

# Prediction in The Holy Bible and Prophet Mohammad Traditions (PBUH): A Contrastive Study

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## **Abstract**

Prediction is one of the speech acts of assertives which has noticeable importance in religious texts said by prophets since it is considered an essential part of prophecy (web 3). This study is an attempt to make a contrast between the holy Bible (English texts) and Prophet Mohammed traditions (PBUH) (Arabic texts) concerning this speech act. The study aims at finding out the similarities and the differences between the English and the Arabic languages as far as prediction in religious texts is concerned. It is hypothesized that Arabic is more explicit in producing prediction in the religious texts. The findings of the study verify that Arabic is not only more explicit concerning the forms used to express prediction, but in the kinds of prediction and some other details.

**Key words:** Prediction, assertion, futurity, religious texts, explicitness.

## **Introduction**

In every day communication, when two friends are going to see a football match one may tell sentences like ' -Beston will win' or '-The result is 2-2' or 'X will score'. These utterances are called predictions. They show the confidence of people that something will happen in the future. In forecasting also, sentences like;

(1) 'The temperature is thirty in the east of the city tonight' or ' It will rain heavily tomorrow'

These examples refer to predictions about weather that enable people to make their plans taking in consideration these future happenings.

Bratcher(ibid) suggests that in the religious texts, it seems that predictions of prophets differ in essential aspects. first of all, the speakers are prophets. They are not ordinary people whose predictions

can be true or false. The second point is that the aim of their predictions is to make people believe in them as messengers and their messages. Thirdly, these predictions are about what happened and what will happen. The wide knowledge of the prophets involves place and time, they can know things happened in any position of place and time in the universe. The fourth point is related to way that help them to make their predictions. They do not depend on logical reasons or scientific expectations, they simply divined.

### **Method**

This study is a contrastive study between two different languages, English and Arabic (an Endo-European language and a Semitic language) that investigates the degree of similarity between the languages as far as prediction in the religious text is concerned. The examples (data) consist of some religious texts cited from King James testament and some sources of prophet Muhammad(PBUH) traditions.

Data is analyzed according to the felicity conditions of the speech act of prediction which are suggested by the researcher. The study contains no statistics, it is qualitative and explanatory.

### **Prediction in Future**

Searle (1979:6) suggests that the difference between a report and a prediction that the first is about something happened while the second is about something will happen. Thus, the futurity is what individuates predict as assertive category of speech act. This issue is rejected by Benton & Turi(2014) who think that iffy view (futurity directed content of prediction) must be modified. Then they produced a hybrid iffy view.

The meaning of the word predict which is derived from Latin (praedicere). This word is composed of two parts; root and prefix. The root is 'dicere' which means 'say' and the prefix 'prae' which means before (web 2). Thus, the word means to say something before it happens.

Downing and Locke (2006:359) state  
**“We cannot refer to future events as facts, as we can to past and present situations, since future events are not open to observation or memory. We can predict with more or less confidence what will**

**happen, we can play for events to take place, express our intentions and promises with regard to future events.”**

Accordingly, future is not used to refer to a time of occurring of events. In fact, English has no future tense, thus, there are only two tenses in English; present and past. This means that English has no verbal category of future, i.e. The indicators of future tense ‘will and shall’ are not markers of a verbal category. (Will) and (shall) belong to the family of modals (can, must, etc) (Huddleston, 1988:81)

The use of will and shall to express future differs from other means because these tools indicate futurity as well as modality. For example,

(2) she will be in London now.

(3) she is in London now.

The first is more salient than the second. On the other hand, the second is more assured. However, (will) carries the meaning of prediction in addition to futurity.

Simple future, the tense that is used in the data under analysis to express prediction, is realized in various grammatical forms. Generally speaking, these forms are; *Will and shall, going to and simple present tense*. At any rate, two of the main summaries of these forms can be displayed in this small work. The first is by Quirk et al (1981:209-213) who claim that there are five constructions referring to future time in English:

-prediction & volition

(4) He will be here in half an hour.

(5) I shall see you next week.

-Fulfilment of present intention

(6) Lela is going to lend her camera.

-Future which is resulted of a present cause

(7) It goes to rain.

Planning and arrangement

(8) The match is starting at 2.30 tomorrow.

-Special cases like ‘if clause’ & calendar {simple present}

(9) It’s Sunday tomorrow.

Temporal frame for volition & intention {will/shall+ progressive infinitive}

We’ll be flying at 300000 feet.

The second is presented by Bowning and Locke (2006:360-361) as follow:

-Prediction

(10) You`ll find petrol more expensive in France.

-Programmed action

(11) Next year`s conference will be held in Milan.

-Intended action

(12) Pete is thinking of changing his job.

-Imminent of events

(13) It look as if there is going to be a storm.

-Future anterior action

(14) The program will have ended long before we get back.

In Arabic, Future refers to the action that happens after the moment of speech (Jane and Gaafar, 2012:98). Future is mainly expressed by prefixed letter (س) before the verb in the present tense. The second way is adding the word (sawfa) to the present verb. The difference between the two cases is that the action in the first case will happen immediately or within a short time (near future). The action in the second case, on the other hand, will happen in longer time, i.e. there is a long time separating the time of speaking from the time of occurring the action. (distant future) (Jane and Gafafar, 2005:89). However, present (imperfect) in Arabic is used to express both present and future events. Imperfect verbs changes according to the subject (I, you, he, etc.), the changes are prefixes or suffixes (e.g. aftah, yaftah, sayaftah, sawf yaftah)(ibid:90).

### **Prediction in the Past**

In various sciences, the theoreticians predict things that have happened long time ago. For example, Bang theory and predictions that the early universe was extremely hot and galaxies used to be much closer together and some other things (Benton and Turi, 2014:1863). This means that prediction is not related to future events but also to the past ones. The question here is not which kind of past; near or far or both? The previous predictions are associated with very remote point of time but in the following example, it is not the case;

(15) Who did win last yesterday?

this question is asked by someone to his friend and the answer is ‘Boston won’. The person who answer did not the result of the match

and he did not see it but he just predicts who can win. This kind of prediction is very normal in every day events of near past. Thus, prediction involves both future& past events. as a result, the word prediction has two meanings; to say before the events happen ' Boston will win', to pertain to the predictor's future evidential(epistemic) situation 'we will discoverer find evidence that Boston won'.

The question at this point is what is about the present time. Harnish (2009:10-25) explains that the use of prediction in the present seems to be ad hoc. The case here is similar to predicting the result of a match without knowing that it has been played or it will be played in the future since that the predictor has evidence that a certain team will win. As if the matter is treated as a fact for the predictor.

### **Assertives and prediction**

Brown and Cappelen (2011) explain the philosophy of Assertion. Assertives are also named representatives, they are about a state or affairs in the world and they are judged as true or false. They are related to humans` belief and when the speaker changes his mind or belief, he must give excuses. Mey (2005:20) states that these speech acts have different degrees of force; it makes difference whether I absolute something or merely hypothesizes it, however, the point of the speech act remains the same.

According to Mey (1998:107), this kind of speech act requires:

1-Believing a proposition means that S knows it is true or its trueness is justified.

2-Making prediction by S adds something to H`s knowledge.

For H, in assertives;

a-H does not know P

b-H is interested to know P or S informs H as a moral duty.

c-H can use P for a useful action

d- P s true for S not for H.

Where P=prediction, S=speaker, H=hearer

### **Felicity conditions of prediction**

The first four rules that make a speech act felicitous are regulations; they regulate the act but they can be changed, by mutual agreement, without altering the nature of act. The last one is constitutive because the change of this rule means the act changes(Mey,2005:101).

The felicity conditions of the speech act of prediction can be constructed as follows:

1-propositional content: A future act or past event must be expected with force or absolute evidence.

2-Preparatory rule: a-S has aim for P.

b-H does not know P.

3-Sincerity: S is sure that P will happen or happened.

4-Essential rule: Uttering of the act makes H expects something to happen or happened.

Where P=prediction S=speaker H=hearer

The constitutive rule of prediction is related to the amount of commitment. Slight commitment makes sentence like 'he will win' expectation rather than prediction.

Benton and Turi (2014:12-1860) suggest that;

-if S appropriately expect P, then S in apposition to predict P and also in apposition to guess P,

2-if S knows P, then in apposition to assert P, and to guess P and

-if S knows that S knows P, Then S in a position to guarantee P and to assert P and to assert that S believes P and to predict P and to guess P.

Where P=prediction, S=Speaker, H=hearer

Thus, prediction must meet two main requirements; the S knows the proposition and S is in a position to make P. Thus, how S may be said to predict something can be shown in the diagram below;

Knowing → believing → asserting → prediction(guessing)

Here it seems that making prediction must be anticipated by asserting of the proposition which requires S to believe it when knows it.

### **Prediction in religious texts**

The meaning of the word 'predict' in science is knowing the results by some rules or information or equations. It cannot be absolute even when there is precise technology or developed techniques to make expectations as in broadcasting where most expressions used are extrapolation like 'with possibility to rain in the north 'or 'there is opportunity to rain in the north'. Forecasting is different from prediction in that the former is based on analysis of past and there is always a chance for error or disappointment (web 4).

According to ( web 1),prophecy and deviation are synonymous of prediction. prophecy is the highest degree of prediction. Prediction is used figuratively to express anything else. Thus, ‘I predict that he will ask for her hand today’ is a direct prediction and the underlined word is used figuratively since that it is uttered by an ordinary person. If the same sentence said by a prophet, it is a kind of deviation. Foretold statement said by a doctors, for example, are considered a prognostication or interpretation of scientific signs.

In science prediction may or may not happen, but it should be logical. In religion, on the other hand, there is one possibility is that prediction will definitely happen or happened. Predictions of prophets are often illogical and make people astonished of hearing about. Another important point is that scientific predictions are always based on evident analysis while religious ones are inspired.

### **Grammatical realizations of prediction in the Holy Bible**

Analyzing the data,P is expressed by verbal sentences structured in three tenses: future, simple present and present perfect.

#### 1-Future by ‘will’or ‘shall’

In T1, reason is given before P, then P is justified. The conjunction ‘therefore’ is used to explain this relation. Intact most predictions in the Bible is expressed in this way [reason or justification-prediction in future (will+ base). See also all the other examples.

P is rarely expressed by this structure. However, ‘shall’ is frequently used with ‘it’ and they and ‘will’ is used with ‘I’ and ‘you’. The second text shows how P is expressed by this pattern. See also the fourth text.

#### 2-Present perfect

Some predictions are expressed in present perfect like T 3. This form is frequently noticed in Bible. The aspect of perfection is associated in English to a number of meanings, in prediction, it is mainly associated to resentence.

#### 3-Simple present

Since simple present is used with facts and habits, it seems that the use of this form to predict events stands for that the speaker is completely sure of what he talks about as if he says facts. For example, Texts no.3,4 and 7.

**Syntactic realizations of prediction of future events in the Prophet Mohammad traditions**

Prediction in the prophet Mohammad`s (PBUH) traditions is expressed in various ways:

1-Using **alseen** (going to)

It is called in Arabic seen al **estekbal**. This particle is used for future. In T1(**alseen**+v. base) is used to express that something will happen to Islamic nation in the future. The structure **syaati**(will come) is frequently used by the Prophet to tell is intensively used by the prophet Mohammad to tell about the events in the future.

2-Statement

In T2, P is expressed by a statement consists of **almusnd** or al **mubtada**(topic) and al **musnad elayh** or khabar (comment). The prophet treats this proposition as a fact because what he tells about is an aspiration from Allah. See also the 19<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> texts.

3-conditional clause by **etha**(if)

In T3, P is expressed by a conditional clause, if you do something, something will happen to as a result. Thus, P is found in both; **feal al shart and gawab alshart**(first and second clauses). If here stands for the meaning of ‘when’ in the sense that the predicted event happens when the condition appears. See also text no.13

4-Emphasized statement by **enna**(it does)

In the fourth T, certainty of prediction is very obvious because the particle **enna** is used for emphasis. This prediction was reported from Omer bin Al **khatab** (the prince of believers) after many years of the prophet`s death. He met this man and told him that The Prophet told him about his description and his superiority and high position for Allah and asked him to pray for him. This shows that the prophet`s prediction is not always related to distant point of time.

5-Simple present

InT14& T15, P is expressed in simple present supported by oath (swearing by Allah) which leaves on doubt about P. But in text no.5, the expression **akhsha** (I am afraid) seems more powerful since the prophet is so sure to extent that he feels worried about his nation.

6-Conditional clause by **hata**(until)

Negative statement linked to with a positive one where the positive proposition is the condition for the negative proposition to

occur. P lies in the positive proposition. Thus, something will not happen till something else happen and this happening is the predictable proposition. For example, the sixth text where the judgment day comes only if Muslims fight Jews and kill them all. See also the 17th text.

7- Using the verbs of **alshrooa** (about to be)

Verbs like **yoshik** and **yakad** are used to express P because they refer to futurity (near future).

The practice **latzal** which indicates continuity and perfection may be used to span the temporal relation between the two clauses of the prediction and its condition.

8-Interrogative

Using rhetorical question is one of the ways used by the prophet to tell his predictions. In T8, the meaning is that 'you must be satisfied that in the future you will live as a good man and die as a martyr.

9-Attributing people

Calling people by certain attribution like al **shaheeda**'(martyr) for Aum **warakha** is telling something about their future or what will happen to them later. The eighth text is an example of this strategy of prediction when the prophet called **Aum Warakha al shaheeda**(martyr) and she was still alive.

10-Passive in the past

Passive in past is used to P in a way that what will happen in the future was decided in the past. Thus, the prophet wanted to say that Allah decided to give him the keys of **Alsham** in the future.

11- Involving past events in the predictions

Telling about past events that there is no evidence about or description of people and places is not restricted to prophet Mohammad but most prophets did including those are mentioned in Holy Bible. But what is special about the prophet Mohammad is that He may make his prediction mixture of events starting with past ending with future. This makes the prediction similar to the scientific prediction which is constructed within a temporal specter. The last text shows the prophet lists the best killed persons throughout the history of humanity; before, within and after his time. To sum up, past events in falls in the scope of the prophet`s Mohammad traditions.

## 12-Perfection & progression by using **latazal**

The prophet wants to say in the eleventh text that there is a part of the Islamic nation who keep this religion in its best condition by obeying Allah neglecting all those who stand against them.

### **Contrast**

It seems, from the analysis, that English and Arabic share some features and strategies concerning expressing prediction in religious texts, namely The Holy Bible and the prophet Mohammad traditions. However, the differences between them in this regard show a distance between the two religions in which the prophets call to worship one and only one God, Allah (the same message).

Generally speaking, it is clear that Arabic is more explicit than English, as far as the forms used to express prediction is concerned. However, direct prediction is not used in both kinds of data. According to the data under analysis, mixture of structures (or tenses) in one piece of prediction is frequently used in the holy Bible like T3 & T5. In the prophet traditions, this is not the case and one form is used, especially that the piece of prediction is shorter. The prophets are usually swearing to emphasize that what they say is completely true. In the tenth T; therefore, the saying is considered more forceful and powerful. In fact, he strategies used in the holy Bible are represented by using various forms of expressing future time. In English, past tense is excluded in prediction while in Arabic prediction of future happenings can be expressed by past tense. However, futurity is the dominant element in prediction. Using passive voice rather than active voice when making prediction may due to two possibilities; the focus is given to event rather than the doer or prediction about the past event is more mysterious. Another attractive point in Arabic is that prediction may be associated with short distance of time. The prophet Mohammad (PBUH) described persons in far places as if he was seeing them, thus distance here is related to place rather than time. However, the effect of prediction in both languages is telling people things remote in time and place to reinforce their confidence in the prophets and their messages, to provide evidence that those persons are not ordinary people and giving advice that make people wiser and more careful.

## **Conclusion**

Prediction is not associated with prophecy only but it is central in it. Prediction in religious texts differs from prediction in other kinds of text because of the nature of the speaker and the aim of utterance. In Arabic Prediction is expressed in a wider range of structures and it covers present and past in addition to future time. However, this diversity in Arabic reflects its explicitness in expressing speech acts.

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**The appendix of English Examples**

**Prediction in The Holy Bible and Prophet Mohammad Traditions (PBUH): A Contrastive Study ..... Manal Adnan**

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1-Amos 1 (8)

“I will cut off the inhabitant from, Asholod and are one who holds the specter from Ashkelon;.....”

2-Eskiel 26 (4-5)

“And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and breakdown her towers, I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top or, rock (4). It shall be a place for speaking nets in the midst of the sea for I have spoken, say the Lord God, it shall become plunder for the nations.” (5)

3-Amos 47 (5)

“Baldness has come upon Gaze; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley. How long will you.....?”

4-Nahoom 13 (3)

“Surely, your people in your midst are women! the gates of you land are wide open for your enemies; Fire shall devour the bar of your gates.”

5-Ezkiel 26(3)

Therefore, thus say the Lord God: “Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will case many nations to come up against you as causes it waves to come up.

6-Eskiel28(22-23)

“And say, thus, say the Lord God:” Behold, I am against you, O Sidon; I will be glorified in your midst; And they should know that I am the LORD, when I exceed judgements in her and hallowed in her.

7- Hosea 13 (16)

Samaria is held guilty. For she has rebelled against her. Their infants shall full by the sword, pieces, And their worn with child ripped open.”

8-Micah 1(6)

Therefore, I will make Samaria a head of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard; I will pour down her stone, into the valley, And I will uncover her foundations.

9-Amoos 1(8)

“I will cut off the inhabitant from, A sholod and the one who holds the specter from Ashkelon ;...”

10-Jeremiah 47 (6)

“O you sword of the Lord, How long until you are quite? Put yourself up into your scabbard, Rest and be still.”

11-(47) 7

How can it be quite, seeing the LORD has given it a change against a skelon and against the sea shone? There He has appointed.

## الملخص

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

- 1- "سيأتي زمان على امتي دينه كالفابض على الجمر."
- 2- "صنفان من امتي لم ارهما لن يدخلوا الجنة ولم يشموا رائحتها و ان رائحة الجنة لتشم على مسيرة خمسمائة عام من الصنف الاول... رجال معهم اسياط كاذناب البقر يعذبون بها الناس... و نساء كاسيات عاريات مائلات روؤسهن كاسنمة البخت المائلة."
- 3- "أذا تبايعتم بالعينة و رضيتم بالزرع وتبعتم ادناب القر سينزل عليكم غضب من الله..."
- 4- "أن في التابعين رجلا يقال له اويس
- 5- "ما لفقر خشيت عيكم و لكن اخشى عليكم فتنا فسوها فتهلككم كما اهلككم."
- 6- لا تقوم الساعة حتى يقاتل المسلمون اليهود فيختبئ اليهودي وراء الحجر والشجر فيقول الحجر والشجر : يا مسلم يا عبد الله هذا يهودي ورأي تعال فاقتله... الا الفرقد فانه من شجر اليهود.
- 7- "توشك ان تداعى عليكم الامم كما تداعى الاكله على قصعتها...".
- 8- "يا ثابت الا ترضى ان تعيش حميدا وتقتل شهيدا و تدخل الجنة."
- 9- كان الرسول يقول عند الذهاب الى بيت ام ورقة " انطلقوا بنا نزور الشهيد."
- 10- " والله ليرى هذا الامر حتى يسير الراكب من صنعاء الى حضرموت لا يخاف الا الله او الذئب على غنمو لكنكم تستعجلون."
- 11- "لا تزال طائفة من امتي قائمة بامر الله, لا يرضهم من خذلهم او خالفهم حتى ياتي امر الله وهم كذلك."
- 12- "بسم الله والله اكبر أعطيت مفاتيح الشام والله اني لا ابصر قصورها الحهر من مكاني هذا."
- 13- "اذا هلك كسرى فلا كسرى بعده واذا هلك قيصر فلا قيصر بعده , والذي نفسي بيده كنزوهما في سبيل الله."
- 14- "والذي نفس محمد بيده , لتفترقن امتي على ثلاث وسبعين فرقه, واحدة في الجنة واثنان وسبعون في النار."

15- "لنتبعن سنة من كان قبلكم شبرا بشبر، وذراعا بذراع، حتى لو دخلو جحر ضب لتبعتموهم."

16- "الخلافه بعدي ثلاثون سنه ثم ملكا من بعد ذلك."

17- "لاتقوم الساعة حتى تلحق قبائل من امتي المشركين."

18- "اشتقت لاخواني. قيل نحن يارسوا الله ... قال بل انتم اصحابي ولكن اخواني من سياتون بعدي ويوءمنوا بي ولم يروني .... اجر الواحدمنهم باجر خمسينمكم... زلانكم تجدون على الخير اعوانا ام هم فلا."

19- "ويح عمر تقتله الفئة الباغية."

20- "خير قتلى قتلت تحت ظل السماء مذ خلق الله تعالى خلقه, اولهم هابيل الذي قتله قابيل اللعين ظلما, ثم قتلى الانبياء الذين قتلهم امهم المبعوثه اليهم حين قالو: ربنا الله و دعوا اليهو ثم مؤمن ال فرعون, ثم صاحب ياسين, ثم حمزة بن عبد المطلب, ثم قتلى بدر, ثم قتلى احدو ثم قتلى الحديبيةو ثم قتلى الاحزاب, ثم قتلى حنين, ثم قتلى تكون من بعدي يقتلهم خوارج مارقة فاجرة, ثم ارجع يدك الى ما شاء الله من المجاهدين في سبيله, حتى تكون ملحمة الروم, قتلهم كقتلى بدر, ثم تكون ملحمة الترك, فقتلهم كقتلى يوم الاحزاب, ثم ملحمة الملاحم قتلهم كقتلى يوم حنين, ثم ملحمة في الاسلام لاهلها فيها الى يوم ينفخ في الصور."