A Relationship Re-visited

Exploring the Relationship Between Ideology and The Shape of Script by Examining The Case of The Perso-Arabic Script

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the idea of whether there is a relationship between the visual look of a written language and the ideological aspect of its society, and if the shape of a script could reveal any information about what was or what is going on in a country. An underlying argument in this study is that a script is not only a medium of access to a set of sociocultural dimensions of human lives through its literary aspects, it is also a materialisation of such dimensions through its visual aspects. Therefore, examining the shift in visual form and application of scripts could contribute to better understanding the changes in the different dimensions of a society. A large body of literature have explored the written language in general. However, their primarily focus is on the linguistic aspect of scripts. What seems to be missing in the current literature is an understanding of the aesthetic dimensions of a script as an artefact, a design object that embody different dimensions of human lives. In other words, the shape of a script, its visual reflection of different dimensions within a given society, and how these dimensions intersect is not well understood at present. This paper looks at the link between written language and ideology, as an example of such dimensions, from a designer's perspective. It explores the transformation of the Perso-Arabic script from sacred calligraphy to graffiti by examining and comparing examples of this script that has been drawn on buildings.

Keywords: language, ideology, calligraphy, Perso-Arabic

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