A COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF DE-PRAGMATIZATION IN SHEIKH AL-WAELI'S SERMONIC STYLE

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ABSTRACT

This study illustrates the de-pragmatization of metaphorical linguistic aspects in the sermonic style of Sheikh Ahmed Al-Waeli, a conspicuous Iraqi Shia theologian known for his distinctive rhetorical performance. This study illustrates Al-Waeli's sermons to classify forms of metaphor and observes the technique of de-pragmatization, when speeches lose their original pragmatic power due to conventionalization, semantic degradation, and re-contextualization. Therefore, the study uses a qualitative analysis of metaphorical expressions derived from Al-Waeli's sermons, improved by quantitative data concerning metaphor varieties and de-pragmatization procedures. The results designate that Al-Waeli's metaphorical aspect shows a sophisticated stability between conventional Islamic metaphors and novel practices, with contrasting topics of de-pragmatization in several sermon situations. Besides, the present study develops a thought of religious discourse via de-pragmatization procedures, while preserving religious integrity and communicative competence. Therefore, this research simplifies the rhetorical styles used in modern Islamic sermons and the linguistic mechanisms that enable the transference of religious beliefs across cultural and temporal restrictions.

Keywords: De-Pragmatization, Islamic Philological Style, Metaphor, Sermonic Style, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Waeli

INTRODUCTION

Religious speech mainly uses metaphorical linguistics to express intellectual, theological phrases comprehensibly. In Islamic sermonic cultures, metaphors are vital

for transmitting religious awareness, ethical procedures, and spiritual instruction. The pragmatic efficiency of metaphorical languages, including their ability to attain specific speech acts and elicit specific answers, regularly changes as these languages get conventionalized through numerous usages. This aspect, called de-pragmatization, specifies a notable yet underexplored surface in the development of religious language. Sheikh Ahmed Al-Waeli (1928-2003), a famous Iraqi Shia scholar, is a classical subject for analyzing this language phenomenon. Prominent for his unique sermonic style that bonded traditional Islamic scholarship with modern statements, Al-Waeli advanced as a singular method to religious discussion, garnering accolades such as "the Tongue of Shia" from Grand Ayatollah Abul-Qassim Khoei and "the Islamic Library" from Ayatollah Imam Khomeini (Al-Kinani, 2003). His theoretical experience in traditional Islamic scholarship at Najaf, a master's degree from the University of Baghdad, and a Ph.D in economics from Cairo University, endowed him with religious authority and scholarly rigor, evident in his sophisticated linguistic use. This study investigates the de-pragmatization of metaphorical language in Al-Waeli's sermonic style, focusing on the subsequent research questions: (1) What categories of metaphors define Al-Waeli's sermonic discourse, and what are their principal source domains?, (2) In what manner do these metaphors experience de-pragmatization, and which tactics of de-pragmatization are most commonly observed?, (3) What rhetorical roles do metaphors fulfill at various stages of Al-Waeli's sermons, and how does de-pragmatization influence these roles?

This research is significant for its contribution to understanding the evolution of religious language while preserving theological integrity. This study analyzes de-pragmatization processes in Al-Waeli's sermonic style, revealing the language mechanisms that transfer religious notions across cultural and historical barriers. Moreover, it offers insights into the rhetorical methods utilized in modern Islamic discourse, with possible applications for comparative religion studies, discourse analysis, and pragmatic theory.

This research paper reviews pertinent literature on metaphor theory and de-pragmatization, delineates the methodology utilized in this study, examines the findings related to metaphorical patterns and de-pragmatization processes in Al-Waeli's sermons, discusses the implications of these findings, and concludes with reflections on the broader significance of this research.

The examination of metaphor has progressed considerably from its conventional view as solely a literary tool to its acknowledgment as a core cognitive process. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

transformed metaphor research by asserting that metaphors are not merely language embellishments but conceptual frameworks that shape human cognition.

In addition, this model theorizes that metaphors simplify the knowledge of the target domain, another, which is the source, enabling the understanding of abstract perceptions via more tangible practices. Religious speech is acknowledged for its rich use of metaphorical language. Soskice (1985) resists the idea that religious language is "irreducibly metaphorical" as it attempts to articulate a superior reality using human language. In Islamic discourse, metaphors are essential in interpreting theological concepts comprehensively and significantly. El-Sharif (2012) explains various conceptual metaphors in Islamic religious writings, such as GOD IS A RULER, FAITH IS LIGHT, GOD IS A RULER, and SPIRITUAL LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which shape believers' comprehension of religious philosophies. Many scholars have analyzed the pragmatic functions of metaphor in religious speech. Charteris-Black (2004) argues that metaphors in religious texts fulfill influential roles by eliciting cognitive and emotional replies. Richardson (2012) suggests that metaphors in sermons improve authority, evoke emotional resonance, and promote impressiveness. These pragmatic aspects are especially pertinent when investigating the de-pragmatization methods of metaphors.

De-pragmatization signifies the phenomenon wherein utterances reduce their initial pragmatic impact via several semantic instruments. According to Clark and Titov (2016), this phenomenon entails the conventionalization, perception, and recontextualization of expressions that formerly possessed distinct pragmatic purposes. Besides, Jubair (2023) designates multiple parts in this process, including semantic destruction, formalization, institutionalization, disambiguation, simplicity, the removal of cultural features, loss of context, literalization, avoidance of pragmatic indicators, and abstraction. De-pragmatization is invented based on prior language ideas concerning semantic evolution (Traugott & Dasher, 2001).

In religious situations, de-pragmatization grasps specific importance. Netzer et al. (2019) suggest that religious speeches, initially possessing significant instruction or commissure force, may become conventionalized through frequent usage, diminishing their instantaneous pragmatic influence while acquiring new semantic layers (Sweetser,1990).

The convention of Islamic sermonic speech originates from the era of the Prophet Muhammad; conventional Islamic sermons (khutbah) adhere to prescribed structures and frequently include Quranic passages, Prophetic traditions (hadith), and poetic mechanisms (Haleem, 2011). Diverse styles and methodologies have been established within this tradition across numerous historical epochs and geographical

locales. Sheikh Ahmed Al-Waeli is a prominent personality in modern Islamic sermon speech. His approach, "Al-Waeli's School of Lecturing," is distinguished by several salient attributes: thematic concentration, audacity and authenticity, audience assessment, proficient vocal modulation, and elevated ethical standards (Al-Kinani, 2003). In addition, prior research on Al-Waeli's language has predominantly concentrated on his lyrical compositions and Quranic influences. Mohi (2021) analyses the influence of the Quran on Al-Waeli's poetry, emphasizing his incorporation of Quranic imagery and allusions. Nevertheless, a comprehensive examination of metaphorical language in his sermons, especially from a de-pragmatization viewpoint, is still constrained. This study's gap offers a chance to enhance comprehension of Al-Waeli's rhetorical methodology and the broader phenomena of depragmatization within religious discourse.

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RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a mixed-methods, participatory qualitative examination of metaphorical expressions with quantitative evaluation of metaphor categories and de-pragmatization procedures. The research design follows a methodical methodology, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation informed by recognized situations in metaphor analysis and pragmatic theory. Metaphorical languages were

collected from many sources of Sheikh Ahmed Al-Waeli's sermons, including YouTube videos with English subtitles, such as "Submit to the Will of God," "Unity of Islam," and "Arrogant People." Academic works examining Al-Waeli's linguistic style, such as "The Quranic Influence on the Poetry of Sheikh Ahmed Al-Waeli" (Kufa Journal of Arts). Texts and translations of Al-Waeli's sermons are available in published accumulations. Besides, the gathering process encountered specific limits, such as linguistic barriers (with numerous sources in Arabic), possible loss of metaphorical distinction after translation, and restricted access to Al-Waeli's complete corpus of sermons.

FINDINGS

The investigation of metaphorical terms followed a three-phase procedure:
a) Recognition of metaphors: Terms were classified as metaphorical using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) recognized by The Pragglejaz Group (2007) when they entailed cross-domain mapping between source and target domains.
b) Metaphors were classified according to their source domains, conceptual frameworks, and rhetorical determinations within the sermon context.
c) Investigation of de-pragmatization: Each metaphorical appearance was scrutinized for signs of de-pragmatization processes related to semantic degradation, conventionalization, recontextualization, formalization, disambiguation, interpretation, and cultural variation.

The gathered data were examined utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies:
a) Qualitative analysis: In-depth scrutiny of metaphorical statements within their sermonic context, emphasizing conceptual mappings, rhetorical roles, and indications of de-pragmatization.
b) Quantitative analysis: Statistical evaluation of metaphor categories, source domains, and de-pragmatization techniques, illustrated using figures and tables to discern patterns and trends. The analysis was informed by theoretical frameworks from conceptual metaphor and pragmatic theory, specifically focusing on the religious and cultural setting of Al-Waeli's sermons.

- **Categories of Metaphors and Source Domains**
Examining Al-Waeli's sermonic vocabulary uncovered various prevalent metaphorical patterns, as depicted in Figure 1. Conceptual metaphors represented the predominant category (35%), followed by Quranic metaphors (28%), metaphors derived from

natural components (22%), body-based metaphors (18%), and architectural metaphors (15%). The principle of conceptual metaphors discerned in Al-Waeli's sermons encompasses: Faith constitutes a journey. Al-Waeli often perceives spiritual development as a physical trip characterized by pathways, impediments, and endpoints. He characterizes obedience to God's will as "a pathway that culminates in tranquility."

Figure 1: Frequency of Metaphor Types in Al-Waeli's Sermons
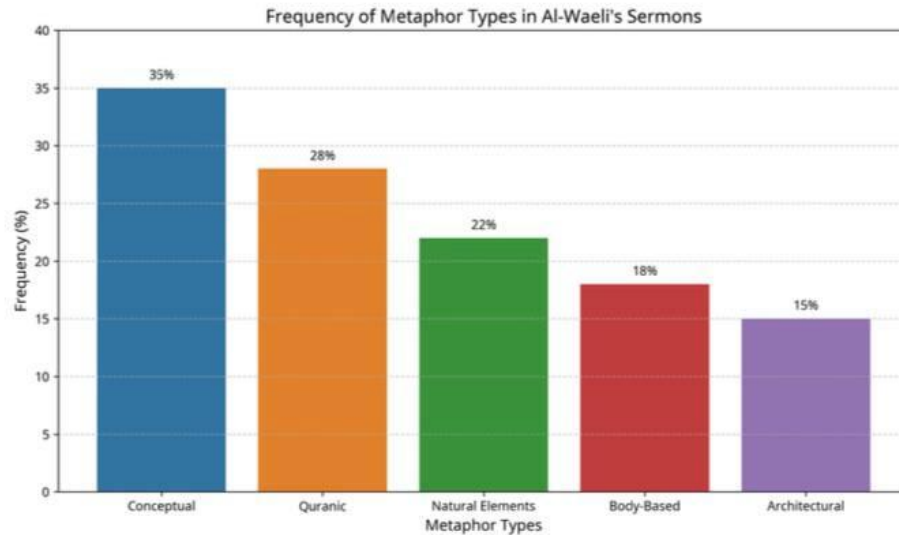
a) A COMMUNITY IS A COLLECTIVE ENTITY: The Islamic community is depicted as a cohesive entity with interdependent components that react collectively. In his discourse on Islamic unity, Al-Waeli likens the Muslim community to a body, asserting that "if one part suffers, the entire body reacts with alertness and fervor."
b) KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT: Divine knowledge and direction are symbolized as illumination in darkness, referencing the Quranic concept of light (noor).
c) PRIDE CONSTITUTES A PHYSICAL IMPEDIMENT: Negative attributes such as arrogance are portrayed as burdens that physically impact the individual. Al-Waeli says that "arrogance is a substantial burden that diminishes individuals."
d) FAIT SERVES AS A VESSEL: Spiritual notions are depicted as entities capable of occupying or vacating vessels. Al-Waeli states, "The heart that harbors faith becomes expansive."

The analysis indicates that Al-Waeli derives his metaphorical imagery from multiple recurring source domains, such as natural elements (water, light, earth), the

human body (heart, hands, eyes), architecture (buildings, foundations, walls), journeys (paths, roads, obstacles), and physical objects (containers, weights, tools). Numerous metaphors exhibit a direct influence from Quranic imagery, demonstrating Al-Waeli's profound involvement with Islamic textual traditions (See Table 1):

**Table 1: Source Domains and Metaphorical Terms in Al-Waeli's Sermons**

No.	Source Domain	Metaphorical Terms	De-Pragmatization Functions
1.	Journey	"Path that leads to tranquility"	Conventionalization, Recontextualization
		"Obstacles in the way of faith"	Semantic erosion, formalization
		"Spiritual destination"	Cultural adaptation, simplification
2.	Light	"Light of divine guidance"	Conventionalization, formalization
		"Illumination of knowledge"	Recontextualization, Disambiguation
		"Darkness of ignorance"	Semantic erosion, cultural Adaptation
3.	Body	"Heart that contains faith"	Conventionalization, formalization
		"Community as a living body"	Recontextualization, cultural Adaptation
		"Eyes of the soul"	Disambiguation, simplification
4.	Architecture	"Building foundations of Belief"	Formalization, disambiguation
		"Walls between people"	Recontextualization, simplification
		"Structure of Islamic thought"	Cultural adaptation, conventionalization
5.	Water	"Quenching spiritual thirst"	Semantic erosion, Conventionalization
		"Ocean of knowledge"	Recontextualization, formalization

		"Flowing wisdom"	Disambiguation, cultural Adaptation
6.	Weight	"Burden of arrogance"	Simplification, conventionalization
		"Lightness of humility"	Recontextualization, Disambiguation
		"Heavy responsibility"	Cultural adaptation, formalization

- **De-Pragmatization Processes and Strategies**

The research delineated several stages of de-pragmatization in Al-Waeli's metaphorical language, as detailed in Table 2. Figure 2 illustrates the frequency of several de-pragmatization tactics in Al-Waeli's metaphorical language. Recontextualization was the predominant method (82%), succeeded by conventionalization (78%), simplification (72%), semantic degradation (65%), disambiguation (58%), cultural adaptation (53%), and formalization (45%). The findings indicate that Al-Waeli's methodology for metaphorical language entails a nuanced equilibrium between maintaining traditional Islamic metaphors and modifying them for modern situations. The significant recontextualization demonstrates his proficiency in adapting traditional metaphors to contemporary contexts, ensuring their relevance to current audiences while preserving their theological underpinnings. Al-Waeli's sermons generally tend towards de-pragmatization.

Figure 2: De-Pragmatization Strategies in Al-Waeli's Metaphorical Language
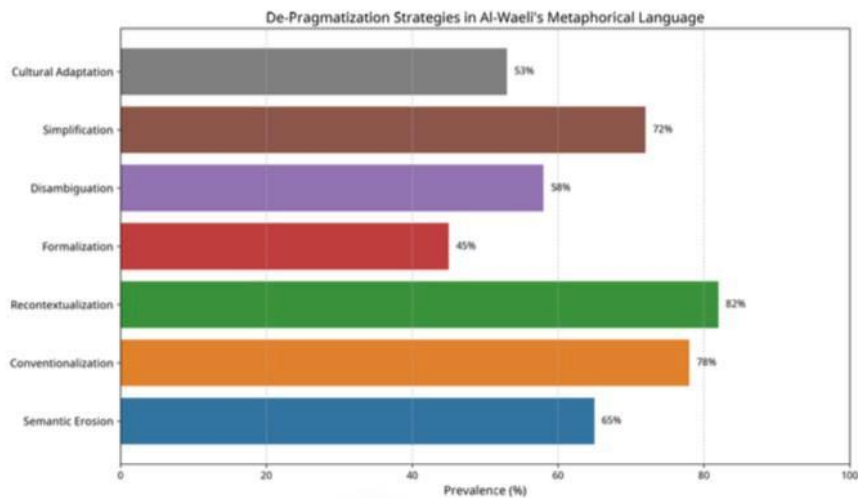
Metaphors originate with distinct pragmatic functions, including guiding conduct, providing rewards or consequences, affirming religious truths, or articulating emotional or spiritual states.

a) Semantic Erosion: With repeated usage, certain metaphors exhibit semantic erosion, resulting in a lessened vividness of the original imagery, generalized contextual linkages, and reduced emotional effect.

b) Conventionalization: Numerous metaphors exhibit conventionalization by habitual usage without elucidation (presumed comprehension), uniform interpretations throughout several sermons, and incorporation into extensive theological debate.

c) Recontextualization: Al-Waeli adeptly recontextualizes conventional metaphors by applying ancient expressions to contemporary scenarios, modifying them to resonate with modern audiences, and forging new contextual associations while maintaining fundamental meaning.

Table 2: Stages of DE-Pragmatization in Al-Waeli's Metaphorical Language

NO.	Level/ Stage	Features	Examples
1.	Original Pragmatic Context	Strong illocutionary force - Specific contextual associations - Vivid imagery - Emotional impact	"The heart that contains faith becomes expansive" (directive force to encourage faith)
2.	Semantic Erosion	Reduced vividness - Generalized associations - Diminished emotional impact - Increased abstraction	"Light of guidance" (reduced from specific Quranic imagery to a general concept)

3.	Conventionalization	- Standardized interpretations - Assumed understanding - Integration into broader discourse - Predictable usage patterns	"Path of righteousness" (standardized metaphor requiring no explanation)
4.	Recontextualization	- Application to the new contexts - Contemporary relevance - New associations - Preserved core meaning	"Walls of pride" (Traditional concept applied to modern social dynamics)

- **Rhetorical Functions and Sermon Structure**

The analysis revealed patterns in how Al-Waeli employs metaphors to serve various rhetorical functions throughout his sermons. (Figure 3) illustrates the distribution of rhetorical functions across different sermon sections.

Figure 3: Rhetorical Functions of Metaphor in Different Sermon Positions
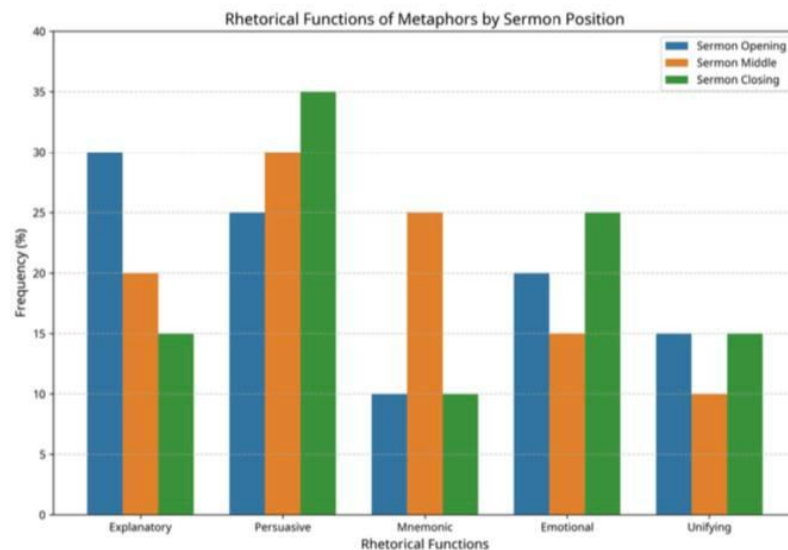
Figure 3 illustrates that explanatory functions constitute 30% of the starting sections of sermons, whereas persuasive functions are predominant in the final sections at 35%. Mnemonic functions are most pronounced in the central segments (25%), emotional functions exhibit relative equilibrium with a modest increase in the concluding segments (25%), and unifying functions maintain consistency, peaking in the introductory segments (15%). Besides, Table 3 presents a comprehensive analysis of the rhetorical purposes of metaphors across various sections of sermons, including the prevalent types of metaphors and levels of de-pragmatization.

Table 3: Rhetorical Functions of Metaphors in Different Sermon Sections

No.	Sermon Section	Primary Rhetorical Functions	Metaphor Types	De-Pragmatization Level
1.	Opening	Establishing conceptual - Conceptual framework - Capturing attention - Setting emotional/Tone	- Quranic metaphors - Visual metaphors	Moderate (balancing traditional and innovative elements)
2.	Middle/ Development	- Explanation - Persuasion - Illustration - Logical connection	- Extended metaphors - Comparative metaphors - Process metaphors	High (emphasis on clarity and logical structure)
3.	Conclusion	- Reinforcement - Emotional appeal - Call to action - Memorability	Culminating metaphors - Emotional Metaphors	Low (preserving pragmatic force for impact)

	-Action/oriented metaphors

The findings indicate that Al-Waeli deliberately utilizes metaphors with differing levels of de-pragmatization based on their rhetorical intent and placement within the sermon framework. Opening metaphors exhibit mild de-pragmatization, harmonizing conventional and novel aspects to create a conceptual framework. Middle-section metaphors demonstrate increased de-pragmatization, prioritizing clarity and logical coherence for explanatory objectives.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Inferences

This study's results include significant theoretical inferences for comprehending metaphor and de-pragmatization in religious discourse. This study describes that de-pragmatization is not simply a reduction of pragmatic force but a transformative method that can expand, rather than impair, communicative efficiency. In addition, Al-Waeli's strategic use of metaphors with contradictory periods of de-pragmatization exemplifies the administration of this process to fulfill diverse rhetorical purposes. These experiments are simplistic clarifications of de-pragmatization as linguistic decline and propose a more nuanced awareness of language evolution in religious contexts. Secondly, this study extends Conceptual Metaphorical Theory by highlighting the dynamic interplay between conceptual metaphors and their pragmatic roles in religious speech. This specifies that a thorough understanding of metaphor must encompass both cognitive frameworks and pragmatic parts. The results enhance pragmatic theory by signifying how religious speakers achieve the conflict between conventionalization and inspiration in metaphorical language. Al-Waeli's equilibrium between conventional Islamic metaphors and modern tenders exemplifies that effective religious communication necessitates preserving existing conceptual agendas and adapting to contemporary situations. This confirms Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance theory, which highlights the necessity of balancing cognitive effects with processing effort in communication.

Practical Inferences

This study offers practical understandings for religious communication and discourse analysis and its theoretical assistance. Al-Waeli's approach offers a paradigm for skillful metaphorical discourse that harmonizes tradition with innovation for

religious orators and academics. The results specify that successful religious communication entails selecting suitable metaphors and managing their de-pragmatization to achieve specific communicative intentions. This study exemplifies how this approach is utilized to analyze de-pragmatization in religious texts systematically.

Constraints and Prospective Investigations

This study possesses multiple shortcomings that indicate avenues for additional investigation. The research was hampered by linguistic obstacles and restricted access to Al-Waeli's entire sermonic collection. Future research could benefit from enhanced access to original Arabic texts and expert translations that maintain metaphorical subtleties. Secondly, although this study concentrated on metaphorical language, other rhetorical strategies in Al-Waeli's sermons, such as metonymy, analogy, and narrative, also warrant examination. A thorough examination of his rhetorical methodology could yield a greater understanding of his communication tactics. The study primarily focused on the textual features of Al-Waeli's sermons, with minimal reflection on paralinguistic features such as tone, gestures, and facial expressions. A forthcoming study may employ a multimodal method to observe the interface of these traits with metaphorical language in meaning construction.

CONCLUSION

This study has stated that the de-pragmatization of metaphorical language in Sheikh Ahmed Al-Waeli's sermon style and exposure shape the metaphor usage and modification that enhance his unique rhetorical method. This study reveals that Al-Waeli utilizes many metaphors derived from multiple source domains, including philosophical, Quranic, and nature-based metaphors. These metaphors experience varying levels of depagratization through recontextualization, conventionalization, simplicity, and semantic erosion. The findings indicate that Al-Waeli's efficiency as a religious communicator is partially derived from his strategic influence of metaphorical language and de-pragmatization. This study recovers our comprehension of the progression of religious language through de-pragmatization, while preserving theological integrity and communication efficacy. It highlights the complicated interaction of metaphorical language's cognitive, pragmatic, and cultural features in religious discourse. Moreover, it simplifies the rhetorical approaches developed in modern Islamic sermons and the linguistic devices that enable the conversion of religious interpretations across cultural and temporal gaps. As religious organizations confront the difficulty of conveying historic ethnicities in modern situations, examining

de-pragmatization processes offers significant insights into the evolution of language while maintaining essential implications. Sheikh Ahmed Al-Waeli's sermonic style exposes the challenging stability between tradition and modern relevance, signifying how metaphorical language may be inflexibly embedded in tradition and adaptively flexible to current conditions.

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