

A Critical Psycholinguistic Study of Sufism in "The Forty Rules of Love"

Maamoon S. Salih, Sameerah Atshan Al –Fayadh

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: July 02, 2020 Accepted: August 04, 2020 Keywords Sufism; image; psycholinguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Gee 2011 DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4153526	<i>Sufism, the essential mystical tradition in Islam has appeared from within renunciatory manners of piety (ZUHD) during a period that extended from last decades of the second / eighth to the fourth / tenth century (Karamustafa, 2007:1). This study investigates the image of Sufism in "The Forty Rules of Love" by ElifShafak(2010) and tries to answer the following questions: How does Sufism as an image influence the writer of the novel and the characters □How does Shafak executes different themes under the brilliant façade of Sufism? How does language signals power and control in the Forty Rules? What connections and relationships drawn via language in the analysis of the Forty Rules?The study aims at: Arriving at influences of Sufism as an image in the Forty Rules.Pinpointing how language signals power and control in the Forty Rules. Arriving at connections and relationships drawn via language in the Forty Rules.This study is limited to analyze Sufism as an ideology in ElifShafak's 'The Forty Rules of Love 2010' and to deal with Sufism from a psycholinguistic perspective. In order to achieve the aims of the study and to test its hypothesis, the following procedures are followed: Selecting texts that fit the aims of this study. Analyzing texts according to an eclectic model. It is concluded that "Sufism as an image has influenced people's minds, values, traditions.The Forty Rules have not signaled fully political issues. Power and control have not revealed in them, except of Allah's. Connection and Relationship through language are so clear in the Forty Rules".</i>

1. Introduction

Sufism, the essential mystical tradition in Islam has appeared from within renunciatory manners of piety (ZUHD) during a period that extended from last decades of the second / eighth to the fourth / tenth century (Karamustafa, 2007:1).

Both *Sufi* and *Sufism* are terms adopted from Arabic (ibid: 6).

By practicing Sufism, Sufis seek to have a close, personal experience of God. Sufism is less a cluster or split from Islam, and more of an aspect of the Islamic belief — Sufis also consider themselves to be Muslim, and like any sincere Muslim, they pray five times a day and track the instructions of Muhammad. Sufism simply contains more mysticism and ceremonials, like the spinning dance done by "whirling dervishes." It is defined by (Friedlander ,2003:1) as an account of the Sufi order of Mevlevi dervishes and its originator, the poet and mystic Mevlana *Jalaluddin Rumi*, grants the mysterious wisdom of the Sufis as it has been handed down from the senior teachers of the past without separating the contemporary reader. Further more, Rumi's life story, explanations of dervishes past and present are added. special are excerpts from Rumi's poetry, knowledges of other Sufi chiefs, descriptions of the dervish cabins and the symbolism of the dervish ceremonial, and an outline of the music that goes with the Mevlevis' dances, etc. In Arabic, Sufi means "man of wool" (web-source 1).

This study investigates the image of Sufism in "The Forty Rules of Love" by ElifShafak and tries to answer the following questions:

- 1-How does *Sufism* as an image influence the writer of the novel and the characters?
- 2- How does Shafak executes different themes under the brilliant façade of *Sufism*?
- 3-How does language signals power and control in the Forty Rules?
- 4-What connections and relationships drawn via language in the analysis of the Forty Rules?

1.2 The Aims of the Study

- 1-Arriving at influences of *Sufism* as an image in the Forty Rules.
- 2-Pinpointing how language signals power and control in the Forty Rules.
- 3-Arriving at connections and realationships drawn via language in the Forty Rules.

1.3 The Hypotheses of the Study

It is hypothesized that:

- 1-*Sufism* as an image has influenced people's minds, values, traditions, etc.
- 2-Themes like; love, religion, betrayal, friendship, etc. are depicted in the Forty Rules.
- 3-Language, successfully, signals power and control in the Forty Rules for certain political issues.

4-Strong ties through language, portrayed by two items that are (Connection and Relationship) and well- depicted in the Forty Rules .

1.4 The Limits of the Study

This study is limited to analyze *Sufism* as an ideology in ElifShafak's '*The Forty Rules of Love 2010*' and to deal with Sufism from a psycholinguistic perspective.

1.5 The Procedures of the Study

In order to achieve the aims of the study and to test its hypothesis, the following procedures are followed:

- 1-Selecting texts that fit the aims of this study.
- 2.Analyzing texts according to an eclectic model.

2. Sufism

2.1 Major Features of Sufis and Sufism

Sufism as a trend has some features and characteristics. Here, we will mention the most, but not all of them:

- 1-Early Sufis were mainly disturbed with obtaining knowledge (ma'rifa) of God unity.
- 2-Distilling the actuality of the Islamic profession of faith 'There is no God but God'.
- 3-Human life is like a journey towards the ever- elusive aim of achieving true 'God Consciousness'.
- 4-Human beings are being observed as God's servants(Karamustafa, 2007:19).
- 5- In Sufism, Muslims try to find the truth of godly love and understanding through direct personal knowledge of God. It consists of a diversity of mystical paths that are designed to determine the nature of humanity and of God and to ease the experience of the presence of heavenly love and wisdom in the creation.
- 6-The word Sufism is resulting from the root 'suf' (wool), which denotes both the woolen clothing that Sufi Muslim puritans and dervishes wear in refusal of colourful, sophisticated clothes, and the notion of 'saf'/'safw' "purity, clarity" (web source 2).
- 7-Practicing Sufism leads to the evolution of inborn spiritual and intuitive capabilities.
- 8-It is neither (*faqr*) nor(*zuhd*). It is a word which comprehends the idea of them both with other things beside (web- source 3).
- 8-The discourse formation of Sufi that refers to Koranic teaching proves their linguistic formation(Coppens,2018:1).
- 9-The folk tradition and the encouragement of women participation (ibid:41).

2.2 The Novel in Words

'*The Forty Rules of Love*' is a love story. Make that two love stories, juxtaposing a contemporary man-woman love story against the backdrop of an ancient tale of the bond between Rumi, the poet, and his Sufi master, Shams of Tabriz. The Forty Rules of Love is a 2009 novel by ElifShafak. The book tells the story of Ella Rubinstein, a woman in her late thirties who has settled into the complacency of her life. She exists without drive or passion. The narrative follows her unlikely escape from what at first appears to be inevitable unhappiness. The novel also concerns itself with the deep, fraternal love between Sufi dervish Shams of Tabriz and the mystical scholar-poet Rumi. The story of Shams and Rumi comes to Ella through a book she is reviewing for her new job as an assistant to a literary agent; that book, *Sweet Blasphemy*, is a novel about the lives of the two mystics and the friends, families, and enemies they touched. As Ella reads *Sweet Blasphemy*, she becomes increasingly aware of the lack of love in her life compared to the love experienced by the characters in the book. Ella tends to relate to the world around her through her relationships, and her dual roles of mother and wife. Pouring over the pages of *Sweet Blasphemy*, Ella grows discontent with her passionless marriage to David and inspired by the love related by the author, Aziz. This study guide references the 2011 Penguin Books Edition of the text(web- source 4)

ElifShafak's '*The Forty Rules of Love*'(2010) conveys two parallel stories that reflect each other across two very dissimilar cultures and seven intervening centuries (Shihada, 2019:1).

2.3 The Novelist

ElifShafak was born in Strasbourg, France, in 1971. She is an award-winning author and the most far and wide read woman writer in Turkey. Her books have been interpreted into more than twenty languages. Shafak spent her teen years in Madrid, Spain before returning to her native Turkey(web- source 5).

2.4 Themes of the Novel

- 1-Religion forms an underlying theme of the novel, but Shafak's story suggests that the fundamental purpose of all religions is to practice Love and tolerance with a common end to unite with the Creator. There are several examples in the novel that interconnect different religions or necessitate bonding of religion and spirituality. Rumi marries a Christian who although converted, always carries the love of Mary in her heart. Ella was a Christian who married a Jew and then fell in love with Sufi Aziz. Her daughter wants to marry a Christian(Faiyaz,2019:1).
- 2-Addressing the issue of religious clashes, ElifShafak articulates her

thought in the novel by saying that faith is only a word if there is no love at its centre (Faiyaz,2019:4), so **"flaccid and lifeless,ague and hollow-not anything you could truly feel"** (Safak,2010).

3-Fighting each other, Shafak writes in the novel that instead of losing themselves in the Love of God and fighting against their ego, religious zealots fight other people, generating wave after wave of fear. Their life is a state of bitterness and hollowness, and discontentment follows them wherever they go(Faiyaz,2019:5).

4-Love represents a great area in the novel. **"If you let love take hold of you and change you, at first through its presence, then through its absence"** (Safak,2010:327). Many characters have love affairs with others; Shams and Rumi, Ella and Aziz have the greatest love tales in the novel.

5-Mysticism and poetry have always been important elements in Islamic cultures. This has been the case throughout the centuries. The Muslim world is not composed of a single color. And it is not static at all.

6-The friendship between Jalal ad-Din Rumi and Shams of Tabriz must rank among the most influential in history. The two men, followers of the mystical Sufi tradition, met in the Anatolian city of Konya in 1244 – a troubled time in a region where Christian crusaders and Muslim Mongols were tearing chunks out of the old empires(Stratuss,2010:1).

7-A psychological novel on the other hand is one that is centered on some kind of a psychological plot. This could be crime (dealing with psychopaths or sociopaths and the crimes they commit), thriller (dealing with the tension and drama of events and relationships involving people with unusual psychology), bildungsroman (coming of age stories that involve people overcoming psychological challenges), medical (stories involving patients or studies of specific psychological phenomena), and so on.This psychological novel could follow a traditional format or could be written in a more freestyle narrative, perhaps even Stream of Consciousness! I hope that makes the difference between the two clear.)Panicker,2018:2).

For this reason, the researchers are dealing with this data from a psychological point of view. Besides, they are investigating it critically through analyzing the ideology (**Sufism**).

3.1 The Model of Analysis

The primary focus of this study is the contribution of **Sufism** as an ideology in social life through applying discursive practices that leads to their value's construction, therefore, and in order to achieve the aims of the study and to test the validity of its hypothesis, the researchers have developed an eclectic model of (**The model of psycholinguistic image analysis**(MPIA, henceforth)of Balandina and Peredrienko,2019), where the psycholinguistic image analysis helps to understand the difference between national cultures and find out their complementarity at the level world culture (Balandina and Peredrienko,2019:2).On the other hand, Balandina and Peredrienko(2019:1) claim that "any phenomena of reality perceived by a person in the process of his activity and communication are revealed in his linguistic consciousness".The second selected model is of Gee's functions of language 2011. He declares that our aim of writing or speaking is with reality. It is constructed in seven building blocks. He called them' building tasks' of language of which a text an analyst can work on. Three functions are selected, since they achieve the objectives for this study:

a)-**Political**, language in the form of power and control can signal what is correct and good behaviour. b)-**Connection**, language can draw connections between certain things or create a disconnect. c)-**Relationship**, language can signal the type of relationship the speaker/writer has or wants to have with others(Gee,2011).

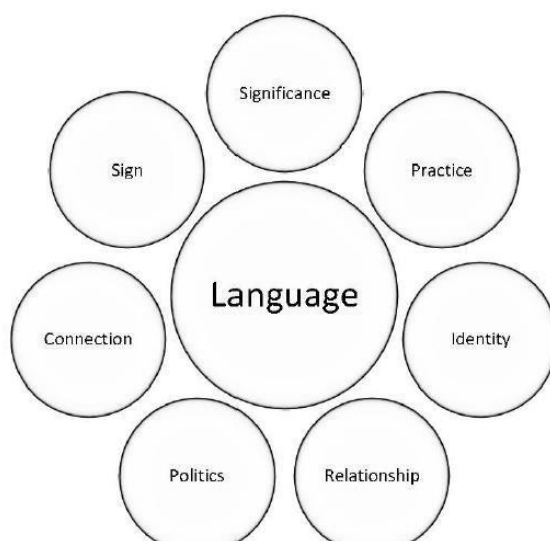


Figure (1) Gee's Functions of Language

3.2 Text Analysis

RULE (1)-*How we see God is a direct reflection of how we see ourselves. If God brings to mind mostly fear and blame, it means there is too much fear and blame welled inside us. If we see God as full of love and compassion, so are we.*"(Shafak,2010)

1-MPIA: It is very clear in this text that the image of *God* is reflected in

The mind due to the person's own idea of himself. "*How we see God is a direct reflection of how we see ourselves* "

2-Political: In this text, we can detect power and control reflected through fear of God "*If God brings to mind mostly fear and blame*" and this fear, on the other hand, determines how should we behave correctly and well.

3-Connection: There is a great connection in this text between how we see God and how we see ourselves. If the image of God brings fear and blame, that means how guilty and sinful we are.

4-Relation: The relation between Great God and His worshipers is a relation of love and compassion. He loves all His creatures".....*we see God as full of love and compassion..*"

RULE(4)- "*You can study God through everything and everyone in the Universe, because God is not confined in a mosque, synagogue, or church. But if you are still in need of knowing where exactly His abode is, there is only one place to look for Him: in the heart of a true lover. There is no one who has lived seeing Him, just like there is no one has died after seeing Him. Whoever finds Him, will remain with Him forever.*"(Shafak, 2010)

1-MPIA: In this rule, the image of '*Allah*' in the heart of His true lover is professionally drawn and dedected. The true lover is necessarily the *SUFI*. This image is not limited with objects or people "*But if you are still in need of knowing where exactly His abode is, there is only one place to look for Him: in the heart of a true lover* ".

2-Relationship: Language signals a relationship that the writer wants to reveal in this text. It is the relation between the one who seeks Allah and worship places ".....*God is not confined in a mosque, synagogue, or church*".

RULE(7)- "*Whatever happens in your life, no matter how troubling things might seem, do not enter the neighborhood of despair. Even when all doors remain closed, God will open up a new path only for you. Be thankful! It is easy to be thankful when all is well. A Sufi is thankful not only for what he has been given but also for all that he has been denied*"(Shafak,2010).

1-MPIA: The image of *life* is clear in this discourse. It is depicted, by the writer, as an epicenter of troubles, but not in the mind of a good Sufi. "*Whatever happens in your life, no matter how troubling things might seem.....,*"

Second, the image of *Great God* as a helper and problem solver as it is portrayed in the mind of a conformist Sufi is so obvious in this rule "*God will open up a new path only for you*". Third, the image of *thankful Sufi* is also well-depicted in this rule "*A Sufi is thankful not only for what he has been given but also for all that he has been denied.*".

2-Connection: A great connection is so clear between thanks devoted to Great God (as a feature of a loyal worshiper) and solving all problems through His help and blessings "*Be thankful! It is easy to be thankful when all is well.*".

3-Relationship: The relation between Allah and his loving adorer(the Sufi) is well- signaled by a language created by the writer. "*Whatever happens in your life, no matter how troubling things might seem, do not enter the neighborhood of despair. Even when all doors remain closed, God will open up a new path only for you. Be thankful* ". It is the dovetail that is never been cut. It is the connection between a lover and his beloved. It is the relation of a Sufi who loves no one ,but his God.

RULE(14)- "*God is busy with the completion of your work, both outwardly and inwardly. He is fully occupied with you. Every human-being is a work in progress that is slowly but inexorably moving towards perfection. We are each an unfinished work of art both waiting and striving to be completed. God deals with each of us separately because humanity is a fine art of skilled penmanship where every single dot is equally important for the entire picture*"(Shafak,2010).

1-MPIA: In this rule, there are two extraordinary images. The first is the human being is depicted and portrayed in the mind of the novelist that Man is as a '*work of art*'. Allah is working on it slowly, but inexorably to be completed. Exactly when a professional works on a masterpiece "*Every human-being is a work in progress that is slowly but inexorably moving towards perfection. We are each an unfinished work of art both waiting and striving to be completed.* ". The second image perceived is the image of '*a fine art of skilled penmanship*'. It is the art of skill of writing by hand. It is a very precise work that need a talent and an unusual skill .The one who is interested in this métier has to be very aware of every bit "*God deals with each of us separately because humanity is a fine art of skilled penmanship where every single dot is equally important for the entire picture*".

2-Connection: These parcels of this discourse are fully connected with each other as it is shown in elements like; *(completion of your work, both outwardly and inwardly), (We are each an unfinished work of art both waiting and striving to be completed).*

3- Relationship: There is a great relation in this text between God and Man as *in:(He is fully occupied with you),(God deals with each of us.....), (....because humanity is a fine art of skilled penmanship where every single dot is equally important for the entire picture).*

RULE(21)- *“ When a true lover of God goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his chamber of prayer, but when a wine bibber goes into the same chamber, it becomes his tavern. In everything we do, it is our hearts that make the difference, not our outer appearances. Sufis do not judge other people on how they look or who they are.. When a Sufi stares at someone, he keeps both eyes closed and instead opens a third eye—the eye that sees the inner realm ”(Shafak,2010).*

1-MAIA: There are two images in this text that are detected and perceived via the readers of this novel. The first is the image of 'true lover'. The second is of 'wine bibber'. The two images are comparable, although they are the opposite. We have the image of a true lover of God compared with a wine addicted, who is not obeying His instructions *“When a true lover of God goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his chamber of prayer, but when a wine bibber goes into the same chamber, it becomes his tavern”.*

The image of ' a Sufi judge' that doesn't make his judgment on appearances. Instead he uses a third eye that is his acumen is well-portrayed in this text *“Sufis do not judge other people on how they look or who they are. When a Sufi stares at someone, he keeps both eyes closed and instead opens a third eye—the eye that sees the inner realm.”*

2-Connection: There is a great connection drawn via language in this text and clearly shown in examples like; *(true lover who turns a tavern into a chamber), (the wine bibber who turns a chamber into an inn), (an obvious connection between what is in our hearts and how do we behave).*

3-Relation: In this rule, language signals the sort of relation between God and His lovers *“When a true lover of God.....”*, this unusual relation that is represented as a lover and his lovable. In addition, we have the relation of a faithful man with his chamber of prayer, and the relation of the drunkard and his pub.

RULE(28)- *“The true Sufi is such that even when he is unjustly accused, attacked and condemned from all sides, he patiently endures, uttering not a single bad word about any of his critics. A Sufi never apportions blame. How can these be opponents or rivals or even “others” when there is no “self” in the first place? How can there be any one to blame when there is only One?”(Shafak,2010).*

1-MPIA: In this text, the image of a Sufi is ideally pictured *“The true Sufi is.....”*. S/he is patient, does not utter bad words, doesn't blame, not put him/ herself first. A Sufi is ideal and perfect.

RULE (37)- *“While the parts change, the whole always remains the same. For every thief who departs this world, a new one is born. And every decent person who passes away is replaced by a new one. In this way not only does nothing remain the same but also nothing ever really changes. For every Sufi who dies, another is born somewhere”(Shafak,2010).*

1-MPIA:In this rule, the image of *renewal* is well-depicted. The idea of replacement (the action or the process of replacing someone or something) is fully portrayed in this text. Sufis believe that nothing will last forever and immortality is only for God *“For every thief who departs this world, a new one is born. And every decent person who passes away is replaced by a new one ”.*

2-Political:In this text, the form of power and control signals what is correct in this world. God has the absolute power over all creatures. He can change everyone and everything. Sufis have the full believe in that *“For every Sufi who dies, another is born somewhere.”*

3-Connection: A great connection has been created via language between things that change through new creation, death, departure,etc.

4-Relationship: An obvious relation is detected in this rule between 'parts' and the 'whole', 'who departs'and'who is newly born', 'die' and *born'*, etc.

Table (1) The Frequency of the Eclectic Model Items

No.	Items	Freq.	%	
1.	MPIA	9	42.85%	
2.	Political	2	9.5%	
3.	Connection	5	23.8%	
4.	Relationship	5	23.8%	
	Total	21	100%	

4.Findings and Conclusions

Table (1) shows the following:

1-MPIA has achieved the highest frequency of recurrence and has (9 times) that equals (42.85%). This leads to the idea that there are different images related to Sufism. And this ideology has many faces.

2-**Political** has (2 times) of frequency that equals (9.5%).

3- Finally, the items (**Relationship and Connection**) have scored (5 times) of frequency that equals (23.8%). So that leads to the idea that language is firmly related and firmly connected in these texts.

5. Conclusions

It is concluded that:

1- Sufism as an image has influenced people's minds, values, traditions so the first hypothesis is confirmed.

2- The Forty Rules have not signal fully political issues and power and control have not revealed in them, except of Allah.

3- Connection and Relationship through language are so clear in the Forty Rules, therefore, the third and fourth hypothesis are affirmed.

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Author Information

Asst. Prof. Maamoon S. Salih (PhD)

University of Babylon/ College of Education/ Dept. of English.

Asst. Lect: Sameerah Atshan Al –Fayadh

Ministry of Iraqi Education
