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Religion, Ideology and Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Majlis-e-Hussain

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Abstract

This paper intends to examine religious ideology and discourse conventions of *majlis-e*-Hussain; i.e. the speech to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Mohammad; from a critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) perspective. The analysis involves identification of multiple linguistic devices such as pronominalization, recontextualization, resemantisization, implicatures, interactional strategies and cohesive links; which serve to perpetuate the religious ideologies in Shi'ah Muslims of Pakistan. In this way, this paper makes an attempt to highlight the way *majlis* discourse delegitimizes and deconstructs sectarian prejudice still prevalent in Pakistani society; and hence argues for a broader interpretation of *majlis*-e-Hussain than merely associating it with Moharram mourning rituals.

Keywords

Majlis-e-Hussain, Shi'ah Muslims, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Moharram mourning rituals

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Introduction

This paper provides a close study to examine the distinguishing features of *majlis*-e-Hussain i.e. the speech to commemorate the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Hussain; and the way discursive choices of certain linguistic devices, implicatures and generic conventions serve to establish it a distinct speech genre. Through *majlis**, Sh'iah Muslims mourn over the martyrdom of Hussain and his seventy two companions who were all 'slaughtered' in 680 AD by the 'unjust and unholy' Umayyad rulers of the time (Armstrong, 2000: 46). *Majlis*, like other mourning rituals for Imam Hussain, serves many purposes for Shi'ia community such as seeking *waseela* (mediation) from the saints**,** learning religious rituals, seeking God's pleasure and rewards and so on ('*Azadari*; mourning for Imam Hussain', 2009). To achieve these ends, *majlis* reciters have to follow typical discourse conventions which construct certain discursive reality for the mourners and weigh heavily on the formation of their distinctive religious ideology. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to examine the ideological contents and Shiite cult preaching as embedded in the Pakistani *majlis* discourse, which when deconstructed can reveal considerable information about the formation of Shi'ism as a distinct Muslim sect, its fundamental principles and the rationale behind the rituals and mourning ceremonies. The way *majlis* attempts to achieve all these objectives and comes out to be a unique speech genre is prompted the following research questions:

- What generic conventions are followed by *majlis-e*-Hussain which mark it as a multipurpose mourning ritual for *Shi'ah* community?
- What key themes and Shiite cults recur in *majlis* discourse?
- What linguistic devices are preferred by a *majlis* reciter to inculcate Shiite ideologies and beliefs in the listeners?

The investigation of these questions can yield considerable insight into the rationale of Shiite mourning ceremonies and *Shi'ah* religious beliefs. The ultimate question is whether the discursive practices of this type 'contribute considerably to the construction of mental models' (Polovina-vokovic, 2004:156) for the members of *Shi'ah* community or influence the way in which they call for, accept and reinforce the linguistic conventions followed by *majlis* reciters traditionally.

(*The definitions of religious terms in italics have been provided in alphabetical order in Appendix.)

According to British Encyclopedia for the year 1997 about 20% of population of Pakistani Muslims comprises of *Shi'ahs* which are predominantly twelvers or *ithna ashariya* Shi'ahs ('How many *Shias* are there in the world', 1999). Twelvers or *ithna ashariya* Shi'ahs believe in twelve imams or twelve absolute leaders of the nation who according to them deserve allegiance from Muslims all over the world (Hitti, 2002; Mahmud, 2004). In fact, Shi'iah sect is sub-divided into different factions other than twelvers or *ithna ashariya* sect. Out of them *ismailites* and *zaidis* (see Appendix) are the most prominent ones (Hitti, 2002; Mahmud, 2004; Armstrong, 2001). But it is *ithna ashariya* (twelvers) sub-sect which is considered the 'the main body of Shi'ah' Muslim community (Hitti, 2002: 441).

There is no certainty as to when the Shia community first established itself in South Asia. It is believed that Shi'ism reached in South Asian sub-continent through Iranian merchants and immigrants who promoted it among Muslim notables in southern India (Ali, 2010; Rizvi, 2008; Cole, 1989). In addition 'urban trades people and some peasants also created their own form of twelver Shi'ism, based especially on mourning rites for the Prophet (Muhammad)'s martyred grandson, Husayn' (Cole, 1989: 16). *Majlis-e*-Hussain along with *marsiya* is one of the traditions of mourning rites of Hussain. According to Armstrong (2000), mourning rites of Hussain—which include weeping, beating the bodies, recitation of *majalis* (gatherings) and singing dirges— developed fully three hundred years after Karbala tragedy. The rituals to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussain stand for declaration of 'undying opposition to the corruption of Muslim political life' (Armstrong, 2000: 46). This centuries old tradition of mourning the Karbala tragedy still persists among Shi'ahs all over the world and Pakistan is no exception. It is by the virtue of foregrounded Muharram's mourning rituals that historically excluded Shi'ah minority of Pakistan is highlighted.

Majlis-e-Hussain as a distinct speech genre

The term *majlis* 'has both a grammatical meaning and a meaning which relates to mourning of Hussain. In its technical sense, a *majlis* is a meeting, a session or a gathering. In reference to Karbala tragedy, it means a gathering to mourn Hussain and his companion's martyrdom. In this particular sense it was first used by sixth Shi'ah imam, Jafar

Sadiq' (Dilbahar, 2005:7; Rahim, 2005:7). It is a popular belief among Shi'ahs that first ever *majlis*-e-Hussain was recited by Zainab-binte-Ali, Hussain's sister (Dilbahar, 2005:12; Rahim, 2005:12). Notwithstanding the form, the essence of mourning rituals of martyrs of Karbala has always been remembrance of Hussain, his family members and little army of his followers who were surrounded and later martyred by Ummayad troops on the plain of Karbala outside Kufa (Armstrong, 2000: 46).

Majlis-e-Hussain as Performance

Bauman (1975) suggests that verbal art (like *majlis)* as performance represents 'a transformation of the basic referential uses of language. Performance sets up, or represents an interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood, and that this frame contrasts with at least one other frame, the literal' (p.292). Following Bauman's (1975) terminology it could be said that *majlis* like any other form of verbal art involves 'artistic action' and 'artistic event—the performance situation, involving performer, art form, audience and setting'… (p.290). Performance could also be declared as a unifying thread tying together all the above mentioned apparently diverse elements into unified conception of a way of speaking. Thus performance is a 'cover term for verbal art as action, the situated doing of artistic oral forms' (Bauman, 1993: p.182).

Majlis-e-Hussain is a peculiar verbal art which could be regarded as 'a focal point of tradition and as a focal point of artistic expression' (Keenan, 1973: 226). As it has already been mentioned *Majlis-eHussain* or simply *Majlis* is a sacred religious ceremony attended by *Shia* Muslim devotees to commemorate the Karbala tragedy. Karbala tragedy happened because Muawiyah—the ruler of Islamic state at that time—appointed his son Yazid to be his successor before his death in the spring of 680 (Halm, 2007: 8). The transfer of power signaled *Shian-e-Ali* or followers of Ali to declare Hussain the next caliph who according to them was the only rightful successor to Prophet Muhammad after Ali and Hassan. The name of *Shi'ah* sect is derived from the Arabic phrase *Shian-e-Ali*, or the party of Ali. The title *Shian-e-Ali* is ascribed to that faction of Muslims who immediately after the death of Prophet Mohammad claimed that it was Ali's (Prophet's cousin and son-in-law) right to succeed the Prophet (Bakhsh, 1984). They maintained that only Prophet Muhammad's clan, especially the descendants of Ali and his wife, Fatima, Prophet's daughter, were

entitled to rule the Muslim community. Therefore they rejected the three caliphs preceding Ali i.e. Abu Bakar, Omer and Osman as usurpers and unjust ('Islam from the Beginning to 1300', 2002; Amin, 2001). After Ali's murder in 661, the majority of the Muslims recognized Amir Muawiya from Ummayad clan as the caliph of Islam. The Shiites, however, supported the claims of Ali's sons Hassan and Hussain over caliphate. Hassan had already died before the incident of Karbala happened. When Caliph Muawiya died eventually, Hussain was in Madina. He was reported that conditions were favourable for the declaration of his caliphate and thousands of supporters were waiting for him in Kufa, a city of Iraq and the capital of Islamic state in 7th century AD. Hussain made his way to Kufa along with his 72 supporters (comprising family members and friends). A patrol sent by Iraqi governor Ibn-e-Zayad blocked Hussain's way to Kufa and confined his small troop in Karbala, 70 kilometers North of Kufa and 20 kilometers west of the Euphrates (Halm, 2007: 9). Iraqi Governor's troop also blocked the access to water and Hussain's small group had to do without water for three days. 'From second to the tenth day of the month of Muharram *Imam* Hussain and his army withstood siege by Yazid's army' (Pinault, 1992: 5). Throughout the siege Hussain, his family members and friends had to face hunger and thirst. On 10th of Muharram Hussain's troop was brutally slaughtered by the enemy. Hussain himself was killed and beheaded by Shemir one of the soldiers from Yazid's army and Hussain's household were taken captive. (Pinault, 1995:5; Halm, 2007: 14).

In a *majli*s the events of Karbla tragedy are narrated by the *zakirs* (the speech makers) and the audience (*Shi'ahs* or followers of Ali) weep and wail over the tragedy. The speech makers who move the audiences and make them cry with skilled and tactful narration are rewarded with praise and money. The *majlis* recites are invited by the organizers of the *majalis-e-Hussain* in *Shi*'ah community during Muharram and other significant days of Islamic calendar. The skilled and more knowledgeable *zakirs* are highly paid and honoured by the community. In the words of Keenan, 1973, 'evaluations (of speech makers) are based on both skill in handling winding speech and on one's ability to follow certain rules governing the sequence and content of particular oratory (p.227).

Going back to Bauman's (1975) terminology it is inferred that like any other mode of verbal art the performance of *majlis* also conveys dual sense, i.e. *artistic action* the doing of *majlis*—and *artistic event*—the

performance situation. *Majlis* as an artistic event involve certain situation where audience makes up the followers of *Shi'ah* Islam who gather to remember and mourn over the death of Prophet's Muhammad's grandson Hussain. Sunnis are the largest group of Muslims whereas Shi'ahs are mostly concentrated in smaller region which include Iran, Iraq, Syria and parts of Lebanon (Islam, Israel and the Middle East, 2006). *Zakir,* the performer in this particular case, is proficient and in most of the cases professional orator who knows the art of delivering this distinct genre of speech with prudent and judicious use of language.

The linguistic features of speech would be discussed in detail in the following sections of the paper.

Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

To establish *majlis* as a distinguished speech genre, marked by ideologically invested discourses, the notions of discourse and genre have to be investigated. Unsurprisingly, areas of discourse and genre have already been subject of much discussion in literature lately (Fairclough, 2003; Eggins, 2004; Boyd, 2009). So, discourse is viewed as a 'general way of representing the world' (Fairclough, 2003: 215); and genre on the other hand is 'a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity' (Fairclough 1995: 14). A range of linguistic devices like implicatures, intertextuality, turn-taking and cohesive links etc. add *expressive, relational* and *experiential values* (Fairclough, 2001) to *majlis* discourse thus establishing it as an altogether unique speech genre. *Experiential values*, according to CDA seek to unveil how the text producer's experience of the natural or social world reflects in the text. On the other hand, *relational value* 'may identify the perceived social relationships between the producer of the text and its recipient' (Atkins, 2002: 5). The third dimension *expressive value*, provides an insight into 'the text producer's evaluation of the bit of reality it relates to' (Fairclough, 2001: 93). These three dimensions of the language provide sufficient indication required to uncover the identities of the text producer. Thus, the objective of CDA—which provides theoretical framework to this paper—is to perceive the language as a social practice embedded in a particular socio-cultural context. According to Fairclough (1995) CDA aims

To systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b)

wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power (p.132)

The proponents of CDA like Fairclough (1995, 2001, and 2003) and van Dijk (1993) do not propose a homogenous model for textual analysis. According to van Dijk (1993), 'Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is obviously not a homogenous model, nor a social school or paradigm, but at most a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotics or discourse analysis' (cited in Horvath, 2010). Summed up in a number of bullet points, main tenets of CDA are:

- CDA addresses social problems
- Power relations are discursive
- Discourse constitutes society and culture
- Discourse does ideological work
- Discourse is historical
- The link between text and society is mediated
- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
- Discourse is a form of social action (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997 : p. 271-80)

Drawing upon these perspectives of CDA, this paper analyzes *majlis* discourse, which like any other ideologically invested discourse, both influences and is influenced by societal and cultural practices of a social setting.

Overview of Method

This research intends to use *majalis* (speeches) recited by a particular *majlis* reciter of Pakistan as the representative sample, selected on the basis of her/his popularity with the masses. In Pakistan, many *majlis* reciters recite *majalis* in their respective localities and it is not very easy to determine one as representative of them all. The unavailability of authentic source to determine the representative sample led the researcher to conduct a small scale survey. For this purpose, a form (see Figure 1) was distributed among 100 participants at a local *imam barigah* situated in the locality of New Multan.

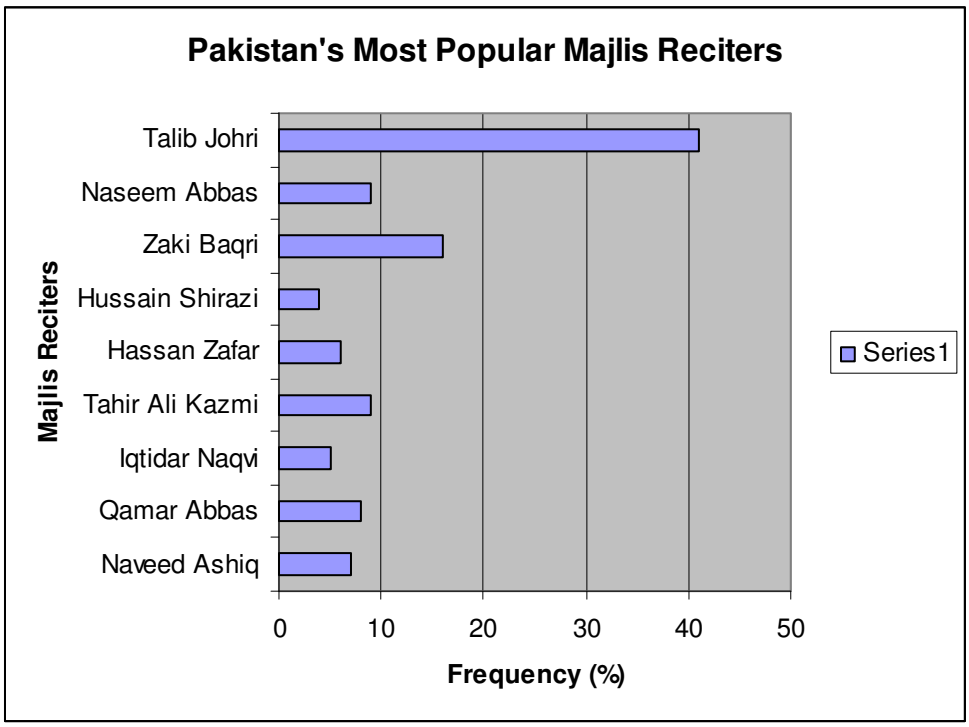
Figure 1: Pakistan's Popular *Zakirs Majlis* Reciter

Who is Pakistan's most popular *majlis* reciter?
Background Information:

Name: (Optional)---------- --- Nationality: ---------- --
Majlis Reciter's Name: ---------- ----------

According to this survey, some of Pakistan's popular *majlis* reciters include: (Figure 1)

Figure 2: List of Pakistan's Popular *Majlis* Reciters



Naveed Ashiq	Qamar Abbas	Iqtidar Naqvi	Tahir Ali Kazmi	Hassan Zafar	Hussain Shirazi	Zaki Baqri	Naseem Abbas	Talib Johri
7 %	8%	5%	9%	6%	4%	16%	9%	41%

The results of the survey (Figure 2) helped to determine Talib Johri (Johri henceforth) as one of the most popular *majlis* reciters of Pakistan as 41% respondents mentioned his name. After having determined this, five of his 2009 *majalis* were selected randomly for identification of generic structure; and one out of these five was randomly selected for in-depth thematic and linguistic analysis. From

table A, a general view of selected speech could be taken. The table indicates that total words of sample speech are 6,658, which are distributed in 988 clauses.

Table A: Statistics of Sample *Majlis* (Speech)

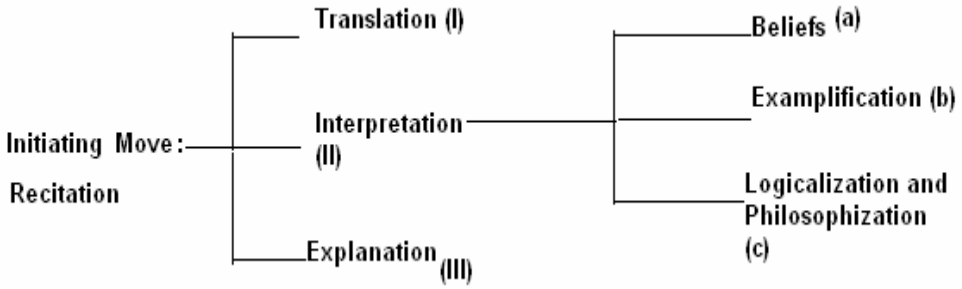
Statistical Item	Statistics
Clauses	988
Words	6,658

Genre Structure of *Majlis*-e-Hussain

Before embarking on CDA of *majlis*-e-Hussain, it would be appropriate to have a look at its generic structure following Hassan's (1984) model of generic structural potential. This would help determining the range of thematic content and the religious services which *majalis* seem to perform for Shiite community. The analysis—based on representative sample discussed above—reveals that generic structure of Johri's *majalis* follows a particular pattern comprising three major moves, namely, initiating move, sequent move and final move. These three terms have been partially borrowed from Hassan's (1984) fairy tales analysis.

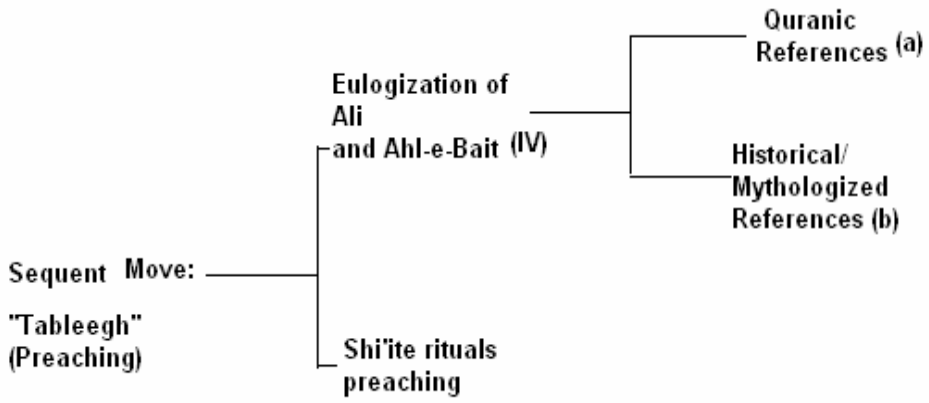
The system diagram (see Figure 3) shows that initiating move starts with the recitation of some of the verses of Quran, recited by the *majlis* reciter himself. The theme of the recited verses gives rise to the discussion and presupposes the content, the *majlis* is going to be based upon. As these *majalis* are essentially religious in character, it seems logical to start them with recitation from the holy book. After that, Johri gives literal translation of Arabic verses along with relevant explanation and interpretation. The interpretation is based upon Shi'ah perspective of Islam; and arguments are supported by authentic examples, logical reasoning and philosophization.

Figure 3: Initiating move description



After having interpreted and explained the verses from Quran, the *majlis* reciter has now background to proceed further and preach the crux of Shi'ite sect which is *walayat-e-Ali* meaning faith in Ali (Prophet's cousin, son in law and the first of the twelve *Imams*) as the sole guardian of Muslim nation after death of Prophet Muhammad. Hence the second move of the *majlis* is *tableegh,* meaning preaching. Rahim (2005) declares *tableegh* as one of the major purpose of *majlis.* As depicted in Figure 4, the preaching of Shi'ism is basically concerned with eulogization and mythologization of Ali supported by *ahadis* (sayings of prophet) and Quranic and historical references. In addition to this, other *Shi'ah* rituals like *matam* (beating the body), weeping and wailing, and *taziah* (the commemorative model of Hussain's tomb carried by *Shi'ahs* in Muharram processions) etc.—which are looked at with doubt by other Muslim sects—are explained and justified.

Figure 4: Sequent move description

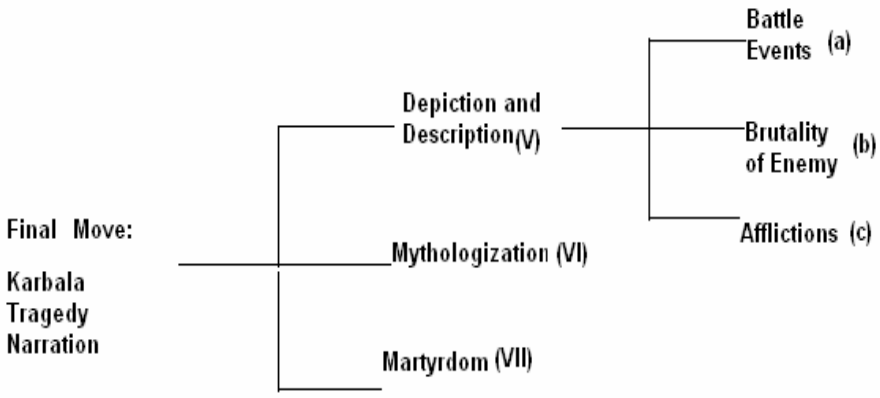


The final move of the *majlis* is most eagerly awaited by the mourners. The above given two moves may be absent from the *majalis* of some

reciters, but final move concerning Karbala tragedy is never left out. Emphasis upon Karbala tragedy is quite natural for the *majlis*, as the very definition of *majlis* declares it a meeting held to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussain (Qureshi, 1989).

As Figure 4 depicts, the final move of *majlis* narrates Karbala tragedy with detailed description of different events involving Hussain and his faithful friends' martyrdom; and *ahl-e-bait*'s (the Prophet's household) consequent sufferings. The narration is made tragic with infusion of elements like depiction of battle events, and brutalities, insults and injuries endured by *ahl-e-bait* at the hands of Hussain's adversaries. Additionally, mythologization adds special flavour to *majlis* discourse and brings about larger than life, semi-divine portrayal of *punjtans* (the five purified souls, i.e. Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussain) and Karbala martyrs

Figure 5: Final move description



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In the following discussion, the discourse of *majlis* will be discussed critically in association with above given constituents of this distinct speech genre.

Critical Discourse Analysis of Majlis-e-Hussain

In any analysis involving CDA, the issues of ideology and power are crucial to the understanding of discursive practices which serve to influence the perception of the reality of the social actors involved. The perception of reality could be influenced in both positive and negative way 'for CDA language is not only a product of society but also an important force in reshaping social practices, both positively and

negatively (Boyd, 2009:79). This proposition implies that *majlis* discourse—being a social product—performs a valuable service to its targeted community by preaching them essence of their religious beliefs.

Recontexualizing the Quranic Verses

According to Fairclough, recontextualization refers to 'the appropriation of elements of one social practice within another' (Fairclough, 2003: 32 quoted from Boyd, 2009). Recontextualizaion could be related to both text-internal references and intertextuality or text-external referencing. The term intertextuality introduced by Julia Kristeva (1980) refers to texts in terms of two axes: a *horizontal axis* connecting the author and reader of a text, and a *vertical axis*, which connects the text to other texts (p.69). These two axes are united by shared codes. Every text depends on some prior codes. Similarly, in recontextualized discourse acts, language of a quotation could be repeated and resemanticized according to social events which are 'selectively filtered' (Fairclough, 2003: 139) by adopting certain linguistic strategies like 'exclusion, inclusion and selective prominence' (Boyd, 2009: 81). Though *majalis* predominantly have to deal with depicting the Karbala tragedy but they also work as an instrument to disseminate Shiite doctrines. Interestingly, in this particular *majlis* all these doctrines and religious practices are legitimized and authenticized by relating them with the interpretation of recontextualized Quranic verses.

In the *majlis* under analysis, the *majlis* reciter seems to recontexualize Quranic verses for two reasons. Firstly, for the sake of eulogizing Ali as the rightful successor of Prophet Muhammad; and secondly, to rationalize and justify the Shi'ah tradition of carrying tazia on 10th of Islamic month of Moharram. Apparently, the speech starts with seemingly neutralized Quranic verses which instruct all the Muslims regardless of sect, to show respect and love for Allah's holy book (1):

(1) "*that this is indeed a Glorious Qur'an,[77] inscribed in a well-guarded Book,[78] which none can touch except the purified (angels):[79] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds"* (Al-Quran: Surah Al-Waqi'ah - The Inevitable; verses 77, 78, 79)

Not only does this (1) declare Quran as a well-guided book which has Allah's commandments inscribed in it, but it also exhorts Muslims to be clean from filth to touch and read from it. Having taken start with this quote in the initiating move, Johri links it with providing the

justification of Shiite tradition of carrying *tazia* in second move. This is actually an attempt to remove the doubts from non-Shi'ah Muslims' mind who think that Shi'ahs worship *tazia* and imams. He argues that just as Quran commands respect from Muslims for having inscribed words of God on its pages, similarly *tazia*s command respect from Shi'iahs for having replicated the Karbala Martyrs' tombs.

As it has already been discussed, the concept of *imamat* (leadership) is the base on which the edifice of Shi'ite faith rests (Hitti, 2002). According to Shi'ahs, Ali (Prophet's cousin and son-in-law) is the only rightful successor of Prophet Muhammad as 'Prophet would have wished to be succeeded by closest male relative' (Armstrong, 2000:46). Hence, major part of the *majlis*, the second move generally, is devoted to eulogization, veneration and mythologization of Ali as the only deserving male heir to Prophet Muhammad. Shi'ahs believe, 'Prophet Muhammad during his life time announced Ali's *imamat* in various ways. The *Ghadeer al Qumm* incident is one of such ways (Shah, 2003: 24). According to *Ghadeer al Qumm* incident, Prophet Muhammad declared Ali his successor at a place called *Ghadeer al Qhum* by uttering the words quoted in (2). This saying of Prophet is highly celebrated and most frequently quoted by Shi'ah Muslims all over the world:

(2) "Allah is my Mawla, Of whomsoever I am the Mawla, This Ali is his Mawla. Whoever obeys 'Ali, obeys me, whoever obeys me, obeys Allah, whoever disobeys 'Ali disobeys me, whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah" (Shah, 2003: 10)

Johri in this particular speech, made the connection between *Ghadeer al Qumm* incident and the recontexualized Quranic verses shown below(3):

(3)"Allah took a covenant with the Prophets, saying: "Now that you have been given the Book and Wisdom; there ***will come to you a Messenger who will confirm that which is with you, you will have to believe in him*** *and help him in his mission." Then He said "Do you affirm this covenant and agree to take this heavy responsibility?" The Prophets replied, "Yes, we do affirm." Allah said, "Very well, bear witness to this and I too bear witness with you."[81]* ***Now if anyone turns back after this, he will become the transgressor****.[82]" (Al-Quran: Al'ay-Imran - The House of Imran; verses 81, 82)*

According to Johri, all the Prophets of God are bound to pledge their allegiance to Prophet Muhammad as it has been injuncted by God Himself (3). So, when Prophet Muhammad declares Ali *mawla* (lord) of the nation of Islam at *Ghadeer al Qumm*, indirectly, Ali gets the

superiority over rest of the Prophets as well. Hence, the recontextualized texts quoted above serve to confirm and consolidate Shiite belief that, except for Prophet Muhammad, no one else had such a brilliant ancestry as Ali.

Use of Interrogatives and Imperative Moods

Fairclough (2001:105) has rightly pointed out that distribution of moods as the grammatical feature of the text configures 'systemic asymmetries' between the discourse participants' relations. In moods like interrogatives and imperatives the text producer asks something and gives commands to the text recipients respectively; and hence enjoys privileged position over the text recipients. The text producers, by employing imperatives and grammatical questions, demand the text recipients to respond. The response is made either through appropriate actions/gestures or by providing relevant information.

*Majlis-e-*Hussain, like any other speech genre, gives privileged position to *majlis* reciter; as it is s/he who is in command of textual content and turn-taking. According to Sacks et al. (1974), turn-taking is a phenomenon in which rules are subject to the control of the participants and *majlis* participants take the turn by slogan raising and Arabic verses chanting at certain occasions. The emergent interactional structure arising in this way set the rules of interaction between the speaker and the listeners. Thus, in this particular *majlis*, Johri displays his total control over *majlis* proceedings and keeps shifting the discourse between declarative, imperative and grammatical question modes. As power relations are realized by the use of imperatives and grammatical questions in this particular context, some of the imperatives and grammatical questions are reproduced below:

Imperatives

(4) Bahut ghor se sunte rehnā
(Keep listening attentively)
(5) Bhaiyyā ruknā, arām se ruknā
Brothers, take a pause here; take a pause with patience.
(6) tum abhi bāhir niklo is imām bārigāh se
(Go out of this Imam Barigah just now)
(7) Nisbat ko dekhnā
(Look at the association)
(8) 'mālik jo is se muhabbat kare , us se muhabbat kar. Jo is is dushmani kare us se dushmani kar.'
(O'Lord, Shower your blessings on whosoever loves him (Ali); and show your wrath to whosoever hates him (Ali))'

Grammatical Questions

(9) Ab dekh rahe ho nā?
(Now, are you observing? Aren't you?)
(10) Pākeezgi dekhi āp ne us wādi ki jahān Taurait utri?
(Have you realized the holiness of the valley where Torah was revealed?)
(11) 'Kiā iqrār karte ho k meri naboowat kā ehtram karo ge aur maula māno ge?
(Do you testify to honor my prophet hood and consider me your lord?)

The instances (4) to (7) are articulated by the *majlis* reciter as manifestation of direct power relation between him and his audience. In all these instances [(4) to (7)], he seems to urge his present audience to listen to him very carefully. Contrarily, the instance (8) is a prayer; and Johri quotes Prophet Muhammad praying to God as an expression of his deep love for his cousin and son-in-law, Ali. Through this statement, Johri preaches Muslims in general and Sh'ahs in particular to eulogize and honor Ali as Prophet's ward and rightful successor. Same is the case with grammatical questions where first two questions [(9) & (10)] are meant to get the listener involved in speech; and last question (11) is implied and indirect. Here, Johri portrays Prophet Muhammad asking this question to his predecessors who are bound to honour and follow him (Prophet Muhammad) like *ummah* (the nation of Islam) under God's instructions (3). Inversely, they are bound to follow and honour Ali as well; as Prophet Muhammad himself declares Ali worth-following and worth-emulating for his *ummah* i.e. the nation of Islam (2).

The examples quoted in this section reveal that imperatives and grammatical questions incorporated into the discourse could be further classified into two sub-categories, i.e. direct imperatives/grammatical questions and indirect imperatives/grammatical questions (Table B).

Table B: Interrogatives and Imperatives

Total Questions :	Frequency: 84, 8.5 %		
Total Imperatives :	Frequency: 56, 5.7%		
Direct Questions	Frequency:81 %: 8.1	Direct 'Imperatives'	Frequency:46 %: 4.6
Indirect Questions	Frequency: 3 %: 0.3	Indirect 'Imperatives'	Frequency:10 %: 1.01

The direct imperatives and grammatical questions serve to develop the solidarity between the *majlis* reciters and the listeners; and listeners are expected to respond to questions and commands of the *majlis* reciters. Whereas the indirect questions and imperatives though less in frequency are more effective tool in the discursive construction of ideology and religious beliefs. In (8) and (11) Prophet Muhammad has

been portrayed as praying to God and administering the oath of Ali's allegiance to the messengers of God respectively. This in turn makes the listeners venerate Ali even more as God and Prophet Muhammad would be highly pleased by their pledge of allegiance to Ali. This once again serves to consolidate Shiite ideological belief regarding Ali's superiority over entire human race except Prophet Muhammad.

Pronominal Use

Johri often shifts pronouns (from *aap* to *tum*) to reflect his solidarity and informality with his audience whom he repeatedly addresses as his *dost* (friends), *bhai* (brothers) and *naujwan dosto* (young friends). The pronouns *aap* and *tum* mean 'you'. In English, the word 'you' can be used to address any person or number of people, whatever the age, social status etc. of that person. In Urdu, which word for 'you' is used, depends on the person being addressed. A common practice is that *tum* is used for talking to close friends, or to someone who is subordinate in status; and *aap* for talking to elders or to express honour and respect for someone superior in social status. Johri makes use of pronoun *aap* only once in initiating move of the speech. As he proceeds further, he becomes more informal and interactive and starts using *tum* or its variants like *tumhara* (your) or *tumhare* (your) etc. The use of *tum,* in this majlis, could be further classified into 'proximal *tum'* and 'distant *tum'* (see Table C):

Proximal *Tum*:

(12) Jitnā ***tum*** *mujh se qareeb ho, utnā main* ***tum*** *se qareeb hoon*

The nearer I am to **you** (plural); the closer **you** (plural) are to me.

(13) Aur ***tum*** *kiā karte rahe zindāgi bhar namāzein parhte rehe, qurbātan illAllāh*

And what did **you** (plural) do all your life, kept offering prayers, to get closer to Allah.

Distant *Tum:*

(14) …Aye nabio **tum** per wājib hai us per imān lāyo…

…O Prophets, it is obligatory for **you** (plural) to declare your allegiance to him (Prophet Mummad)…

(15) …Adam tum suno, Nooh tum suno, Ibrāhim tum suno…

… O Adam, **you** (singular) listen; O Noah, **you** (singular) listen; O Abraham, **you** (singular) listen…

In (12) and (13) the *majlis* reciter is expressing solidarity with his audience but, *tum* in (12) is explicitly exclusive as it is meant for the audience present in the *majlis* only; whereas, the *tum* in (13) is inclusive as it is a rhetorical question asked to all the Muslims

regardless of their sect. Johri keeps shifting between inclusive *tum* and exclusive *tum* throughout the speech. The inclusive *tum* serves the purpose of communicating with Muslims from other sects, who look at Shiite practices and rituals with doubt; and the exclusive *tum*, as it has already been mentioned, is a marker of solidarity and brotherhood between the *majlis* reciter and the present audience. Another important means to express the solidarity is through the repeated use of word *bhai*, meaning 'brothers' in discourse. It is used as many as 29 times in this *majlis* of one hour duration (0.44% of total words).

Linked with this explicit profession of brotherhood, is indirect second person pronouns *tum* in (14) and (15). Here once again, *tum* is all-inclusive as it not only includes all the sects of the Muslims but also the devotees of other messengers of God. By retuning to *Ghadeer al Qumm* statement (2), the second person pronouns in (14) and (15) demand the allegiance of Ali not only from Muslims but also from the believers of other monotheist religions.

Table C: Pronominalization

Second Person Pronouns	Frequency	%
Proximal 'Tum'	29	0.44
Distant 'Tum'	13	0.19
Total 'Tum' (You)	32	0.48
Aap (you)	1	0.01

Implicatures and resemanticization

Implicature is a technical term coined by Grice (1975), which refers to what is *suggested* in an utterance, even though neither expressed nor literally meant by the utterance. Implicatures 'are usually defined as weak semantic implications or pragmatically in terms of contexts' (Chouliaraki, 2007:65). The term could be applied by linking it up with pragmatics of the context and by basing it specifically on the context (Van Dijk, 2005). The analysis involving the implicatures in this article follows the same approach. Johri, in this particular speech, makes use of implied language deliberately and his audiences decode the implicated meanings quite appropriately because of their 'synthetic sisterhood' (Talbot et al, 2003). Talbot et al (2003) gave the concept of 'synthetic sisterhood' when they analyzed the linguistic devices in teenage girls' magazines and demonstrated the way such linguistic devices construct a simulated friendship between reader and producer

of the text. Similar sort of synthetic sisterhood can be observed between the producers (the speaker) and recipients (the listeners) of the *majalis* texts.

Hence, implicatures as a linguistic device construct synthetic sisterhood between the *majl*is reciter and the audiences. Furthermore implicatures, resemanticize and provide new interpretation of apparently limited meanings of the language:

(16) Ibādat to Allah ki hai kion jhuk rahe ho Kābā ki taraf
If only Allah is to be worshipped, why are (you) bowing before Kaba?
(17) agar (Quran) shifā hai to usko samajh mein nahin āye gā jis k dil mein marz ho, agar ilm hai to jāhil nahin samjhe gā aur agar noor hai to andhe ki samajh mein nahin āye gā.
If Quran is a cure, a sick person would not understand it; if Quran is knowledge, an ignorant would not understand it; and, if Quran is a light, a blind would not understand it.

Though the *majlis* discourse is replete with this sort of contextualized implicatures, these two instances would sufficiently indicate how meanings are mediated through certain beliefs and ideologies which in turn achieve the desired semanticization of the message. The closer inspection reveals that the implicatures in both (16) and (17) are targeted towards non-Shi'ah sects. The example (16) could be understood by linking it up with the Shi'ah's answer to *tazia* tradition. Although agency is dropped here, but the context makes it obvious that non-Shiite Muslim sects are being addressed. Bowing before *Kaba* in *namaz* (prayer) is a common practice of Muslims all over the world, regardless of their sectarian differences. Hence Johri is making an attempt to prove the point that as *Kaba* is worth respecting for Muslims because of its association with Allah; similarly, *tazia* is worth respecting for Shiites because of its association with martyrs of Karbala. The act of showing reverence to *tazia* should not be equated with *kufr* (blasphemy or infidelity) by the non-Shiite Muslims.

The example (17) carries somewhat similar contextualized implicatures where the people who do not come up with right interpretation of Quran have been declared 'sick at heart'; 'ignorant' and 'blind'. Here the metaphors 'sick at heart'; 'ignorant' and 'blind' create negative imagery. This negative imagery, obviously, represents the people who do not agree to Shiite interpretation of Quran.

Mythologization and foregrounding the atrocities committed against Kabala martyrs and *ahl-e-bait*

The mourning rituals of Karbala martyrs including *majlis* 'has transformed the historical tragedy into a myth' (Armstrong, 2001: 47). Even though Prophet, Ali and Fatima were not present at the time battle of Kabala happened, they are 'brought into the (majlis) narrative symbolically or metaphorically' (Aghaei, 2005:10):

(18) bhāi ki qabar se mā ki qabar ki taraf gaye to aise dore jaise bachā dortā hai. Kehte jāte the Ammā mein ā gayā, ammā main ā gayā. Qabar k qareeb pohnche, dono hāth qabar per rakhe aur kahā… ARABIC … aye ammā merā salām pohnche. Rāvi kehtā hai Qabar se awāz ayi… ARABIC… aye mā ke yateem bache aye mā k mazloom bache, aye mā ke piyāse bache tujhe bhi mā kā salām pohnche.

After having visited his brother's (Hassan) grave, he (Hussain) turned towards his mother's (Fatima). He started running towards it as if he were a child. He kept saying, 'Mother, I've come; mother, I've come'. When he reached there, he placed his hands over the grave and said, O' mother, accept my greetings' (greetings uttered by the reciter twice, first in English and then in Urdu). An anonymous narrator tells, a voice from the grave replied, 'O my orphan child, O my aggrieved child, O my thirsty child, you too accept my greetings' (greetings uttered by the reciter twice, first in Arabic and then in Urdu).

In (18) Fatima (Hussain's mother and Prophet's daughter) is mythologized and symbolized. It is obvious from the discourse that Fatima is portrayed as listening to Hussain's farewell greetings. Her 'role as mother and educator of Hosayn, as well as her role as one of the *Chaudah Masumin* or purified fourteen who suffered for the cause of Islam, cannot be separated from the Karbala event' (Aghaei, 2005:10). The importance of Fatima is demonstrated by large number of *majalis* and historical accounts devoted to her memory. Here, she has been introduced into the narrative metaphorically as she manifests semi-divine powers which, according to Shiite belief, *ahl-e-bait* possessed. 32

Additionally, mourning rituals also celebrate infallibility and impeccability of *ahl-e-bait* who are reported to have undergone unbearable sufferings and tortures despite being incarnation of goodness and virtue (Armstrong, 2000; Bakhsh, 1984). In this instance (18) the addressor uses 'the list of three' (cited in Zubair and Abbas, 2008) in the lines uttered by Fatima (O my orphan child, O my aggrieved child, O my thirsty child) to maintain the status of Hussain as infallible and being sinned against.

In *majlis* and other mourning ritual discourses, mythologization is often supported by foregrounding and aestheticization of violence committed against Hussain and his friends and family. The foregrounding of brutality and violence is highly anticipated and appreciated by the mourners because it makes them grieve and eventually weep. And, Shi'ahs believe that 'weeping for Imam Hussain is a meritorious act… it is one of the Sunnat of the Prophet' (Sabisons, 2011:12). Regarding foregrounding and arousal of emotions, Hunt and Vipond (1985) and Van Peer (1986) have rightly pointed out that text recipients are impressed by foregrounded imagery and linguistic devices which evocates certain emotions in them. The more defamiliarize a text becomes; the more prone it is to hasten the emergence of feeling. The *majlis* discourse is generally filled with atrociously violent imagery which is achieved by the detailed depiction and description of scenes from the battle of Karbala:

(19) *Nānā apne pās qabar mein bulā lein. Sar per hāth phera aur kahā, betā abhi se pareshān ho, abhi to tum ne bachi k rukhsāron per tamānche dekhne hain. Bechādar bibiyān sheher bā sheher phirāyi jāyen gi. Tumhārā sar nok-e-nezā pe jāye gā.*

'O Grandfather (Prophet Muhammad) I want to be with you in your grave; please, call me in'. (The grandfather) put his hand on (Hussain's) head with affection and said: 'My son, it is just the beginning. Even worse is waiting for you ahead. You will have to witness your daughter being slapped; your unveiled women being marched (from Karbala to Damascus); your head being stuck on a spear's top.

The lines quoted in (19) clearly foreground the violence with incorporation of imagery like slapping and sticking Hussain's head on spear top after beheading. The tragic effect is further enhanced by mythologization and depiction of unveiled holy women forced to march to Damascus. These lines further establish the Shiite belief of semi-divine attributes of *purified fourteen* (Muhammad, Fatima and twelve Shiite Imams—i.e. Ali, Hassan, Hussain, Zain-ul-Abidin, Baqir, Jaffar, Kazim, Raza, Naqi, Taqi, Askari, Mahdi—make up the *purified fourteen*). According to these lines Hussain already knew what tragic fate is waiting for him in the coming days; and this was revealed to him by Prophet Muhammad himself when he had a vision of Prophet in dream.

Interactional conventions

Majlis-e-Hussain, as it is obvious from its genesis and purpose, is a form of public speaking; and like any other form of public speaking, *majlis* reciters seek feedback on their speaking skills and knowledge

from the crowd. The feedback reaches them in form of religious slogans and traditional chanting in Arabic. Resultantly, *majlis* reciters feel motivated and enthusiastic in front of their crowd. This process establishes *majlis* as a sort of a communication activity where participants' take turns transmitting messages between one another" ("Interaction – Definition", 2004: 4). The interactive nature of *majlis* can be explained with the help of model shown below (see Figure 6):

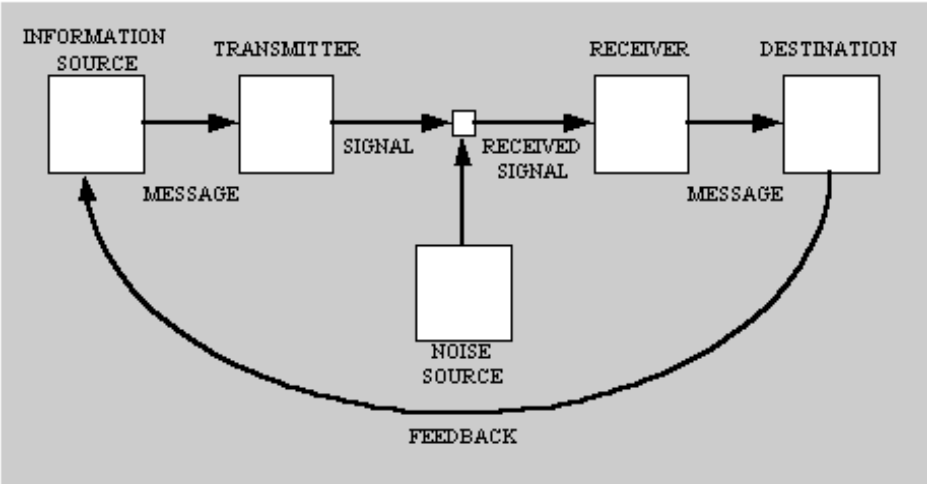


Figure 6: An Interactive Model (Foulger, 2004)

The interactive model shown in Figure 1, breaks the process of *majlis* communication down into nine discrete components.

1. An information source: presumably Quran or religious books which are quoted by the *majlis* reciter
2. The message: which is mourning and defense of Shiite rituals and beliefs
3. A transmitter: the *majlis* reciter
4. The signal: *majlis* reciter's sound and gestures
5. A carrier or channel: which is represented by the small unlabeled box in the middle of the model; air or space between speaker and listeners
6. Noise: which would presumably obscure or confuse interaction process
7. A receiver: in face to face *majlis* communication listeners' ears and eyes
8. A destination: the participants of mourning rituals , i.e. the mourners
9. Feedback: which is attained through the response of the listeners by both verbal and non-verbal signals

This model is more likely to be applied on every day face to face interaction; nevertheless, its components describe the interaction process of *majlis* quite appropriately. Unlike general conception of face-to-face communications, *majlis* is characterized by unequal power relations where topics are controlled by the *majlis* reciters. As it has already been mentioned, *majlis* reciters and listeners make up a sort of 'synthetic sisterhood' and anticipate where to take turn. In the course of *majlis* under analysis, the listeners took turn at thirty two occasions and at almost all these occasions, it was *majlis* reciter who enforced explicitness from the listeners. The explicitness is enforced to make the listener express their appreciation and signal that they have successfully decoded the implicatures:

(20) Nisbat ka ehtrām samajh mein ā gayā nā? Nahin bhāi nahin, agar nisbat ka ehtrām samajh mein ā jatā to kia hi bāt thi

Have you got how to honour associative relations? No, my brothers no, If you get how significant honouring the associative relations is, you will have the key.

(21) *Ye Qurān agar pahāron pe utar jāve to pahār hut jaye. Quran ko rakh kar dekho apne Qurān ko, koi pahār hate gā? Bhāi tawajo.. apne Qurān ko rakh kar dekho koi pahār hate gā?*

If this Quran is revealed on mountains, they would be shaken. Put your Quran… put your Quran on a mountain and see. Would it move? Be attentive, my brothers. Put your Quran on a mountain, would it move?

In (20) and (21) above, the *majlis* reciter seems to enforce the response from the crowd by asking them different questions. Resultantly, the *majlis* listeners come out of their silence and respond either by shaking their heads or through utterances like '*subhan Allah*' (God be praised) and '*wah, wah, wah'* (excellent); or by shouting slogans. Sometimes, this sort of responses cause interruptions; but these interruptions are welcomed by the *majlis* reciters because they provide them feedback on their skill of oratory. The positive feedback of this sort prompts the *majlis* reciters to get enthusiastic and provide even more relevant details to the listeners. In this particular *majlis,* the above quoted instances [(3), (8), (11) and (15)] regarding *Ghadeer-al-Qumm* incident made the *majlis* listeners very vocal and they expressed their ideological solidarity explicitly. Some of the slogans raised by *majlis* participants in this *majlis* are (22):

(22)

Slogan Initiator (Any participant can initiate the slogan raising):
Dam mast qalandar:
Collective Response from the gathering:
Ali Ali
Slogan Initiator:
Zarā Zor se Bolo:
Collective Response from the gathering:
Ali Ali,
Slogan Initiator:
Zara Jān se bolo:
Collective Response from the gathering:
Ali Ali
Slogan Initiator:
Nārā Haidri:
Collective Response from the gathering:
Yā Ali madad
Slogan Initiator:
Salwāt:
Collective Response from the gathering*:*
Allah huma Sale Ala Muhammadin wa āle Muhammad

Slogan Initiator:
God-intoxicated sire:
Collective Response from the gathering:
Ali Ali
Slogan Initiator:
Say it louder:
Collective Response from the gathering:
Ali Ali
Slogan Initiator:
Say it with devotion:
Collective Response from the gathering:
Ali Ali
Slogan Initiator:
Raise Ali's Slogan:
Collective Response from the gathering:
O, Ali, Help me out
Slogan Initiator:
Send blessings to Prophet's household:
Collective Response from the gathering:
O' Allah send your blessings on Prophet Muhammad and his children

All of these slogans where *majlis* participants take turn express Shi'ah's love for Ali, Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Muhammad's children.

Parallelism, lexical chains and repetition

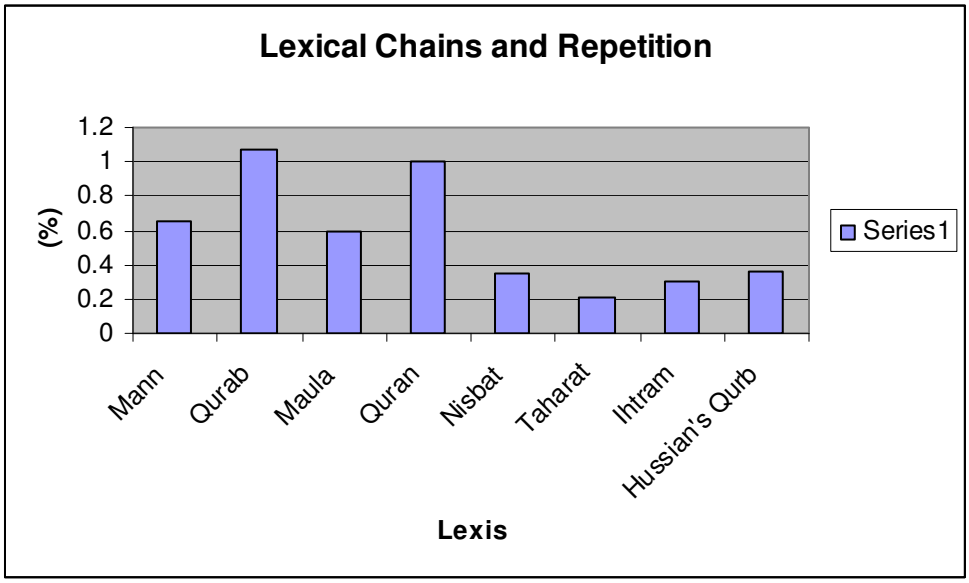
The genre structure of *majlis* (see Figures 3, 4 & 5) indicates that a *majlis* generally deals with diverse issues which range from interpretation of Quranic verses, veneration of Ali, explanation and justification of Shiite cults to the detailed narration of Karbala tragedy. It is through the use of formal links inside the discourse that the unity of all these varied issues is achieved. Apart from linking up the discrete units of the speech, the formal links in this particular *majlis* serve to perpetuate certain Shiite ideologies. The most frequently used formal links in the sample *majlis* are parallelism and lexical chains and repetitions. These cohesive links serve to refer to the facts inside the text which are repeated by the *majlis* reciter after regular intervals:

(23) *Allah se do qurbatein, tawajo rakhnā, ek sajde ki qurbat, ek hajj ki qurbat. Ab wo log jo zamān-e-rasūl mein thay aur rasūl unhein hajj k liye le chale, unhein dono qurbatein nasib hain. Sajde ki qurbat bhi Allah se, Kābe se qarib hone ki qurbat bhi unhein nasib hai. Ab rasūl se teen qurbatein hain unki.*

(Muslims have) two relations with Allah. Please, be attentive, i.e. one relation of that of obeisance and other (relation) of that of pilgrimage. The people of Prophet's age who went for pilgrimage in Prophet's company enjoy both of these relations, i.e. the relation of obeisance to Allah and the relation of being in the vicinity of Kaba. On the other hand, they have three relations with Prophet…

It can be observed that in (23) alone, lexical item *qurbat*—meaning 'relation' or 'nearness' and its variant 'vicinity'—is repeated as many as 8 times thus making up a lexical chain. This particular lexical item has been repeated 67 times in the entire *majlis* text which makes up 0.65% of total 6,658 words. In addition to this, many other lexical chains have also been used by the *majlis* reciter. The frequency of different repeated words along with their overall % is shown below in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Lexical Chains and Repetitions



Mann (Whosoever)	Qurb (Relation)	Maula (Lord)	Quran	Nisbat (Association)	Taharat (Purity)	Ihtram (Respect)	Lexis indicating Hussain's associations
0.6 % Frequency: 41	1.07 % Frequency: 67	0.6% Frequency: 38	1.0 % Frequency: 62	0.35 % Frequency: 22	0.21 % Frequency: 13	0.3% Frequency: 19:	0.63 % Frequency: 23

Parallelism is another cohesive device utilized by the *majlis* reciter to make the discourse ideologically invested which in turn moves and excites the listeners. Overall, there are 37 instances of parallelism in this particular sample of *majlis*, out of them one is reproduced below:

(24) *Muhammad sāre nabiyon ka nabi hai to Adam kā mawla hai, Nūh kā mawla hai, Ibrāhim ka mawla hai, Mūsa ka mawla hai,Isa kā mawla hai.*

If Muhammad is prophet of rest of the prophets; he is Adam's lord, he is Noah's lord, he is Abraham's lord, he is Moses' lord, and he is Jesus' lord

Here, after the first clause, the discourse proceeds through repeated grammatical structures creating a certain rhythm (24). This rhythmic structure not only serves to yield prominence to certain ideologies but also reinforces them eventually. This particular instance (24) occurs in

the *majlis* in second move where *majlis* reciter venerates Ali as Prophet's rightful successor by citing Prophet's saying of *Ghadeer al Qumm* (2). Its Shiite interpretation has already been discussed in detail with reference to examples (3), (8), (11), (13), (14) and (15).

Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis indicates that *majlis* discourse addresses multiple issues ranging from the rationale of *ithna ashariyah* ideological beliefs and detailed depiction of Karbala incidents to violence committed against *ahl-e-bait* and Hussain's companions. Although the study is limited to only one commemoration speech, it nevertheless allows for some generalizations to be made regarding the questions initially posed:

- What generic conventions are followed by *majlis-e*-Hussain which mark it as a multipurpose mourning ritual for Shi'ah community?
- What key themes and Shiite cults recur in *majlis* discourse?
- What linguistic devices are preferred by a *majlis* reciter to inculcate Shiite ideologies and beliefs in the listeners?

The analysis reveals that Johri's *majlis* follows a certain generic convention. The generic structure of the *majlis* is almost fixed comprising three moves mentioned above. Notwithstanding Johri's majlis, the *majalis* recited by other *zakirs* follow somewhat similar structural moves. Pinault (1992) also observes the same when he identifies fixed structure of Muharram sermon:

The *majlis* typically begins with *mersiyeh*, the reciting of funeral laments by a chorus of some half-dozen men. A sermon is then given by a *zakir* or preacher. The structure of sermon is fixed according to tradition: the invocation of God's blessing and praise of the Prophet's family; *faza'il* description of the merits of the martyrs of Karbala with reflections on how their merits can guide our conduct today; *masa'ib* evocation of sufferings endured by martyrs and the rapacious cruelty of their persecutors (p.115).

The move structure reveals the diversity of the topics a *majlis* generally covers. The *majlis* as a multipurpose tool not only serves the community by teaching and preaching Shiite cults but also creates a sense of solidarity and love for the Prophet's family. Furthermore, it

also renders the mourners in awe of semi-divine attributes of *purified fourteen* because the mourners believe that the martyrs of Karbala are invisibly present in their liturgical gatherings. Pinault (1992) records the comments of one the mourner who, regarding the value of the *majlis*, was of the view:

The *majlis* is a religious act in which I am not alone. I don't mean just because the preacher is there and the *nauha khawan* and the chorus and my other Shiite friends. For one of the fourteen *mausum'in* Hazrat Fatima and possibly one of the *Imams* will be present with me while I am there. I mean invisibly present. The *masum'in* ensure that my act of devotion is perfect (p.116).

The above discussion also provides answer to second question regarding recurring themes of *majlis* and Shiite cult practices. The depiction of move structure in Figures 3, 4 and 5 above gives detailed description of thematic content of a *majlis* in general and of Johri's *majlis* in particular. Shiite cult preaching and Karbala tragedy narration are meant to strengthen a common believer's faith in larger than life portrayal religious figures and their semi-divine attributes. This in turn also gives a clue to the mourners' 'mental model' (Johnson-Laird, 1983) paradigms, 'internal images and constructs which make sense of' their world (Carlson, 2007: 1). Thus, the discourse of *majlis* serves to construct a particular mental model based on scriptural interpretation and *Shi'ah* version of Muslim historical traditions. Results of the analysis suggest the way *zakirs* through *majlis* discourses discursively produce the ideological mental paradigms which echo basic injunctions of *Shi'ah* Islam. The pathos of Imam Hussain's tragedy issues out of Shi'ahs' belief that an imam is 'a reliable and perfectly trustworthy means of divine guidance, he cannot commit any sins, neither major, nor minor, nor venial, neither intentionally nor inadvertently' (Gojri, 2010: 28).

This research is based on deconstruction of Urdu *majlis-e- Hussain* discourse alone; though *majalis* are recited in different regional languages of Pakistan. Each vernacular lends it a peculiar flavour which could be unveiled if analyzed deeply. Though major part of this *majlis* is devoted to *walayat-e-Ali*; many other Shiite beliefs have also been elaborated in other *majalis*. Future research should aim at further elaboration of such linguistic cues deployed in ideologically loaded religious discourses practiced in a range of contexts.

Appendix

Definition and Explanation of Religious Terms

Religious Terms	Meanings and Explanation
Ahadis	Traditions of Prophet Muhammad
Ahl-e-bait	Members of Prophet Muhammad's family comprising his daughter Fatima, son-in-law Ali, and grandchildren Hassan and Hussain
Aza	mourning, condolence
Azadari	mourning, especially the mourning of Imam Hussain
Ghadeer al Qumm	The appointment of Ali as the successor to Prophet Muhammad in Qum, a city in Iran. It happened on the way back from the Prophet's last pilgrimage to Makkah before he died.
Imam	Literally *Imam* means chief or leader. In *Shi'ah* religion *Imams* are divinely appointed leaders of the nation of Islam.
Imamat	leadership, guidance
Imam barigah	Muharram commemorations' sanctuary
Ismailites	A Shiite sect which gets its name from its acceptance of Ismail bin Jafar as the appointed *Imam to* Jafar as Sadiq, wherein they differ from the *Ithna Ashariyah*, who accept Musa Kazim, younger brother of Ismail, as the true Imam.
Ithna Ashariyah	Twelver Shi'ahs. *Ithna Ashariyah* or Twelvers is the largest branch of Shi'ah Islam. Adherents of Twelver Shiism are commonly referred to as *Twelvers*, which is derived from their belief in twelve divinely ordained leaders, known as the Twelve Imams and their belief that the Mahdi will be none other than the returned twelfth Imam that disappeared and is believed by Twelvers to be in occultation.

	The Twelve Imams: Ali · Hasan · Husayn al-Sajjad · al-Baqir · al-Sadiq al-Kadhim · al-Rida · al-Taqi al-Naqi · al-Askari · al-Mahdi
Kaba	Literally Kaba means cube. It is a cube-shaped building in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, which is visited by Muslims around the world every year to perform pilgrimage. All Muslims around the world face Kaba during prayers, no matter where they are.
Kufr	blasphemy, infidelity, heathenism, profanity
Majalis	Plural of *majlis*
Majlis or Majlis-e-Hussain	A meeting to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain
Namaz	The prayer Muslims offer five times a day
Punjtans	Literally *punjtan* means five holy persons especially revered by Shi'ahs. *Punjtans* include Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, son-in-law Ali, and Prophet's grand children Hassan and Hussain.
Shi'ah	A sect of Islam which regard Ali, Prophet's cousin and son-in-law as direct lawful successor to Prophet Muhammad and rejects the other orthodox caliphs.
Sunni	Orthodox Muslim
Sunnat	Religious rites ordained by Prophet Muhammad
Tableegh	preaching, spread or propagation
Taziah	Imam Hussain's sarcophagus, commemoration model of Imam Hussain's tomb carried by Shi'ites in procession during Muharram
Ummah	The nation of Islam
Walayat-	Spiritual leadership of Ali

e-Ali	
Waseela	Mediation
Zaidis	The Zaydi Shia'ahs are closest to Sunnis. They believe that Imams were appointed to their high office by Allah, but were not semi divine creatures. Twelvers and Ismailis recognize the same first four Imams, however, the Zaydis recognize Zayd ibn Ali as the Fifth Imam. After Zayd ibn Ali, the Zaydis recognize other descendants of Hassan or Hussain to be Imams.
Zakir	Majlis reciter, speaker

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