UDC 81

INTERTEXTUAL FEATURES OF RELIGIONYMS IN LEILA ABOULELA'S NOVEL "THE TRANSLATOR"

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Abstract. *This article examines the intertextual and linguo-poetic functions of religionyms in Leila Aboulela's "The Translator". The study distinguishes the religionym as a religiously marked nominative unit from the intertextual relationship it may activate within a particular literary context. The findings show that religionyms do more than identify religious concepts: they contribute to the representation of Sammar's inner experience, religious identity, values, and perception of time and everyday life. The study argues that religious intertextuality is an important element of Aboulela's linguo-poetic method, through which established religious meanings become part of the characterization and representation of religious consciousness.*

Keywords: *intertextuality, religionym, intertextual marker, Qur'anic intertext, hadith intertext, religious discourse, linguo-poetics, Leila Aboulela, "The Translator".*

LEYLA ABULELANING "THE TRANSLATOR" ROMANIDA RELIGIONIMLARNING INTERTEKSTUAL XUSUSIYATLARI

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada Leyla Abulelaning "The Translator" romanida qo'llangan religionimlarning intertekstual xususiyatlari va lingvopoetik funksiyalari tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqotda religionim diniy jihatdan belgilangan nominativ birlik sifatida talqin qilinib, uning muayyan badiiy kontekstda yuzaga keltirishi mumkin bo'lgan intertekstual aloqalari tahlil qilinadi. Tahlil natijalari religionimlar faqat diniy tushunchalarni nomlash bilan cheklanmasdan, Sammar obrazining ichki kechinmalari, diniy identiteti, qadriyatlari, vaqt va kundalik hayotni idrok etish tarzini ifodalashda ham muhim o'rin tutishini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqotda diniy intertekstuallik Abulela lingvopoetik uslubining muhim unsurlaridan biri bo'lib, u orqali shakllangan diniy ma'nolar personaj xarakterini ochish va diniy ongni badiiy ifodalash vositasiga aylanishi asoslanadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *intertekstuallik, religionim, intertekstual marker, Qur'oniy intertekst, hadis interteksti, diniy diskurs, lingvopoetika, Leyla Abulela, "Tarjimon".*

ИНТЕРТЕКСТУАЛЬНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ РЕЛИГИОНИМОВ В РОМАНЕ ЛЕЙЛЫ АБУЛЕЛЫ «THE TRANSLATOR»

Аннотация. *В статье исследуются интертекстуальные особенности и лингвопоэтические функции религионимов в романе Лейлы Абулелы «Переводчица» («The Translator»). В исследовании религионим рассматривается как номинативная единица с религиозной маркированностью и разграничивается с интертекстуальной связью, которую он может актуализировать в конкретном художественном контексте. Результаты анализа показывают, что религионимы не ограничиваются номинацией религиозных понятий, но также участвуют в репрезентации внутреннего мира Саммар, её религиозной идентичности, ценностных ориентиров, а также восприятия времени и повседневной жизни. В статье обосновывается, что религиозная интертекстуальность является важным элементом лингвопоэтического метода Абулелы, посредством которого сложившиеся религиозные смыслы становятся средством раскрытия характера персонажа и художественной репрезентации религиозного сознания.*

Ключевые слова: *интертекстуальность, религионим, интертекстуальный маркер, коранический интертекст, хадисный интертекст, религиозный дискурс, лингвопоэтика, Лейла Абулела, «Переводчица».*

Introduction. Intertextuality has become an important concept in literary studies because literary texts do not exist independently of earlier texts, cultural traditions, or established forms of discourse. The meaning

of a literary work is often shaped through its interaction with what has already been written, narrated, believed, or culturally remembered. Such connections can take different forms: a writer may reproduce an earlier text directly, reshape its meaning, refer to it indirectly, or incorporate elements of another discourse into a new literary context.

References to sacred texts, theological views, religious expressions, rituals, and well-known religious narratives may thus find their way into fictional discourse in many forms. Some are clearly identifiable as quotations or allusions, while others occur more subtly through specific phrases, images, memories, or concepts. Their role in a literary work, however, cannot be limited to simply recreating the religious meaning they carried in their original setting. When incorporated into a fictional story, these aspects interact with characters, events, and the work's overarching themes. As a result, they may convey a character's inner condition, reflect specific beliefs, form the narrative's cultural setting, or help to establish its creative meaning.

Literature review. Leila Aboulela's "The Translator" is an especially important backdrop for investigating this relationship between religious speech and literary meaning. The work does not just approach Islam as a subject. It is deeply ingrained in Sammar's thoughts, memory, and response to her surroundings. Qur'anic expressions, hadith allusions, religious notions, ritual terms, and culturally particular Islamic vocabulary can be found throughout her speech and memories, and they frequently accompany emotional or psychologically significant occasions. As a result, religious language gets integrated into Sammar's perception and interpretation of ordinary reality.

The methodology of research. The importance of religion and Muslim identity in Aboulela's fiction has already received considerable scholarly attention. Abbas (2011), for example, discusses the place of religion in Aboulela's understanding of the novel, whereas Al-Adwan and Abu Amrieh (2013) approach Islam and religious practice through the experience of diaspora and translation. Steinitz (2013) reads translation and conversion as principles that shape both the structure and the ideological dimension of "The Translator". Questions of identity and belonging are developed further by Zannoun (2019), who considers the connections between Muslim identity, home, love, and belonging. Other studies have approached Aboulela's fiction through Qur'anic references, Arabic expressions, representations of Islam, linguistic appropriation, and the literary construction of Muslim identity.

With this distinction in mind, the current study investigates religionyms in "The Translator" in terms of the religious discourse they inspire, the extent to which the intertextual relationship is made plain, and how the activated meaning is changed by its immediate literary setting. As a result, the analysis focuses on the key types of intertextuality associated with these units, as well as how they contribute to the representation of Sammar's religious identity and psychological experience, character development, and the novel's broader cultural significance.

In this study, the term "religionym" refers to religiously marked nominative units such as sacred persons and books, religious eras and rituals, doctrinal notions, sacred items, and other features of religious discourse. The use of a religionym in a literary piece does not inevitably render it an intertext. Its intertextual importance becomes apparent in context, when the unit refers the reader beyond the present story to an older sacred text, doctrinal notion, ritual tradition, or other established form of religious discourse. In such circumstances, the religionym serves as an intertextual marker, linking the fictional context to an external religious source or set of meanings.

The analysis employs intertextual, contextual, semantic, and linguo-poetic techniques, each addressing a distinct facet of the process. Intertextual analysis is used to determine the religious source or speech to which a specific religious term refers. Contextual analysis then explores how the unit functions within the episode in which it appears, whilst semantic analysis attempts to elucidate the religious meanings and associations that it introduces into that context. Linguo-poetic analysis is concerned with what happens to these meanings inside the literary text: how they interact with the character's circumstances and experience, as well as how they contribute to characterization, psychological representation, religious identity, and the narrative's artistic form.

Discussion. Julia Kristeva's version of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism theory is important to today's understanding of intertextuality. Her well-known description of the text as a "mosaic of quotations" draws attention away from the notion of a literary work as a separate and self-contained entity [12]. According to this viewpoint, texts take shape in connection to other texts and discourses, drawing on meanings that already circulate within a specific cultural context. What enters a new text, however, does not always keep the same function it had previously. Earlier discourse can be assimilated, recontextualized, and given a distinct meaning in a new literary milieu.

This idea of intertextuality is especially valuable when studying fiction in which religious language is strongly related to the characters' experiences. An term related with the Qur'an, hadith, Islamic ideology, or ritual practice conveys implications that exist outside of the literary source. When such a term arises in a fiction, the associations are not simply erased. They are still available to the reader when the narrative context puts them in a new relationship with character, emotion, memory, and event. The analytical question is thus not restricted to determining the religious origin of a certain statement. It also concerns how its original meaning is altered throughout the narrative.

One of the clearest instances of religious intertextuality in "The Translator" occurs when hadith discourse is introduced directly into the narrative:

"The Prophet, peace be upon him said, 'Allah Almighty says: I am as My servant thinks I am… And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed.'"[2;35]

The passage refers to the well-known hadith Qudsi transmitted from Abu Hurayrah. In this case, the connection with the religious source does not depend on indirect recognition or inference: the reference to the Prophet and the quotation itself make the hadith origin explicit.

What is essential, however, is how the hadith functions once it enters the fictional framework. The contrast between the servant who comes "walking" and God who responds "at speed" provides a concrete illustration for an otherwise abstract concept of the believer's relationship with God. Movement here implies more than a physical approach. It expresses the believer's willingness to turn to God while emphasizing the immediacy of the heavenly response. The theological concept of proximity to God is thus portrayed in an image that may also be understood emotionally and experientially.

In this context, the religious name Allah cannot be considered solely as a reference to the divine. Its significance emerges from the hadith in which it appears and from the connotations that the citation introduces into the narrative. Trust in God, hope for mercy, expectation of response, and spiritual proximity all become relevant to how the verse is interpreted. As a result, the hadith is integrated into the novel's emotional and cognitive framework for representing religious experience.

The narrative of Sammar's widowhood provides a very revealing example of the connection between Qur'anic reference, religious law, and personal experience.

"Four months and ten days, was the sharia's mourning period for a widow… She thought of how Allah's sharia was kinder and more balanced than the rules people set up for themselves." [2;54]

The phrase *"four months and ten days"* recalls Qur'an 2:234, where the same period is prescribed for women whose husbands have died. The connection is significant because the Qur'anic prescription reaches the novel not simply as a reference to sacred law, but as part of the way Sammar understands her own bereavement.

The specified time span in the passage provides Sammar with a theological framework that helps explain her experience of loss. What starts out as a religious-legal standard is introduced into the character's personal life and becomes associated with memory, sadness, and her quest to understand widowhood. As a result, the line separating religious instruction from personal experience is not as clear as it might first seem; for Sammar, the former offers a vocabulary for understanding the latter.

As a result, the Qur'anic-jurisprudential intertext directly influences characterisation. Sammar uses Islamic law to comprehend and assess her experience rather than viewing it as something outside of it. This is typical of Aboulela's treatment of religious discourse in the book: Islamic allusions regularly appear in the story from the character's consciousness and are included into the vocabulary used to depict her emotional existence.

The connection between religious language and Sammar's inner life becomes still more apparent in a seemingly ordinary episode in which she experiences fear while learning to drive:

"She would… instinctively go over the shahadah: I bear witness there is no god but Allah…" [2;55]

The concept of "instinctively" is essential to how this passage functions. The story does not introduce the shahadah to explain its doctrinal meaning, nor does Sammar intentionally choose to recall a religious formula. In a time of fear, it comes to her on its own. The religious reference's purpose is altered by this minor linguistic detail: what could otherwise be interpreted as merely a declaration of faith becomes proof of how profoundly religious language has permeated the character's regular response to experience.

The shahadah necessarily invokes the Islamic profession of monotheistic faith, and the religionym Allah situates the statement within that doctrinal framework. However, the fictional circumstance gives a new dimension to the established religious meaning. Because the formula appears without careful study, it shows something about Sammar's consciousness organization. In a time of weakness, her response takes on religious linguistic characteristics.

The shahadah therefore contributes to characterization without the requirement for substantial authorial explanation. Aboulela does not have to tell the reader that religion is central to Sammar's inner world; the character's language demonstrates this. In this scenario, the shahadah serves as both a distinguishing feature of Islamic religious discourse and a statement of Sammar's identity and psychological response. The religionym's intertextual meaning occurs as a result of the encounter between an established theological formula and a specific and profoundly personal story scenario.

Several passages in "The Translator" bring Qur'anic language directly into the narrative. One example is the expression:

"All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful…" [2;59]

The language definitely recalls the first verses of Surah al-Fatihah. Recognizing the Qur'anic source, however, explains just a portion of its role in the narrative. The passage arrives in an emotional situation, and the familiar hallowed words give Sammar a sense of certainty and spiritual coherence. The quotation's significance arises from the relationship between the Qur'anic formula and the character's state of mind. As divine words penetrate her consciousness, they provide a vocabulary for containing emotional disintegration and restoring inner connection. In this regard, the citation serves not only an intertextual but also an integrative psychological purpose.

A similar relationship between Qur'anic language and emotional experience can be observed in the references to Surahs al-Falaq and al-Nas:

"Say: I take refuge in the Lord of daybreak…"

and

"Say: I take refuge in the Lord of humans…" [2;79]

Both texts reference Qur'anic formulations for requesting divine protection. In the narrative, however, their value is strongly linked to Sammar's childhood fears. The passages recur in relation to hazardous streets and frightening nightmares, connecting Qur'anic terminology with memories of vulnerability and the longing for safety. Their prevalence in these recollections shows that the phrases have become integrated into the experience and management of terror.

This relationship is important for understanding Aboulela's representation of religious consciousness. Religion does not simply enter the narrative after an emotional experience has taken place, as an explanation or commentary upon it. In Sammar's case, the experience itself may already be articulated through religious language. Qur'anic discourse is therefore incorporated into the representation of interiority, becoming one of the linguistic forms through which memory, fear, protection, and emotional response are narrated.

A more complex pattern of religious intertextuality appears in the following sentence:

"But he did not know about the stream of Kawthar, the Day of Promises, or what stops the heart from rusting." [2;91]

What distinguishes this passage is the inclusion of multiple religious associations in a single statement. The references are grouped together without explanation, yet each may lead to a separate topic of Islamic theological debate.

Kawthar is the most easily recognizable example. The name refers to Surah al-Kawthar and is related with hadith traditions that describe al-Kawthar as a divine gift to the Prophet and its portrayal as a river in Paradise. The word so conveys connections that go beyond its immediate lexical meaning in the sentence.

Day of Promises makes a less straightforward case. The expression may be read in terms of the Islamic concept of the original covenant between God and Adam's descendants, which is frequently related with Qur'an 7:172. Unlike the allusion to Kawthar, the statement does not directly quote a Qur'anic formula. It is thus more fair to regard it as an allusion or conceptual connection with Qur'anic discourse rather than a citation.

The following phrase, "what stops the heart from rusting" necessitates equal prudence. Images of the heart rusting, cleansing, or polishing are common in Islamic devotional discourse, and they are frequently associated with God's recollection and spiritual purity. Because formulations of this picture circulate across religious traditions and precise attribution is not always clear, associating the term unequivocally with a single hadith would risk making the intertextual source appear more solid than the evidence supports. It is better understood here as an evocative of classic Islamic devotional imagery concerned with the spiritual state of the heart.

When these references are combined, they result in an intertextual condensation. Their value is not exclusively determined by what each statement implies individually. They combine to bring numerous areas of religious meaning into a very little textual space: Paradise and eschatological expectation via Kawthar, covenant and the human relationship with God through Day of Promises, and spiritual recollection and

cleansing through the picture of the heart. As a result, the sentence gains density that would otherwise be hidden by its surface structure.

This density also highlights the function of the reader. Someone conversant with Islamic textual and devotional traditions may recognize Kawthar, relate the Day of Promises with the primordial covenant, and comprehend the imagery of the rusted heart within the context of spiritual purification. For such a reader, a brief line can reveal numerous layers of religious significance without the narrator having to express them directly. A reader without this background may not recreate the same network of associations and may first encounter the statements as symbols of Sammar's religious and cultural universe.

The passage therefore shows that the intertextual potential of a religionym depends not only on the relation between a literary text and an earlier religious discourse, but also on the reader's ability to recognize and activate that relation. In this sense, religionyms participate in a three-way relationship between **religious source, fictional context, and reader**, with literary meaning emerging through the interaction of all three.

The sentence *"My fate is etched out by Allah Almighty"* [2;58] contains no direct quotation from a sacred text. Its religious significance instead comes from the idea expressed through it. The belief that human destiny is determined by God brings the statement into relation with the Islamic doctrine of divine predestination, or *qadar*. The intertextual connection is therefore less visible than in passages where a Qur'anic verse or hadith is quoted directly. Here, it is the underlying concept, rather than a recognizable verbal formula, that connects the fictional statement with an established religious discourse.

The paragraph can thus be viewed as an implicit doctrinal intertext, as its connection to Islamic discourse is based on conceptual recognition rather than textual quotation. Its significance for characterization stems from the way a theological thought is integrated into Sammar's understanding of her own existence. In other words, religious dogma serves as a conceptual framework for understanding personal experience.

Religious message in "The Translator" is not often conveyed using words or plainly identified concepts. Sometimes it is carried by the body itself. One example is given in the description:

"…their forehead, nose and palms touching the ground." [2;60]

Although sujud is not mentioned in the sentence, the bodily stance resembles prostration in Islamic prayer. Recognizing the connection thus requires a different type of understanding than a direct Qur'anic statement. A reader familiar with Islamic prayer can identify the ritual based on the physical arrangement described and provide the religious meaning that the text does not explicitly mention.

The passage is useful for understanding how intertextuality in the novel may extend beyond verbal correspondence. Here, the connection with religious tradition is established through a culturally recognizable bodily practice. The body becomes part of the signifying process: posture itself carries meanings associated with prayer, submission, and worship. This form of reference may therefore be understood as an embodied ritual intertext, in which religious meaning is activated through the representation of ritual action rather than through quotation.

The relationship between religious practice and ordinary life appears in a simpler form in the instruction:

"Say bismillah before you eat. Be good and finish your plate." [2;128]

The religious formula *bismillah* occurs within an entirely everyday situation: eating. Its placement beside the ordinary parental instruction *"finish your plate"* is particularly revealing. Sacred formula and domestic speech are not separated into different spheres; they coexist within the same utterance and the same routine activity.

Such moments help explain the particular place of religious discourse in Aboulela's fictional world. Islam is not represented only when characters discuss theology or participate in explicitly religious events. Its language and practices are present in the organization of time, bodily movement, food, family interaction, memory, fear, and grief. The sacred and the everyday are therefore not constructed as opposing domains. Instead, religious meaning emerges through their continual interaction, allowing faith to be represented as part of the ordinary texture of lived experience.

Conclusion. The investigation of religionyms in Leila Aboulela's "The Translator" demonstrates that their role goes beyond the labeling of religious ideas. A religionym is not an intertext in and of itself; rather, in a given literary context, it might serve as an intertextual marker that activates Qur'anic, hadith-based, doctrinal, ritual, or devotional discourse. These links include direct quote, explicit reference, allusion, and implicit conceptual relationship. Once integrated into the story, religious meanings are changed by the fictional framework. Religionyms thus contribute to characterization, psychological representation, identity, ethical appraisal, and the novel's linguo-poetic structure.

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