speech delivered at Yazid's court following the Karbala tragedy. Using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1985), the research examines the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions in her speech to understand its linguistic and rhetorical depth. Employing qualitative methods, the findings reveal that Zainab's speech serves as a powerful medium for resistance, moral defiance, and the assertion of justice. The ideational metafunction highlights her unwavering commitment to truth and justice, while the interpersonal metafunction establishes her authority and challenges Yazid's tyranny. The textual metafunction ensures coherence and amplifies the speech's impact. The analysis underscores her linguistic expertise and spiritual fortitude, transcending historical contexts to affirm timeless principles of faith, truth, and opposition to oppression. Lady Zainab's eloquent delivery transforms her speech into a lasting symbol of resistance and moral integrity, inspiring generations to stand against injustice and uphold truth.

Keywords: Metafunctions, Zainab's Speech, Resistance and Power Dynamics

1. Introduction

One of the most important occurrences in Islamic history, especially in light of the Karbala events, is the speech given by Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) in Yazid's court. Imam Hussein's sister Lady Zainab is well known for her powerful addresses after her brother and his family killed at the Battle of Karbala (61 AH/680 CE). She rejects, resists, and demands justice in her address to Yazid ibn Muawiya, the tyrannical monarch, in his court. By examining its metafunctions, especially from the perspective of linguistic theory, this study investigates the religious and linguistic aspects of Zainab's speech. Metafunctions, as outlined in the systemic functional linguistics model by Halliday (1985), refer to the different functions language serves in communication. In this case, the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions of Zainab's speech are analysed, with a focus on how they convey religious messages, challenge oppressive powers, and establish her moral authority.

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Resistance and Power Dynamics

Lady Zainab's (peace be upon her) speech in Yazid's court represents a profound act of resistance and an unparalleled assertion of power in the face of tyranny. Despite her status as a bereaved captive in the hostile environment of Yazid's palace, she dismantled his authority with eloquence and moral conviction, transforming her apparent powerlessness into a position of spiritual and ideological superiority. Her speech unmasked Yazid's tyranny by exposing his moral corruption, juxtaposing his temporal power with the eternal justice of God, and highlighting his inevitable accountability before the Divine (Hassan, 2018). By reframing the narrative, she countered Yazid's portrayal of her family as rebels, emphasizing their steadfast adherence to truth and righteousness while aligning herself with the prophetic legacy of her grandfather, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Her words not only embarrassed Yazid, stripping him of moral legitimacy before his court, but also inspired the oppressed by showing that even in chains, the power of truth can prevail over falsehood. Through a bold and fearless declaration, she turned the court from a symbol of Yazid's triumph into a stage for her defiance, shifting the focus from physical dominance to moral and spiritual authority. Her invocation of divine justice and her unwavering stance as a representative of the Ahlul Bayt reclaimed the narrative and undermined Yazid's claims of victory. Moreover, Lady Zainab's audacity to confront tyranny as a woman in a patriarchal society added another layer to her resistance, challenging societal norms and illustrating the universal and timeless principles of justice, faith, and perseverance. Her speech continues to resonate as a powerful example of resistance against oppression, serving as a source of inspiration for generations striving for truth and justice in the face of overwhelming adversity (Jafri, 1979).

Metafunction

Originating in systemic functional linguistics, the term "metafunction" refers to a feature shared by all languages. The orientation of systemic functional linguistics is functional and semantic as opposed to formal and syntactic. It asserts that the development of grammar and the specific shapes that grammars take should be explained "in terms of the functions that language evolved to serve" as a functional linguistic theory. Although the ways in which languages work and what people do with them in the context of human cultural practice differ, all languages are seen to be shaped and organized in reference to three functions, or metafunctions. According to systemic functional linguistics' author, Michael Halliday, these three functions are textual, interpersonal, and ideal. The experiential and logical components make up the ideational function (Halliday, 1985).

Metafunctions of Zainab's Speech

The researcher uses M.A.K. Halliday's (1985) systemic functional linguistics model, which identifies three primary metafunctions of language, to examine Zainab's speech:

Ideational Metafunction: Communicating Ideology and Meaning

The depiction of the world around us how individuals and events are expressed through language is the focus of the ideational metafunction. The ideational metafunction in Zainab's speech emphasizes her constant commitment to justice, truth, and religious values. She frames the events of Karbala and questions Yazid's leadership with powerful images.

The Interpersonal Metafunction: Relating to Others and Social Roles

The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the role that language plays in forming and preserving interpersonal bonds. In this way, Zainab uses her speech as a powerful instrument to challenge the social order and establish her claim to power.

The Textual Metafunction: Organizing the Speech and Conveying Coherence

The arrangement of the message itself, the connections between the many discourse components, and the establishment of coherence are all addressed by the textual

metafunction. Zainab's statement is an impulsive declaration of faith as well as a well-planned reply to Yazid.

2. Materials and Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach using Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework to analyze Lady Zainab's (peace be upon her) speech at Yazid's court. SFL is employed for its ability to explore how language conveys meaning through its three primary metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The analysis focuses on the translated English text of the speech to examine its linguistic and rhetorical features.

Data collection involves primary and secondary sources, including the original Arabic text, its English translation, and relevant literature on Lady Zainab's speech and functional linguistic theory. The analytical process identifies grammatical structures, metaphorical expressions, and rhetorical strategies that communicate the speech's spiritual, moral, and political messages.

The ideational metafunction is examined to explore how the events of Karbala and principles of justice are represented. The interpersonal metafunction assesses the role of language in establishing power dynamics and authority, while the textual metafunction investigates the coherence and organization of the speech.

This methodology enables the study to uncover the linguistic and spiritual depth of the speech and its role as a symbol of resistance and justice. The findings provide a comprehensive understanding of its rhetorical impact and its enduring relevance across historical and cultural contexts.

3. Results and Discussion

The analysis of three functions : textual, ideational, and interpersonal of Halliday(1985) model.

Text (1):

Do you, Yazid, think that -when you blocked all the avenues of the earth and the horizons of the heavens before us, so we were driven as captives- that we are worthless in the sight of Allah and that you are respectful in His eyes? Or is it because you enjoy with Him a great status? So, you look down at us and become arrogant, elated, when you see the world submissive to you and things are done and you want them, and when our authority and power became all yours? But wait! Have you forgotten that Allah has said, "Do not regard those who disbelieved that we grant them good for themselves? We only give them a respite so that they may increase their sins, and for them there is a humiliating torment.

Ideational Metafunction

This metafunction addresses how experiences and events including participants, procedures, and circumstances are portrayed in the text.

Verb Processes: The text uses a variety of verb processes to express meaning. "حين أخذت علينا أقطار الأرض" (when you grabbed the corners of the earth) and "نساق إليك سوقاً" (we are driven to you like prisoners) are examples of material processes (activities). These acts eloquently illustrate Yazid's behavior by showing oppression and tyranny.

Mental processes (thoughts and perceptions): Yazid's logic and his understanding of divine justice are called into question by the text's use of verbs like "أظننت" (Did you think?) and "أنسى" (Did you forget?).

Relational processes, or states of existence, include: Yazid's ideological presumptions regarding divine favor are called into question by phrases like "أن بنا من الله هواناً و عليك منه كرامة" (that we are humiliated by God while you are honored by Him).

Participants:

Yazid is portrayed as the cause of oppressive acts, signifying tyranny. In the mental relational processes, Lady Zainab and her close companions are shown as moral and spiritual winners, while in the material processes, they are victims.

One important player is God, who is portrayed as the final arbiter who decides what constitutes honor and shame. **Circumstances** (Time, Location, Etiquette): While contextual details like "أسار" (in captivity) and "سوقاً" (driven in a procession) highlight the conditions of oppression, temporal markers like "حين" (when) frame the narrative and connect events.

Interpersonal Metafunction

This metafunction deals with how the text communicates attitudes and judgments as well as builds relationships between the speaker and the audience. **Mood** (interrogative and declarative):

Rhetorical inquiries ("أظننت...؟" and "أنسيت...؟") are used to dispute Yazid's presumptions. These inquiries aim to provoke thought and reveal his conceit rather than to obtain knowledge. A tone of power and command is conveyed by declarative statements ("فمهلا مهلا لا تطش جهلا"), which affirm Lady Zainab's moral and spiritual fortitude in spite of her physical imprisonment.

Modality: Modality is a way to convey certainty and judgment. The statement "أن بنا من الله هوأنا وعليك منه كرامة" (that we are humiliated by God while you are honored by Him) subtly challenges Yazid's supposed superiority. The passage in the Qur'an that reads, "...ولا تحسبن الذين كفروا..." Reminding Yazid of the ultimate repercussions of his deeds, (Do not suppose that those who disbelieve...) unequivocally emphasizes divine justice.

Attitude and Assessment:

In order to mock Yazid's short-lived victory, the speaker uses phrases like "تضرب صدريك" (you beat your chest in delight) and "تنقض مذرويك مرحا" (you leap in hubris) to create a tone of moral defiance. Both a warning and a scolding, "فمهلا مهلا لا تطش جهلا" (Take care! Do not be haughty out of ignorance) highlights Yazid's moral failings and the speaker's confidence.

Textual Metafunction

In order to provide coherence and emphasis, this metafunction focuses on the organization and flow of the text.

Thematic Structure:

The first line, "أظننت يا يزيد..." (Did you think, O Yazid...), highlights the main idea of Yazid's conceit and delusion. This lays the groundwork for a compelling argument against his views and behavior. The change to "فمهلا مهلا..." (Take heed!) marks a sea change, moving from rhetorical inquiry to straightforward reprimand.

Cohesion:

Rhetorical structures (حين... حين...) (when... when...) are repeated to create rhythm and draw attention to Yazid's misguided faith in his ephemeral power. As the climactic conclusion, the Qur'anic verse links the speaker's argument to divine power and emphasizes how divine justice is inevitable.

Lexical Choices:

Ironically employed terms like "اقتدار" (power), "خطرك" (your importance), and "قدرك" (your stature) undermine Yazid's sense of self. Comparing "هوأنا" (our shame) and "كرامة" (your honor) contrasts the ultimate divine judgment with one's imagined worldly position.

Text (2):

Is it fair, O son of the 'Released ones', that you keep your ladies and maidens in their chambers (under protection), and at the same time you drive the daughters of the Messenger of Allah as captives with their veils removed and faces exposed, taken by their enemies from one land to another, being viewed by those at watering places as well as those who man your forts, with their faces exposed to the looks of everyone -near or distant, lowly or honorable, having none of their men with them nor any of their protectors?

Ideational Metafunction

Processes(verbs): highlights Yazid's unfair behavior through both social and physical acts: The phrase "اختدّرت حرائرك وإماءك" (you kept your wives and slave-women safe) emphasizes Yazid's selective and callous defense. The phrase "وسوفك بنات رسول الله سبايا" (you displayed the daughters of the Prophet as captives) emphasizes the horrible act of public humiliation. Meaning "you tore down their veils and exposed their faces," "هتكت ستورهن" denotes both actual and metaphorical abuses of dignity. **Relational processes**, including identities and states:

Since they lack a male defender, "ليس معهن من رجالهن ولي" creates a vulnerable and unfair situation. Yazid's activities are linked to moral and religious disobedience by their contempt toward God and repudiation of His Messenger. "عتوا منك على الله وجوداً لرسول الله":

Mental operations (perceptions and thoughts): Yazid's contempt for moral and heavenly standards is implied throughout the narrative, demonstrating a willful and conscious defiance.

Participants (Actors, Objectives, and Recipients):

Yazid: He represents oppression and arrogance and is the main actor in material processes. His acts are portrayed as willful violations of both human and divine principles. As victims of Yazid's oppression, the ladies of Ahl al-Bayt represent moral and spiritual fortitude in the face of adversity.

Observers, or viewers:

The use of phrases such as "أهل المناقل القريب والبعيد الشريف والوضيع" (people at rest stations, the near and far, the noble and humble) highlights the humiliation's public character and the outrage's universality. The Prophet and God (indirect participants): By presenting Yazid's acts as transgressions of divine justice and prophetic holiness, their reference raises the poem to a theological level.

Time, Place, and Manner Circumstances: Geographical circumstances: "من بلد إلى بلد" (from town to town) depicts the public humiliation and the protracted agony. Observed by passengers and awaited at water stops, the phrase "يستشفهن أهل المناقل، ويتربص" exemplifies the obsessive aspect of the humiliation.

Interpersonal Metafunction

Mood (Declarative and Interrogative): Yazid is explicitly challenged by the first rhetorical question, "أمن العدل" (Is it justice?). This kind of interrogation emphasizes the terrible injustice rather than asking for an explanation. It emotionally engages the audience and challenges their moral convictions.

Attitude and Tone: There is a moral wrath and censure in the tone. "هتكت ستورهن" (tore down their veils) and "عتوا منك على الله" (arrogance against God) are examples of words that express disgust and dismay at the extent of the injustice. Yazid's hypocrisy is exposed by contrasting his treatment of his own women ("حرائرك وإماءك") with that of the Prophet's women ("بنات رسول الله").

Evaluation and Judgment: Yazid's actions are presented as both spiritually arrogant ("عتوا" - denial of the Prophet) and morally repugnant ("جوداً لرسول الله" - disobedience against God). The speaker's implied acknowledgment of the victims' dignity elevates them morally and spiritually despite their physical humiliation.

Textual Metafunction

This metafunction examines the text's informational organization for emphasis and coherence.

Thematic Structure

The theme's opening line, "أمن العدل" (Is it justice?), establishes the text's emphasis on injustice right away and asks the reader to consider its moral ramifications. After that, the emphasis switches to Yazid's behavior, comparing it to Ahl al-Bayt's treatment of his own family. In order to elevate the argument to a spiritual and universal level, the Quran ends by connecting these acts to Yazid's disobedience of God and rejection of prophetic truths.

Cohesion (Parallelism and Repetition):

To highlight the sharp disparity in treatment, phrases like "حرائك وإماءك" (your ladies) and "بنات رسول الله" (the daughters of the Prophet) are repeated. Phrases such as "القريب والبعيد" (the near and far, the noble and humble) establish rhythm and draw attention to how pervasive the tyranny is in society.

Parallelism:

The ubiquitous nature of the humiliation is reinforced by the symmetrical structure of "يستترشفهن أهل المناقل، ويتربص أهل المناهل" (seen by travelers and expected at water stops).

Lexical Choices: Phrases that appeal to cultural and moral sensitivities, such as "هتكت" (tore down their veils) and "أبدیت وجوههن" (revealed their faces), conjure up strong images of shame and violation. By linking the moral argument to divine authority, references to "الله" (God) and "رسول الله" (the Prophet) increase its rhetorical potency.

Text (3):

But what can be expected from one descended from those whose mouths chewed the livers of the purified ones¹ and whose flesh grows out of the blood of the martyrs How can it be expected that one who looks at us with grudge and animosity, with hatred and malice, would not hates us- the Ahl al-Bayt? Besides, you, without feeling any guilt or weighing heavily what you say, recite saying: They would have been very much delighted, Then they have said, "May your hands, O Yazid, never be paralyzed. How dare you hit the lips of Abu 'Abdullah (a), the master of the Youths of Paradise? But why should you not do so, since all mercy is

removed from your heart, having shed the blood of the offspring of Muhammad, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his Progeny, and the stars on earth from among the family of 'AbdulMuttalib?

Ideational Metafunction

Material Processes (Actions): Processes (Verb Types):

Emphasize Yazid's unethical and violent behavior: "لفظ فوه أكباد الشهداء" (he spat out the martyrs' livers) is a metaphor for his brutality. "نبت حلمه بدماء السعداء" (his wisdom developed from the blood of the righteous) portrays his childhood as being rife with injustice and persecution. Yazid's acts are linked to historical animosity toward Islam by the statements "نصب الحرب لسيد الأنبياء" (he fought against the Prophet) and "هز السيوف في وجه رسول الله" (he brandished swords in the face of the Messenger of God).

Mental Processes (Thoughts and Choices):

"...وأنى ترجى مراقبة ابن" (How can a man like him be expected to be pious?) doubts Yazid's moral character and expresses skepticism about his capability for moral behavior.

Qualities and States of Relational Processes:

Yazid's identity is presented as one of conceit and impiety by "أشد العرب لله جحودًا" (the most disobedient of Arabs toward God) and "أظهرهم له كفرًا" (the most egregious in his unbelief).

Participants (Actors, Goals, and circumstances):

Yazid, the actor: portrayed as the primary offender of injustices from the past and now. He is shown as both an individual and the heir to a tradition of hatred and incredulity.

The victims (goals):

The main characters, the Prophet Muhammad ("سيد الأنبياء") and Imam Hussain ("سيد شباب أهل الجنة"), draw attention to Yazid's offenses against both divine authority and holy people. "نريته" (his descendants) represents the Prophet's family's wider subjugation.

Situations (Moral and Historical Backgrounds):

Yazid's acts are linked to a history of hostility toward Islam by the allusions to historical occurrences such as the Battle of Badr ("ألحقت قتلى يوم بدر"). Yazid's pride in his heritage of denial is eloquently expressed in the phrase "يَهْتَفُ بأشياخه" (he calls upon his forefathers).

Interpersonal Metafunction

Mood (Declarative and Interrogative): The text is primarily declarative, making strong claims about Yazid's personality and deeds. For example, "لقد نكأت القرحة" (you have reopened the wound) is a striking statement of the suffering Yazid has inflicted, highlighting the condemnation's emotional depth. Yazid's moral integrity is called into doubt by rhetorical questions such "وأنى ترجى مراقبة ابن" (how can one expect piety from a guy like him?) which prompt the audience to consider his duplicity. **Attitude and Tone:** There is a strong moral outrage and righteous rage mixed with a very critical tone. Phrases such as "أعتاهم على الرب كفرًا وطغيانًا" (the most disobedient to God in oppression and disbelief) express an uncompromising censure. "هتف بأشياخه: أهلوا واستهلوا فرحًا" (he calls upon his forefathers to celebrate) is a sarcastic depiction of Yazid's celebration that mocks his pride in evil.

Evaluation	and	Conclusion:	Yazid's	Actions:
blatantly denounced as acts of disobedience against God and the Prophet, based on cruelty and conceit. His delight in desecration of holy images, like "انحنأوه على ثنايا أبي عبد الله" (his leaning over Abu Abdullah's severed skull), is portrayed as the pinnacle of moral decay.				
The Family of the Prophet: Exalted as representations of morality and divine direction. "شمس آل عبد المطلب" (the sun of the Hashemites) and "ابن يعسوب الدين" (the son of the religious head) are two respectful descriptions of Imam Hussain.				

Textual Metafunction

Thematic Structure: The tone of moral outrage is established at the outset of the passage with the words "لا غرو منك ولا عجب من فعلك" (no surprise or astonishment at your acts). After describing Yazid's ancestry, it links his acts to a past of animosity toward Islam, which ends with his destruction of Imam Hussain's body. "لقد نكأت القرحة، واستأصلت الشافة" (you have reopened the wound and exterminated the residue) is the final line, which links these deeds to their emotional and symbolic value.

Cohesion (Parallelism and Repetition):

Repeating:

"رسول الله", "سيد الأنبياء", and "الكفر" are among the words and phrases that are used often to emphasize the moral and theological significance of Yazid's conduct. Yazid's bad traits are emphasized and rhythm is created by parallel constructions such as "أشد العرب لله جودًا، وأنكرهم" (the most obedient of Arabs toward God, the most disobedient of His Messenger).

contrast:

The moral outrage is heightened by the text's juxtaposition between Yazid's acts (لفظ فوه) and the holy figures he persecutes ("سيد شباب أهل الجنة").

Lexical Choices: The language is purposefully evocative and sentimental: Deeply emotional and spiritual imagery is evoked by phrases like "نكأت القرحة" (reopened the wound) and "التماع الرسول بوجهه" (the radiance of the Prophet's face). Yazid's cruelty and callousness are highlighted by references to "الثنايا" (Abu Abdullah's teeth) and "المخصرة" (the stick used to defile them).

4. Conclusion

The investigation of Lady Zainab's (peace be upon her) speech in Yazid's court demonstrates its deep rhetorical and linguistic expertise, which is based on spiritual profundity and moral conviction. The speech goes beyond its historical setting, reaffirming the timeless principles of religion, truth, and resistance while taking a strong stand against oppression and injustice. In addition to recounting events, Lady Zainab uses language to fight moral decay, confront oppression, and instill in her audience a steadfast faith in divine justice.

Through her comments, Yazid is revealed as an oppressor whose fleeting material authority is juxtaposed with Ahl al-Bayt's unwavering moral authority. Her moving

accounts highlight her family's spiritual fortitude while graphically describing the horrors perpetrated. The speech's moral gravity is reinforced by its use of rhetorical questions, scathing rebukes, and Qur'anic allusions, which also position Lady Zainab as a voice of justice and truth against oppression. The speech is elevated from a moment of resistance to a timeless lesson in courage and dignity by her ability to combine eloquence with emotional and ethical clarity.

The speech's beautiful delivery and coherence and structure guarantee that its message is deeply understood by both readers and listeners. The words of Lady Zainab continue to serve as a potent reminder of the never-ending fight for justice and the victory of moral rectitude against injustice. Her speech will serve as an inspiration to future generations and a permanent tribute to human values.

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