

## The Concept of Peace in Persian Proverbs: A Systemic Functional Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

Proverbs, a cornerstone of folk literature, transmit societal thoughts and experiences across generations through concise and impactful sentences. Virtually every facet of human experience is reflected in proverbs, including the concept of peace, which is richly represented in Persian tradition. This study examines 30 Persian proverbs related to peace, employing a systemic-functional linguistics framework to analyze their ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. The findings reveal that these proverbs frequently utilize or imply a relational process. Circumstantial elements within these processes often serve to compare peace with war, or to provide justification for the prioritization of peace. In terms of interpersonal function, the consistent use of the present tense underscores the timeless relevance of peace. Regarding textual function, the placement of peace-related concepts in the thematic position emphasizes their centrality for the audience. Furthermore, the cohesive juxtaposition of peace with war, or related concepts, reinforces the imperative to avoid conflict.

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## 1. Introduction

Folklore encompasses the collective ideas, narratives, customs, songs, and traditional arts of a nation. Often regarded as the culture and knowledge of everyday people, it comprises beliefs, practices, legends, proverbs, folk poetry, and other cultural expressions (Yavari & Messiah, 2009, p. 15). Crucially, folklore represents a body of knowledge, actions, and behaviors transmitted intergenerationally among ordinary individuals, independent of demonstrable scientific or logical validation. This transmission occurs primarily through experiential learning (Zulfaqari, 2015, p. 6). In essence, folklore functions as a versatile analytical lens, enabling diverse perspectives and adaptable approaches to cultural phenomena. Its narratives and practices are mobile, carried as cultural capital by individuals moving within and between communities. Furthermore, folklore is inherently dynamic, subject to continuous evolution (Tatiana and Ceri, 2023). Proverbs, a significant component of folklore, encapsulate the beliefs and viewpoints of diverse communities through concise and direct expressions. These aphorisms address a wide range of subjects, rendering it challenging to identify a topic not represented within the proverbial tradition.

Peace and war are enduring themes within human culture, manifesting in diverse forms. Human history is replete with conflict and devastation, leading to a perception of peace as merely an interlude between wars. Consequently, peace and tranquility are highly valued by humanity and have been expressed in various ways. Proverbs, with their distinct structural features of form and meaning, serve as effective vehicles for conveying societal attitudes towards these concepts. As linguistic artifacts, proverbs structure our understanding of reality, contribute to the establishment and maintenance of social relationships, and generate nuanced meanings through their contextual usage. Therefore, analyzing the linguistic dimensions of proverbs allows us to uncover their underlying layers of meaning.

It seems that one of the frameworks that can be effective in analyzing the layers of such proverbs because of their systematicity is Halliday's perspective in the framework of systemic-functional linguistics. In this approach, the text is analyzed based on three ideological, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, and how they are connected. This approach tries to reveal the hidden layers of the text in a reasoned method by focusing on different elements of text and language as a social phenomenon. It presents the human perception of the inner and outer world, his thoughts and feelings, and the interaction of the speaker and the audience in a systematic way. It seems that the analysis of proverbs of peace with such an approach shows, despite the variety of forms, that the proverbs have similar functions and often have the same pattern in terms of process, tense and mode of the process, circumstantial elements, information structure, and textual function; the deep structure of all these proverbs is the relational process: "Peace is better than war", which has a thematic structure, and assessment, with present tense and mode. All these elements are nothing but to persuade the audience to focus on "peace".

Therefore, the present study reviews the definition of proverbs, describes the framework of systemic-functional linguistics, and examines the corpus of 30 Persian proverbs about peace, out of Dehkhoda's (1998) proverb collection, within the framework.

## 2. Research Background

Researchers have long studied proverbs and related topics, producing numerous books and articles. The field is so extensive that Zulfazari (2005) compiled a dedicated *Bibliography of Persian Proverbs*. His other contributions include *Methodology for Compiling Persian Proverbs* (2005), *Investigation of the Structure of Proverbs* (2006), and *The Difference Between Irony and Proverbs* (2007). Other significant works include Ahmad Abu Mahboob's *In Parables and Proverbs* (1993), Ahmad Parsa's *Parables from a New Perspective* (2005), and Zen Zungroong's *Animals in Chinese and Persian Proverbs* (2015).

Several Persian-language studies have applied systemic-functional linguistics to proverbs and texts. For example, Rezaei and Ghobadi (2009) analyzed four Persian odes in *Review and Analysis of Four Persian Odes Based on Systemic-Functional Linguistics*, while Monshizadeh and Elahian (2014) examined verb stylistics in *Investigation of the Cognitive Stylistics of the Verb in Golestan*. Fallah (2017) explored transitivity in *The Transitivity Function in Surah Hamza: A Hallidayan Systemic-Functional Approach*, and Asudeh and Ishani (2021) compared a Rumi poem with its English translation in *A Comparative Analysis of a Poem from Rumi's Masnavi and Its English Translation Based on Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion Theory*.

While such research is valuable, it lies beyond this article's scope. Nevertheless, the current study is not without precedent in this regard.

### 2.1. Proverbs

Proverbs are a set of thoughts of different nations, used as short sentences and phrases. The origin of most proverbs is uncertain. We cannot perhaps make an organic relation between its different parts or formal structure. The proverb has multiple definitions, with some based on its content and others based on its form (Rezaei, 2023). A short pithy saying which embodies a general truth. It is related in form and content to the maxim and the aphorism. Common to most nations and people, it is a form of expression of great antiquity (Cuddon, 1984, p. 537). For Wolfgang Meider, "a proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorial form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (Mieder, 2004, p. 3). It can be said that a proverb is a short sentence that is known and repeated among people and expresses a truth based on common sense or practical experience of humanity (Akbarian, 2012) and often describes a basic behavioral law. It may also be known as a pearl of wisdom. The other definition is also similar more and less to the mentioned definition. It taken notice of the proverb's nature in all definitions and expressed its attributes and we cannot know it a

complete definition of the proverb these attributes are: Other scholars cite different features or attributes of the nature of proverbs, as follows:

1. A short pithy saying which embodies a general truth.
2. It is related in form and content to the maxim and the aphorism.
3. Proverb based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity.
4. Proverb is handed down from generation to generation.
5. They are used to carry more weight in a discussion, a weak person is able to enlist the tradition of the ancestors to support his position, or even to argue a legal case (Rezaei, 2012).
6. Unlike idioms or other formulaic types, shortened versions of the complete sentence form of some proverbs are also quite common (Akbarian, 2010, p. 2012).

## 2.2. Halliday and Systemic-Functional Linguistics

Halliday's name is associated with systemic-functional linguistics. Since the 1960s, many efforts have been made to clarify the concept of context, but only systemic-functional linguistics could fill this gap. One of Halliday's greatest successes was that he was able to provide a systematic and integrated understanding of how to reflect the specific aspects of the situation in the participants' linguistic choices (Mohajer & Nabavi, 1997, p. 25). Based on this theory, each linguistic element is examined according to its role in the whole text or system. Halliday and Hassan consider any spoken or written phrase, with any length and size, that forms a coherent whole, as a text. They have used the term context to distinguish text from non-text; a texture that gives coherence to the text (Eggins, 2007, p. 24). In its broadest sense, the text is described as a social event or a product of social interactions. According to Eggins, in its broadest sense, the meaning and "role in the context" are the same. The things that exist in this context include the participating humans, what they say, and what goes on (Soren, 2009, p. 82-84). Therefore, in systemic-functional linguistics, language is explained according to its social function. In this sense, systemic-functional linguistics includes various theories and models that explain the function of language as a social behavior (Eija, 1991, pp. 255–260). As a result, the description of the roles and functions of language in society is, in fact, the description of the meanings that language in general and each text, in particular, can have. Halliday has mentioned three types of ideational, textual, and interpersonal functions; while explaining them, we will examine the proverbs of peace based on them (Mohajer & Nabavi, 1997, p. 26).

## 3. Proverbs of Peace and the Ideational Metafunction

The ideational function, also called the experiential function, expresses our perceptions of the outside world and the inner world. Our beliefs, feelings, and impressions are recounted in this process (Halliday, 2003, p. 312). This function focuses on objects, displays the attributes,

ratios, and attributes of the noun, and describes the events along with their time and place. The ideational function pays attention to what happens in the world and how language conveys it. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, or adverbs in various processes are used to demonstrate this attitude at the level of grammar. The process is a reference to an event, action, emotion, speech, or existential state; The processes are classified into different types, based on their meanings and special participants (Jiang Zh et al., 2011, pp. 27–52), which include: 1) Material process, in which an event or doing something takes place or is affected by something. If the process verb is intransitive, it has a subject called ‘actor’ and if it is transitive, it takes another participle called ‘goal’ (Eggins, 2002, pp. 215–216). While the mental process implies feeling, thought, and perception, this process has two participants: the entity that perceives is the ‘sensor’ and the thing that is perceived is the ‘phenomenon’ (Eggins, pp. 225–233). 2) The verbal process is a process that deals with verbs that are all of the ‘saying’ types and have three participants named ‘sayer’, ‘receiver’, and ‘saying’. 3) The behavioral process involves the physical and mental actions of a living or presumed living being and has a participant called ‘behavior’. 4) Relational/existential processes are also implicated in the relationship and existence of phenomena through being. Since this process attributes a characteristic of phenomena, it is also called an ‘existential process’. This process is in two ways: in the first, we have two participants named ‘identifier’ and ‘identified’; in the second, we have a participant called ‘carrier’ and a characteristic that we attach to the carrier, which is called ‘attribute’.

It’s evident that the participants are a key component of the processes. Participants in the process include factors and elements that may have one of these characteristics: 1) be the agent of the process, 2) The process is applied to them, and, 3) He benefits from the process (Mohajer & Nabavi, 1997, pp. 39–40). Also, every process has a place, tense, method of action, tools, means, and conditions of the process, which are called circumstantial elements, usually manifested in the adverbial and the adverbial group. The elements are categorized as tense, place, quality, casual, role, and topic (Jiang Zh et al., 2011, pp. 27–52). Based on the three components of process types, process participants, and circumstantial elements, Persian proverbs related to peace were analyzed, as follows (see Table 1):

**Table 1.** *Proverbs of Peace and the Ideational Function*

| No | Proverbs  | Process                    | Participants           | Circumstantial Elements |
|----|---|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | <i>With friends of chivalry, with enemies of tolerance.</i>     | behavioral                 | (2) you                | companionship           |
| 2  | <i>Be a mill: take the coarse and return the soft.</i>          | relational + material      | you + coarse           | ---                     |
| 3  | <i>Where there is friendship, there is no need for trouble.</i> | (2) existential            | friendship + trouble   | spatial (2)             |
| 4  | <i>He who starts a war is playing with his life.</i>            | material (2)               | he/she                 | causal                  |
| 5  | <i>Staying away from evil is the beginning of all goodness.</i> | relational, the first type | staying away from evil | ---                     |

|    |  |                            |                                 |                  |
|----|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 6  | <i>Peace and war cause is in people's imagination.</i>                                     | relational                 | peace and war                   | causal           |
| 7  | <i>If you want to have many friends, don't be spiteful.</i>                                | relational (2)             | you                             | quality          |
| 8  | <i>Friend! If the enemy does not tolerate you, you must tolerate the enemy</i>             | behavioral (2)             | friend/enemy                    | companionship    |
| 9  | <i>Peace is the king of decrees.</i>   | relational, the first type | peace                           | ---              |
| 10 | <i>Peace is God's greatest commandment.</i>  | relational, the first type | peace                           | ---              |
| 11 | <i>One enemy is many and thousands of friends are few</i>                                  | relational (2)             | friend/enemy                    | quality          |
| 12 | <i>Do good with malicious too.</i>   | behavioral                 | you                             | companionship    |
| 13 | <i>In war, leave a way for reconciliation</i>  | behavioral                 | you                             | causal           |
| 14 | <i>Overcome the enemy with gentleness.</i>   | behavioral                 | you                             | causal           |
| 15 | <i>Do good and don't bother anyone.</i>  | behavioral (2)             | you                             | ---              |
| 16 | <i>War arises from words and reconciliation from meanings.</i>                             | relational (2)             | peace/war                       | causal           |
| 17 | <i>War from the plow, reconciliation from the threshing.</i>                               | relational, the first type | peace/war                       | spatial          |
| 18 | <i>War at the beginning is better than peace at the end.</i>                               | relational                 | peace/war                       | measurement      |
| 19 | <i>War is easy on the observer.</i>  | relational                 | war                             | quality          |
| 20 | <i>You should not spend the world with evil</i>  | material                   | you/world                       | quality          |
| 21 | <i>Do not start a war when Peace is open.</i>  | behavioral/relational      | peace/war/you                   | temporal         |
| 22 | <i>When the enemy humbly apologizes, forgive him.</i>                                      | behavioral                 | you/enemy                       | temporal/quality |
| 23 | <i>The salvation of the two worlds is in harassing others less.</i>                        | relational                 | the salvation of the two worlds | ---              |
| 24 | <i>Peace is undoubtedly better than war.</i>   | relational, the first type | peace/war                       | measurement      |
| 25 | <i>Heaven cannot oppose the skillfulness of tolerance.</i>                                 | relational                 | Heaven                          | ---              |
| 26 | <i>When things are difficult, war is better than reconciliation.</i>                       | relational, the first type | peace/war                       | measurement      |
| 27 | <i>The wolf should be taught to sew as he knows how to tear.</i>                           | mental (2)                 | wolf/sew/tear                   | causal           |
| 28 | <i>Where you see contention, be gentle.</i>  | behavioral/material        | You                             | spatial          |
| 29 | <i>I am not saying to be afraid of war with the enemy, be more afraid of him in peace.</i> | verbal                     | i/you/war/enemy                 | quality          |
| 30 | <i>To me, peace is better than war.</i>  | relational                 | peace/war                       | measurement      |

Note: This table lists the all (30) proverbs of peace and war from Dehkhoda's collection, numbered 1-30.

Based on what is evident in the analysis of ideational function, it can be said that the aforementioned proverbs include 47 different processes, including 23 relational, 13 behavioral, 6 material, 2 mental, 1 verbal, and 2 existential processes. In other words, the

frequency of relational processes is the highest. It has been mentioned that relational processes are based on the 'being' of things and phenomena or giving them a quality, which is often expressed by the verb 'to be'. Among the relational processes, we are faced with the second type (i.e., a process with a participant named 'carrier' and its 'phenomenon'). The first type, which has two participants ('identifier' and 'identified'), has a lower frequency. This feature shows that a) proverbs have a very simple structure, b) in most of them, a phenomenon is attributed to the 'carrier', and c) participant in them is 'peace or reconciliation'. In other words, we face a participant that always has a characteristic, as shown in these examples:

*Reconciliation is undoubtedly better than war.  
Heaven cannot oppose the skillfulness of tolerance.  
People's imagination is the cause of their peace and war.*

The focal point or 'carrier' of these proverbs is 'peace'. Its phenomena are 'being better', 'skillfulness', and 'imagination'. In these cases, we are frequently confronted with circumstantial elements of 'measure' or 'causality'. The two sides of this measurement are 'peace' and 'war'. The proverb consistently compares these two and emphasizes that peace is superior to war or that war is caused by a false fantasy. In the relational processes where we are faced with two participants ('identifier' and 'identified'), in addition to the brevity of the structure, the order of two participles can be changed without altering the sentence's meaning, as in this example:

*The **king of decrees** is **reconciliation** = The **reconciliation** is **king of decrees**.  
**God's greatest commandment** is **reconciliation**. = **The reconciliation** is **God's greatest commandment**.*

In these processes, it is not possible to use measuring circumstantial elements. In addition, other peripheral elements are not used. The high frequency of relational processes shows that the text is free of any ambiguity and its understanding is easy. In other words, these proverbs, while comparing peace and war, easily convey the message of peace. Another focal point in the current proverbs is the contrast between peace and war. This characteristic is one of the main features of proverbs in its general meaning. After the relational processes, the behavioral process has the highest frequency. As mentioned, the participant of this process is 'behavior'. What deserves attention in this process is mental or physical behavior. The characteristic of behavioral processes in the following proverbs is their prescriptive aspect:

*With friends of chivalry, with enemies of tolerance.  
Do good with malicious too.  
In war, leave a way for reconciliation.  
Overcome the enemy with gentleness.  
Do good and don't bother anyone.*

In other words, these proverbs always motivate the audience to do something, and interestingly, all the behavioral processes of these proverbs come with an imperative verb. If we examine the deep structure of these proverbs, we will get propositions, such as relational processes. In addition to declarative mode, their main part is the opposition between war and peace. Finally, like relational processes, it ends with the proposition that *'peace is better than war'*.

#### 4. Proverbs of Peace and Interpersonal Metafunction

What is considered in the interpersonal function is the interaction between the sayer and receiver (i.e., the communication parties). Here, the sayer can choose between the communicative roles of language for himself and his receiver. Giving information, offering, answering, or accepting it, and providing goods and services are included in this section (Halliday, 2003, p. 80). In this part, the role of the sayer, receiver, and audience, and verb modes (informative, interrogative, and imperative), verb tenses (past, present, and future), conjunctions, and modal verbs are examined. The interpersonal function is related to the way the sayer communicates with others. In this function, the interaction of the participants in linguistic communication and the establishment and stabilization of social relations are considered. From the perspective of interpersonal function, we find out that the sayer said something or asked something, or told the news. In addition, his statement shows his social position towards us.

Table 2. *Proverbs of Peace and Interpersonal/Textual Function*

| No | Proverbs  | Tense   | Mode        | Theme/Rheme  |
|----|---|---------|-------------|--------------|
| 1  | <i>With friends of chivalry, with enemies of tolerance.</i>                     | present | imperative  | Theme-Rheme  |
| 2  | <i>Be a mill: take the coarse and return the soft.</i>                          | present | imperative  | Rheme- Theme |
| 3  | <i>Where there is friendship, there is no need for trouble.</i>                 | present | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 4  | <i>He who starts a war is playing with his life.</i>                            | present | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 5  | <i>Staying away from evil is the beginning of all goodness.</i>                 | present | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 6  | <i>Peace and war cause is in people's imagination.</i>                          | present | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 7  | <i>If you want to have many friends, don't be spiteful.</i>                     | present | subjunctive | Rheme- Theme |
| 8  | <i>Friend! If the enemy does not tolerate you, you must tolerate the enemy.</i> | present | subjunctive | Rheme- Theme |
| 9  | <i>Peace is the king of decrees.</i>  | present | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 10 | <i>Peace is God's greatest commandment.</i>                                     | present | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 11 | <i>One enemy is many and thousands of friends are few.</i>                      | present | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 12 | <i>Do good with malicious too.</i>  | present | imperative  | Rheme- Theme |
| 13 | <i>In war, leave a way for reconciliation</i>                                   | present | imperative  | Theme-Rheme  |



|    |  |            |             |              |
|----|--|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 14 | <i>Overcome the enemy with gentleness.</i>   | present    | imperative  | Rheme- Theme |
| 15 | <i>Do good and don't bother anyone.</i>  | present    | imperative  | Rheme- Theme |
| 16 | <i>War arises from words and reconciliation from meanings.</i>                             | relational | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 17 | <i>War from the plow, reconciliation from the threshing.</i>                               | present    | imperative  | Theme-Rheme  |
| 18 | <i>War at the beginning is better than peace at the end.</i>                               | present    | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 19 | <i>War is easy on the observer.</i>  | present    | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 20 | <i>You should not spend the world with evil.</i>   | present    | imperative  | Rheme- Theme |
| 21 | <i>Do not start a war when Peace is open.</i>  | present    | imperative  | Rheme- Theme |
| 22 | <i>When the enemy humbly apologizes, forgive him.</i>                                      | present    | imperative  | Theme-Rheme  |
| 23 | <i>The salvation of the two worlds is in harassing others less.</i>                        | present    | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 24 | <i>Peace is undoubtedly better than war.</i>   | present    | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 25 | <i>Heaven cannot oppose the skillfulness of tolerance.</i>                                 | present    | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 26 | <i>When things are difficult, war is better than reconciliation.</i>                       | present    | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 27 | <i>The wolf should be taught to sew as he knows how to tear.</i>                           | present    | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 28 | <i>Where you see contention, be gentle.</i>  | present    | imperative  | Theme-Rheme  |
| 29 | <i>I am not saying to be afraid of war with the enemy, be more afraid of him in peace.</i> | present    | declarative | Theme-Rheme  |
| 30 | <i>To me, peace is better than war.</i>  | present    | declarative | Rheme- Theme |

#### 4.1. Tense and Mode

The first feature of peace proverbs based on interpersonal metafunction is their tense. The interesting point is that the time of proverbs is the present tense. Obviously, it is appropriate for the proverbs for the following reasons: 1) It is not limited to a specific tense. It is fluid and floating. 2) The events and actions in question take on a permanent aspect. 3) As a result, such events do not take on a fixed time point. Therefore, whenever the audience encounters them, they consider it as the beginning of such actions (Aghagolzadeh, 2005, p. 18). All the proverbs of peace in this writing have this temporal characteristic. This tense characteristic of proverbs makes the audience think that such a proposition was issued to him at the same moment. As a result, it is very effective in terms of motivation. In the following proverbs, no example has a past tense, as the message would end and no one would pay attention to it:

*To me, peace is better than war.*  
*The salvation of the two worlds is in harassing others less.*  
*War at the beginning is better than peace at the end.*

They suggest to the audience that ‘peace’ is always better than ‘war’. The relief of both worlds is always in ‘peace’ and always the best thing that leads to ‘peace’. In other words, none of these propositions is dependent on a particular tense since we could claim that ‘peace’ was good in the past and is not important now, whereas the temporal structure of the proverb tells that ‘peace is the best thing in all times’.

Yet, in terms of mode, there are three types of modes in the proverbs on ‘peace’: declarative, imperative, and subjunctive. The aspect of declarative mode is the most frequent in the proverbs on peace. As its name suggests, it conveys declaration; informing about something is its most important feature. This feature is seen in the proverbs that focus on ‘peace’:

*Staying away from evil is the beginning of all goodness.  
To me, peace is better than war.  
When things are difficult, war is better than reconciliation.  
Reconciliation is undoubtedly better than war.*

After the declarative mode, the imperative mode has the highest frequency in these proverbs:

*Where you see contention, be gentle.  
Do good with malicious too.  
Do good and don't bother anyone.*

The imperative mode prompts the audience to do something or warns them not to do it, even in subjunctive mode like the following examples:

*The wolf should be taught to sew as he knows how to tear.  
You should not spend the world with evil.  
If you want to have many friends, don't be spiteful.*

The structure of the verb is based on hope, wish, condition, doubt, etc., and the deep structure of the process or the verb is based on the imperative mode. In other words, it can be said that the basis of the proverbs of peace is based on the ‘imperative mode’. Whether this is an explicit matter or in the depth of the process, such proverbs try to encourage the audience to ‘calmness and peace’ and keep them away from ‘controversy and contention’. Of course, in order to achieve such a goal, imperative mode is the best choice. In addition, from an interpersonal point of view, such proverbs are based on ‘suggestions’ or ‘information’; the former is based on the imperative mode, and the latter on the declarative mode.

## 5. Proverbs of Peace and Textual Metafunction

The textual metafunction organizes structural factors (e.g., theme, rheme, and information construction) and non-structural factors (reference, ellipsis and substitution, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion). It **relates** to the situational context. In the textual metafunction, the relationship between the two previous metafunctions and the representation of the language

itself is organized; a connection is made between the real world and linguistic structures. Here, the question is: which of the textual elements is important and focal? According to the speaker, what part of the topic is the most important part? What does the audience think about the subject? Which subject does the speaker choose as the starting point of the utterance?

Based on what has been said, it can be seen that ‘theme’ and ‘rheme’ are very important in the proverbs of peace. In these statements, ‘peace’ is placed in the theme position:

*‘Peace’ is the king of decrees.*

*‘Peace’ is God’s greatest commandment.*

*‘Peace’ is undoubtedly better than war.*

*‘Peace’ and war cause is in people’s imagination.*

*In some cases, ‘war’ is placed in the theme position:*

*‘War’ arises from words and reconciliation from meanings.*

*‘War’ from the plow, reconciliation from the threshing.*

*‘War’ at the beginning is better than peace at the end.*

*‘War’ is easy on the observer.*

However, in these cases, even though war is the theme, the emphasis and focus of the text is peace. On the other hand, it can be seen that proverbs like this are composed of two parts, and each part has a theme and a rheme. In other words, the meaning of the proverb is: *war is abhorrent in any case, so turn to peace*. The theme is the main issue of the message and everything comes back to it. Therefore, what is placed in the position of the theme, tells about its importance. Therefore, when peace or war are placed in the theme position, it indicates their importance or, in other words, their centrality in these propositions.

Another point in the textual metafunction is the information structure. Information structure is formed based on old and new information; they present the old information first and then the new information. Therefore, the information should be presented to the audience in such a way that its novelty can be understood (Halliday, 2003, p. 89). The syntactic information structure of proverbs is always new because the text is not so extensive that we want to provide a context for old information. This feature draws the attention of the audience to the message of the proverb. In other words, the mentioned proverbs are ‘audience-oriented’. The information structure of peace proverbs were formed based on new information. In other words, the short structure of most of these proverbs, the initial focus of the proposition on peace, and its clarity make each proverb a unique type with new information for the audience.

## 7. Conclusion

Analyzing proverbs concerning peace within the framework of systemic-functional linguistics yields several key conclusions. Firstly, within the ideational metafunction, the majority of

peace-related proverbs are structured around, or interpretable as, relational processes. In these processes, a 'carrier' participant is attributed with a 'phenomenon'. Typically, the 'carrier' is 'peace', and the attributed 'phenomena' include expressions such as 'being the king of decrees', 'being God's greatest commandment', and 'being the salvation of two worlds'. These relational processes function prescriptively, encouraging the audience to acknowledge and adhere to the presented propositions. Furthermore, even behavioral processes, which exhibit the second-highest frequency after relational processes, can often be reinterpreted as relational processes.

Secondly, circumstantial elements include measuring, causal, spatial, and temporal elements, but measuring and causal elements have a high frequency. The measuring elements always compare peace with war and prefer peace to war whereas the causal elements state the reason for the preference for peace over war and unrest. Thirdly, the interpersonal metafunction in these proverbs includes informing and giving suggestions. These two are based on the characteristics of tense and modes of verbs. The tense of the verbs in these proverbs is the present tense. This tense refers to the fact that whenever the audience is faced with such a proposition, they feel that such a proposition was formed at the same moment, so it is very effective. The mode of verbs is declarative or imperative, and if the subjunctive is used, it is in the sense of an imperative mode. This feature causes the proverb to become persuasive. In other words, the urge for 'peace' becomes its central feature.

Finally, there are several features worth attending in the textual function. The first one is construction of theme and rheme. In most Persian proverbs of peace, the word peace or what encourages peace is located in the position of theme. This feature shows the centrality of peace in these proverbs and its importance in such propositions. Another one is new and old information structure. From the point of view of new and old information structure, it can be said that proverbs of peace always contain new information and do not have components related to old information. Maybe the old information can be imagined in the audience's mental background. New information encourages the audience on the topic of peace. In addition, the proverbs of peace contain a type of complementary opposition, i.e. peace and war. In most of these proverbs, we find that peace is better because of its opposition, which is the dislike of war. One more component of these proverbs is their short textual structure, which makes other elements such as ellipsis or replacements less visible. This feature helps the clarity of the text's message.

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