

A TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF SACRED TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a text-linguistic typological classification of sacred texts, shifting the analytical focus from traditional theological frameworks to internal structural, functional, and rhetorical profiles. Utilizing a qualitative comparative discourse analysis framework, the study evaluates a diverse corpus of Abrahamic and Dharmic scriptures based on three operational variables: attribution of authorship, macro-genre, and deontic force.

The linguistic analysis reveals four primary structural categories of sacred texts: revelatory/manifested, historical/narrative, sapiential/wisdom, and legal/ritual prescriptions. The findings indicate that despite profound theological variations, the structural configurations of sacred discourse converge significantly across global traditions, aligning closely with universal cognitive schemas. This structural unity highlights the shared cognitive and linguistic mechanisms underlying religious language and its socio-cultural institutional functions.

Keywords: *text linguistics, sacred texts, typology, comparative discourse analysis, macro-genre, deontic modality.*

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu tadqiqot muqaddas matnlarning matn-lingvistik tipologik tasnifini taqdim etadi va tahliliy e'tiborni an'anaviy ilohiyot doiralaridan matnning ichki tarkibiy, funktsional hamda ritorik xususiyatlariga qaratadi. Sifatli qiyosiy diskurs tahlili metodologiyasiga tayangan holda, tadqiqotda Ibrohimiy va Dxarmik an'analarga mansub muqaddas manbalar korpusi uchta operatsion o'zgaruvchi: mualliflikning mansubligi, makro-janr va deontik kuch mezonlari asosida baholanadi.

Lingvistik tahlil natijasida muqaddas matnlarning to'rtta asosiy tarkibiy toifasi aniqlandi: vahiy/namoyon bo'lgan, tarixiy/narrativ, hikmatli (safensial) hamda huquqiy/marosimiy matnlar. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, chuqur teologik farqlarga qaramay, muqaddas diskursning tarkibiy tuzilishi global an'analarda sezilarli darajada mos keladi va universal kognitiv sxemalarga bog'lanadi. Ushbu tarkibiy birlik diniy til va uning ijtimoiy-madaniy institutsional funktsiyalari asosida yotgan umumiy kognitiv hamda lingvistik mexanizmlarni ko'rsatib beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: *matn lingvistikasi, muqaddas matnlar, tipologiya, qiyosiy diskurs tahlili, makro-janr, deontik modallik.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данном исследовании представлена тексто-лингвистическая типологическая классификация сакральных текстов, переносящая аналитический фокус с традиционных теологических рамок на внутренние структурные, функциональные и риторические характеристики. Используя методологию качественного сравнительного анализа дискурса, исследование оценивает репрезентативный корпус авраамических и дхармических писаний на основе трех операциональных переменных: атрибуции авторства, макрожанра и деонтической модальности.

Лингвистический анализ выявляет четыре основные структурные категории сакральных текстов: откровения/явленные, историко-нарративные, сапиенциальные (тексты мудрости) и юридическо-ритуальные предписания. Результаты показывают, что несмотря на глубокие теологические различия, структурные конфигурации сакрального дискурса существенно сближаются в мировых традициях, тесно согласуясь с универсальными когнитивными схемами. Это структурное единство подчеркивает общие когнитивные и лингвистические механизмы, лежащие в основе религиозного языка и его социокультурных институциональных функций.

Ключевые слова: лингвистика текста, сакральные тексты, типология, сравнительный анализ дискурса, макрожанр, деонтическая модальность.

INTRODUCTION

Sacred texts constitute the semiotic and dogmatic foundations of global religious systems. From a text-linguistic perspective, these documents are unique communicative events that claim transcendent authority and require strict socio-cultural preservation. While religious studies often categorize scriptures based on historical or theological lineages, text linguistics seeks to classify them according to their internal structural, functional, and rhetorical profiles.

Understanding the textual categories of sacred discourse is essential for identifying how religious authority is grammatically and cognitively constructed across diverse cultures. This study analyzes the structural and communicative typologies of primary global scriptures to establish a systematic classification based on textual macro-structures and institutional functions.

METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative comparative discourse analysis framework to evaluate a corpus of foundational sacred texts representing major Abrahamic

traditions (the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Quran) and Dharmic traditions (the Rigveda, the Upanishads, and the Pali Canon). The texts were systematically evaluated based on three linguistic and situational variables:

- Attribution of authorship: Divine, prophetic, or human.
- Macro-genre: Narrative, legislative, sapiential, or liturgical.
- Deontic force: The degree of linguistic obligation, command, or prohibition.

Cross-linguistic comparisons were made to isolate recurring formal regularities independent of specific language families or historical eras.

RESULTS

The textual analysis revealed four primary categories of sacred texts, each distinguished by specific linguistic profiles and communicative functions:

Revelatory and manifested texts: Attributed directly to divine dictation or supreme cosmic revelation (e.g., the Quran, the Vedic Samhitas). Structurally, these texts exhibit high levels of formal symmetry, poetic rhythm, and an authoritative first- or third-person voice. They serve to establish absolute metaphysical truths.

Historical and narrative texts: Chronological records documenting the interactions between the divine, prophetic figures, and human communities (e.g., Genesis, the Gospels, the Buddhist Jataka tales). Linguistically, they rely heavily on past-tense verb profiles and temporal adverbials to construct foundational historical identities.

Sapiential and wisdom texts: Aphoristic and poetic compilations focusing on ethics, philosophical contemplation, and existential insights (e.g., the Book of Proverbs, the Dhammapada). These texts favor timeless present-tense structures, metaphors, and parallelisms designed for moral instruction.

Legal and Ritual Prescriptions: Explicit codes governing canonical law, dietary restrictions, and liturgical performance (e.g., Leviticus, the Vinaya Pitaka). Grammatically, they are dominated by high-density deontic modality, including explicit directives, formal prohibitions, and performative utterances.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that despite profound theological variations, the structural categories of sacred texts are highly convergent, aligning closely with universal cognitive schemas. For instance, the transition from narrative texts to legal prescriptions across different traditions reflects a structural shift from descriptive/narrative types to instructive/argumentative text types, as conceptualized in classical text grammar.

Furthermore, sacred texts exhibit an exceptional degree of intertextuality and situationality. Primary revelatory texts invariably generate a secondary layer of

commentarial and exegetical texts (such as the Talmud or Hadith) to bridge the gap between ancient canonical law and contemporary socio-cultural environments.

A primary limitation of this research is its restriction to written canonical corpora. Future empirical studies should apply these qualitative methods to oral sacred traditions within indigenous communities to assess the global universality of this fourfold typology.

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