



RESEARCH PAPER

Discursive Strategies used in Quran: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Social Issues in Surah Al-Isra

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores various social issues discussed in Qur'anic discourse through highlighting discursive strategies used to indicate widespread social problems in Meccan society at the time of revelation of Surah Al-Isra. The study also focuses the social ideologies presented in the respective surah. The study is delimited to selected verses of Surah Al-Isra, i.e., verse 31-37 (except verse 35). Qur'anic discourse predominantly focuses on the prevalent social issues in its depiction of current as well as historical events. It not only indicates the widespread social evils, but also guides to eradicate them through the application of Islamic ideologies. The present study applies Fairclough's three dimensional model (2013) to the afore-mentioned verses of Surah Al-Isra. The verses are selected on the basis of their enhanced representation of social problems such as illegitimate sex, unlawful control of orphan's property, arrogance, unnecessary curiosity, and murdering someone unjustly. The study selects the English translation of these verses given in *The Easy Qur'an* (Ahmed, 2005). The analysis of the verses is based on categorization of discursive strategies, i.e., Argumentation, Prediction, Perspectivation and Intensification (Wodak, 2005). Furthermore, the analysis argues for the significance of specific lexical choices, speech acts, and recurrence of various linguistic expressions in asserting the disapproval for all social evils in a morally upright society. The findings of the study imply the need to follow Islamic ideologies to resolve multiple social issues still prevalent in the contemporary world. Overall the study provides an impetus to future studies of Qur'an and other religious texts in CDA research paradigms, which is still an understudied area in the research body of religious literature. The selected framework (Fairclough, 2013), and method of manual codification of verses through Wodak's categorization (2005) is, hence, recommended for further Qur'anic studies in the domain of CDA.

KEYWORDS CDA, Islamic Ideology, Surah Al-Isra, Social Issues, Discursive Strategies

Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA henceforth), is an interdisciplinary research field of linguistics that investigates language in its social, political and cultural contexts. The researchers and scholars apply CDA frameworks to explore various societal and power structures embedded in the text and speech, following multiple approaches and theories. However, the main objectives lie in the exploration of social issues constituted by a discourse. CDA not only sheds light upon the connections between social practices and language use but also concentrates on the role of discursive practices in maintaining social order and promoting social change.

Fowler (1979) first presented CDA as a linguistic research technique in *Language and Control*. The publication of *Speech, Power, and Ideology* (Wodak, 1989) and *Language and Power* (Fairclough, 2001) paved the way for further development of CDA. Up to now, CDA

has gone through the developmental process of more than thirty years, from budding to growing. It takes into consideration any discourse that contributes in the construction and transformation of social issues like political problems; race and age-related differences; religious and traditional ideologies; power establishment; judicial strategies; and other institutional practices. More than any other subject, CDA preferably concerns the ways in which social issues are addressed and negotiated through discursive practices. These issues further encompass practices like social behaviour, social norms, and social abuses. Fairclough (2001) builds up the relationship between social practices and their widespread impact on the society while using discourse. He proposes that a critical analysis of discourse helps readers understand the significance of language in the production, maintenance, and transformation of social relationships and attitudes. It helps the reader to identify how discursive practices function to build social norms and address social issues. Fairclough's views are further agreed upon and endorsed by other prominent figures in the fields of CDA. Rogers (2004, as cited in Wodak, 2001) argues that social practices like power relations are consulted and implemented through discourse. Meyer (2001) proposes that CDA represents an opaque set of themes, i.e., dominance, authority, and power as control, which can be explicitly observed in language use. Van Dijk (2015) emphasizes that discourses structure, enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, and challenge relations of power and dominance in society.

Abu Quba (2023) presents one of the unique studies done in the field of DA of Qur'anic verses and establishes some of the foundational elements for the type of CDA insight the present study aims to provide, i.e., discursive strategies. The linguistic and literary characteristics of Surah Al-Duha are examined in this study using a discourse analysis (DA) framework. The analysis highlights the use of various discursive patterns such as repetition of certain linguistic expressions, the employment of imagery and metaphors, and specific lexical choices. The exploration of such linguistic and textual features draws attention towards how power and social structures are created and transformed, and how such religious literature is relevant in the contemporary discourse. The study is significant for its detailed analysis of linguistic and textual features of Surah Al-Duha, and helps readers to employ methods to better understand any work of religious discourse.

The present study selects Surah Al-Isra, also known as Surah Bani Isra'il, for CDA to highlight the social problems addressed in this chapter. Specifically, the current CDA of Surah Al-Isra focuses on the discursive practices used to present social Islamic ideologies, which improve the moral status of the society. Surah Al-Isra is a Meccan chapter, as it was revealed in Mecca a few years before Hijrah. It is one of the longest chapters of Qur'an, located in the fifteen *parah* (section). It is the seventeenth chapter with one hundred and eleven verses, seventeen thousand four hundred and forty-four Arabic words, and sixty-five thousand and fifty-four letters. It has twelve *rukus* that also make the first twelve *rukus* of fifteen *parah* of the Qur'an (About Surah Al-Isra, n.d.). The word Isra refers to the Night Journey of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as the beginning verses of the Surah narrate the incident of 'Mi'raj (the Prophet's (PBUH) ascension towards heavens). The introductory words of the Surah also refer to the exaltation and glorification of Allah, which makes this Surah a part of the list of Al-Musabbihat, the chapters that explain the greatness and powers of Allah.

Surah Al-Isra was revealed almost a year before Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) migration to Medina from Mecca. By that time, it had been a decade since the Prophet (PBUH) began preaching in Mecca, yet the city remained a centre of polytheism, with major sins deeply rooted in society. This made it an unstable and unjust place to live. The society

was divided into various tribes, each worshipping its own idol. The people from weak financial and tribal backgrounds were subjected to all kinds of oppression, cruelty and hostility. The dominant tribes used to exercise control and authority over their daily affairs. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in that time of ignorance, was blessed with the divine message of justice and equality through Qur'anic revelations. The discourse of Surah Al-Isra addresses almost all social evils prevalent in Meccan society. It further presents the Islamic ideologies to eradicate the social injustice and corruption to lead it towards a healthy societal establishment. The themes of warning and moral guidance make this chapter a suitable choice to address social issues, still widespread in various societies of the world.

The names 'Al Isra' and 'Bani Isra'il' do not imply that the chapter is all about the Prophet's 'Night Journey' or the life events of Children of Isra'il; rather, it covers a wide range of topics. These topics include monotheism, the importance of prayers, social justice, brotherhood, warnings against evil doings, depiction of divine authority as well as prophets, the purpose of the revelation of the Quran, and many more. The inclusion of multiple topics makes this Surah an appropriate discourse for CDA as depicted by Fairclough and Wodak (1997).

Literature Review

This section sheds light upon various other research works, which are, in one way or another, related to the present topic of study, or at least pave the way to further studies in CDA. Jorgensen (2002) and Blommaert (2005) assert that CDA, which examines the relationship between language and society and its effect on discourse, is increasingly regarded as more comprehensive. They believe that in CDA research, linguistic and social variables are intertwined because we approach every text or discourse from a linguistic perspective. Moreover there is always an emphasis on how language choice in a particular discourse, within a specific socio-political context, attempts to analyse discursive practices. CDA aims to build connections between the powers of language and a vast socio-political context. As it reflects the identity and ideological foundations produced by social relationships, the text appears to be the primary focus. Therefore, CDA not only identifies dynamics of power in social practices but also provides opportunities to question and critique them.

CDA serves as both a theory (theoretical framework) and a methodological approach, providing various dimensions for the speech or text analysis. The sociological and postmodern perspectives on discourse analysis are brought together in CDA (Carroll, 2004). The construction and explanation of social relations are influenced by social features that are inherently connected to the functional aspect of language. Thus, CDA focuses on how language is used in speech and how power and hegemony affect social relationships. Through the lens of language, CDA examines the establishment of various social issues.

Previous Studies on Qur'anic Discourse

Application of discourse analysis and its other disciplines on Qur'anic verses is not something new in the domain of research, particularly in linguistics. Under various theoretical frameworks and numerous linguistic approaches, researchers and scholars attempt to investigate, explore, interpret, and explain Qur'anic verses. The themes addressed in this body of literature include the peaceful dealing with the hypocrites, the Qur'an as the best tool of communication, the ideological representation of an Islamic society, and the equal rights of women, etc. The following thematic collection of literature

provides a deep insight into the themes discussed in existing studies of discourse analysis on Qur'anic verses.

Relating Qur'anic Interpretations with the Requirements of Modern World

To address the requirements of Muslim societies, Saeed (2005) looks into how the message of the Qur'an can be associated in the modern world. The study focuses on how the Qur'an's ethical and legal teachings should be interpreted in light of the evolving social issues of the modern world. While keeping the core message intact, the study provides the readers with a distinct approach to the understanding of Qur'anic discourse. Furthermore, the discussion compares and contrasts the historical as well as modern interpretations according to their contemporary contexts. The findings of the study intensify the need of the interpretations as per the challenges of the modern world.

Social Ideologies Represented By Qur'an

Fattahizadeh (2022) and Abu Quba (2023) explore the ideological nature of Qur'an's message. The studies focus on the discursive elements and grammatical choices of the selected verses, employed to highlight different social issues. Such studies intensify the building up of social behaviours and structures by Qur'anic discourse, instead of merely giving instructions. The findings indicate various social ideologies addressed through discourse which are still a matter of great concern in the contemporary societies.

Qur'an as the Best Tool of Communication

By using Fairclough's model (2015), Kanwal (2021) applies CDA approach to selected verses of Qur'an to justify the communicative strengths of the text. The study presents a detailed descriptive analysis of lexical choices and discursive patterns to illustrate Qur'an as a strong medium of ideological expression and communication. The discourse of selected verses narrates the principles of communication which build up cohesive bonds among the members of the society. The findings shed light upon the advantages of an effective communication as prescribed by the discourse of the Qur'an.

All the above discussion implies that researchers have thematically analyzed the Qur'anic discourse by applying numerous methods and approaches. However, limited research has been conducted in the field of CDA, which views discourse as a social phenomenon in which the identification and examination of social issues and ideologies become primary objectives. The study of Fattahizadeh (2022), focusing on the social issue of peaceful engagement with hypocrites provide the foundation for the present research. There remains a need to highlight additional social issues addressed by the Qur'an, along with the solutions offered through Islamic ideology. Since no linguistic or discourse-oriented research has yet been conducted on the text of Surah Al-Isra, despite its important, diverse themes and didactic style this study analyzes selected verses from this chapter. The present research aims to address this gap by examining the selected Qur'anic verses of Surah Al-Isra according to the principles of CDA proposed by Fairclough (2015).

Theoretical Framework

Fairclough's (2015) theory of CDA, presented in *Language and Power* (2015), is considered a significant work to the field, and brings together various respective approaches to CDA. Fairclough applies this framework to a range of case studies, including political, media, and organizational discourse. The studies demonstrate how discourse

reflects and shapes social structures and power relations, and how CDA reveals underlying ideologies and assumptions. Fairclough summarizes the key principles and goals of CDA and provides a three-dimensional model that highlights the interconnectedness among text, discursive practices, and social change. This model analyses language through three stages of investigation, i.e., description, interpretation, and explanation. The same model also serves as a theoretical framework for the present research. The selected verses of Surah Al-Isra are analysed by these three stages of exploration by keeping in view the relationship between the text and the discursive practices used to build and maintain specific social changes. The CDA of these verses reflects how the respective Qur'anic discourse does the ideological work for improving the moral status of the society (Van Dijk, 2015).

Material and Methods

The present study employs a qualitative contextual analysis approach to highlight various social problems addressed in the discourse of Surah Al-Isra, and the discursive strategies used to present Islamic ideologies regarding such issues. Applying Fairclough's three dimensional model (2013) to selected verses of Surah Al-Isra, the study analyses the themes of multiple social issues that were prevalent in Meccan society at the time of the revelation of these verses. The importance of exploring such issues lies in their prevalence in many modern contemporary societies today. The selected verses include verse 31-37 (except verse 35) according to their thematic richness as well as their relevance to the current subject of study. The analysis is based on the manual codification of verses, according to categorization of discursive strategies, i.e., Prediction, Argumentation, Perspectivation, Intensification (Wodak, 2005). The method of manual codification is opted due to its flexibility, subjectivity and vivid representation of the ideas narrated in the study (Isangula & Kelly, 2024). It is considered as one of the most effective methods of codification in the course of a research process.

The study selects the English translation of these verses provided in *The Easy Qur'an* (Ahmed, 2005) due to simplicity of language and clarity of expression. As the study primarily focuses on social issues and their solutions according to Islamic ideologies, even the collection of content words is sufficient to identify the main ideas represented in the verses. However, to ensure accuracy, the selected verses were cross-checked against Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (2015).

Fairclough's three dimensional model (2015) can be applied in several ways, however, the current research follows a qualitative critical discourse analysis approach to highlight the social issues according to their social contexts. The verses pass through three stages of investigation, i.e., description, interpretation, and explanation. In the 'description' stage, the verse is described according to its social context and the audience being addressed. In the 'interpretation' stage, the meaning is interpreted on the basis of its linguistic and textual features, and discursive practices used in the construction of the verse. In the 'explanation' stage, to improve the moral fabric of the society, the social and ideological implications of the verse are highlighted.

Results and Discussion

A social issue is a common and prevalent problem or situation that negatively affects a large number of members within a society, and is generally recognized to be addressed. The social problems are usually generated as a result of elements that are beyond an individual's control. Such elements may include human behaviours, particular situations, or subjective social backgrounds that disturb the healthy functioning of

societies. A social evil does not become a social one until and unless its spread affects major population of a society. The effect can be graded as minimum or maximum, but its impact is clearly seen on a significant number of people living in a society. The impact of a social problem is always vividly visible on economic, health, and moral grounds within a society. The society suffers in general as the consequences of these problems. The social issues like poverty, child labour, gender inequality, and low inclination towards national investments lead towards various economic hazards. They primarily limit access to education and employment. They further increase the financial gaps between different financial classes of society.

The social problems related to mind and body include mental torture and physical harassment, unhealthy work environments, and injustice in deciding the standards as per age and health. Such problems lead to severe mental and physical health outcomes. The discrimination and injustice at workplace consequently deteriorate social solidarity. It further results in protests, weak social bonds, and migration from one workplace to another. Social stability and cohesion come at stake, which reduces the quality of life in general. People find inadequate opportunities to demonstrate their full potential, which ultimately increases social unrest and instability. These consequences of social problems often pass on to future generations. For instance, children brought up in poverty, observing unusual home and work environments are at higher risk for poor mental and physical outcomes and hence generate cycles of disadvantage in the society. These consequences are interconnected and vital to sabotage the face of a healthy and stable society. Hence, a need to resolve these issues has always been felt for centuries.

From the beginning of time to the present, whenever individual's deviant or unethical behaviours have led to social evils, there have always been guiding sources available, be they divine or human, which show humanity the paths to root out these issues. Widespread public apprehension, in this regard, takes inspiration from religion and general societal values. Religious and societal ideologies make such issues solvable through moral guidance strategies and establishment of ethical norms.

The present research investigates the social issues that were prevalent in Mecca at the time of the revelation of Surah Al-Isra and explores how the Qur'an's guidance on these matters continues to be relevant in contemporary society. Employing a CDA approach within the theoretical framework proposed by Fairclough (1992), this study analyzes the discursive practices used to highlight social problems. The verses are manually coded according to Wodak's (2005) categorization of discursive strategies. This categorization is presented in the following table.

Table 1
Wodak's (2005) Discursive Strategies

Discursive strategy	Meaning
Prediction	embodies the intention of speaker to describe impact of social actions negatively and positively.
Argumentation	explains the moments when speaker attempts to give convincing or refuting arguments for any social practice
Perspectivation/Framing	indicates attempt of a speaker to produce a certain viewpoint through a variety of strategies such as reporting, describing, narrating or explaining
Intensification/ Mitigation	describes the moment when the speaker intensifies the actions through implicit or explicit utterances

A detailed critical discourse analysis of discursive strategies used in the text of the verses 31-37 (except verse 35), about different social issues, is as follows:

Prediction

Verse 35 of Surah Al-Isra addresses the social issue of honesty in weighing and measuring. It states:

And when you measure, give full measure and weigh with a balance that is straight. It is a good practice and its end result is good too. (There is not only reward in the Hereafter but it also promotes good personal relations which in turn promotes trading).

Description: In Meccan society, business misconduct was common and merchants often measured and weighed less when selling goods and more when purchasing. Such malpractices caused financial harm to individuals as well as the groups. Moreover they eliminate trust and workplace unity among members of the trading community. This situation had become a continuous threat to the newcomers coming from other lands in the trade and commerce markets of Mecca. The text of the verse indicates moral and social consequences associated with honesty and dishonesty in trade.

Interpretation: The verse establishes a predictive lesson that conjuncts ethical conduct in trading with both spiritual and material outcomes. The metaphor 'A balance that is straight' stands for ethical uprightness to show while measuring and weighing goods. Here, the use of discursive strategy of **Prediction** anticipates the fruitful outcomes for those who weigh and measure according to appropriate standards. The simple and direct mode of expression encourages humans to be fair in business dealings.

Explanation: The discursive strategy of **Prediction** is utilized to construct the second half of the verse, which refers to the positive outcomes of adopting honest means of trading. The discourse constructs Islamic ideology of acting honestly in business dealings. The honesty in business ensures individual prosperity, as well as strengthens the interpersonal relationships within a society.

Argumentation

Verse no. 31 states the social problem of killing children in fear of poverty. It says: And don't kill your children (for fear of poverty). We provide them and you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin.

Description: The verse addresses the people who commit infanticide due to fear of hunger, and illuminates hope for providing means for their future survival. The Meccans had always been involved in the shameful and atrocious act of killing their children right after birth due to certain fears and sinful beliefs. They used to bury their infant daughters alive and kill their sons to avoid financial hardships. The poor and harsh financial realities had pushed society into such a cruel act. The daughters had been victimized more, being less valuable in labour. They were also considered a sign of bad omen for the family. They faced hatred and humiliation due to the fear that they could be enslaved or kidnapped easily, which resulted in social embarrassment. Moreover, killing children was also common due to health concerns. A child born with some physical or mental impairment does not had the right to live.

Interpretation: The text uses speech act of prohibition to forcefully condemn this practice and stops believers from killing their children, no matter what the case may be. The remainder of the verse forewarns against committing such crimes.

Explanation: The verse also makes use of the discursive practice of **Argumentation**, providing Islamic notion for the survival of humans in this world, i.e., only Allah has the responsibility to provide for the people He has created. Killing due to the fear of poverty or health concerns is regarded as a great sin, and people who commit such a crime will remain accountable on the Day of Judgment.

Verse 37 criticizes people's proud and arrogant attitude. It states:

And don't walk in the earth arrogantly. Indeed, you can neither penetrate the earth, nor you can be as tall as a mountain.

Description: The people of Mecca were highly proud and arrogant. Allah Almighty had blessed them with economic, religious, and tribal superiority, due to which they had become stubborn and ruthless. Mecca, being the centre of trade and travel, had provided its inhabitants with great financial strength, which removed all kindness from their hearts. Moreover, being custodians of the Kaaba, they think themselves superior to others.

Interpretation: This verse specifically argues that the people of Mecca would neither be able to pierce the earth nor could they increase their height to mountains, so what is the purpose of this much pride and arrogance? The use of imagery and hyperbolic expressions intensify the discursive strategy of **Argumentation**, stated to remind humanity of its trivial strengths before divine authority.

Explanation: The Qur'anic ideology, however, strongly dismisses such thinking. All human beings, as per the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), are equal, and none finds any superiority unless his faith is stronger than others. The custody of the Kaaba, the wealth of Quraysh, and the opportunities of trade and business in Mecca are all the blessings of Allah. These are not the symbols of superiority or pride. For Allah, superiority lies in the acts of humility and righteousness. Only humility and self-accountability create great social values and ideologies. Pride disrupts relationships, whereas humility creates solidarity among the members of a society.

Perspectivation

Verse no. 32 talks about the illegal physical relationships or unlawful sex commonly practiced in Mecca. It says:

And don't come near unlawful sex. Indeed, it is an indecent activity and an evil way (since it causes enmity, mischief, and affects the family chain).

Description: In Meccan society, women were treated as objects of sex and exploitation. They had very low social status and were considered inferior to the male members of society. They were provided with the least human rights and kept as slaves by the elite members of the influential tribes. They had to do a lot of physical work to get access to food and a living. Moreover, they had been kept as victims of physical abuse. Without building any legitimate or lawful relationship, the powerful personages used them for pleasure seeking.

Interpretation: The didactic construction of the verse warns the readers against social evil of treating women inappropriately. The discursive strategy of **Perspectivation** is employed in the verse to convey Islam's perspective regarding unlawful sex. The verse announces such acts as 'evil' and 'indecent.'

Explanation: Unlawful sex, or Zina, is regarded as illegitimate because it disrupts the social values of society. When it is committed forcefully, it leads to growing enmity among the people; when it is committed with consensus, it results in broken family systems as well as damages one's faith. Therefore, it is completely discouraged in Islamic teachings, with the perspective that a respectful, equal, and harmonious relationship could only emerge when it abides by the social and religious laws.

Verse 34 takes into account the rights of orphans in Islam. It indicates:

And don't even go near the wealth of an orphan except in the way that is (religiously) approved until he becomes mature (physically and mentally). And fulfill (every) promise. Indeed, you will be questioned about your promise (on the Day of Judgment).

Description: A widespread social issue in Meccan society is highlighted in this verse. The society exhibited barbarism regarding the rights of widows and orphans. The authoritative members of the family often seized the wealth and property of orphans or widows immediately after the father or husband died. Their rights to a respectful life, as well as to their wealth and property, were taken by guardians due to the absence of legal security. The laws of inheritance were insufficient to protect the wealth of orphans. Orphans were exploited not only by their guardians but also by the masters of influential tribes who seized their property.

Interpretation: Islamic teachings consider the act of taking wealth from orphans to be loathsome. The verse clearly explains Allah's perspective on the property owned by orphans. The tone of the verse strictly forbids even 'going near' the possessions of an orphan. The discursive strategy of **Perspectivism** is used here to assert Islam's perspective to handle property of an orphan.

Explanation: An Islamic ideology addresses this issue by protecting the orphan's property by a custodian and returning all belongings to him once he reaches a certain age. The custodian of the property is also obligated to fulfil all promises made at the time of assuming responsibility. Allah Almighty warns that individuals will certainly be questioned about their promises on the Day of Judgment.

Intensification

Verse 33 addresses the issue of unjust killing, which was common in Meccan society. It states:

And don't kill anyone whose killing has been forbidden by Allah, except for a just reason. And whoever is killed wrongfully, We have given his heir the authority (to demand *qisas*, or to forgive, or to accept blood money). But let him not exceed limits in the matter of taking life. Indeed, he is helped (by Islamic law).

Description: The verse highlights the prevalent practice of cruel and unjust killing of innocents at that time. In Mecca, the members of the influential groups used to assert power over humble members of society. Their killing was a common practice in case of any opposition to such cruelty and oppression. Social discrimination was widespread, based on tribal and financial differences. Wealth and power were concentrated in a few merchant families, commonly from the Quraysh tribe, while others occupied relatively poor and subordinate positions in society.

Interpretation: The text issues a clear warning to those who kill others for the sake of asserting power or doing exploitation. Such acts are strictly forbidden, with an exception for killing only for a just cause. A just cause may include killing in self-defense or in the name of Allah (Jihad). The discursive strategy of **Intensification** functions to assure Islamic ideology in this regard. The heirs of the murdered are granted the authority to either forgive the perpetrator or to demand *qisas* (blood money).

Explanation: To prevent successive killings in the name of revenge, the discourse presents Islamic ideology to assist those who commit murder unintentionally. At the same time, a warning is given not to exceed limits when compensation is permitted. Allah Almighty provides opportunities for the perpetrator to make amends and for the victims to receive appropriate compensation, reflecting His mercy toward the victims.

Verse 36 expresses strong disapproval of humans engaging in conspiring or intrusive behavior. It states:

And don't pursue that of which you have no knowledge (i.e., do not try to know others' secrets). Indeed, the hearing, the eyesight, and the heart, each of them will be questioned (by Allah).

Description: The construction of text implies strong condemnation towards intrusive behavior shown in daily affairs. The tone suggests limitations of humans' capabilities of knowing anything beyond Allah's will.

Interpretation: The people of Mecca were accustomed to ill-mannered and immoral practices of eavesdropping and prying into others' affairs. They frequently investigated the private lives of friends and family members. Respecting confidentiality and leaving certain matters private was largely unknown. Men often controlled the personal lives of other household members, while the masters of the tribes exercised authority over the weaker members of society. In the verse above, the use of **intensification** emphasizes the Islamic ideology to control the social evil of prying into others' secrets. The verse strongly discourages such behavior, as it can erode personal trust and confidence in various relationships and ultimately weaken social bonds.

Explanation: According to Islamic ideology, a balanced and harmonious society requires foundations of trust and cooperation. Muslims are encouraged to respect the privacy of their peers and colleagues in order to earn their confidence and faith.

Word choices employed in Surah Al-Isra:

The word choices and sentence structure in verses 31-37 show how the language is used to establish social values and norms ("Surah Al-Isra [17]: Overview, themes, lessons and more," n.d.). The recurrent language choices are shown in the following table:

Table 2
Words Choices Addressing Social Issues

Verse	Words/Phrases	Implications
Verse no.31	وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا and don't kill	deals social abuse of killing infants
Verse no.32	وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا and don't come near	condemns sexual abuse
Verse no.34	وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا and don't kill	addresses unjust killing and blood money

Verse no.36	وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا and don't go near	prohibits taking wealth of orphans
Verse no.37	وَلَا تَقْفُ and don't pursue	condemns curiosity and conspiracy
	وَلَا تَمْشِ and don't walk	forbids arrogance

It is noteworthy that six of these seven verses begin with the recurrent phrase 'And don't', which prohibits certain actions that are incompatible with the norms of a healthy society. The people are explicitly forbidden from acts such as taking the property of an orphan or dishonestly measuring the weight of goods. This choice of words also reflects the social problems prevalent at that time. The sentences are constructed in a way that makes it clear why the revelation of these verses was urgently needed. The social environment of Mecca required guidance to address these issues. Therefore, the address to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and to humanity begins with negation and firm rejection of these harmful practices. Similarly, two of these verses (i.e., verse 32 and verse 34) begin with the imperative phrases 'And don't go/come near'. This choice of words is highly appropriate for prohibiting actions such as engaging in illegitimate relationships and taking possession of an orphan's property. The phrases convey the intensity with which these actions are condemned in Islam. True believers are not permitted to come even close to such sins. Unlawful physical intimacy is described as a highly 'evil way' to follow. Similarly, the construction of text in the second verse directs the way to deal with the wealth of an orphan. Firstly, the language is used to stop people from taking anything from the orphan's money. The religiously approved way is to take care of his belongings until he becomes mentally and physically mature and then return everything as per the commitments and promises made earlier. The verse is completed by giving a reminder that the guardian or the custodian of the orphan's property will be questioned for his dealings on the Day of Judgment.

Next, two of these verses (i.e., verse 31 and verse 33) begin with the noun phrase 'And don't kill', which emphasizes that killing is a major sin. The sentence is carefully constructed to restrain people from killing their children out of fear of poverty or shame regarding daughters. Killing children in the name of honour or due to fear of hunger is strongly discouraged. This prohibition is instantly followed by a ray of hope given by Allah. The verse indicates that Allah is the provider of Rizq (bread for living) for all human beings. He surely arranges food for the children as He has arranged it for their parents. The word choices in the second verse also show a strict rejection of not only unjust killing but also killing in the name of revenge or honour. The organization of text suggests forbidding such an atrocious act and then providing alternative solutions. It is declared totally unlawful to kill someone without any legitimate reason. But if such a sin is committed, Allah, with all His mercy, blesses both the parties to refrain from further enmity and bloodshed. The murderer can pay the blood money to the family of the victim to seek forgiveness.

Similarly, the use of 'Don't pursue and don't walk' in verses 36 and 37 direct the ways of life to follow and the ways of life to abandon. The organization of sentences creates the meanings of instruction as well as warning. The first verse starts with the advice of not interfering in the private affairs of others and leads towards the warning of being questioned in the life Hereafter. Showing curiosity into others' personal matters is strictly condemned, and whoever does this, will remain. The sentence sequence in the second verse ironically reminds us to avoid pride and arrogance, as, despite all physical strength and financial power, man is still unable to fully conquer the earth and the skies. Neither can

humans break the earth, nor are they able to reach the mountain heights, so showing pride in God-gifted things is just meaningless.

In verse 35, however, instead of choosing any imperative phrase or word of negation, the discourse makes use of a simple instruction followed by a promise. To measure things on the right scale and to weigh the products on a proper balance is appreciated in the verse. The people of Mecca, specifically, and mankind in general, are advised to be honest in their business affairs. And those who abide by the rules of weighing and measuring the things in an appropriate manner are promised to get a reward not only in this world but also in the world Hereafter.

Conclusion

The above discussion shows that language in the aforementioned verses has been used in a very beautiful and engaging manner to shed light upon the widespread social abuses prevalent in the society of Mecca at the time of the revelation of Surah Al-Isra. The discursive practices, like the choice of vocabulary items, imperative sentence structures, repetition of phrases, and use of various speech acts like advising, promising, and warning, etc., has constructed the text to build and maintain social realities. Certain social ideologies are manifested by the use of these discursive practices. CDA of these selected verses not only addresses different social issues of the society, but also the use of discursive practices presents the possible solutions to these problems by offering various Islamic ideologies to construct a balanced and healthy society for living.

Recommendations

The present study offers many implications for theory and practice. On theoretical grounds, it provides a wide impetus for advanced studies in the field of Qur'anic CDA. More theories can be built up to investigate Qur'anic verses in the paradigm of CDA. Since the present study deals only with the discursive strategies used to build social ideologies, the CDA's linguistic features like modality and sentence structures can also be investigated in the future studies. Practically, such studies serve as a reminder for the Muslims in particular and all of humanity in general. Allah Almighty has provided mankind with a specific code of life where crimes and sins like killing someone unjustly, taking orphans' land and property, or engaging in illegitimate sex, etc., are all completely prohibited. Such wrongdoings are discouraged, as they disrupt the harmony and solidarity among the members of a society. On the contrary, Allah, through His divine message, presents beautiful Islamic ideologies for mankind, which not only benefit us in this world but also in the life Hereafter.

In general, the discourse analysis of religious texts offers several productive and fruitful implications. Such analysis reveals how language is used to construct power, legitimacy, and moral guidance within religious teachings. It further highlights the role of historical, cultural, and social contexts in shaping interpretations and practical applications of religious texts. It tends to provide alternative perspectives on religious interpretations, and challenges dominant interpretations of religious texts. Moreover such analytical studies encourage critical thinking and nuanced understanding of religious texts and their applications. Developing new approaches through discourse analysis pave way to theological debates as well as interfaith dialogues. The introduction to such novel approaches also broadens the span of religious sermons and pedagogy. On practical grounds discourse analysis of religious texts promote social justice and religious activism. Not any religious text offers negative mental and spiritual upbringing of humans, so a

deeper investigations of such text always leads to a better moral social change. Since religious teachings are mostly found in textual form, their analysis provides a major catalyst for moral social change. Hence discourse analysis of various religious texts ultimately inspires humans to critically think about and promote morality, justice and equality.

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