An intertextual analysis of English and Arabic selected poems: A contrastive study

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Abstract---Recently, the concept of intertextuality has become one of the important issues in modern linguistic studies. This study tackles a contrastive discoursal analysis of intertextuality in William Blake and Ahmed Matar's selected poems. This study attempts to present an intertextual analysis of two poems which are: (Jearusalem) by William Blake and (Lived-Fall down (عاش-يسقط) by Ahmed Matar. This study aims at finding out the techniques of intertextuality that are used in these selected poems, then pointing out the levels of intertextuality and reconextualisation of these poems and finally revealing the most frequent technique of intertextuality that is used in the selected data. It is hypothesized that an indirect quotation is more used in English selected poems, whereas the direct quotation is more used in the Arabic ones. To investigate this hypothesis and reach the aim, the next procedures are followed: presenting a theoretical background of discourse analysis and intertextuality. Analyzing the two selected poems according to an adopted model of Bazerman (2004). Following both quantitative and qualitative method. In the conclusion of the study, the contrastive intertextual analysis shows that Blake in his poem “Jearsalem” was influenced by the following texts or documents: The Holy Bible and the Greek mythology. On the other hand, Matar in his poem (Lived-fall down (عاش-يسقط) was influenced by The Holy Quran only. Also, it concludes that in the English poems, Blake uses less explicit levels of intertextuality, whereas in the Arabic poems, Matar uses the explicit ones.

Keywords---discourse analysis, intertextuality, text, English poems, Arabic poems.
Introduction

The present study aims at investigating selected poems of William Blake and Ahmed Matar through doing intertextual analysis of these poems. Intertextuality has offered critics and linguists a new means of talking about both the nature of textuality and influence. It is one of paramount linguistic devices to analyze. It also related to the ways through which new meanings are created from the old ones and deals with “how new writing incorporates previous texts by transforming them into new text” (Kristeva 1980:5). As the researcher knows, no previous research has tackled intertextuality in William Blake and Ahmed Matar’s selected poems as a contrastive discoursal analysis. Such a gap was evident through searching the literature relevant to intertextuality analysis in poetry; hence, this study aims at filling this gap. This study is an attempt to analyze the intertextuality in the selected poems to find out the reason behind using intertextuality. It identifies how the English and Arabic poets use the words or phrases in new context by giving them new meaning.

An Overview of Discourse Analysis (DA)

The existing body of literature about discourse explains that ‘discourse’ is one of the concepts that are widely used and still not well defined (Schiffrin 1994:5; Stubbs 1983:12). The most obvious reason for this discrepancy is the divergency of origins from which the researchers come and hence the broad use to which the term is put. Each group of researchers tends to have different interests and assignments from other groups. The groups of researchers also differ in their theoretical attitudes which finally affect the way they view this concept (Agnes Weiyun, HE, 2007).

Van Dijk (1985) states that the historical and general view of Discourse Analysis (henceforth DA) turns back to the beginning of linguistics since DA is one of the developments of linguistic theories. That is to say, DA can be considered an old and new field. It is old in the sense that its roots belong to the study of language and literature 2000 years ago. Beaugrande (2006:39) suggests seven principles which have to be satisfied to qualify either a written or spoken text as a discourse. These principles are called ‘the seven principles or standards of textuality’ which are:

Cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and finally intertextuality which is our concern in this current study. The present study is concerned with one of the seven standards of DA which is intertextuality.

History, Definitions and Types of Intertextuality

The concept of Intertextuality

Intertextuality as a term was first used in Julia Kristeva’s “Word, Dialogue and Novel” (1966). The concept of intertextuality that she initiated proposes the text as a dynamic site in which relational processes and practices are the focus of analysis instead of static structures and products (Maria et al. 2014:268). Accordingly, Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality assumes that meaning and
Intelligibility in discourse and texts are based on a network of prior and concurrent discourses and texts. Every text (and any cultural object) is a mosaic of references to other texts, genres, and discourses. Any text includes a combination of quotations, any text is the absorption and transformation of another (Gattan Dijla 2016:15).

Allen (2000) states that since neither Saussure nor Bakhtin actually employs the term, most people would wish to credit Julia Kristeva with being the inventor of ‘intertextuality’. Kristeva is influenced by both Bakhtinian and Saussurean models and attempts to combine their insights and major theories. Fairclough (1992) states that intertextuality has an important relation to discourse in social change. It implies the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history. Fairclough (ibid:102) states: “the concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones”. In other words, intertextuality refers to heterogeneity of texts, i.e., to the process of producing and creating new texts similar in content and in form to the original texts (Ahmed, Mazin Fawzi 2010:510). Fairclough (1992) uses intertextuality to indicate the productivity of texts, in a sense that the transformation of prior text and the reorientation of present conventions lead to the creation of other texts.

He (ibid:10) categorizes intertextuality into two categories ‘manifest intertextuality’ and ‘constitutive intertextuality’. The first type can be defined as the explicit or implicit reference to previous texts while the second type refers to the connection between two texts in a way that they have the same form, structure and/ or genre. Bazerman (2004), on the other hand, deals with the concept of intertextuality in a more general way by relating the advantage of such analysis to a variety of fields such as academic writing, research projects, policy documents, and so on. He defines the concept of intertextuality as: the explicit and implicit relations that a text or utterance has to prior, contemporary and potential future texts. Through such relations a text evokes a representation of the discourse situation, the textual resources that bear on the situation, and how the current text positions itself and draws on other texts. While this is now a widely recognized phenomenon, there is not a standard shared analytic vocabulary for considering the elements and kinds of intertextuality (ibid:3). He identifies specific procedure for intertextual analysis of texts, this procedure is divided into four steps: levels of intertextuality, techniques of intertextual representation, intertextual distance or reach, and recontextualisation (ibid:3-6).

Intertextuality in English and Arabic poetry

The literary terms in intertextuality take the form of pastiche, quotation, plagiarism, imitation, allusion, parody, irony, citation, and so on. For instance, "allusion is an implicit reference, perhaps to another work of literature or art, to a person or an event. Thus, for a purpose to be achieved, there has to be an established literary tradition or a body of shared knowledge with an audience to pick up the meaning. Both English and Arabic languages are rich in intertext (Abu Dayyeh Imad 1991:79).
The Model of Analysis

The present study will adopt Bazerman (2004) model for analyzing intertextuality. According to Bazerman’s (2004) model, there are three terms which represent the main aspects of intertextuality:

Levels of Intertextuality

Bazerman (2004) introduces six levels of intertextual analysis in which the text rely on other texts, these are:

- The text may draw on prior texts as a basis of meanings to be used at face value.
- The text may draw explicit social dramas of prior texts engaged in discussion.
- The text may also explicitly use other statements as background, support, and contrast.
- Less explicitly the text may rely on beliefs, issues, ideas, statement as common knowledge
- By using definite indirectly recognisable kinds of language, phrasing, and genres.

Techniques of Intertextual Representation

Bazerman (ibid) delineates six points within this step, thus the following techniques embody levels of intertextuality:

- Direct quotation.
- Indirect quotation
- Mentioning of a person, document or statements.
- Comment or evaluation on a statement, text, or otherwise invoked voice.
- Using recognisable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular documents.

Recontextualisation

It refers to how the text uses the words or phrases in new context by giving them new meaning. This Model is illustrated bellow in Figure 1.
The Data
Data Description and Collection

The sample of the present study is limited to William Blake’s poem(Jerusalem) in (1804) and Ahmed Matar’s poem(Lived-fall down ) in (1984) from the poetical works (Diwan lafitat1 ). The data of this study chosen intentionally by the researcher according to the theme since the two poems are talking about the same theme which is: Al-Quds (القدس).

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data follows both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches. Qualitatively, by describing each poem and quantitatively by identifying the frequencies and percentages of intertextualities.

Intertextual Analysis of William Blake’s poem (Jearsalem)

This poem composed of four stanzas and these stanzas can be divided into two halves: the first two stanzas contain a series of questions, while the other two stanzas describe a ‘call to arms’, which represents an attempt to ‘build new Jerusalem’ among the ‘green and pleasant land’ of England. There are three instances of intertextuality in Text 1(the first stanza) as follows:

Figure(1): Intertextual Analysis according to the adopted model of Analysis by Bazerman (2004).
And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon Englands mountains green

A. Firstly, in the first two lines, Blake asks a question if the divine feet ever walked on English mountains or lands. This idea belongs to the information that held on the life of Jesus of Nazareth which represents the writings of the disciples who recorded his Ministry, today found in the New Testament of the Catholic Bible. These writings record the birth, early childhood, and preachings of Jesus (cited in the Gospel of Luke to be in His thirties), but leave out the entirety of time between the two periods. According to medieval belief, Jesus had visited England during those unknown years (Asad Omer, 2015).

B. Secondly, the term "green and pleasant land," is quoted commonly and become a collocation for English landscape or society. It appears as a headline, title or sub-title in many articles and books.

C. The "Lamb of God" is a reference to Jesus as the Son of God. It also contains an echo to Blake’s ‘The Lamb’. It can be said that Blake used an invoked voice technique which in turn represents an internal intertextuality with another poem “The Lamb”. As in the following lines:

And was the holy Lamb of God,
On Englands pleasant pastures seen!

Blake wonders about building a New Jerusalem as promised in the Bible (Book of Revelation). The intertextual analysis of the first stanza will be as follows:

Intertextual Analysis of Text 1

Technique of intertextual representation

A. The first instance of intertextuality, Blake uses comment on a text (i.e. the idea that describes Jesus Walks upon Englands mountains green which is found in New Testament).

B. In the second instance, the technique is using a recognizable terminology (the lamb of God) associated with specific people or groups of people in particular document (The Bible).

C. Invoked voice from Blake’s prior poem (the lamb) 1789.

Levels of intertextuality

In both A and B, the text relies on beliefs and ideas that are generally circulated. In C, the level is that the text draws explicit social dramas of prior texts.

Recontextualisation

Apparently, in A and B, the context of the New Testament (the Gospel of Luke) recounts the events of the life of Jesus from roughly the same perspective (from the Greek noun synopsis or “a seeing all together” or “general view”). So, the idea is recontextualized by describing Jesus Walks upon Englands mountains green.
This is Blake’s wish about Jesus the Savior who would protect England from evil and darkness.

The Lamb was written during the Industrial Revolution, and Blake saw its economic and social changes as threats to humankind. Jerusalem also was written during the rise of industrialization in England, a process that was considered dark and evil by many farmers who would be without business by it. The purpose of using such intertextuality in this text for enrich Blake’s beliefs and wishes of building new Jerusalem and adding more support for his writing. When he uses words from the Bible, he wants to say that he is religious man who is influenced by the Bible.

**Text 2**

In the second stanza, Blake continues speaking in his interrogative mood, he wonders if the divine presence of Jesus ever landed upon English shores? The point of questioning is the same as the first stanza, he wonders if Jesus Christ may have lived in these lands before living in his native land. Then coming to the third verse, he wonders if Jesus formed a new Jerusalem in these very lands, among these satanic mills.

*And did the Countenance Divine,*  
*Shine forth upon our clouded hills?*

The “Countenance Divine” is an expression used to refer to the Face of God, a sight that—according to the Book of Exodus—no one can see and live. This is an intertextuality and Blake used the technique of recognizable terminology associated with specific people. Moreover, the “Countenance Divine” alludes to the light as in bringing a change in terms of reforms. As a matter of fact, Jesus of Nazareth for all intents and purposes may have been black complexioned. In these passages, he explains that the need of light is necessary to clean the darkness, this light is indicating the presence of Jesus.

**Intertextual Analysis of Text 2**

**Technique of intertextual representation**

Blake is using a recognizable terminology (the lamb of God) which is associated with specific people or groups of people (Christians) in particular documents (The Bible).

**Levels of intertextuality**

The text relies on beliefs and ideas that are generally circulated like” Countenance Divine” which is an expression used to refer to the Face of God.

**Recontextualisation**

Blake uses this intertextuality to make comparison between the Face of God and England’s clouded hills. He talks about two different ideas within these two lines.
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

The final two lines of this stanza are little ambiguous. The “dark Satanic Mills” and Jerusalem are popular terms appearing in William Blake’s poems more than one time. Blake refers to the promised biblical Jerusalem alluded to in the Bible, (Book of Revelation3:12; 21:2). As Christian theology hypothesizes, after the earth is destroyed, a new home will appear in the form of New Jerusalem. The true believers of Christ will live in it for eternity.

"Dark satanic mills" throughout these words, Blake could be referring to the industrial revolution or the churches during the romantic period which would put down the minds of society and corrupt them. It is possible to say that they’re meant to be the industrial mills which were appearing all over England around the time when Blake wrote this poem, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries or may be represent churches (since Blake was a "radical Christian" who had little time for the established church) (Accessed in 7 July,2022).

**Intertextual Analysis of Text 3**

**Technique of intertextual representation**

Blake uses recognizable phrasing associated with specific people.

**Levels of intertextuality**

The level refers to the use of statements as contrast since Blake compares Jearusalem with the"dark satanic mills”. The words “Jerusalem” and “dark Satanic Mills” have opposite meanings; “Jerusalem” is a metaphor for an ideal place which contrasts with the metaphor of the “Satanic Mills”.

**Reconexturalisation**

Within these words ,Blake emphasizes the difference between England, Jearusalem and dark satanic mills.

**Text 3**

The fourth line, "Bring me my Chariot of fire!" draws on the story of 2 Kings 2:11, where the Old Testament prophet Elijah is taken to heaven directly: {2:11} “And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, [there appeared] a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven”.Blake used this intertextuality to show that he would part the industrial factories aside and ride up above them and start a mental revolution. Here, the poet becomes a man of action not just a man of sayings by his insistence on taking up arms in the “mental fight” and building Jerusalem “in England’s green and pleasant land”.

Intertextual Analysis of Text 3

Technique of intertextual representation

The technique, here, is an indirect quotation (*a chariot of fire*) from the Bible.

Levels of intertextuality

Blake uses this statement as background and support for his situation.

Recontextualisation

As mentioned in Kings 2, after Elijah hands over his duties to his successor Elisha, Elijah is taken to heaven on a flaming chariot. Tradition holds that Elijah never died and that he will return before the final judgment by God—a key belief of traditional Christians. Blake uses this statement because he wants to fight for getting peace and building a Jerusalem. The words of the poem stress the importance of people taking responsibility for change and building a better society 'England's green and pleasant land.' This poem can be considered as a suitable expression for the desire of social change through human determination.

Intertextual Analysis of Ahmed Matar's poem (Lived-Fall down)

In (text1), the poet demands from (Al-Quds) to excuse him about what took place for her. He says that he hasn't anything of what is done because the rulers who have the hand in that thing. This is a reference to the Arabic politicians. The poet then describes himself that he was a weak person who has nothing to defend (Al-Quds) from the enemies because he shouldn't see and hear about anything the politicians didn't want. There is no intertextuality in text1.

Through the text 2, the poet explains why he doesn't defend Al-Quds from enemies by saying that he tries to do so by his writing in poetry. He compares himself with the politicians by saying that he just like fire whereas the politicians are like the rain so there is a contrast between them. This means when the poet tries to revenge, but the politicians try to prevent him. For that, he asks what the time in which he will stand against them without any obstructions.

In the third lines of text2, Matar wishes that the leaders were idols to carry an axe in order to hit them one by one and kill them, but there are spies among them who will kill him before doing that thing. The poet deals with the axe with which Ibrahim destroyed the idols of his people, which they worship instead of God, as he destroyed them with it. The Qur'anic text talks about the story of our Prophet Ibrahim (p. b. u. h.) and how he destroyed all the statues by his axe, so this is an intertextuality.

Another intertextuality which is (لا تَذَرُ ولا تَبْقِي وَلَا سَقَرُ لَا تَفْقَرُ (It spares not (any sinner), nor does it leave anything unburnt!))
Intertextual Analysis of Text 2
Text 2

Technique of intertextual representation

A-Matar uses the technique of comment or evaluation on a text, and invoked voice from the story of Ibrahim (p.b.u.h) in Quran.
B-Matar uses indirect quotation from (The one Enveloped) (سورة المنثر28) by paraphrasing the verse (الائیه).

Levels of intertextuality

A- The text draws upon explicit social dramas of prior texts.
B- Matar uses other statements from Quran as background and support to show his strength. Moreover, to show the extent of hatred against the politicians.

Reconextualisation

A- The context of the Quranic text was about Ibrahim(p.b.u.h) and his story in destroying the status at that time. Matar uses this idea to express his feeling towards the idols which can't benefit the people, on contrary they are the reason behind people's sorrow. B- The context of the Quranic text was about Hell which would be the place of disbelievers. This Hell will burn their body and didn't let anything right in that body. Whereas Matar wants to say that he wishes to take an axe to kill the idols if they were from stone and take revenge from them.

Text 3

After that, the poet moves to talk about the life of politicians and how they live. There are a lot of guards and servants around them and the dining tables in which they put a lot of cows for eating, so this is a luxurious life. There is no intertextuality in Text 3.

Text 4

Finally, the poet addresses (Al-Quds اللقدس) to shake the trunk (stem) of the Arab conferences, so that nonsense will fall from them (وَهُزِي الْيَكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسَاقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَبًا جَنِيًّا) (مريم25):

"And shake the trunk of date-palm towards you, It will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee."

There are two instances of intertextuality, the first one is (هَزَّي الْيَكِ بِجِذْعِ) the technique is indirect quotation. After this line, another intertextuality which is (تُسَاقِط).
Intertextual Analysis of Text 4
Technique of intertextual representation

A. Matar uses indirect quotation from Surat Marriam. He resembles Al-Quds with the Virgin Mary since Al-Quds is like Mary in her innocence, but they are different of what surrounded them. In other words, Mary was surrounded by ripe-dates when she put her child, while Al-Quds was surrounded by useless conferences.

B. B- Comment or evaluation on a text, Matar paraphrases the words from Quran to make new meaning.

Levels of intertextuality

In both A and B, the same level Matar is using other statements as contras

Reconextualisation

In the two instances of intertextuality, the context of the Quranic text was about the Virgin Mary (p.b. u. her) when labor came to her to the trunk of the palm tree. Then God inspired her to shake the palm so that the wet would fall so that she could eat it and make it easier for her to give birth.

In the poem, Matar uses this idea to make comparison between Mary and Al-Quds. Mary was surrounded by the palm tree which was full of palms. While Jerusalem was surrounded by useless conferences which were full of sayings not workings.

Table (1): Techniques of Intertextuality and their number of intertextual Instances in William Blake’s poem (Jerusalem) and Ahmed Matar’s poem (lived-fall down- عاش-يسقط)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Techniques of intertextuality</th>
<th>Frequency of Intertextual Instances in Jerusalem</th>
<th>Percentage 100%</th>
<th>Frequency of Intertextual Instances in (lived-fall down- عاش-يسقط)</th>
<th>Percentage 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Indirect quotation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>mentioning of a person or statement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>comment or evaluation on a statement or invoked voice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>using recognizable phrasing associated with specific people</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 using language that seem to echo certain ways of communicating 0 0% 0 0%
Total 6 100% 4 100%

Conclusions

On the basis of the previous analysis, the present study has reached the following conclusions:

1. Intertextuality is a type of techniques that is used in discourses whether speaking or written. It is found in both cultures.
2. The contrastive intertextual analysis shows that Blake in his poem “Jearsalem” is influenced by the following texts or documents: The Holy Bible and the Greek mythology. On the other hand, Matar in his poem (Lived fall down) is influenced by The Holy Quran only.
3. It is clear that the technique of using recognizable phrasing associated with specific people is the most frequent in the English poem which was 50% from 6 instances of intertextuality. While the indirect quotation and the comment or evaluation on a statement are the most frequent techniques in the Arabic poem which were equal in their percentage, both were 50% from 4 instances of intertextuality.
4. In the English poems, Blake uses less explicit levels of intertextuality, whereas in the Arabic poems, Matar uses the explicit ones.

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