

A Linguistic Analysis of the Transaction Of Job And His Three Friends- Job 1:1-42:27

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Abstract: Language has been viewed as a key concept in the regulation of human relationship. Three friends of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar's visits Job and their discourse goes a long way in buttressing this notion. Using Toulmin's six layer-layout of everyday argument, the study carried out a linguistic analysis of the cycles of speeches between Job and his three friends. Findings showed that each speaker employed the six layers of everyday argument-Data, Claim, Reservation, Warrant, Backing and Rebuttal indicating that whereas, the use of language can result to misunderstanding, it can also be employed in the smooth running of human activities. The study concluded that the book of Job, which is written in poetic format, is cryptic, that is, (written with an unusual grammatical constructions and rare words). The book showcases the theme of the righteous suffering, hence, the inability of mere mortals to explain the reason behind some of their earthly experiences. The friends of Job came to console him, but through their use of language, they added to Job's woes.

Keywords: Claim, Reservation, Warrant, Backing, Data, Rebuttal.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ideology and language are interwoven, therefore ideological views in literary texts such as the Holy Scripture or the Bible cannot exist without the instrumentality of language. People communicate and share ideas by the use of one language form or the other- written, spoken, sign or body language. This also applies to the Holy bible whose content are replete with ideologies that are propagated through the use of language. Language has been defined from divergent standpoint of scholars. Lamidi, (2000: 105) describes language as 'the medium or vehicle for conveying ideas, a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for social cooperation, the totality of meaningful utterances in any given society'. Osisanwo, (2003:1) asserts that 'Language is human vocal noise or the arbitrary graphic representation of this noise, used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for the purpose of communication' while, Mey (2001), sees Language as a means of communication that has linguistic features that are peculiar to different contexts of use. The study of these unique linguistic features of the discourse between Job and his three friends –Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, is important for defining and creating the different genres of linguistic texts. Hence, it is reasonable to talk of variations of language such as the language of religion. Linguists have deemed it fit to study different genres as well as understand how language functions in various fields in order to either standardize specific linguistic symbolizations or perform certain appropriate functions that are pertinent to the existence, definition and survival of the institutions and their members (Mey, 2001). This is to imply that language is a means to ensure there is an agreement between the sender and the receiver are amicable.

The book of Job

The book of job is the first of the five books commonly referred to as "The Book of Poetry". The five books include job, Psalms, Proverb, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. This is so because they are written in poetic style. This is in contrast to the other books of the Holy Bible which is written in narrative style. These five books are also referred to as the "wisdom Literature", this is so because it proffers insight to the reality of human everyday existence thus;

1. The Book of Job –How to suffer
2. Psalms – How to pray
3. The book of proverbs – How to act
4. The book of Ecclesiastes – How to enjoy
5. Song of Solomon – How to love (Copeland 2000)

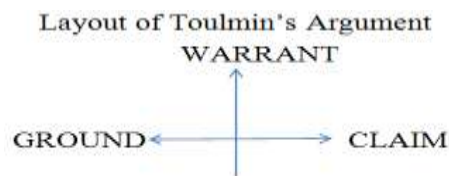
This study however focuses on the book of Job with the view to analyse the spontaneous face to face interaction between Job and His three friends –Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, with the view to explore how the use of language can generate and handle misunderstanding and conflict in everyday human relation.

Authorship and Writing Outline Of the Book Of Job

According to Copeland (2000), the author and date of writing of the book of Job is not certain, however, the Jewish tradition attributes the book to Moses and other authors. Nevertheless, one basic fact stands out and that is the fact that the author of the book of Job is a loyal Hebrew who was not strictly bound by the popular creed that assumed suffering was always the direct result of sin. This notion played out during transaction between Job and his friends-Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar

II. Theoretical Framework

ToulminEdelston Stephen is a British philosopher, who was influenced by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. He devoted his works to the analysis of moral reasoning. Toulmin sought to develop ethics that is found behind moral issues. Toulmin(1958)'s model of argumentation which contains a diagram of six interrelated components is adopted as the frame work for the present study. This is germane in that this framework believes that reasoning is less an activity of inference involving the discovery of new ideas, but more so a protest of testing and sifting already existing ideas. This act is achievable through the process of justification. To him, good argument succeeds in providing good justification to a claim, which will stand up to a criticism and earn a favourable verdict. (Copeland 2000).



- a. **CLAIM:** this is the point an arguer is trying to make. The claim in other words is the proposition or assertion an arguer wants another to accept. This answers the question “what is your point?”

Examples are as follows:

1. He should pay for John's meal, because he paid for him the previous day.
2. I sang last night, so this time it is your turn to sing

Three basic types of claims exist and they are;

- (i) **Fact:** This includes Claims that are focused on empirically verifiable phenomena.
- (ii) **Judgement/value:** this claim deals with opinions, attitudes, and subjective evaluations of utterances or things
- (iii) **Policy:** These are Claims that advocate courses of action that should be undertaken

- b. **GROUNDS:** grounds refer to the proof or evidence that an arguer offers. This answer the question “what is your proof?”, “How come?” or “why?”. It usually consists of statistics, quotations, reports, findings, physical evidence, or various forms of reasoning.

Examples are:

1. It looks like a chopper, the noise is deafening
2. The entire school compound is dirty, so I'll bet the restrooms will also be dirty.

Grounds can be based on;

- (i) **The evidence:** that is, facts, statistics, reports, or physical proof.
- (ii) **The source credibility:** authorities, experts, celebrity endorsers, a close friend, or someone's say so
- (iii) **Analysis and reasoning:** reasons maybe offered as proof.

c... **WARRANT:** this is the inferential leap that connects the claim with the grounds. The warrant is typically implicit (unstated) and requires the listener to recognise the underlying reasoning that makes sense of the claim in the light of the grounds. It functions by establishing a mental connection between the grounds and the claim,

examples are:

- (i) Glory is finding it difficult to breathe. I'll bet she is asthmatic.

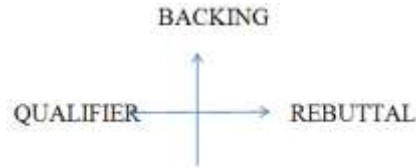
Warrant: sign reasoning; difficulty in breathing is a reliable source of asthma

- (ii) That house is probably the tallest in the city. It is the center of attraction.

Warrant: generalisation: Most of the tallest buildings are the center of attraction. Warrant can be based on ethos (source credibility, authority), logos (reason – giving, induction, deduction); pathos

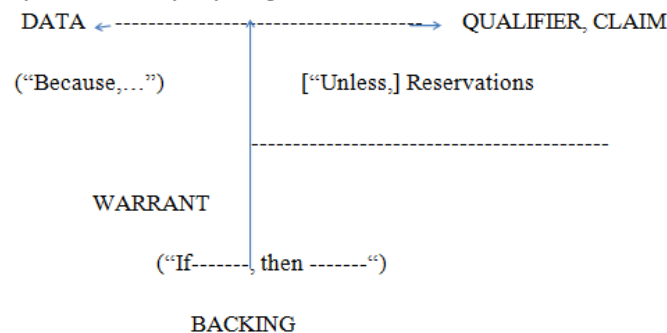
(emotional or motivational appeals, shared values etc). It should, however, be noted that these categories aren't mutually exclusive; there is considerable overlap among the three.

The Second Triad Of Toulmin's Model



- a. **BACKING:** this provides additional justification for the warrant, backing usually consists of evidence to support the type of reasoning employed by the warrant.
- b. **QUALIFIER:** The qualifier states the degree of force or probability to be attached to the claims. The qualifier states how sure the arguer is about his/her claim.
- c. **REBUTTAL:** According to Oyekunle (2016), the rebuttal acknowledges exceptions or limitations to the argument. The rebuttal admits to those circumstances or situations where the argument would not hold. In Toulmin's view, every acceptable argument may be laid out using these elements. However, arguments in actual discourse situation sometimes express their warrant and backing in words. All these elements are usually suppressed by arguers. Most of the times, the arguments that arguers offer employ warrant that may be subject to exceptions. This is to say that despite the general circumstances in which applying the rule will lead to an unacceptable conclusion. In this case, it can be said that there are reservations or exceptions to the warrant. When this occurs, that is when there are reservations to the warrant, the arguer may need to meet them by showing that the case in hand is not exceptional or by reducing the rigour of the claim proposed. (When the argument is unacceptable, neither of these strategies will work). Rather, speakers reduce the rigour of their claims with qualifiers.

Toulmin's Six Layer - Layout Of Everyday Argument



(Adapted from Oyekunle2016:72)

III. Methodology

It would certainly not be out of place to state that there is numerous recorded face to facespontaneous interactions of characters in the Bible. The book of Job is not an exception. The data for analysis for the study shall be limited to the face to face spontaneous interaction between the main character Job and the minor characters his three friend (Job3:1-42:27). Due to limited time and space, only the relevant aspects of the discourse (structured argument), shall be selected for analysis. The transaction between Job and his friends is recorded in the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible is the sacred book of the Christian religion. The New International Version (NIV) of the Holy Bible will be selected for analysis. The Toulmin's six elements already proposed will be employed as the tool for the analysis. The utterances would be delineated into paragraphs and important sections would be foregrounded.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The friends of Job –EliphazBildad and Zophar, visits Job in his distress and seeks to comfort him. They sat in silence for seven days with Job and finally Job begins to soliloquize. He started by cursing the day of his birth (3:1-10), to wondering why he did not die even at conception and also wondered why those that desire death are allowed to live because what he has had feared has befallen him (3:11-26). The utterance of Job generated cycles of speeches between Job and his friends. The utterance of Job aroused some response from his three friends and they spoke in blame to Job, claiming that his (Job) sins are responsible for his suffering. Eliphaz the Temanite spoke expressing the view that the innocent does not suffer “consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?” “As I have observed, those who

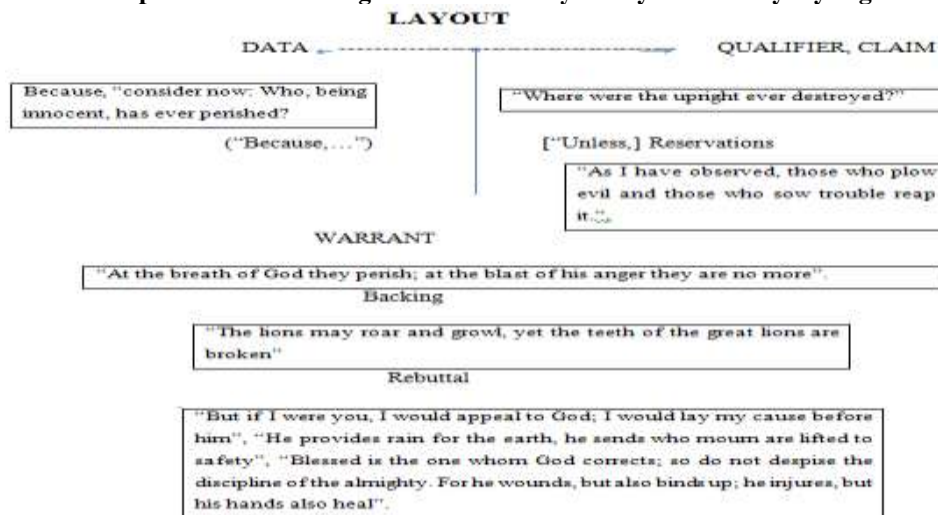
ploughevil and those who sow trouble reap it.”, “At the breath of God they perish; at the blast of his anger they are no more”. “The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great lions are broken”. Eliphaz went further to admonish Job to ask for forgiveness from God, reminding him of the joy that will follow if he humbles himself before God (4:1-5:22). He said “Call if you will, but who will answer you?. To which of the holy ones will you turn?” “Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple, I myself have seen a fool taking root, but suddenly his house was cursed,” “But if I were you, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him”, “He provides rain for the earth, he that mourn are lifted to safety”, “Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the almighty. For He wounds, but also binds up; He injures, but his hands also heal”. Job responds to the chastisement of Eliphaz by requesting him to show him where he (Job) has erred. He calls them deceitful brook (6:1-7:21). “Have I ever said, give something on my behalf, pay a ransom for me from your wealth, deliver me frOm the hand of the enemy, rescue me from the clutches of the ruthless? “Teach me, and I will be quiet; show me where I have been wrong”, “How painful are honest words! But what do your arguments prove”. Job goes on with his lament over his woes. Another of his friends Bildad responds to Job. Bildad the Shuhite responds to Job saying that God is a just God and that the death of Jobs children was as a result of their sins; and that if only Job will repent, God will visit him with blessings (8:1-22) “ How long will you say such things”? “Your words are a blustering wind”“Does God pervert justice”? “Does the Almighty pervert what is wright?” “When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin.” “But if you will seek God earnestly and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your prosperous state”. Surely, God does not reject one who is blameless or strengthen the hand of evildoers”. Job responds to Bildad by agreeing with him, but nevertheless wondered who can really be righteous in God’s sight in view of His wisdom and strength. He wished he has access to God for him to find out the reason for his suffering, asking God for His reasons for the affliction (9:1-10:22). At this point, the third friend Zophar spoke.

Zophar the Naamathite counsels Job by saying that Job had received less suffering compared to his sins. He asks Job to seek out the deep things about the person of God. He admonished Job to put away iniquities and wickedness, for then he would abide in brightness and Joy. (11:1-20). Zophar said “will your idle talk reduce others to silence? Will no one rebuke you when you mock?” “You say to God, My beliefs are flawless and I am pure in your sight”, “Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that He would open his lips against you, and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin” “Surely He recognizes deceivers; and when He sees evil, does he not take note” “Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him” “then free of fault, you will lift up your face; you will stand firm and without fear”, “life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning”. Job reiterates the fact that he is innocent, he desires the presence of God and longed for death (12:1-14:22). “If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me”.

Using Eliphaz as a representative of Job’s friends, the Lord reprimand’s Job’s friends for erroneous assumption. He points out to them that they have angered the Lord by saying things that were not correct about God. The Lord directs Job’s friends to offer sacrifice of seven bulls and seven rams and that Job should pray for them. Job forgives and prays for them, and the Lord blessed and restored Job’s lost glory (42:10-17).

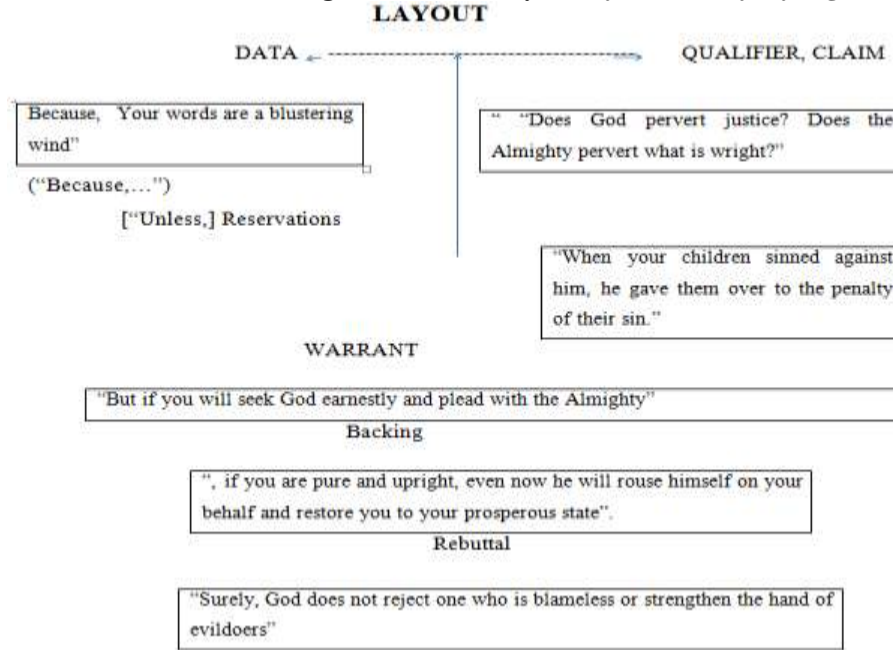
Analysis of cycles of speeches with Job

The Transaction of Eliphaz with Job Using Toulmin’s six layer-Layout of everyday argument.



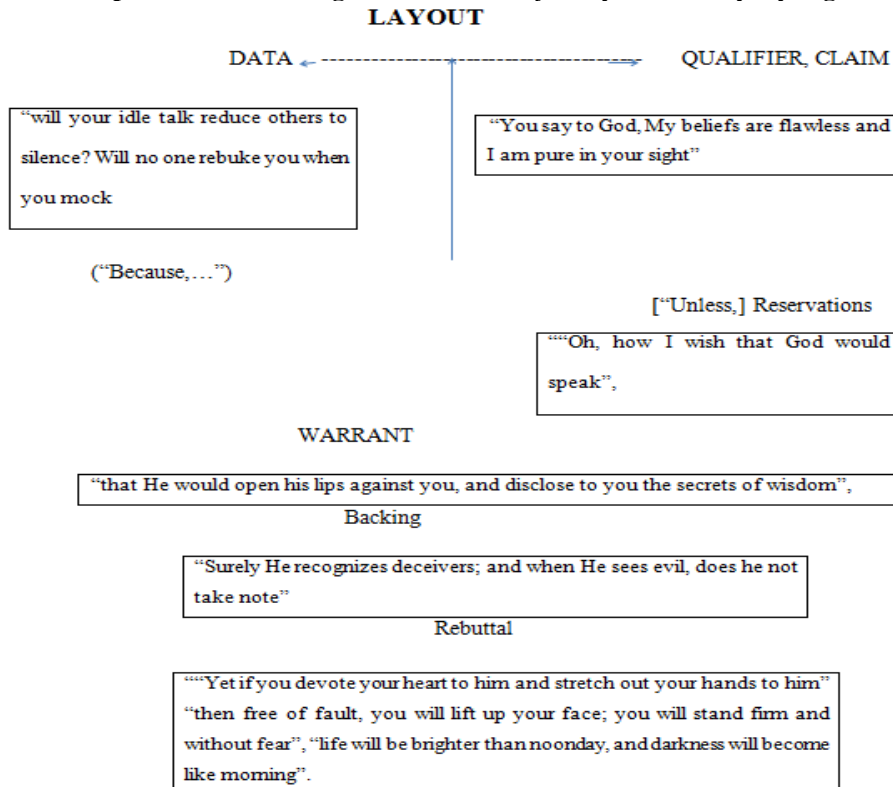
Job responds by requesting him to show him where he (Job) has erred. He calls them deceitful brook (6:1-7:21). “Have I ever said, give something on my behalf, pay a ransom for me from your wealth, deliver me from the hand of the enemy, rescue me from the clutches of the ruthless? “Teach me, and I will be quiet; show me where I have been wrong.

The Transaction of Bildad with Job Using Toulmin’s six layer - layout of everyday argument.



Job’s answer was that of agreement. Nevertheless, he wondered who can really be righteous in God’s sight in view of His wisdom and strength. He wished he has access to God for him to find the reason for his suffering, asking God for His reasons for the affliction (9:1-10:22).

The Transaction of Zophar with Job Using Toulmin’s six layer-layout of everyday argument.



Job responds buttressing the fact that he is innocent, he desires the presence of God and longed for death (12:1-14:22). "If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me".

V. Findings

In addressing the question of suffering, findings showed that though Job's friends, (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar), concluded that Job is the architect of his suffering, Job's utterances signified that suffering may be allowed in order to foreground an individual's spirituality. Secondly, the notion that suffering is a consequence of personal sin is proven otherwise by Job. This is seen in the dialogue between God and Satan in Job 1: thus that Man cannot explain the changes in the existence of man. Though Job's friends concluded in error that Job's suffering is as a consequence of his sins, their utterance reveals that they have absolute trust that God is a just God that does not pervert justice and does not punish the righteous. This is actually the truth as the source of Job's suffering is not God but the devil

VI. Conclusion

The book of Job also underscores the theme of repentance and forgiveness. This is evident in the repentance of Job's friends and their forgiveness. It is important for one to forgive. It is when Job had forgiven his friends that God blessed him and he lived 140 years, seeing his descendants to fourth generation. In Hebrew the defining relative clause "whose name was job", is actually an asyndetic verb less noun-clause placed in apposition to the substantive "a man". The word "upright" is complementary to "blameless before God" it conveys the idea of one that is just and applies to his relationships with others (25:21). This expression explains job's character –fearing God and turning from evil" this correlates ideas in scripture that, signifies job's personality as a devoted worshipper of God. The book of job, written in poetic format is cryptic, that is, (written with an unusual grammatical constructions and rare words). It showcases the theme of the suffering of the righteous, hence the inability of mere mortals to explain the reason behind some of their experiences.

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