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Use of Color in Holy Qur'an and Arabic Prose

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Abstract: Current study explores the use of "color" in Holy Qur'an and Arabic prose. Classical and modern Arabic writers use colors not merely as visual descriptors but as symbolic markers that convey emotional, psychological, and cultural meanings. Different colors in Arab-Islamic literature symbolizes purity, innocence, and clarity, grief, mystery, dignity, connotations of life, fertility, and spiritual blessing depending on context. In eloquent prose, colors are used metaphorically to intensify imagination, create contrast, and guide the reader's emotional response. This symbolic layering enriches narrative texture and reflects the Arabic language's affinity for vivid, sensory-rich expression. In the Holy Qur'an, color imagination assumes a more profound theological and rhetorical dimension. Colors are used not only for descriptive realism but also to reinforce divine signs and moral reflection. For example, the Qur'an refers to the diversity of colors in nature, such as in plants, mountains, and human appearances, as evidence of Allah's creative power and wisdom.

Keywords: Color; Arabic prose; Holy Qur'an; Arabic texts; simile; metaphor; personification; embodiment

1. Introduction

Arabic literature has evolved through various stages, experiencing diverse ups and down during its life before being integrated into modern Arab renaissance. However, new factors have prepared further grounds for the advancement of Arabic literature, especially prose, which has been, and continues to be, in urgent need of analysis and review. Although current research does not encompass a comprehensive study of Arabic literature, particularly the use of color in Arabic prose, Islamic prose in general and colors in particular have a significant role in Arabic literature. These elements are one of the modes of prose imagery used to express rhetorical and artistic meanings.

Despite the abundance of literary studies on color, the use of color as a rhetorical image has not been studied thoroughly. Thus, this research analyzes previous studies exploring the aesthetic and eloquent use of color in Arabic prose and identifying the patterns of such usage and its effect on the meaning.

Accordingly, this study adopts the analytical method in examining prose texts. The research addresses colors linguistically and terminologically in literature.

"Use of Color in the Holy Qur'an," is followed by the, "Use of Color in Arabic Prose" highlighting the color as an artistic symbol within literary output, giving literary imagery its artistic character.

Previous studies mostly addressed employment of color e in Arabic prose within broader artistic analyses; without a focused and indepth research, as attempted in current study. One of the major challenges faced during this research was the lack of independent sources dealing specifically with color use in Arabic prose or providing practical application of this rhetorical analysis of prose texts. The scarcity of literary evidence limited deeper analysis, particularly concerning texts from the Islamic Arabic era.

2. Use of Color in the Holy Qur'an

Color use in the Holy Qur'an is one of the rhetorical techniques to express inner meanings. It grants prose texts a high aesthetic value, aiding its retention in memory and continued circulation. This phenomenon depends on the manner by which linguistic and semantic structures emerge from its text.

The color is important being the foremost a visual tool that dominates other artistic means, its presence or absence determines the flow of color image. Color is among the most important psychological tools, capable of establishing ideas and emotions. It is, the visible or face of imagination stirring emotions from their depths.

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This usage harmonizes with the deep structure of meaning and the artistic language, making the text a unique fabric. The reader is a special reader who dives deeper meanings. Colors profoundly affect our perception of life; each color carries a unique significance and psychological impact.

For instance, the green color in the Qur'an symbolizes goodness, bliss, and beauty:

Reclining on green cushions and beautiful fine carpets" (Al-Rahman: 7)

Similarly, it represents fertility after rain:

"Seven green ears of corn and others dry" (Yusuf: 43)

Dark green color indicates the dense trees of Paradise:

"Dark green in color" (Al-Rahman: 64)

Black suggests darkness, sorrow, and grief while yellow conveys joy and delight:

*"It is a yellow cow, bright in color, pleasing to the observers" (*Al-Baqarah: 69*)*

It can also symbolize decay:

"And you see it turning yellow" (Ar-Rum: 51)

It also signals mortality and barrenness as in: *"...then it dries up and you see it turn yellow; then it becomes stubble"* (Al-Hadid: 20).

White color indicates brilliance, daylight, dawn, and morning.For light and dawn *"until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread…"* (Al-Baqarah: 187).The color of the faces of the people of Paradise: *"But as for those whose faces will be white, they will be in Allah's mercy…"* (Aal 'Imran: 107); illness and grief: *"And his eyes became white from grief…"* (Yusuf: 84); the miracle: "...it was white for the beholders" (Al-A'raf: 108); mountain trails: *"And from the mountains are white and red, of varying colors"* (Fatir: 27); and the drink of Paradise: *"White, delicious to those who drink"* (Al-Saffat:46).

The blue color describes fear and terror at the Day of Judgment as *"We will gather the criminals that Day blue-eyed"* (Taha: 102).

Red is used to indicate mountain trails and varied natural colors: *"...white and red, of varying colors"* (Fatir/27). Rose color paints the sky at its splitting: "*...and has become pink like [oil] paint*" (Al-Rahman/37).

The red color appears in descriptions of mountains and fruits as : "*...white and red, of varying colors*" (Fatir:27).

The rose or pink color depicts the sky at its splitting: *"...and has become pink like [oil] paint"* (Al-Rahman: 37)

Thus, color usage forms a dynamic element within textual construction, enhancing emotional depth and aesthetic expression.

3. Use of Color in Arabic Prose

Use of Color in Arabic prose is one of the rhetorical techniques used by writers to express meanings and expand imagination. It enables the communicator to project attributes of praise or criticism within the literary work, reflecting experiential realities.

The artistic image, central to literary expression, relies on imagination shaped by lived experience. Through this, the writer constructs symbolic imagination reflecting personal vision.

For example, *"You were on the edge of a pit of fire..."* (al-Baghdadi 1999). The text includes eloquent similes that paint weakness, humiliation, and fear, then salvation through the Prophet. In the sermons of Ziyad: *"Who drowns a people, we will drown him; who burns a people, we will burn him..."* (al-Jahiz 1948). Khalid ibn Safwan described a land: *"The earth took its adornment... like scattered carpets... and its soil like camphor…"* (al-Halabi 1962). Zayd ibn Maniyah: *"...I traveled to you for two months... at times donning the cloaks of night... at others wading through mirages..."* (al-Qalqashandi 1913). Tariq ibn Ziyad: *"...beautiful daughters of the Greeks... adorned with pearls and coral..."* (al-Tilmisani 1968). Hafsa bint Umar: *"His light shines in darkness, his radiance gleams in shadows"* (al-Aabi 1980). Lady Fatimah al-Zahraa: *"The truth dawned in its pure form..."* (see root 'safar').

Another Qur'anic borrowing: *"And the earth darkened with his absence"* (al-Majlisi 1404H).

Classical prose texts demonstrate rich examples of color-based rhetoric. For instance, in descriptions of pre-Islamic Arab conditions, imagery reflects weakness and vulnerability through vivid metaphors. Similarly, in oratory texts such as those of Ziyad or Khalid ibn Safwan, color imagery enhances rhetorical force and emotional effect.

These expressions rely on stylistic devices such as simile, metaphor, personification and embodiment. The use of color interacts with rhythm, especially in rhymed prose, amplifying emotional and aesthetic resonance.

Prominent examples include descriptions of Andalusian landscapes as richly adorned with green carpets and white fabrics, metaphorical expressions such as "wearing the garments of night" to convey darkness and hardship and symbolic use of light imagery to denote guidance, knowledge, and righteousness.

In speeches attributed to figures such as Fatimah al-Zahra, color metaphors elevate moral and theological arguments. Expressions like: *"Truth has dawned in its purity"* present abstract concepts through luminous imagery, blending sensory perception with intellectual meaning.

Color usage thus serves as a core structural element in forming artistic imagery, integrating sensory and abstract layers to influence the recipient's cognition and emotions.

4. Conclusion

Color in Arabic prose reflects artistic subjectivity and inner aesthetic expression. It is closely linked with simile due to its clear relational structure and contributes significantly to meaning within texts. It plays both artistic and psychological roles, influencing the reader's emotional response. It was instrumental in the development of Arabic oral speeches, especially in political and religious discourse. Qur'anic language greatly influenced stylistic and semantic dimensions of color usage. It enriched rhetorical techniques such as metaphor and analogy. It was widely employed in Umayyad era for persuasion and emphasis. Its effectiveness depends on context and the speaker's psychological state. It appears naturally rather than artificially in stylistic embellishment. It contributes to clarity, simplicity, and rhetorical effectiveness. Its language remains balanced, neither overly simplistic nor obscure, thus maintaining stylistic elegance.

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