

**A Linguistic Analysis of Figurative Language in Wulid al-Huda
Poem**

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تحليل لغوي للغة المجازية في قصيدة ولد الهدى

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Abstract

Language is a system of communication made up of a collection of written symbols and sounds, that the people of a certain nation or area use for writing and speaking. Communicating one's thoughts, feelings, and opinions to others is a genuinely amazing skill. The figurative language in *Wulid al-Huda Poem* select randomly. This research aims to investigate and clarify the basic types of figurative language in *Shawqi's* poetry, as well as to identify its spiritual and creative connotations. This is achieved by using a qualitative descriptive approach based on Deignan's (2009) model for analyzing poetic texts. This study found 6 types of figurative language in poem. The results showed that 170 figurative used in data, with conceptual metaphor being the most frequent category, occurring 72 times (42.35%). Proverb expressions were the least frequent, occurring only 3 times (1.76%).
Key words: Figurative Language, linguistic analysis, Wulid al-Huda, poem, metaphor

المستخلص

اللغة هي نظام تواصل يتكون من مجموعة من الرموز والأصوات المكتوبة التي يستخدمها شعب أمة أو منطقة معينة للكتابة والتحدث. إن توصيل الأفكار والمشاعر والآراء للآخرين هو مهارة مذهلة حقًا. تشير اللغة المجازية في قصيدة ولد الهدى إلى أن هذه التعبيرات المجازية تتجاوز الأفكار الشعرية المجردة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقيق في الأنواع الأساسية للغة المجازية في القصيدة وتوضيحها، بالإضافة إلى تضخيم دلالاتها الروحية والإبداعية. ويتحقق ذلك باستخدام منهج وصفي نوعي يعتمد على نموذج Deignan's (2009) لتحليل النصوص الشعرية. وجدت الدراسة 6 أنواع من اللغة المجازية في القصيدة. أظهرت النتائج أن 170 مصطلحًا مجازيًا مستخدمًا في العينة، وكانت الاستعارة المفاهيمية هي الفئة الأكثر شيوعًا، حيث حدثت 72 مرة (42.35%). كانت تعبيرات الأمثال هي الأقل شيوعًا، حيث حدثت 3 مرات فقط (1.76 %)

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة المجازية، التحليل اللغوي، ولد الهدى، قصيدة ، الاستعارة

1. Introduction

Figurative language defined as a kind of language where words are expressed in peculiar ways. It states the use of a figure of speech to express a certain meaning in it (Rohani *et al.*, 2018). Figurative language is used in both literary and commercials to convey ideas and influence viewers in order to pique readers' interest and convey ideas and imaginations in a more enjoyable manner (Fatimah, 2019). According to Heller (2011), it alters or exaggerates the usual meanings of words, making it harder to interpret and sometimes causing misunderstanding. However, people still operate it because it carries rich and profound meanings (Colston, 2015).

Moreover, the tone, content, and general stylistic identity of a poem are greatly influenced by metaphorical language. It allows poets to create links between seemingly unrelated ideas, stimulate sensory reactions, and express abstract ideas in concrete forms (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Therefore, deciphering the deeper levels of poetic texts and appreciating the beauty ingrained in the poetic trade require a comprehension of figurative language.

1.1 Research problem

Despite the rich literary and linguistic legacy of Arabic poetry, little linguistic attention has been paid to the metaphorical language used by Ahmed Shawqi. Few studies have examined how Shawqi's figurative phrases serve as linguistic strategies that create meaning, arouse emotion, and influence the reader's view of the Prophet's birth, despite the fact that many have examined the thematic and artistic aspects of poem. The poem was chosen as it represents one of Shawqi's richest texts, in terms of the density of figures of speech, the richness of its themes, and its

complexity of style, but that it is not thoroughly analyzed in past studies. Thus, a thorough grasp of how figurative language functions in Shawqi's poetry as a tool for creative innovation, reverence, and persuasion has been hampered by the dearth of linguistic analysis. In order to identify the underlying mechanisms that support the poem's expressive and rhetorical force, this study aims to examine Wulid al-Huda's figurative language from a linguistic standpoint.

1.2 The Questions of the Research

1. What types of figurative language are used in Wulid al-Huda?
2. How the messages are expressed by the meaning of figurative language in Ahmed Shawqi's poem?

1.3 The Aims of the Research

1. To know the types of figurative language are used in Wulid al-Huda.
2. To identify the messages are expressed by figurative language in the Ahmed Shawqi's poem.

1.4 Significance of the research

This study is important because it closes the gap between linguistic analysis and the literary understanding of Arabic poetry. By analyzing Wulid al-Huda's figurative language. The study shows how Shawqi's linguistic choices express intense religious devotion and intense emotion. The results offer important insights for linguistic and literary studies as well as a better understanding of the expressive role of language in Arabic poetry.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Figurative Language

Language plays a significant function as a way of communication in all facets of human life. When individuals interpret a language literally, misunderstandings develop and meanings change. The

writers generate a variety of literary works that poetry is one form of literature. One artistic effort that elevates a text to poetic status is poetry. The meanings of poems are determined by the choice of language (Mulyani *et al.*, 2020). It applies to communicate a message through poetry. Figurative language is a type of language that uses words or sentences with a deeper meaning than their literal meanings (Adkins, 1968). Figurative language may be used when a statement or piece of writing has more than one meaning. Abrams and Harpham (2014) utilize that figurative language is a diversion from what language speakers typically understand to be meaningful or the standard language or word order to create specific effects. For a better understanding of figurative language, the reader needs to pay attention to their imagination. According to Perrine and Arp (1963), the language that is not comprehended in the literal sense is called figurative language. Cuddon (2013) shows that figurative language is different from literal language. It uses figures of speech instead of literal meaning.

Figure of speech, rhetorical figure, and metaphorical language are other names for figurative language (Elder, 2008). Since human symbolic ability is depending on the conceptual framework, artistic expression must reflect the nature of human embodiment and, consequently, bodily experience (Evans & Zinken, 2006 p. 11).

2.2 Characteristics of Figurative Language

The primary benefit of using figurative language in poetry is that it facilitates reading. Perrine (1982, p. 118) lists four traits of metaphorical language. First, readers can enjoy literary works imaginatively thanks to figurative language. Secondly, it is a means of adding more imagery to poetry, giving the abstract a concrete form and enhancing the sensuality of literary works. The

third is figurative, which conveys opinions in addition to facts and adds emotional impact to words that would otherwise only be informative. Finally, it conveys a lot in a short amount of space. According to Arvius (2003, p. 190), figurative language falls into two broad categories: 1) schemes, which deal with the repetition of phonological, syntactic, and lexical forms, and 2) tropes, which deal with meaning changes in the usage of lexemes and multi-word language constructs. Figurative language allows authors to elicit feelings and images in their writing that are just not possible with literal language. Figurative language thereby facilitates and increases the reader's ability to relate to written content.

2.3 Previous Studies

Ibrahim (2024), in his study pointed to the concepts of poetry through the use of creative language, which is used as a means of conveying ideas and feelings in a professional manner to create a unique environment. The study employed a statistical structural method, selecting three poems to represent the complete collection. The study determined that he utilized poetic lines that were compatible with the aims of praise, as well as Manifestations of his creative skill, which increased the percentage of absolute rhyme and testified to his freedom and freedom, which distinguished and made the collection distinctive.

In the political context, Nugraha and Budiono (2024) conducted a scientometric analysis of figurative language in political discourse from 2014 to 2024. Their findings revealed four main research clusters rhetoric and stylistics, politician identity, persuasive and ideological discourse, and political events indicating a growing academic interest in how figurative

language functions in politics. The current study focuses on the use of figurative language in the poems of Ahmad Shawqi poem. The previous studies in this study were one that focused on literary data and another focused on political speeches. While the literary study delved into the realm of figurative language in a general literary context, and the political discourse analysed the figurative strategies in political communication, the current research is different in both scope and focus. The researcher explores the Arabic literature in particular through the analyzing of *Ahmad Shawqi's poem*, and focuses on the function of the figurative in a classical Arabic poetic form. This provides a clear research gap as previous research did not integrate literary analysis with a comprehensive examination of the Arabic poetic discourse in the context of Shawqi's poetry. Therefore, this study bridges this gap by providing a concentrated, yet culturally grounded, analysis that was neither provided by the literary nor political studies before this study.

3. Methodology

In this research, the researcher has used research method, model adopted, description data, and analysis of the data.

3.1 The Method of the Research

In this study, the researcher described and analyzed the poetry using a qualitative approach. It depicts the process of comprehending a social or human issue by using words to create a complex, comprehensive picture, reporting in-depth informant perspectives, and being carried out in a natural setting related to its subject matter (Creswell *et al.*, 2007). According to Christensen *et al.* (2008), the qualitative approach looks at how decisions are made rather than merely what, where, and when.

This study employs this approach since a poem can be classified as either abstract or concrete, and in order to analyze it, the qualitative method must be shown with stages that involve reading the poem in detail.

3.2 Adopted Model

Deignan (2009) focuses on figurative language as a feature of everyday communication not just poetry or literature. She identifies several core kinds of figurative expressions that are used naturally in spoken and written English:

1. Metaphor Conceptual mapping between two domains of experience (source and target). Linguistic focus: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

2. Simile An explicit comparison showing similarity between two entities using like or as. Linguistic function: Highlights perceived similarity between domains.

3. Metonymy A figure where one concept is used to refer to another closely related concept. Function: Cognitive and referential economy in discourse.

4. Idiom Fixed multiword expressions whose meaning cannot be deduced from individual words. Function: Conventionalized figurative expressions in everyday language.

5. Proverb Culturally conventionalized figurative expressions reflecting shared wisdom. Function: Encodes collective experience metaphorically.

6. Collocations with Figurative Meaning Word combinations that develop figurative senses over time. Function: Lexicalization of figurative meanings.

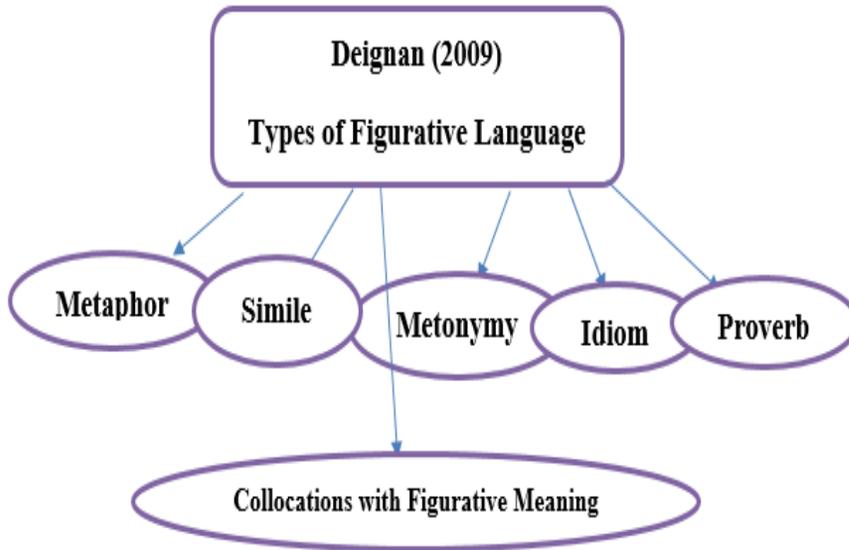


Figure 3.1 Model of the research

3.۳ Data Description

The data for this study consist of a selected poem by the prominent Egyptian poet Ahmad Shawqi (1868–1932), who is considered one of the most influential figures in modern Arabic poetry. Shawqi represents a transitional phase in Arabic literary history, combining the classical Arabic poetic tradition with modern themes and national sentiment (Hammoud, 2014). This poem serves as the primary data source for the study, allowing the researcher to recognize and examine different forms of metaphorical expression. It was selected for its intricate stylistic and rhetorical features, as well as its significance and cultural importance within the context of Neoclassical Arabic poetry. The

verses on figurative language extracted from Ahmed's poem constitute the source of the data used in this study. The data source was obtained from 131-verse poem was accessed online, and ten verses were analyzed in November 1, 2025. The ten verses chosen for their greatest concentration of figurative language in comparison to the rest of the poem, thus making them amenable to rhetorical analysis within the theory. They are reflective of the major themes of the poem. They represent the figurative diversity that the research is intending to discuss. The rest of the verses were excluded due to reasons such as, the repetition of the meaning and types, thereby reducing their usefulness in analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

According to Babby (1986), content analysis can be used to examine virtually any sort of communication. Based on this premise, content analysis is used as a tool to examine the data and tactics it for this study. In this regard, content analysis may be the most appropriate technique for addressing the content and contextual meaning of any text.

Furthermore, content analysis is situated at the intersection of observation and document analysis. According to Kerlinger (1973), observation involves asking questions about people's communications rather than asking them to answer to questions. The descriptive quantitative method is offered in both numerical and descriptive form. According to Sugiyono (2012, p.13), descriptive research is a sort of investigation that identifies variables whether one or more without comparing or connecting them to other factors.

1. The researcher read the poem and marked the verses containing figurative language.
2. Then manually counted the types and explained the proportions of each type.
3. The researcher analyzed the sample linguistically, indicating the importance types of figurative languages.
4. The model Deignan (2009) used to analyze the poem Wulid al-Huda.

4. Results and Discussions

Table 4.1 Types of figurative language in whole data

Figurative language types	Frequencies	Percentages
1. Conceptual Metaphor	72	42.35
2. Simile	11	6.47
3. Metonymy	34	20
4. Idiom	9	5.29
5. Proverb-like Expressions	3	1.76
6. Figurative Collocations	41	24.11
Total	170	100%

Above table 4.1 indicated that metaphors occurred 42.35%, emphasizing the significance of indirect mappings. Figurative collocations (24.11%) indicate persistent non-literal linguistic pairings. Metonymy accounts for 20% of references, indicating conceptual continuity. Similes (6.47%) and idioms (5.29%) are less common, relying on direct comparison and fixed phrasing, respectively. Proverb-like utterances appeared 3 times (1.76%), indicating a low use of aphoristic constructs. Furthermore, metaphoric and collocational tactics are the principal ways to communicate figurative meaning in the corpus. Metaphor occurred too much in Ahmed Shawqi poem since he was a poet

with a tendency towards artistic images, converting meanings into clear pictures, which increased their beauty and effectiveness. He was also influenced by classical Arabic poetry, which is full of figurative language and imagery. His use of proverbs arises out of his desire to crystallize the ideas to strengthen the wisdom; proverbs speak of deep human experience and readily accessible to the reader. Therefore, Shawqi made use of them in order to make his poetry more clear and powerful.

Table 4.2 Metaphors in Wulid al-Huda

No.	Arabic Verse	English Verse	Linguistic Meaning
1	فَالْكَائِنَاتُ الْهُدَىٰ وَوَلَدًا ضِيَاءً	The Guide was born, and all creation became light.	Metaphor: Maps moral guidance to light, showing the Prophet's birth as a source of spiritual illumination.
2	يَقْطُرُ وَالْوَحْيِ سَلْسَلًا مِنْ سَلْسَلًا	The Revelation drips, chain by chain.	Metaphor: Compares revelation to dripping water, emphasizing purity, continuity, and gentle guidance.
14	الَّذِي مَحْيَاكَ وَبَدَا حَقُّ قَسَمَاتِهِ	Your face appeared whose features are truth.	Metaphor: Equates the Prophet's facial features with truth, highlighting moral perfection.
15	نُورٍ مِنْ وَعَلَيْهِ رَوْنَقِ النَّبِيِّ	Upon him is the radiance of prophetic light.	Metaphor: Describes prophecy as physical light, reinforcing the idea of divine enlightenment.
128	فِي الْحَضَارَةِ مَشَتْ سَنَاهَا	Civilization walked in its radiance.	Metaphor: Personifies civilization as walking, linking cultural progress to divine illumination.

1. Metaphor – Conceptual Metaphor *The Guide was born, and all creation became light.* *وَلَدًا الْهُدَىٰ فَالْكَائِنَاتُ ضِيَاءً*

The linguistic combination of "born" and "Diyaa" creates a striking image of cosmic illumination. Linguistically, this verse conveys that the birth of the Prophet was not merely a historical event but a metaphysical turning point. The use of *ضِيَاءً* suggests enlightenment, spiritual awakening, and divine mercy all central themes in Islamic theology and Arabic poetry.

The Revelation drips, chain by chain. *وَالْوَحْيِ يَقْطُرُ سَلْسَلًا مِنْ سَلْسَلًا*

The metaphor transforms an abstract theological process into a tangible, visual experience. A visual depiction of an abstract

religious process is produced using the language use of "drips" and "chain by chain."

Table 4.3 Similes in Ahmed Shawqi's Poem

No.	Arabic Verse	English Verse	Linguistic Meaning
3	إِلَى مَشَيْتٍ وَإِذَا فَعَضَّنْفَرُ الْعِدَا	And when you march to the enemy, you are like a lion.	Simile comparing the Prophet's bravery to a lion, emphasizing strength and courage.
4	مِنْ كَأَنَّكَ أَمْسَى أُمَّةً جَلَالِكَ	It became as if you were a whole nation in your grandeur.	Simile exaggerating the Prophet's influence, showing his presence equals a nation.
28	فَأَنْتَ الْجَمَالَ أَمَا سَمَائِهِ شَمْسُ	As for beauty, you are the sun of its sky.	Simile comparing the Prophet's beauty to the sun, highlighting radiance and prominence.
56	يَمْلَأُ النُّورَ كَأَنَّ الدُّنْيَا	As if the light fills the world.	Simile expressing the Prophet's illuminating and guiding presence.
70	النَّاسَ دَعَوْتَ لَمَّا عَاقِلٌ نَبِيٌّ	As if all rational people answered your call.	Simile showing the natural response to the Prophet's message, emphasizing influence.

2. Simile – Explicit Comparison *وَإِذَا مَشَيْتَ إِلَى الْعِدَا فَعَضَّنْفَرُ*

The word "Ghadanfar," means not only strength but also dominance and courage. Linguistically, this simile indicates that the Prophet's courage is based on morality and spiritual appeal, and the lion represents the just, strong, and principled prophetic leadership.

3. Simile *أَمْسَى كَأَنَّكَ مِنْ جَلَالِكَ أُمَّةً*

The researcher expressed figurative language by referring to the word "as if" as a simile to explain and reinforce the Prophet's social and spiritual status. The speaker reveals through it that he

is using a hypothetical simile to express glorification and veneration without explicitly stating it.

Table 4.4 Metonymy in Arabic poem

No.	Arabic Verse	English Verse	Linguistic Meaning
5	حِيَالُهُ أَنْتَ وَالْحَوْضُ السَّقَاءُ	And you are the source of watering at the Basin.	Metonymy: 'The Basin' stands for intercession (Shafaa). A concrete symbol used to represent a spiritual function.
6	مَا اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ صَلَّى الدُّجَى صَحِبَ	May God bless you through all that accompanies the night.	Metonymy: 'Night' represents the passing of time, expressing continuous divine blessings.
21	بِهَا رَوَّاحَ جِبْرِيلَ غَدَاءَ	Gabriel travels with them morning and evening.	Metonymy: 'Morning and evening' represent ongoing, repeated divine support.
29	كَرَمَ مِنَ وَالْحُسْنَ الْوُجُوهِ	Beauty comes from the generosity of faces.	Metonymy: 'Faces' refer to people themselves; using a part to signify the whole.
124	وَالْقُلُوبُ هَوَاهَا رَكِبَتْ هَوَاءَ	They rode their desires, and hearts followed whims.	Metonymy: 'Hearts' stand for inner intentions and moral will.

4. Metonymy وَالْحَوْضُ أَنْتَ حِيَالُهُ السَّقَاءُ

The basin symbolizes intercession. Linguistically, a more practical one for the distribution of water and irrigation, signifying divine mercy and the prophetic call, has replaced the concept of intercession. The basin represents the role of the Prophet Muhammad, as a conduit for divine grace and his ability to feed and sustain believers in the afterlife.

5. Metonymy صَلَّى عَلَيْكَ اللَّهُ مَا صَحِبَ الدُّجَى

In this verse, the word "الدُّجَى" refers to darkness and night, representing time and continuity. However, when used figuratively, its literal meaning is linked to a religious and

spiritual concept, that expresses the night and emphasizes the tranquility of the Prophet's presence and God's eternal blessings.

Table 4.5 Idioms in poem

No.	Arabic Verse	English Verse	Linguistic Meaning
7	وَالْقُلُوبُ هَوَاهَا رَكِبَتْ هَوَاءَ	They rode their desires, and hearts followed whims.	Idiom expressing surrender to desires; indicates moral weakness and loss of self-control.
8	نَعِيمٌ وَعَرَّهُمْ رَقْدُوا بِاطِلٌ	They slept, deceived by false luxury.	Idiom meaning they became negligent due to worldly pleasures; highlights illusion of material comfort.
23	الْحَيَا يُسْتَسْقَى الْمَهْدِ فِي بِرْجَانِهِ	In the cradle, rain was sought through him.	Idiom implying blessings are obtained through him; expresses greatness from early life.
26	لَقَامَتْ دِينًا نَعْمَ لَمْ نُؤ وَحَدَّهَا	Had you not established a religion, it would have risen on its own.	Idiomatic hyperbole meaning his virtues alone are enough to form a religion.
77	الدَّوَاءُ بَعْضٌ مِنْ أَحْفَ الدَّاءِ	Sometimes the illness is lighter than the cure.	Idiom expressing wisdom: some solutions can be worse than the problem itself.

6. Idiom – Fixed Expression رَكِبَتْ هَوَاهَا وَالْقُلُوبُ هَوَاءَ

This line refers to the heart and will capable of enduring or acting. In a metaphorical sense, the use of these words can be interpreted as the weakness of the human spirit in resisting temptation and moral weakness, revealing that desire is a dominant force.

7. Idiom رَقْدُوا وَعَرَّهُمْ نَعِيمٌ بَاطِلٌ

False luxury serves as a powerful moral warning by instilling a linguistic critique of superficial well-being. This statement highlights the spiritual risk of complacency, where people are preoccupied with momentary pleasures at the expense of ethical awareness and transcendent goals.

Table 4.6 Proverb-like Expressions from 'Wulida al-Huda'

Poem No.	Arabic Verse	English Verse	Linguistic Meaning
22	بَعْضُهُ رِزْقٌ وَالْبَيْتُمْ وَذِكَاؤُ	Orphanhood is partly a gift and partly brilliance.	A proverb-like nominal sentence presenting as carrying positive inherent traits; syntactically compact, semantically generalizable.
77	بَعْضٌ مِنْ أَخْفَتِ الدَّاءِ الدَّوَاءِ	Sometimes the cure is worse than the disease.	A comparative proverb expressing paradoxical wisdom; structurally parallel to common universal sayings.

8. Proverb-like Expressions *المُصْلِحُونَ أَصَابِعُ جُمِعَتْ يَدًا*

This saying encapsulates the principle that unity amplifies strength. Linguistically, it uses a metaphor where in separate fingers, each with a finite amount of strength, are depicted as coming together to form a coherent hand. As a result, the phrase encourages solidarity as a fundamental principle for community resilience and efficacy.

Table 4.7 Figurative collocations from data

No.	Arabic Verse	English Verse	Linguistic Meaning
4	يَزْهُو وَالْعَرْشُ تَزْدَهِي وَالْحَظِيرَةُ	The Throne exults, and the enclosure shines.	Collocation linking divine realm with celebratory brightness; personification creates spiritual grandeur.
5	سَلْسَلًا يَقْطُرُ وَالْوَحْيُ	The revelation drips in a flowing chain.	Collocation of divine message with flowing movement; imagery of gentle, continuous guidance.
14	الَّذِي مَحْيَاكَ وَبَدَا حَقُّ قَسَمَاتِهِ	Your face appeared whose features are truth.	Collocation pairing physical features with moral truth; merges visual and ethical domains.

15	النُّبُوَّةُ نُورٌ مِنْ رَوْنَقٍ	Upon him is the radiance of prophetic light.	Combines radiance + prophecy; creates a spiritual aesthetic emphasizing divine illumination.
128	فِي الْحَضَارَةِ مَشَتْ سَنَاهَا	Civilization walked in its radiance.	Collocation personifies civilization and links it with radiance, suggesting progress guided by light.

9. Figurative Collocations وَالْعَرْشُ يَزْهُو وَالْحَظِيرَةُ تَزْدَهِي

By associating the cage with rays and the throne with the verb exults, the term establishes a figurative collocation that gives inanimate cosmic elements the characteristics of life. The celestial realm is personified by that verb, which is usually reserved for the subject of life. The language describes the majesty of the Prophet's birth through this nonliteral connection, describing it as a cosmic resonant event that transcends earthly boundaries and confirms his spiritual primacy in the metaphysical system.

10. Figurative Collocations مِنْ نُورِ النُّبُوَّةِ رَوْنَقٌ

This phrase is a powerful metaphorical collocation that uses metaphor and imagery to lift the concept of prophecy. The translation more or less means "From the light of prophecy comes light," and its symbolic potential comes from the way this phrase combines abstract spiritual aspects with sensory imagery.

Conclusions

The results revealed that the poet employed six types of figurative language, as identified by the model. Metaphor occurred with the highest frequency showed linguistic creativity through manual analysis (42.35%). The least was Proverb-like utterances occurred 3 times (1.76%). The dominant type of figurative expressions was metaphor. Furthermore, the present research

found that the poet uses these expressions throughout his poem about the Prophet's birth. Metaphors combine spiritual and human elements to convey the reader in a visually and spiritually impactful way.

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