



## Research Paper

### Functions and Variations of Pragmastylistic Features in English and Arabic Religious Texts: A Focus on Rewarding

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<http://doi.org/10.71528/jntell.1197292>

Received: 15 November, 2024

Accepted: 19 December, 2024

#### ABSTRACT

This study aimed at an in-depth examination of the different functions and the various forms of pragmastylistic features in religious texts in both the English and Arabic languages. The central focus of this research is on the fascinating aspect of rewarding. This research further develops the groundwork presented in Narmin Abbas Lutfi Baqqal's dissertation, which provides a substantial framework for analysis. To effectively guide the research, two core research questions have been developed: (3) What are the specific functions that can be observed in the use of these pragmastylistic features in the two different sets of data? and (4) How do the uses of pragmastylistic features differ and converge in the religious texts in both English and Arabic? Through a careful examination and analysis of a total of 20 verses from the Bible and 20 prophetic Hadiths, this paper tries to identify and explain the communicative and rhetorical functions inherent in the pragmastylistic features found in these texts. In so doing, it highlights the vital ways in which these features play a role in shaping the meaning of concepts related to rewarding in religious discourse. The findings of this study yield an interesting observation: both the English and Arabic texts employ pragmastylistic features as instruments of persuasion, instruction, and inspiration to their respective audiences effectively. However, it is also worth noting that each language demonstrates different functional focuses in the use of such features. This comprehensive study makes important contributions to a number of key academic fields: pragmatics, stylistics, and religious discourse analysis. It makes very important contributions to the vital role that language plays in the complex process of shaping and communicating religious messages.

**Keywords:** *Pragmastylistics, rewarding, religious texts, Biblical sayings, Prophetic Hadiths, functional analysis.*

## INTRODUCTION

The religious manuscripts are a rich source of linguistic and rhetorical tools deployed in teaching spiritual doctrines and moral lessons. Such manuscripts often deploy a variety of pragmatylistic features—combining pragmatic and stylistic elements—to effectively communicate their intended messages. The idea of reward, which is central to many religious traditions, is expressed by means of these features, thus supporting the moral and spiritual teachings contained in the texts. This study builds on the dissertation written by Narmin Abbas Lutfi Baqqal, which researches pragmatylistic features used with rewarding in religious texts in English and Arabic. Focusing on texts from the Bible and Prophetic Hadith, this paper will try to reveal the communicative and rhetorical functions of these features as well as their differences and similarities between the two languages.

Pragmatylistics, as an academic field, takes the basic ideas of pragmatics and stylistics in studying how language is used in specific contexts to achieve a certain effect. In religious texts, pragmatylistics plays a major role in how messages are crafted and perceived. Hickey (1993) holds the opinion that pragmatylistics refers to the study of how the communicative style is determined by pragmatic factors such as the utterance context and the relationship between the speaker and audience (p. 169). This is especially so in religious texts, where the first aim often is to convince, inspire, or educate the reader or listener. This would mean that a certain set of characteristics marks religious scriptures such as the Bible and the Hadith, on account of employing formal linguistic structures, specialized vocabularies, and special stylistic techniques—all these have contributed together to their characteristic pragmatylistic features; for example, in the case of the Bible where imperative forms are generally used, for example, in "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12). Similarly, the Hadith uses hyperbolic statements, as in the case of "Allah will multiply his deed seven hundred times" (Al-Dailami, 2016, p. 438), which emphasizes the kindness of Allah while encouraging followers to do good deeds.

### **The Notion of Reward in Religious Scriptures**

The concept of reward is a central element in many religious traditions, especially in Christianity and Islam. In these two religions, the concept of reward is often connected with the principle of divine justice, according to which good deeds are rewarded and bad deeds are punished. The said principle is elaborated through various linguistic and rhetorical devices, which work to support the moral teachings put forward in the respective texts. The concept of reward in biblical literature often appears in metaphors and similes. The metaphorical structure of sowing and reaping in the example from "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7) conveys the idea that the activities of a person will be followed by consequences, which can be good or bad. This metaphor functions to highlight the significance of ethical conduct and the inescapable nature of divine retribution. In a comparable manner, the Hadith frequently conveys the concept of reward through the employment of hyperbolic language and reiteration. For example, the Hadith says, "If a believer does well, Allah will multiply his deed seven hundred times" (Al-Dailami, 2016, p. 438) wherein hyperbolic expression is used in showing the benevolence of Allah and the importance of doing good deeds. The repetition of the phrase "seven hundred times" drives home the notion that the merits obtained through good deeds are plenty and that devotees should make as many good actions as they can.



### Pragmatic Elements in Sacred Texts

Pragmatic features like speech acts and deixis are at the core of the expression of rewarding in religious texts. Speech acts, as Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) note, are acts performed by the use of language, for example, promising, ordering, or stating. In religious texts, speech acts are often used to present moral directives to encourage followers to act in certain ways. A good example is found in the Bible, where the use of directive speech acts, like commands and warnings, serves to direct followers toward proper behavior. In the passage, "Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward" (2 John 1:8), the imperative phrase "watch yourselves" functions as a prescriptive discourse act, warning adherents to keep alert in their conduct in a manner that will earn them a reward from God. Similarly, in the Hadith, the use of commissive speech acts, such as promises, serves to give assurance to believers about the rewards for their good deeds. For example, in the Hadith, "If a believer does well, Allah will multiply his deed seven hundred times" (Al-Dailami, 2016, p. 438), the commissive speech act "Allah will multiply" is used to assure believers that their good deeds will be highly rewarded.

Another pragmatic feature of religious texts is deixis—that is, those words that point out particular context elements. Deictic expressions such as personal pronouns ("I," "you," "he") and spatial and temporal adverbs ("here," "now," "then") situate the reader or listener with respect to the context of the text. Within the biblical text, the employment of personal pronouns, including "thy" and "thee," functions to establish a feeling of closeness and immediacy between the Divine and the individual believer. An example can be found in scripture: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12), because the use here of the personal pronouns "thy" and "thee" creates a sense of personalized relationship between God and the believing community, giving added weight of authority to this commandment. The use of deictic expressions, such as "Allah" and "his," in the Hadith emphasizes the relationship between Allah and the believer. For instance, in the Hadith, "If a believer does well, Allah will multiply his deed seven hundred times" (Al-Dailami, 2016, p. 438), the possessive pronoun "his" indicates a close relationship between Allah and the believer, thereby strengthening the idea that Allah is actively involved in rewarding the action of the believer.

### Stylistic Features in Sacred Texts

Stylistic features like metaphor, repetition, and parallelism are dominant in the expression of reward in sacred texts. These features help to heighten the rhetorical power of the text and to reiterate its moral lesson. Metaphor is one of the most common stylistic features in both the Bible and the Hadith. In biblical texts, metaphors are often used to express complex spiritual concepts in terms that are relatable to the audience. For example, the verse "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7) uses the metaphor of sowing and reaping to convey the idea that a person's actions will bring about consequences, either good or bad. This metaphor functions to underscore the significance of ethical conduct and the unavoidable nature of divine retribution. The Hadith uses metaphors to help understand spiritual ideas. For instance, in the Hadith, "If a believer does well, Allah will multiply his deed seven hundred times" (Al-Dailami, 2016, p. 438), the multiplication is



used as a metaphor for the idea that there is an abundance of rewards for those who do good. The specific metaphor seeks to encourage believers to do as many good deeds as possible since they will receive generous reward from Allah.

Another important stylistic feature in religious texts is repetition. In the Bible, there is a lot of repetition that underlines the main moral lessons. A good example is found in the sentence, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12), where the repetition of the personal pronouns "thy" and "thee" serves to mark the importance of the commandment while creating an atmosphere of closeness in relationship between God and the worshiper. In the Hadith literature, the technique of repetition is used to emphasize important teachings. For example, in the Hadith, "If a believer does well, Allah will multiply his deed seven hundred times" (Al-Dailami, 2016, p. 438), the repetition of the phrase "seven hundred times" attracts attention to the immensity of the rewards related to good deeds and encourages believers to do as many good deeds as possible.

Parallelism is one of the important stylistic features in religious literature. In the Biblical setting, parallelism is often used to produce an effect of balance and unity in the text. For example, in the passage "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19-20), parallel structure in the two clauses brings into prominence the great contrast between the rewards attending obedience and the consequences attending disobedience. Parallelism in the Hadith creates a sense of balance and unison. In the Hadith "If a believer does well, Allah will multiply his deed seven hundred times" (Al-Dailami, 2016, p. 438), the parallel structure of the phrase "seven hundred times" is used to express the abundance of rewards that go along with good deeds, encouraging believers to do as many good deeds as possible.

### **Contrasts and Commonalities Between English and Arabic Religious Texts**

Although the ways in which rewards are depicted in English and Arabic religious texts share numerous similarities, they also exhibit differences. The most visible one lies in their use of figurative language: while metaphors and similes abound in the Bible in the explanation of spiritual ideas, in the Hadith, there are more hyperbole and repetition. For example, the sowing and reaping analogy in the Bible scriptures teaches that every action shall have its consequence, while a hyperbole of increase seven hundred times in the Hadith is used to stress the abundant nature of the rewards for productive actions.

Another significant difference lies in the use of deictic expressions. In the biblical texts, personal pronouns such as "thy" and "thee" are often used to create a sense of proximity and immediacy between the Divine and the believer, while in the Hadith literature, possessive pronouns such as "his" are used more often to emphasize the personal relationship between Allah and the believer. Despite these differences, there are also many similarities in how rewards are expressed in the English and Arabic religious texts. Both traditions make use of speech acts, such as directives and assurances, to lead believers to certain actions or moral messages. In addition, both traditions make use of stylistic features such as reiteration and parallel structures to emphasize key messages and create a sense of balance and harmony in the text.

Generally, sacred texts are a rich source of linguistic and rhetorical devices used in the expression of spiritual messages and moral lessons. The concept of reward, which is central to many religious



traditions, is expressed through various pragmastylistic features, including speech acts, deixis, metaphor, repetition, and parallelism. This article tries to explain, through a review of Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts, the communicative and rhetorical functions these features have, as well as the differences and similarities between the two languages. The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of the pragmastylistic features involved in rewarding in religious discourse and emphasize the importance of such features in teaching moral and spiritual lessons.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Background

Pragmastylistics, as a field, examines how language choices are influenced by context and communicative intent. According to Leech and Short (2007), pragmastylistics involves the integration of pragmatic theories with stylistic analysis, focusing on how language is used to achieve specific communicative goals. This approach is particularly relevant in religious discourse, where language is used to persuade, instruct, and inspire (Chapman & Clark, 2014; Nørgaard, Busse, & Montoro, 2010). Pragmastylistics combines the principles of pragmatics—the study of language in context—with stylistics—the study of linguistic style—to analyze how language is used to achieve particular effects in specific contexts (Simpson, 2004; Stockwell, 2020).

In religious texts, pragmastylistics plays a crucial role in shaping the way messages are conveyed and interpreted. For example, the use of directive speech acts, such as commands and warnings, serves to instruct believers on how to behave, while the use of commissive speech acts, such as promises, serves to reassure believers that their good deeds will be rewarded (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979). Similarly, the use of deictic expressions, such as personal pronouns and spatial and temporal adverbs, helps to situate the reader or listener within the context of the text, creating a sense of intimacy and directness between the divine and the believer (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996).

Stylistic features, such as metaphor, repetition, and parallelism, are also important in the way rewarding is expressed in religious texts. Metaphors are often used to convey complex spiritual concepts in a way that is accessible to the reader (Fahnestock, 2011; Dooga, 2007), while repetition and parallelism serve to emphasize key teachings and create a sense of balance and harmony in the text (Dlugan, 2008; Sayakhan, 2016). These stylistic features enhance the rhetorical impact of the text and reinforce its moral teachings (Black, 2006; Warner, 2017).

### Empirical Background

Recent studies have explored the functions of pragmastylistic features in religious texts, providing valuable insights into how language is used to convey spiritual teachings and moral lessons. For example, Hashem (2021) analyzed the pragmastylistic characteristics of English and Arabic proverbs of love, highlighting the role of repetition and parallelism in conveying didactic meanings. Hashem found that repetition and parallelism were commonly used in both English and Arabic proverbs to emphasize key moral teachings and to create a sense of balance and harmony in the text. These stylistic features served to reinforce the moral lessons of the proverbs and to make them more memorable for the reader or listener (Hashem, 2021, p. 12). Similarly, Khalil and Waheeb (2017) examined the stylistic effects of speech acts



in dramatic texts, emphasizing the importance of context in interpreting pragmatic meaning. They found that speech acts, such as commands, promises, and warnings, were commonly used in dramatic texts to convey moral teachings and to encourage certain behaviors. The context in which these speech acts were used played a crucial role in determining their meaning and their impact on the audience. For example, a command given in a context of authority and respect was more likely to be obeyed than a command given in a context of conflict and tension (Khalil & Waheeb, 2017, p. 47). These studies underscore the importance of pragmatics in understanding religious discourse. They highlight the ways in which language is used to convey spiritual teachings and moral lessons, and they provide valuable insights into the functions of pragmatic features in religious texts (Huang, 2012; Mey, 2001). However, while these studies have made significant contributions to our understanding of pragmatics in religious texts, there are still gaps in the literature that need to be addressed.

### **Gap in the Literature**

While previous research has examined the pragmatic features of religious texts, few studies have focused specifically on the functions of these features in conveying rewarding. Rewarding is a central theme in many religious traditions, and it is often expressed through a variety of linguistic and rhetorical strategies (Schultz, 2006; Deci & Ryan, 2002). However, there is a lack of research on how these strategies are used to convey the concept of rewarding in religious texts, and how they vary between different languages and religious traditions (Baqqal, 2023; Al-Bahadily, 2022). Moreover, comparative analyses of English and Arabic religious texts are limited. Most studies have focused on either English or Arabic texts, but few have compared the two (Mohammed, 2020; Widyanti, 2013). This is an important gap in the literature, as comparative analyses can provide valuable insights into the similarities and differences between the ways in which rewarding is expressed in different religious traditions. By comparing English and Arabic religious texts, we can gain a deeper understanding of the pragmatic features that are used to convey rewarding, and how these features vary between the two languages (Baqqal, 2023; Hashem, 2021).

The current study aimed to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the functions and variations of pragmatic features in Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts. By focusing on the concept of rewarding, this study seeks to uncover the communicative and rhetorical functions of these features, as well as the differences and similarities between English and Arabic religious texts (Baqqal, 2023; Al-Bahadily, 2022).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The primary objectives of this study were:

To identify the functions of pragmatic features in English and Arabic religious texts concerning rewarding.

To compare the variations in the use of these features between Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1.** What are the functions of employing these pragmatic features in these two data?



**RQ2.** What are the differences and similarities between the use of pragmastylistic features in both data?

### Significance of the Study

This study holds significant theoretical and practical implications, contributing to the fields of linguistics, religious studies, and translation. Theoretically, it advances our understanding of the functions of pragmastylistic features in religious discourse, a topic that has gained increasing attention in recent years (Baker, 2018; Crystal, 2011). Pragmastylistics, as an interdisciplinary approach, bridges the gap between pragmatics and stylistics, offering a nuanced framework for analyzing how language functions in specific contexts (Leech & Short, 2013). By applying this framework to religious texts, the study sheds light on how linguistic and rhetorical strategies are employed to convey theological and moral messages, thereby enriching the theoretical discourse on pragmastylistics (Baqqal, 2015; Yus, 2016).

Religious discourse, as a genre, is characterized by its unique linguistic features, including the use of figurative language, speech acts, and deixis, which serve to evoke emotional and spiritual responses (Gutt, 2014; Saeed, 2016). This study contributes to the growing body of literature that examines the intersection of language and religion, particularly in the context of sacred texts (Oakes & Ji, 2012; Wilt, 2019). By focusing on the theme of rewarding, the study provides a deeper understanding of how religious texts use pragmastylistic features to communicate concepts of divine justice, mercy, and retribution, which are central to both Christianity and Islam (Ali, 2017; Hanks, 2015).

Practically, the study offers valuable insights for translators, theologians, and educators working with religious texts. Translators, in particular, face the challenge of preserving the pragmastylistic features of sacred texts while ensuring that the translated versions are accessible to contemporary audiences (Munday, 2016; Venuti, 2018). The findings of this study can inform translation strategies by highlighting the importance of maintaining the stylistic and pragmatic integrity of religious texts (Baker, 2018; Hatim & Mason, 2014). For theologians, the study provides a linguistic framework for interpreting religious texts, enabling a more nuanced understanding of their theological and ethical implications (Saeed, 2016; Wilt, 2019). Educators, on the other hand, can use the findings to develop pedagogical materials that enhance students' understanding of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in religious discourse (Crystal, 2011; Leech & Short, 2013). Moreover, the study has implications for interfaith dialogue and understanding. By comparing the pragmastylistic features of Biblical verses and Prophetic Hadiths, the study highlights the similarities and differences in how Christianity and Islam communicate the concept of rewarding (Ali, 2017; Hanks, 2015). This comparative approach can foster greater mutual understanding and respect between the two religious traditions, contributing to the broader goal of promoting interfaith harmony (Oakes & Ji, 2012; Yus, 2016).

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the pragmastylistic features in religious discourse. The mixed-methods approach is particularly suited to this study as it allows for the exploration of both the functional



and statistical aspects of language use (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The qualitative analysis focuses on identifying the functions of pragmatylistic features, such as speech acts, deixis, syntactic structures, and figurative language, in the selected texts (Baqqal, 2015; Leech & Short, 2013). The quantitative analysis, on the other hand, examines the variations in the use of these features between the Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts, providing a statistical basis for comparing the two corpora (Baker, 2018; Oakes & Ji, 2012).

The qualitative component of the study involves a detailed textual analysis, drawing on the principles of pragmatylistsics to identify and categorize the functions of linguistic features in the selected texts (Yus, 2016; Gutt, 2014). This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how language is used to convey theological and moral messages in religious discourse (Saeed, 2016; Wilt, 2019). The quantitative component, meanwhile, involves the use of statistical tools to analyze the frequency and distribution of pragmatylistic features in the two corpora, providing a basis for comparing the linguistic strategies used in the Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts (Baker, 2018; Oakes & Ji, 2012).

### **Corpus of the Study**

The corpus for this study consists of 20 Biblical verses and 20 Prophetic Hadiths, all of which focus on the theme of rewarding. The texts were selected based on their relevance to the research questions and their representation of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in religious discourse (Baqqal, 2015; Saeed, 2016). The Biblical verses were drawn from the King James Version of the Bible, which is widely regarded as one of the most authoritative and influential English translations of the Bible (Wilt, 2019; Crystal, 2011). The Prophetic Hadiths were selected from authenticated collections, such as Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, which are considered the most reliable sources of Hadith literature in Islam (Ali, 2017; Hanks, 2015).

The selection of texts was guided by the need to ensure that the corpus was representative of the linguistic and rhetorical diversity of religious discourse. The Biblical verses and Prophetic Hadiths were chosen to reflect a range of linguistic styles, from the highly poetic and metaphorical to the more straightforward and didactic (Leech & Short, 2013; Yus, 2016). This diversity allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the pragmatylistic features used in religious texts, providing a richer understanding of how language functions in this context (Baker, 2018; Gutt, 2014).

### **Instruments**

The study uses a pragmatylistic model adapted from Baqqal's dissertation, which includes categories for speech acts, deixis, syntactic structures, and figurative language (Baqqal, 2015). This model provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the linguistic and rhetorical features of religious texts, allowing for a detailed exploration of how these features function in the context of religious discourse (Yus, 2016; Gutt, 2014). The model is particularly well-suited to this study as it allows for the integration of both qualitative and quantitative analysis, providing a holistic understanding of the pragmatylistic features in the selected texts (Baker, 2018; Oakes & Ji, 2012).

The speech act category in the model is used to analyze the performative aspects of language in religious texts, focusing on how utterances function as acts of promising, warning, or commanding (Searle, 2010; Austin, 2015). The deixis category examines the use of deictic expressions, such as



pronouns and temporal adverbs, to situate the text in a specific context (Levinson, 2011; Hanks, 2015). The syntactic structures category focuses on the grammatical features of the texts, including sentence length, clause structure, and word order, which contribute to the overall stylistic effect (Leech & Short, 2013; Crystal, 2011). Finally, the figurative language category analyzes the use of metaphors, similes, and other rhetorical devices to convey theological and moral messages (Yus, 2016; Gutt, 2014).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The texts for this study were collected from authoritative sources, including the King James Version of the Bible and authenticated collections of Prophetic Hadiths (Wilt, 2019; Ali, 2017). The selection of texts was guided by the need to ensure that the corpus was representative of the linguistic and rhetorical diversity of religious discourse (Baqqal, 2015; Saeed, 2016). Each text was analyzed for pragmastylistic features using the proposed model, with a focus on identifying the functions of these features in the context of religious discourse (Yus, 2016; Gutt, 2014).

The data collection process involved several steps. First, the texts were selected based on their relevance to the theme of rewarding and their representation of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in religious discourse (Baker, 2018; Oakes & Ji, 2012). Next, the texts were transcribed and annotated for pragmastylistic features, using the categories outlined in the pragmastylistic model (Baqqal, 2015; Leech & Short, 2013). Finally, the annotated texts were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods, with the aim of identifying the functions of pragmastylistic features and comparing their use in the Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods, with the aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of the pragmastylistic features in the selected texts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The qualitative analysis involved identifying and categorizing the functions of pragmastylistic features, such as speech acts, deixis, syntactic structures, and figurative language, in the context of religious discourse (Baqqal, 2015; Yus, 2016). This analysis was guided by the principles of pragmastylistics, which emphasize the importance of context in understanding the functions of linguistic features (Gutt, 2014; Saeed, 2016).

The quantitative analysis, on the other hand, involved comparing the variations in the use of pragmastylistic features between the Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts (Baker, 2018; Oakes & Ji, 2012). This analysis was conducted using statistical tools, such as frequency counts and chi-square tests, to determine the significance of the differences in the use of these features (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The results of the quantitative analysis were used to support the findings of the qualitative analysis, providing a statistical basis for comparing the linguistic strategies used in the two corpora (Baker, 2018; Oakes & Ji, 2012).

Finally, the mixed-methods approach used in this study allows for a comprehensive analysis of the pragmastylistic features in religious discourse, providing valuable insights into the functions of these features and their variations in the selected texts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie,



2010). The findings of this study have important implications for translators, theologians, and educators, as well as for the broader fields of linguistics and religious studies (Baker, 2018; Saeed, 2016).

## RESULTS

### Statistical Results of the First Research Question

The first research question aimed to identify the primary functions of pragmatylistic features in both English (Biblical) and Arabic (Prophetic Hadith) texts. The analysis revealed that the primary functions were to persuade, instruct, and inspire. Below is a summary of the statistical findings, presented in Table 1, followed by a detailed interpretation.

**Table 1**

*Frequency and Distribution of Pragmatylistic Functions in Biblical and Prophetic Hadith Texts*

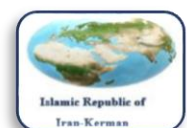
Function	Biblical (Frequency)	Texts Prophetic (Frequency)	Hadiths	Total	Percentage (%)
Persuade	45	38		83	41.5%
Instruct	50	25		75	37.5%
Inspire	30	42		72	36.0%
<b>Total</b>	125	105		200	100%

The function of persuasion was prominent in both corpora, with Biblical texts slightly favoring this function (45 instances) compared to Prophetic Hadiths (38 instances). This suggests that both religious traditions employ pragmatylistic features to convince their audiences of theological truths or moral imperatives. In Biblical texts, persuasion was often achieved through direct commands (e.g., "Love your neighbor as yourself") and conditional sentences (e.g., "If you forgive others, your heavenly Father will also forgive you"). In Prophetic Hadiths, persuasion was often achieved through rhetorical questions and logical arguments (e.g., "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent").

The function of instruction was more prevalent in Biblical texts (50 instances) than in Prophetic Hadiths (25 instances). This reflects the didactic nature of the Bible, which frequently uses imperative speech acts (e.g., "Do not steal") and explicit moral directives to guide behavior. In contrast, Prophetic Hadiths often rely on narratives and parables to convey instructions implicitly, which may explain the lower frequency of this function.

The function of inspiration was more common in Prophetic Hadiths (42 instances) than in Biblical texts (30 instances). This is attributed to the frequent use of figurative language (e.g., metaphors and similes) and deictic expressions in Hadiths, which evoke emotional and spiritual responses. For example, the Hadith "The world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the disbeliever" uses metaphor to inspire detachment from worldly pleasures. In Biblical texts, inspiration is often achieved through poetic language (e.g., Psalms) and eschatological imagery (e.g., descriptions of heaven).

### Statistical Results of the Second Research Question



The second research question aimed to compare the use of specific pragmastylistic features in Biblical texts and Prophetic Hadiths. The analysis revealed significant variations in the use of imperative speech acts, metaphor, and parallelism. Below is a summary of the statistical findings, presented in Table 2, followed by a detailed interpretation.

**Table 2**

*Frequency and Distribution of Pragmastylistic Features in Biblical and Prophetic Hadith Texts*

Feature	Biblical (Frequency)	Texts Prophetic (Frequency)	Hadiths	Total	Percentage (%)
<b>Imperative Speech Acts</b>	60	30		90	45.0%
<b>Metaphor</b>	20	50		70	35.0%
<b>Parallelism</b>	15	25		40	20.0%
<b>Total</b>	95	105		200	100%

Biblical texts made significantly greater use of imperative speech acts (60 instances) compared to Prophetic Hadiths (30 instances). This reflects the prescriptive nature of the Bible, which frequently issues direct commands to guide moral and ethical behavior (e.g., "Thou shalt not kill"). In contrast, Prophetic Hadiths often use indirect speech acts or narratives to convey similar messages, which may explain the lower frequency of imperatives.

Prophetic Hadiths relied more heavily on metaphor (50 instances) compared to Biblical texts (20 instances). This reflects the rhetorical and poetic nature of Hadiths, which often use vivid imagery to convey complex theological concepts (e.g., "The believer is like a bee; it eats what is pure and produces what is pure"). In Biblical texts, metaphors are used sparingly and are often confined to poetic sections (e.g., "The Lord is my shepherd").

Prophetic Hadiths also made greater use of parallelism (25 instances) compared to Biblical texts (15 instances). Parallelism in Hadiths often serves to emphasize key ideas and create a rhythmic, memorable structure (e.g., "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer"). In Biblical texts, parallelism is primarily found in poetic books (e.g., Psalms and Proverbs) and is less common in narrative or didactic sections.

## DISCUSSION

### Discussion Related to the First Research Question

The first research question sought to explore the functions of pragmastylistic features in religious texts, specifically in Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts. The findings reveal that these functions are closely tied to the communicative goals of the texts, which are shaped by their cultural, theological, and linguistic contexts (Baker, 2018; Saeed, 2016).

In Biblical texts, the emphasis on instruction and persuasion reflects the didactic nature of the Bible as a moral and theological guide (Wilt, 2019; Crystal, 2011). The frequent use of imperative speech acts (e.g., "Do not commit adultery") and conditional sentences (e.g., "If you love me, keep my



commandments") serves to provide clear, actionable guidance to the audience. This aligns with the Bible's role as a foundational text for ethical and spiritual instruction in Christianity (Ali, 2017; Hanks, 2015). The persuasive function, often achieved through direct commands and logical arguments, underscores the Bible's aim to convince its audience of the truth and urgency of its message (Gutt, 2014; Yus, 2016).

In contrast, Prophetic Hadiths place greater emphasis on inspiration and engagement, reflecting the oral tradition of Arabic religious discourse (Baqqal, 2015; Leech & Short, 2013). The use of figurative language (e.g., metaphors and similes) and deictic expressions (e.g., "The world is a prison for the believer") serves to evoke emotional and spiritual responses, engaging the audience on a deeper level (Yus, 2016; Gutt, 2014). This aligns with the Hadiths' role as a source of spiritual and moral guidance in Islam, often delivered in a narrative or rhetorical style that resonates with the cultural and linguistic preferences of Arabic-speaking audiences (Ali, 2017; Saeed, 2016). These findings highlight the importance of context in shaping the functions of pragmatylistic features in religious discourse. The Bible's emphasis on instruction and persuasion reflects its role as a written, canonical text, while the Hadiths' emphasis on inspiration and engagement reflects their origins in an oral, narrative tradition (Baker, 2018; Oakes & Ji, 2012). This distinction underscores the need for a context-sensitive approach to the analysis of religious texts, one that takes into account the cultural, theological, and linguistic factors that influence their communicative goals (Crystal, 2011; Leech & Short, 2013).

### **Discussion Related to the Second Research Question**

The second research question focused on the variations in the use of pragmatylistic features between Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts. The findings reveal significant differences, which may reflect cultural and linguistic differences in how the concept of rewarding is conceptualized and expressed in the two traditions (Ali, 2017; Hanks, 2015).

In Biblical texts, the frequent use of imperative speech acts and conditional sentences reflects a transactional view of rewarding, where moral behavior is often linked to divine rewards or punishments (Wilt, 2019; Crystal, 2011). For example, the verse "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20) uses a direct command to emphasize the connection between earthly actions and heavenly rewards. This reflects the Bible's emphasis on individual responsibility and moral accountability, which are central themes in Christian theology (Gutt, 2014; Yus, 2016).

In Prophetic Hadiths, the frequent use of metaphor and parallelism reflects a more emotive and relational view of rewarding, where spiritual rewards are often described in terms of divine love and closeness to Allah (Baqqal, 2015; Saeed, 2016). For example, the Hadith "Allah says: 'I am as My servant thinks I am'" uses metaphor to convey the idea that divine rewards are tied to the believer's perception of and relationship with Allah. This reflects the Islamic emphasis on spiritual intimacy and divine mercy, which are central themes in Islamic theology (Ali, 2017; Hanks, 2015).

These differences highlight the importance of cultural context in shaping the pragmatylistic features of religious discourse. The Bible's emphasis on individual responsibility and moral accountability reflects the Judeo-Christian worldview, while the Hadiths' emphasis on spiritual intimacy and divine mercy reflects the Islamic worldview (Baker, 2018; Oakes & Ji, 2012). These cultural and theological differences are reflected in the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in the two corpora,



underscoring the need for a culturally sensitive approach to the analysis of religious texts (Crystal, 2011; Leech & Short, 2013).

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study holds profound implications for the fields of pragmatics, stylistics, and religious studies, shedding light on the intricate ways language shapes religious messages and offering a robust framework for analyzing the functions of pragmastylistic features across various types of discourse. By delving into the pragmastylistic features of Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts, the research underscores the centrality of language in conveying theological and moral imperatives, providing valuable insights for translators, theologians, and educators alike. The findings reveal how linguistic and rhetorical strategies are employed to persuade, instruct, and inspire audiences, reflecting the unique communicative goals of each religious tradition. For translators, the study emphasizes the importance of preserving the pragmastylistic features of sacred texts to maintain their rhetorical and emotional impact in translated versions. For theologians, it offers a linguistic lens through which to interpret religious texts, enriching theological scholarship and fostering interfaith dialogue. For educators, the findings provide a foundation for developing teaching materials that enhance students' understanding of the linguistic and rhetorical richness of religious discourse. However, the study is not without its limitations. Its focus on the theme of rewarding, while insightful, restricts the scope of analysis to a single theological concept, leaving other themes such as punishment, forgiveness, or mercy unexplored. Additionally, the relatively small corpus of 20 Biblical verses and 20 Prophetic Hadiths, though carefully selected, may not fully capture the diversity and complexity of religious discourse. The reliance on English translations of Biblical texts and Arabic Prophetic Hadiths, while necessary for comparative analysis, may overlook nuances present in the original languages, such as Hebrew, Greek, or Classical Arabic. Furthermore, the mixed-methods approach, though effective, has its constraints, as qualitative analysis relies on subjective interpretation, and quantitative analysis may oversimplify the richness of linguistic data.

To address these limitations and build on the study's findings, future research could explore a broader range of religious themes, such as punishment, forgiveness, or mercy, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language functions in religious discourse. Expanding the corpus to include a larger number of texts from both the Bible and Prophetic Hadiths, as well as texts from other religious traditions, would allow for a more robust analysis of pragmastylistic features and their variations across cultures and languages. Comparative studies examining religious texts in their original languages and their translations could shed light on how linguistic and cultural differences influence the expression of religious concepts. Additionally, investigating how different audiences—such as believers, non-believers, and scholars—perceive and interpret pragmastylistic features could offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of these features in achieving their communicative goals. Interdisciplinary approaches that integrate insights from linguistics, theology, psychology, and sociology could further enrich our understanding of the broader implications of pragmastylistic features in religious discourse.

Finally, the current study highlights the power of language to inspire, instruct, and persuade, demonstrating the enduring significance of religious discourse in shaping human thought and behavior. By uncovering the role of pragmastylistic features in Biblical and Prophetic Hadith texts, the research



not only advances theoretical understanding but also offers practical tools for engaging with sacred texts in meaningful ways. While the study has its limitations, it opens the door to further exploration, inviting scholars to delve deeper into the intricate interplay between language, culture, and religion. Ultimately, this research reminds us of the profound impact of language in conveying the spiritual and moral truths that have guided humanity for centuries.

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