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### **Language Use in Selected Sermons of Nasfat *Assalat* Group: A Critical Discourse Analysis**

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#### **Abstract**

This study conducts a critical discourse analysis of selected sermons from the Nasrul-lahi-li Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) *Assalat* group to explore the interplay between language, ideology and identity in Islamic discourse. By examining the linguistic strategies employed in the sermons, the paper highlights how NASFAT leaders utilise thematic resources and rhetorical devices to propagate their ideologies and influence the attitudes of their followers. The findings reveal that the language used in the sermons reflects the underlying religious beliefs of the *Assalat* group. It also reinforces community cohesion and moral values among members of the group. The analysis identifies key discursive strategies, such as code-switching, metaphor, and personification, which contributes to the construction of socially situated identities of NASFAT as well as the preachers and audiences of the group. The study concludes that language is significant in shaping the thoughts of the faithful and in perpetuating religious narratives and ideologies in contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Language of Religion, NASFAT *Assalat* Group, Multi-Expository Sermon (MXS) Model

#### **Introduction**

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Language is inherently discursive and serves as a means of uncovering the social relationships tied to language, society, power, ideology, values, and beliefs. As Obiegbu and Njemanze (2015) argue, language not only distinguishes humans from other beings but also empowers them to communicate and exert control over their environment. This implies that language can shape human cognition by instilling ideologies that permeate various aspects of life, including political and religious spheres. Consequently, the language employed in religious contexts reflects underlying beliefs and ideologies. According to Van Dijk (1998:18), ideology is “the overall, abstract mental systems that organise the socially shared attitudes”. These collectively held attitudes can have a positive or negative impact on the audience. The connection between language and diverse human activities is a crucial focus within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Van Dijk (1998:1) elaborates that CDA is “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily investigates how social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, produced, and resisted through text and talk in social and political contexts.” This highlights the interdisciplinary nature of CDA in examining discourse. Thus, a critical discourse analyst adopts a clear stance to understand, reveal, and challenge social and political inequalities within a speech community.

As van Dijk (2008) notes, critical discourse research examines how discourse structures enact, affirm, legitimise, reproduce, or contest power relations (dominance) within society. It seeks to elucidate discourse structures by considering the characteristics of social interaction and social structures. Additionally, it explores how language functions discursively concerning power, addresses societal issues, and performs ideological work, among other aspects. Therefore, the focus of this research is the connection between language, ideology, and socially shared identity in relation to CDA, specifically through the analysis of sermons from a selected *Assalat* (Islamic denominational) group. The link between language and ideology manifests in various

ways in Nigeria. From a religious perspective, religion is often utilised to create a cohesive community where followers are united by shared cultural values and principles, facilitated through language. This is accomplished by employing specific linguistic strategies to persuade. It also entails the selection of particular thematic resources to evoke certain religious ideologies and identities within a social group.

Numerous groups are located in Nigeria, with several found in the Kaduna metropolis. Through careful observation, it becomes evident that these groups employ various methods and linguistic styles in their preaching. Each group possesses its own ideologies, which are articulated through a series of discourses led by their leaders, who regularly deliver sermons aimed at influencing the attitudes of their audiences. It is crucial to recognise that these leaders are not entirely immune to personal biases and emotional influences when utilising specific discursive strategies to rekindle members' enthusiasm for spiritual matters. Essentially, the language adopted by preachers during the religious activities of these groups presents a significant area for linguistic investigation. Against this backdrop, this study aims to critically examine the relationship between thematic representations and linguistic devices through the use of ideology by the NASFAT *Assalat* group in the Kaduna metropolis. Consequently, the analysis focuses on purposively selected sermons of the *Assalat* group as the discursive elements for study.

#### **Nasrul-lahi-li Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT)**

The organisation is also known as Nasrul-lahi-li Fathi Society of Nigeria. It is a Nigerian Muslim prayer group sometimes referred to as a Muslim Pentecostal group. It has over one million members in Nigeria. The group organises prayer fairs where the recitation of prayers can be done by all without the agency of clergy. The history of NASFAT can be traced to a prayer group formed by a few Yoruba elites and Muslim bankers in Ibadan on 28 July, 1984 which came to be known as Yusrullahi Society of

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Nigeria. The growth of the group led to the establishment of sister branches in other Yoruba cities including Lagos. In 1995, the Lagos branch formed an independent group whose members became the core leadership of Nasrul-lahi-li Fathi Society of Nigeria or NASFAT. The group holds modernist and reformist beliefs as regards to the equality of all Muslims. The major focus of the group is individual morality and piety along with education and socio-economic empowerment of its members. NASFAT holds its weekly prayer meetings every Sunday morning. The organisation also holds a yearly programme tagged *Lailatul Qadr* (night of majesty) during the last ten days of Ramadan at Mowe Village, Ogun State. The organisation also established Fountain University. The Kaduna branch of NASFAT started in 2001 (Adetona, 2012).

**The Place of *Assalat* in Language Classification**

The term *Assalat* is an Arabic word which generally denotes the five daily obligatory prayers established by Muslims (Qur'an 22:40). However, it has other contextual usages such as supplication (Qur'an. 9:103), veneration, mercy or blessing (Qur'an 33:57). Specifically, this study considers the context in which it is described as a meeting, a session or a gathering for teaching and inculcating religious beliefs and culture in the adherents of Nasrul-lahi-li Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) as a modern model of *Assalat* group in Nigeria.

*Assalat*, like any other prayer group, serves many purposes to its members such as seeking mediation (finding answers to their questions and solutions to their problems), learning religious rituals, seeking God's pleasure and rewards in this world and the hereafter, and so on. To achieve these ends, members have to follow typical discourse conventions. This weighs heavily on the formation of each group's distinctive religious ideology. The *Assalat* group was established for the purpose of the educational development of Muslims and also, as a body, to enhance the moral and social development of the Muslim community. Their

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roles in the metropolis include the organisation of religious activities such as open-air praying, celebration of important Islamic dates, child-naming ceremonies, fundraising activities, symposia and leadership summits. Sunday lecture series, spiritual and personal development skills. The aim of each of the activities is to create awareness about Islam and to also impart Islamic culture and values to members. The *Assalat* group also believes in and facilitates harmonious relationships among the Muslim organisations in Nigeria, just as it fosters peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims in the country.

**Statement of the Problem**

A few critical discourse studies on religion have scrutinised actual text or talk to examine how a specific discourse contributes to creating an identity and how ideologies are embedded in discourses but none is known to have applied CDA to *Assalat* groups, particularly in Nigeria. Within the context of language use in the selected sermons of the NASFAT *Assalat* group, there is a relationship between the group's discourses and ideologies. Thus, members of the group not only declare their allegiance to the five pillars of Islam but also, mostly, align with those ideologies as promoted through various sermon discourses they listen to on a regular basis. Against this backdrop, the preacher – usually the leader of the *Assalat* group – is responsible for consistent and up-to-date delivery of the sermons to the faithful.

Beyond the assumption of a leading role during the sermon discourse delivery, the preacher is recognised by his listeners as a servant (or representative) of Allah. That automatically places him on a higher plane – a man with a message from a Supreme Being. Hence, his listeners presumably consider what he says divine and final. Meanwhile, regardless of the pious level he has attained, the speaker is unarguably human and prone to emotional tendencies. He, like any other man, therefore, has his biases

and personal judgements. That shows that the discourse practices of the *Assalat* group may not be completely free of some kind of disguised discursive attitudes that may be difficult to notice or perceive by many of the members of the group. Upon that premise, this study sets out to critically investigate the interface between thematic representations and linguistic devices used in the selected sermons of the NASFAT *Assalat* group in Kaduna metropolis in order to reveal the hidden hegemonic tendencies that are embedded in the sermons. For specific objectives, the study sets out to,

- i. Identify the thematic resources and linguistic devices adopted by NASFAT to perpetuate ideology;
- ii. identify generic conventions expressed in the language use of the *assalat* group;
- iii. establish the extent discursive strategies are employed in the sermons of the NASFAT *Assalat* group; and
- iv. categorise how the discourse of the *Assalat* group enacts socially situated identities of the members.

Investigating language use in sermons as a social variable is a well-established area of research. Akinwotu (2021) analyses twelve sermons from selected Pentecostal preachers in Nigeria, revealing that rhetorical questions, commands, metaphors and repetition are used strategically to influence listeners. Alsaawi (2017) explores language in religious contexts through interviews and observations, finding that code-mixing English and Arabic enhances authenticity and emphasises religious authority. Esimaje and Orife (2017) examine the lexes of Christian sermons to understand their attitudinal meanings, utilising lexical pragmatics to bridge the gap between linguistic choices and interpretations. Their findings indicate that while some words retain their meanings, others contradict them. Emike and Abdulraheem (2015) conduct a stylistic analysis of Christian and Islamic sermons, noting similarities in stylistic devices but differences in nomenclature and context. Eldin (2014) employs Critical

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Discourse Analysis to investigate Amr Khalid's sermons, focusing on ideological devices and the relationship between the speaker and audience. County (2013) identifies challenges in interpreting church sermons in Kenya, highlighting the need for training interpreters in linguistic and cultural contexts. Building on these studies, the current research examines language use in the sermons of the NASFAT *Assalat* group in Kaduna Metropolis. It notes that group leaders of the group often operate above their audience, propagating group ideologies. Despite potential weaknesses, these leaders maintain support from listeners, who may feel that criticising them challenges divine authority. Thus, this study aims to investigate the hidden hegemonic tendencies in the selected sermons.

**Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): An Overview**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a difficult concept to define. Specifically, this can be attributed to its interdisciplinary nature. As Amoussou and Allagbe (2018) posit, CDA has been known by different names, owing to its interconnectedness with fields of study such as Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). To define the concept effectively, therefore, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) identify eight basic principles of CDA as follows,

- i. CDA addresses social problems;
- ii. power relations are discursive;
- iii. discourse constitutes society and culture;
- iv. discourse does ideological work;
- v. discourse is historical;
- vi. the link between text and society is mediated;
- vii. discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory; and

viii. discourse is a form of social action

Amoussou and Allagbe (2018:11), citing Bloor and Bloor (2007), define CDA as “an interdisciplinary approach which ... can be used by professionals from a variety of backgrounds such as historians, business institutions, lawyers, politicians, etc., to investigate social problems relating to their work.” According to van Dijk (2015:466), “Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.” He explains further that, in analytical research, Critical Discourse analysts take an explicit stance and seek to comprehend, reveal, and challenge social inequalities. This is why CDA can also be described as a socio-political movement of politically engaged discourse analysts. One of the most common misunderstandings is that CDA is a special way of conducting discourse analysis. In CDA, all methods of cross-disciplinary discourse studies and other relevant humanities and social sciences can be used Hence, as a research methodology on discourse, van Dijk (2015: 467) emphasises that CDA has the following properties,

- i. It focuses primarily on social problems and political issues rather than the mere study of discourse structures outside their social and political contexts.
- ii. This critical analysis of social problems is usually multidisciplinary.
- iii. Rather than merely describe discourse structures, it tries to explain them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure.

- iv. More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power abuse (dominance) in society.

### **Major Approaches to CDA**

There are several approaches to CDA. Central among them are as follows.

#### **i. Fairclough's Socio-Cultural Approach**

Fairclough's discourse analysis has three dimensions: text, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practice. It provides a framework for the analysis of text and discourse. Fairclough argues that discursive practices can produce unequal power relations between social classes, gender groups, and ethnic and cultural minorities. While emphasising the relationship that binds discourse, power and ideology, he underscores the importance of hegemony which is "a way of theorising change in relation to the evolution of power relations which allows a particular focus upon discursive change, but at the same time a way of seeing it as contributing to and being shaped by wider processes of change" (Fairclough, 1993:92 cited in Amoussou and Allagbe 2018:14). According to Fairclough (2001), the orders of discourse are not static. Hence, that can change based on the power relations that exist among language users in social interaction within a space of time.

#### **ii. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach**

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach sees discourse as a form of social practice that mediates between text and society. He identifies two levels of discourse analysis: macro and micro. The macro level refers to power, dominance, and inequality

between social groups. Van Dijk emphasises understanding ideological structures and social relations of power embedded in discourse. He defines social power as control and views ideologies as the basis of social representations of a group. CDA should not limit itself to a study of the relationship between discourse and social structure, but rather that language use and discourse always presuppose intervening mental models, goals, and general social representations. By examining these interconnected elements, he aims to provide a critical analysis that accounts for the ways in which discourse both shapes and is shaped by the mental representations, knowledge and ideologies of language users, as well as the broader societal contexts in which communication occurs.

**iii. Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)**

Wodak developed the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). According to Reisigl and Wodak (2009), the approach is a form of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that aims to describe and analyse how language and other semiotic practices are employed by those in positions of power to maintain dominance. According to Okpeh (2017), while the approach initially focused on prejudiced utterances in anti-Semitic discourse, it has since expanded its analytical scope to include the discursive construction of national identity and the social exclusion of the out-group through discourses of difference, as well as the reconstruction of the past through sanitised historical narratives. From Wodak's perspective, CDA within the DHA framework is fundamentally concerned with analysing both overt and subtle structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in discourse. The critical aspect of CDA lies in its commitment to investigating how social inequality is expressed, constituted, and legitimised through language use. A key defining feature of CDA in this model is its focus on power as a central

force in social life, and how language both reflects and mediates the contestation and challenge of power structures. The texts analysed are often sites of discursive struggle, revealing competing discourses and ideologies vying for dominance.

### **Language of Religion**

Habermas (2006) affirms that religion and religious communities have taken on a political dimension that was previously unimaginable. According to the author, the current reformation and enlightenment in the world have brought about a shift in the way religious consciousness is experienced in society. Tagging the shift “modernization of religious consciousness,” Habermas (2006:14) explains that three reasons – “pluralism, the emergence of modern science, and the spread of positive law and a profane morality” – are responsible for it. It is, therefore, possible to state that both religious and secular people develop only through the process of learning that helps religious leaders maintain support from their listeners. Since the process of learning is usually embedded during *Assalat* discourses, this study considers it a worthwhile exercise to investigate the hidden hegemonic tendencies in the selected sermons of the NASFAT *Assalat* group in Kaduna Metropolis.

### **The Concept of Ideology in Critical Discourse Analysis and Religion**

The role of ideology in discourses has been discussed by many scholars. Khan (2014) reviews that, according to Williams (1976: p.126). He states that the word *ideology* first appeared in English in 1796, as a direct translation of the new French word *ideologie*, which had been proposed in that year by philosopher Destutt de Tracy to denote the *science of ideas*. A contentious argument in CDA has been how discourse may manifest or at least implicate the ideologies of the discourse participants. By restoring the focus upon discourse in society, CDA offers an occasion to subject ideology to new methods of investigation and to formulate an explicit ideology in discourse. For Fairclough (1992), ideology functions in discourse through dominant discourse

in terms of what the Marxist theorist and activist Gramsci called *hegemony*. Fairclough (1992) states that hegemony operates through orders of discourse of a society and institutions such as education, media, and business. Hegemony, therefore, can be viewed as a form of control through consensus, as contrasted with control based on coercion (force or threat of force). This further shows that the two concepts, ideology and hegemony, overlap. This means that although the strong relation between ideology, discourse and power relation might seem clear, it is not noticed by a great number of people, and discourse analysis thus aims “to make more visible these opaque aspects of discourse” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258). Discourse analysis stands as a prosperous field that allows the identification of ideological dominations, as well as social relations within discourse. The search for evidence in various texts and talks, therefore, helps to understand the social context surrounding religious discourse.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is an eclectic approach. It draws from two key theoretical models: Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model of CDA and Hwang's (2005) Multi-Expository Sermon (MXS) model. Fairclough provides a comprehensive approach to the analysis of discourse, examining the text, the discursive practices and the social practices. His approach is grounded in a theoretical foundation that emphasises the interconnectedness between language, discourse and social power dynamics. Fairclough's view is that discourse is not merely a neutral medium of communication, but rather a basis for social struggle where dominant ideologies and power structures are constructed, maintained and challenged. Fairclough argues that language is not simply a reflection of the world; rather, it actively constructs and shapes our understanding of social reality. Through the strategic use of linguistic and semiotic resources, individuals and institutions can legitimise certain ways of thinking, acting and being, while marginalising or suppressing alternative perspectives. Fairclough's CDA framework, therefore,

aims to uncover these underlying power relations and ideological assumptions embedded within discourse, ultimately contributing to a more critical and emancipatory understanding of social phenomena. However, Hwang's (2005) MXS model promotes the idea that effective preaching often involves the exploration of a sermonic text from multiple perspectives of themes. The themes are arranged and connected to maintain a clear and concise message, while providing opportunities for active audience engagement. The visual representation of the MXS model, with its rectangular boxes, arrows and brackets, provides a concise and insightful way to understanding how preachers organise their sermons to be more comprehensive, coherent and interactive. By integrating Fairclough's CDA model and Hwang's MXS model, this study offers a comprehensive framework for the analysis of the language use, discursive practices and social implications embedded within the sermons delivered by the selected *Assalat* group in Kaduna metropolis. The eclectic theoretical framework, therefore, provides a foundation for the critical examination of the linguistic, organisational and contextual aspects of the selected sermons of the Nasri-Lahi-Fathi (NASFAT).

### **Methodology**

This paper studies the linguistic interactions (in the form of sermons) of the Nasri-Lahi-Fathi NASFAT *Assalat*. It adopts a purposive method for data collection. Several sermons of the group were retrieved from the group's archives through its officials. The selected sermons were variously produced in video formats. The videos were critically viewed, transcribed and presented as texts for analysis. The study adopts Hwang's (2005) Multi-Expository Sermon (MXS) model as an analytical procedure as it provides a structured framework for dissecting and understanding the delivery of a sermon. Hence, the data, which are extracted from selected NASFAT's sermons, are analysed in terms of the number of distinct themes in each of the excerpts. The themes

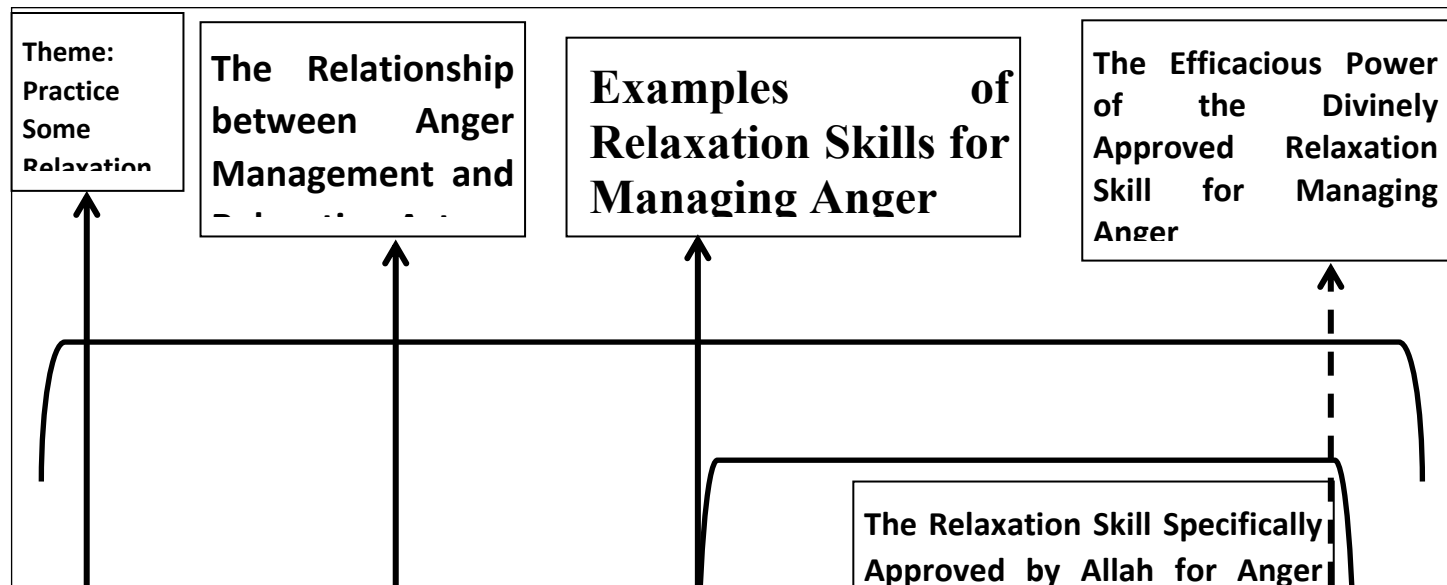
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are represented by sets of rectangular boxes in the MXS model. The function of the multiple themes in each sermon is to explore a subject from different perspectives, allowing a comprehensive examination of the topic of the sermon and establishing how the multiple themes are connected and contribute to the subject matter of the sermon. The model comprises a set of arrows. The arrows represent the logical flow and transitions between the themes. They are also used to demonstrate the coherence and progression of the sermon, ensuring that the various themes build upon each other and lead to a unified conclusion. To reveal how the congregation interacts and participates in the sermonic event, the model has a set of brackets which indicate where the preacher pauses, asks questions or invites the congregation to reflect on the content. Therefore, the brackets are meant to highlight the points in the sermon where the preacher deliberately engages the audience in order to foster a more interactive preaching experience. The procedure finally utilises a table format to foreground how the preachers incorporate linguistic devices and socially situated identities in the sermons to make the sermons relatable, memorable and effective while communicating their central messages to their congregations.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

The data, which are extracted from the NASFAT *Assalat* group's sermons, are presented and analysed as demonstrated below.

**Unit 1**



**Critical Evaluation of the Graphical Token**

The graph illustrates one of the themes of the text in the following order,

**A. Introduction:**

**Text 1** introduces a subtheme of **Practice Some Relaxation Skills** under the Subject Matter (Anger Management) of the sermon.

**B. Body:**

**Text 2** describes the relationship between anger management and observation skills while **Text 3** itemises examples of relaxation activities one can involve in to overcome the circumstances that promote anger. **Text 4** foregrounds the relaxation skill for managing anger which is divinely promoted

**C. Conclusion:**

**Text 5** suggests the divinely approved relaxation skill as a tool for managing anger owing to the exceptional effect of adopting the skill in a difficult situation.

| Categorisation of the Discursive Strategies on the Unit |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Thematic Resources</b>                               | <i>i. Practice Some Relaxation Skills</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                         | <i>ii. The Relationship between Anger Management and Acts</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                         | <i>iii. Examples of Relaxation Steps for Managing Anger</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                         | <i>iv. The Efficacious Power of the Divinely Approved Relaxation Skill for Managing Anger</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Linguistic Devices</b>                               | <p>A. <u>Figurative Expressions</u></p> <p>i. <b>Personification:</b> When your temper flex . . . [Text 2]/When your temper flex [Text 3]/. . . relaxation helps to ward off difficult situations [Text 5]</p> <p>ii. <b>Metaphor:</b> You want to practise deep breathing . . . [Text 3]</p> <p>iii. <b>Bathos:</b> If one of you gets (angry) while standing, then he should sit down. When he is angry while</p> |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>sitting down, then he should</p> <p>[lie] down. But if he is still angry while lying down, he should then do [. . . ]. He should perform ablution.</p>                                                                                                               |
|  | <p>A. i. <u>Code Switching</u>: <i>Nil</i></p> <p>ii. <u>Code Mixing</u>: . . . here is what the Rasulu[SAW] said . . . if he is still angry while lying down, he should then do [. . . ].</p> <p>. . . I am most probably going to go for the . . . physical . . .</p> |
|  | <p>B. <u>Pronouns</u>: Text 2 – <i>you, yourself, themselves</i></p> <p>Text 3– <i>You</i></p> <p>Text 4 – you(x3), he(x7), one of you, us I(x4)</p> <p>Text 5 – you (x4)</p>                                                                                           |
|  | <p>C. <u>Complex Layer of Quotations</u>:</p> <p><b>1st Layer:</b> (The preacher) says</p> <p><b>2nd Layer:</b> . . . here is what the Rasulu[SAW] said . . .</p>                                                                                                       |

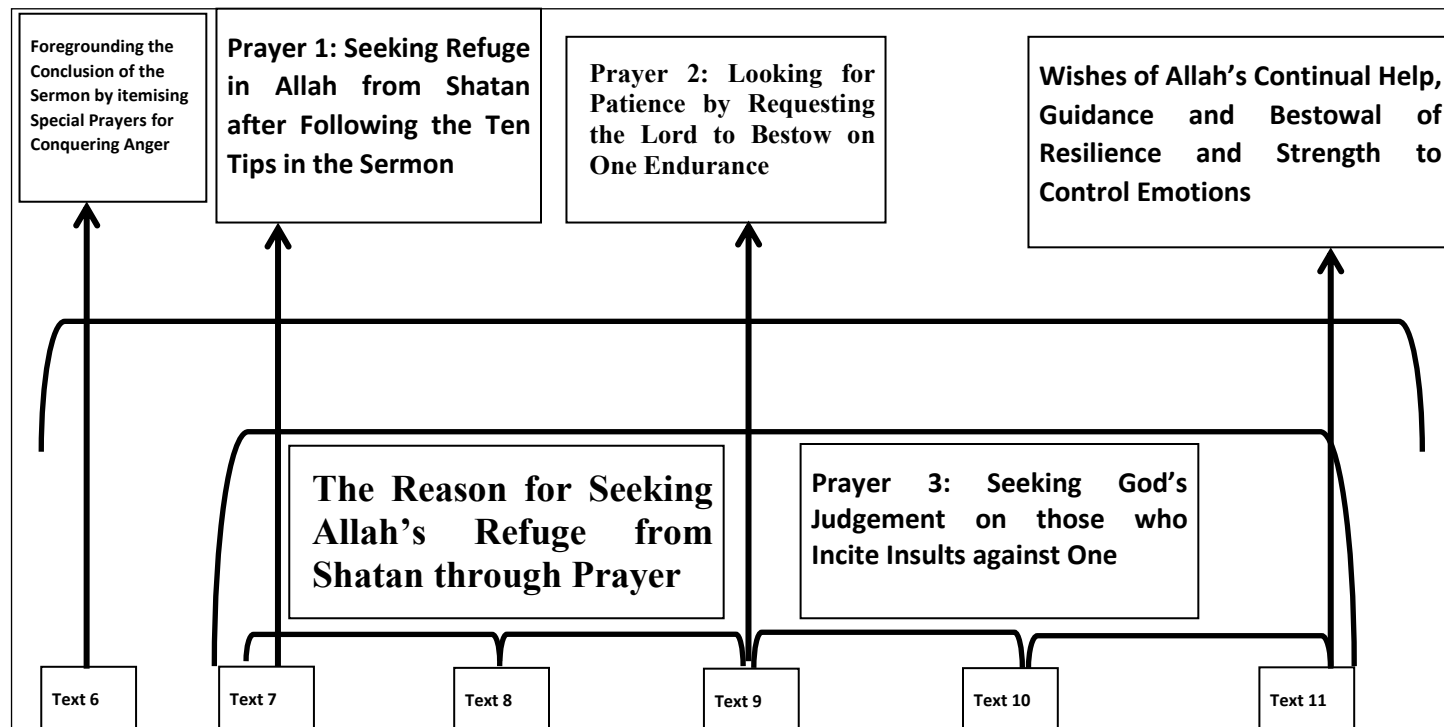
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|                                             |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             | <b>3rd Layer:</b> If one of you gets (angry) while standing [Text 50]                                                                 |                                                                                                              |
| <b>Socially<br/>Situated<br/>Identities</b> | relaxation [Texts 2, 4and 5]<br>deep breathing [Text 3]<br>temper [Text 3]<br>people [Text 3]<br>yoga [Text 3]<br>one of you [Text 4] | Rasulu[Text 4]<br>ablution [Text 4]<br>Prophet [Text 4]<br>position [Text 5]<br>difficult situation [Text 5] |

The analysis categorises the discursive strategies employed within the text and provides an exploration of the linguistic devices, socially situated identities and the complex layers of the quotations present. The thematic resources identified, such as "Practice Some Relaxation Skills," "The Relationship between Anger Management and Acts," "Examples of Relaxation Steps for Managing Anger," and "The Efficacious Power of the Divinely Approved Relaxation Skill for Managing Anger," provide a clear and structured understanding of the central themes and subthemes within the sermons. The inclusion of specific examples from the text, such as the personification of "temper" and the metaphorical use of "deep breathing," enhances the analysis and demonstrates the preacher's strategic use of language to convey the message. The analysis reveals the linguistic devices employed in the text. These include code-mixing, complex layers of quotations and the use of pronouns. The identification of the "Bathos" technique, where the preacher suggests a gradually decreasing physical state (standing, sitting, lying down) as a means of anger management, highlights the preacher's rhetorical approach. Furthermore, the analysis of the socially situated identities,

such as "relaxation," "deep breathing," "temper," "yoga," "Rasulu," "ablution" and "difficult situation," provides valuable context and reveals the cultural and religious underpinnings that shape the discourse within the sermon.

## Unit 2



The graph illustrates the concluding part of the text in the following order,

**A. Introduction:**

**Text 6** foregrounds the conclusion of the sermon on **Anger Management** by itemising special prayers that could help to overcome every form of angry attitude.

**B. Body:**

**Text 7** contains the first prayer item, which is a request for Allah's refuge from *Shatan* while **Text 8** explains the reason for one to make use of the prayer in **Text 7**. **Text 9**, that is **Prayer 2**, contains a request from the Lord to bestow on an individual the endurance that is needed to be patient in every circumstance that promotes anger with **Text 10**, that is **Prayer 3**, seeking God's judgement upon those incite insults against one

**C. Conclusion:**

**Text 11** which the preacher exploits to wrap up the sermon contains heartfelt wishes Allah's continual help, guidance and bestowal of resilience and strength to overcome emotions that promote anger.

| Categorisation of the Discursive Strategies on the Unit |                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Thematic                                                | <i>i. Special Prayers for Conquering Anger</i> |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Resources</b>          | <i>ii. Seeking Allah's Refuge from Shatan</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                           | <i>iii. Exhibiting True Patience by Obtaining God-Given Endurance</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                           | <i>iv. Need to Seek Allah's Judgement on those who Incite Insults</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Linguistic Devices</b> | <p><u>Figurative Expressions</u></p> <p>i. <b>Personification:</b> This '<i>dua</i>' can help us be in control of situations surrounding us. It can help us build ourselves to be stronger</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and resilient to difficult situations [Text 6]</p> <p>ii. <b>Rhetorical Question:</b> So, how do you help yourself?[Text 7]/Why do we say this '<i>dua</i>'?[Text 8]/What</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[does] this one mean? . . . You what to recite the '<i>dua</i>' with me again?[Text 9]/. . .what do you say to someone when he says something insulting to you? [Text 10].</p> <p>iii. <b>Name Calling:</b> . . . Shatan, <i>the accursed . . . perpetrator of the evil feelings</i>[Text 8]</p> <p>iv. <b>Metaphor:</b> Sometimes our anger sparks out . . . [Text 10]</p> |

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|  | <p>i. <u>Code Switching:</u> . . . I want to share very beautiful 'dua with us. This 'dua can help . . . [Text 6]/ These prayers are going to</p> <p>be [. . .]/Say, [" . . ."] we can repeat it three times together [" . . ."] [Text 7]/ Why do we say this 'dua [Text 8]/. . . we can seek</p> <p>for Allah's help by saying, [" . . ."] [Text 9]/ The 'dua I am going to be leaving with you is also when someone insults you. . .</p> <p>You say, [" . . ."] . . . This 'dua can help us . . . [Text 10]/ So again I leave us with these three 'dua and I say that may Allah</p> <p>continue to help us, guide us, may us resilient, and strengthen us in [. . .] that we will be able to control our emotions. [Text 11]</p> <p>ii. <u>Code Mixing:</u> <i>Nil</i></p> <p>A. <u>Pronouns:</u> Text 6 – <i>I, us(x3), ourselves</i><br/> Text 7 – <i>we, someone, something, you(x6), yourself, I, we(x2), it</i><br/> Text 8 – <i>we(x3), this, you, he, us</i><br/> Text 9 – <i>we (x2), one, it, us(x3), you, me</i><br/> Text 10 – <i>I, you (x5), someone (x4), something, us(x3), we(x3), ourselves, he, One</i></p> |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

D. Complex Layer of Quotations:

**1st Layer:** (The preacher) says

**2nd Layer:** . . . you say, . .

**3rd Layer:** “I seek refuge in Allah from Shatan, the accursed”

**4th Layer:** (The preacher) says

**5th Layer:** Can we repeat this together again. Say . . .

**6th Layer:** [“. . . “]

**7th Layer:** (The preacher) says

**8th Layer:** we can repeat it three times together

**9th Layer:** [“. . . “][Text 7]

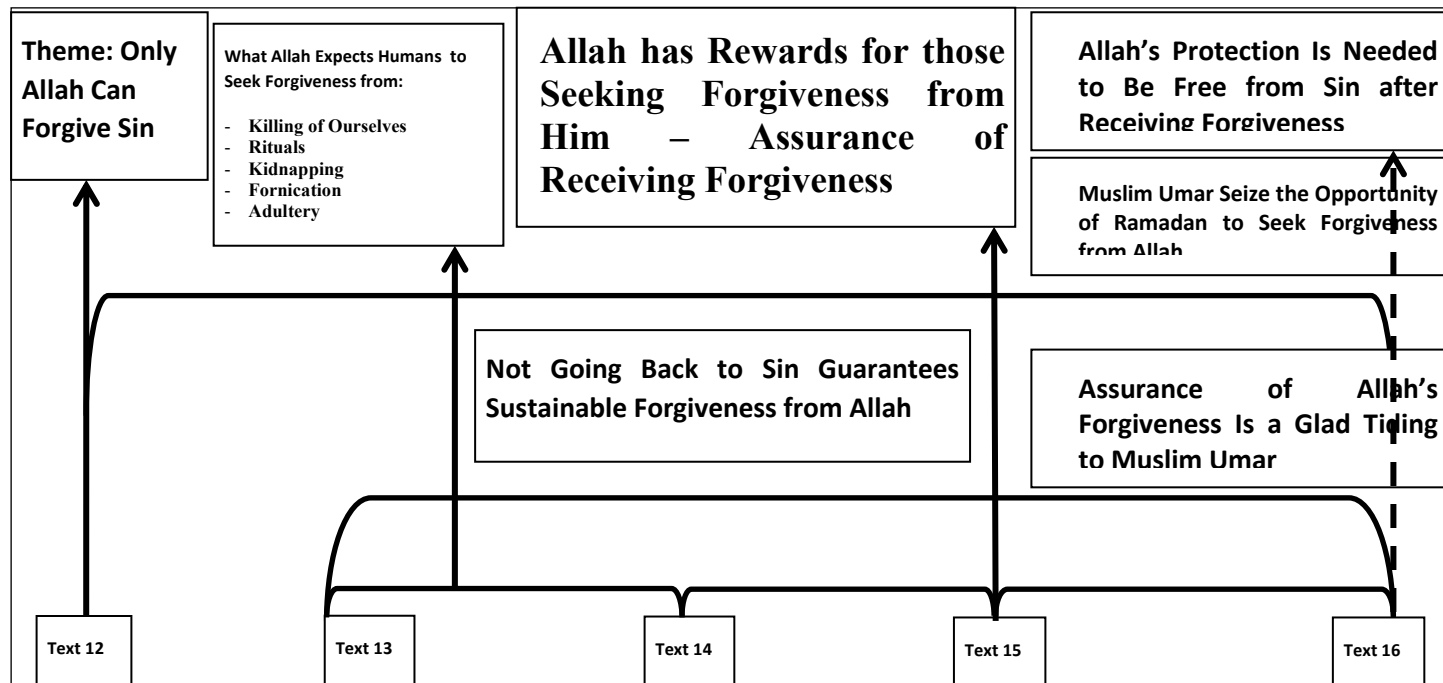
|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><b>1st Layer:</b> (The preacher) says</p> <p><b>2nd Layer:</b> . . . we can seek for Allah’s help by saying . . .</p> <p><b>3rd Layer:</b> [“. . . “]</p> <p><b>4th Layer:</b> (The preacher) says</p> <p><b>5th Layer:</b> It is saying . . .</p> <p><b>6th Layer:</b> “Oh lord bestow on us endurance. Make our truth folk sure and give us help against disbelieving folk.”</p> <p><b>7th Layer:</b> (The preacher) says</p> <p><b>8th Layer:</b> You what to recite the '<i>dua</i> with me again? Let’s go . . .</p> <p><b>9th Layer:</b> [“. . .”] [Text 9]</p> <p><b>1st Layer:</b> (The preacher) says</p> <p><b>2nd Layer:</b> But what do you say to someone when he says something insulting to you? You say . . . .</p> |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                              | <p>..</p> <p><b>3rd Layer:</b> [“. . .“]. “Oh Lord, judge between us in truth. Our lord is the most merciful, the One Whose help is sort against that which you describe.” [Text 10]</p>                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Socially<br/>Situating<br/>Identities</b> | <p>'dua[Texts 6, 8 – 11]</p> <p>situations [Texts 6, 7 and 10]</p> <p>prayers [Text 7]</p> <p>someone [Texts 7 and 10]</p> <p>something [Text 7]</p> <p>ten tips [Text 7]</p> <p>a better person [Text 7]</p> <p>a positive person [Text 7]</p> <p>anger [Texts 7 and 10]</p> <p>refuge [Texts 7 and 8]</p> <p>Allah [Texts 7, 8, 9, 11]</p> | <p>Shatan[Texts 7 and 8]</p> <p>perpetrator of evil feelings Allah[Text 8]</p> <p>endurance [Text9]</p> <p>truth folk Allah[Text 9]</p> <p>Lord Allah[Texts 9 and 10]</p> <p>our person Allah[Text10]</p> <p>humans Allah[Text 10]</p> <p>our Lord Allah[Text 10]</p> <p>fight Allah[Text 10]</p> <p>emotions Allah[Text11]</p> |

The analysis examines the language use and strategic discursive elements within the sermon on anger management. The analysis categorises the thematic resources, linguistic devices and socially situated identities present in the sermon text. One key aspect

highlighted is the sermon's focus on the theme of "Knowing when to Seek Help" when dealing with anger issues. It also identifies code-switching and code-mixing techniques, as well as the complex layering of quotations, which underscores the multifaceted nature of the sermon's rhetorical structure. Furthermore, the analysis examines the socially situated identities within the text, highlighting the various referents such as "people," "anger issues," "regret," "advice" and "emotions." These identity markers help contextualise the sermon's target audience and the specific challenges they may be facing in relation to managing their anger.

### Unit 3



### **Critical Evaluation of the Graphical Token**

The graph illustrates one of the themes of the text in the following order,

#### **A. Introduction:**

**Text 12** introduces the point that it is only Allah Who can forgive sin.

#### **B. Body:**

**Texts 13** and **14** enumerate what Allah expects men to seek forgiveness from. They include, but not limited to, killing ourselves, rituals, kidnapping, fornication, adultery and stealing. The texts also emphasise that it is only when one does not go back into committing sins that one can have the assurance of sustainable forgiveness from Allah. In addition to that, **Text 15** establishes that Allah has rewards for those who seek forgiveness from Him. The greatest of the rewards is the assurance of receiving forgiveness.

#### **C. Conclusion:**

**Text 16** concludes the section by revealing that the assurance of receiving Allah's forgiveness is a glad tiding to Muslim *umar*, who should seize the opportunity of the month of Ramadan, being the month of forgiveness, to avail themselves the forgiveness and seek Allah's protection from committing sins after receiving it.

| Categorisation of the Discursive Strategies on the Unit |                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Thematic                                                | <i>i. Only Allah can forgive sin</i> |

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|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Resources</b>          | <i>ii. Allah expects humans to seek forgiveness from killing of one another, rituals, kidnapping, fornication, adultery, etc.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                           | <i>iii. Not going back to sin guarantees sustainable forgiveness from Allah</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                           | <i>iv. Allah has rewards for those who seek forgiveness from Him</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                           | <i>v. Allah's protection is needed to be free from sin after receiving forgiveness</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Linguistic Devices</b> | <p>A. <u>Figurative Expressions</u></p> <p>i. <b>Metaphor:</b> . . . go back . . . [Texts 12, 13, 14 and 16]/. . . themonth of forgiveness . . . [Text 16].</p> <p>ii. <b>Repetition:</b> go back . . . [Texts 12, 14, 14 and 16]/. . . have committed . . . [Texts 13, 13, 14 and 16]/Allah[Texts 12 – 16]</p> <p>A. i. <u>Code Switching:</u> And there is no one that can accept our forgiveness except Allah [. . .]. [. . .]. [Text 12]/except Allah<br/>[. . .]. [. . .]/[Text 13]</p> <p>ii. <u>Code Mixing:</u> . . . except Allah [. . .]. [. . .]. . . they have committed . . . [Text 12]/. . . if you look at this hayah . . . Allah<br/>[. . .] . . . said, "When you now discover that these are sins against Allah [. . .] . . . remember Allah [. . .]"</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>that . . . you have committed, [. . .] and you now seek forgiveness from Allah [. . .]<br/>         .][. . .] for all the sins . . .<br/>         [. . .] there is no one that can accept that forgiveness except Allah [. . .] . .<br/>         .[Text 13]/. . . Allah [. . .] will<br/>         reward them . . .[Text 14]/. . . from Allah [. . .] . . . from Allah [. . .]. They have<br/>         reward from Allah [. . .], .<br/>         . . that Allah [. . .] said He is . . . there is no one that can forgive sins except<br/>         Allah [. . .][Text 15]/Allah [. . .<br/>         .] . . . from Allah [. . .] . . . that Allah [. . .] will forgive . . . May Allah [. . .<br/>         .]continue to be with us. May<br/>         Allah [. . .] continue to assist us . . .[Text 16]</i></p> | <p><b>B. Pronouns:</b>      Text 12 – <i>no one, they (x6), we</i></p> <p>Text 13– <i>you(x8), us, these (x3), no one, we, them</i></p> <p>Text 14 – <i>they (x11), it(x3), them</i></p> <p>Text 15 – <i>Whoever, they (x2), He (x2), them (x2), no one</i></p> <p>Text 16 – <i>this, we(x3), everyone, us(x4)</i></p> |
| <p><b>C. Complex Layer of Quotations:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             | <p><b>1st Layer:</b> (the preacher) says . . .</p> <p><b>2nd Layer:</b> Allah is trying to tell us that . . .</p> <p><b>3rd Layer:</b> there are so many things that people are committing in sin – killing ourselves, rituals, kidnapping and so on and</p> <p>so forth</p> <p><b>4th Layer:</b> (the preacher) says . . .</p> <p><b>5th Layer:</b> Allah now said . . .</p> <p><b>6th Layer:</b> “When you now discover that these are sins against Allah [. . .] you have committed .<br/>.[Text 13]</p> |                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Socially<br/>Situated<br/>Identities</b> | immortality [Text 12]<br>hayah[Text 12]<br>no one[Texts12 and 13]<br>forgiveness [Texts 12, 13, 15and 16]<br>Allah [Texts 12 – 16]<br>people [Text 13]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | evils [Text 13]<br>fornication [Text 14]<br>adultery [Text 14]<br>stealing [Text 14]<br>numerous things[Text 14]<br>Whoever [Text 15] |

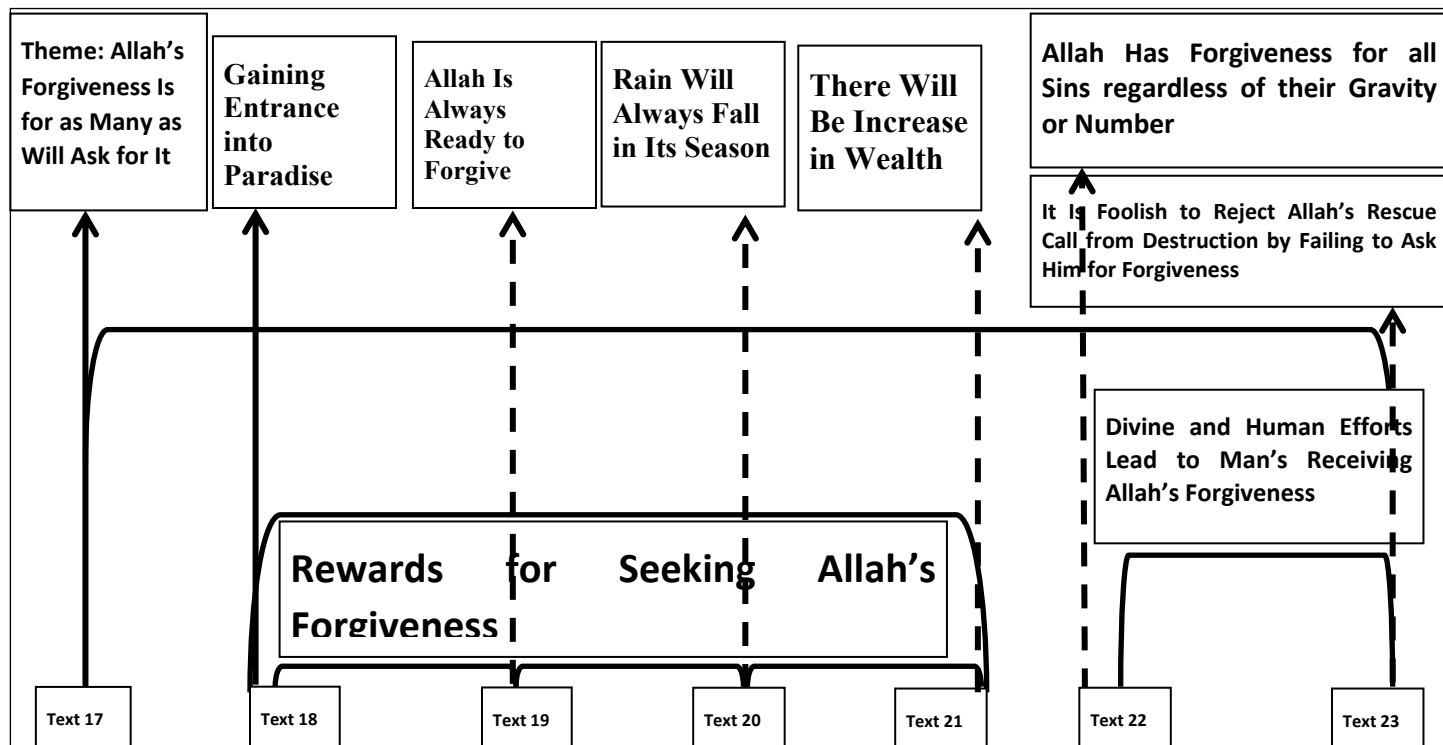
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|  |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                              |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | killing ourselves [Text 13]<br>rituals [Text 13]<br>kidnapping [Text 13]in the sight of Allah [Text 13]<br>yourself[Text 13] | a glad tiding [Text 16]<br>month of Ramadan [Text 16]<br>the month of forgiveness[Text 16]<br>my mummy [Text 16]<br>everyone of us [Text 16] |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The analysis examines the discursive strategies employed in the selected sermon text, with a particular focus on the themes of forgiveness and repentance. The analysis effectively highlights the centrality of the concept of forgiveness from Allah within the sermon, as evidenced by the repeated emphasis on the idea that "there is no one that can accept our forgiveness except Allah [. . .]." This recurring motif underscores the notion that true forgiveness can only be granted by the divine, reinforcing the sermon's core message. The analysis further establishes into the specific conditions and expectations associated with seeking forgiveness, as exemplified by the requirement that individuals "never go back to that sin they have committed again." The text cites numerous examples of sins like "killing ourselves, rituals, kidnapping and so on and so forth," and emphasises the need for the faithful to not only recognise their transgressions but also refrain from repeating them. This encourages a meaningful understanding of the sermon's discourse, which demands genuine repentance and a commitment to reforming one's behaviour, rather than mere lip service. The analysis also highlights the use of vivid and evocative language to convey the gravity of sin and the significance of seeking forgiveness. For instance, the phrase "these are evils you have committed" underscores the severity of the transgressions, while the promise of reward from Allah for those who seek forgiveness ("Whoever come(s) ... with asking for

forgiveness from Allah [...], they have reward from Allah [...].") provides a powerful incentive for the faithful to engage in this spiritual process.

#### Unit 4



**Critical Evaluation of the Graphical Token**

The graph illustrates one of the themes of the text in the following order,

**A. Introduction:**

**Text 17** introduces the point that Allah's forgiveness is available for everyone who will ask for it.

**B. Body:**

**Texts 18 and 21 contain** the benefits awaiting those who will seek Allah's forgiveness. The benefits include gaining entrance into Paradise, enjoying Allah's willingness to always forgive those who seek forgiveness from Him, showering of rain in due season and experiencing an increase in wealth.

**C. Conclusion: Texts 22 and 23** conclude the section by revealing the divine and human roles that will bring about man's receiving Allah's forgiveness: Allah's readiness to forgive and man's willingness to ask for the forgiveness. Allah, in His part, is always ready to forgive man of every sin regardless of how grievous that sin may be. It will therefore be foolish of any man to reject Allah's offer of rescue from the destruction awaiting those who do not have their sins forgiven by Allah.

|                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Categorisation of the Discursive Strategies on the Unit</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|

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|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Thematic Resources</b> | <i>i. Allah's forgiveness is for as many as will ask for it</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                           | <i>ii. There are rewards for seeking forgiveness from Allah</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                           | <i>iii. Both divine and human efforts will bring about man's receiving Allah's forgiveness</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                           | <i>iv. Allah has forgiveness for all sins regardless of their gravity</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                           | <i>v. It is foolish for any man to reject Allah's rescue call from destruction by failing to ask Him for forgiveness</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Linguistic Devices</b> | <p><b>A. <u>Figurative Expressions</u></b></p> <p><b>i. Rhetorical Question:</b> . . . I will accept their [what?] . . . [Text 17]/. . . what is this garden?[Text 18]/. . . the essential ingredients</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>of what?[Text 20]/Allah will increase your enjoyment because of what? . . . Allah will make it possible for you</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>because of what?[Text 21]/(why) will you be destroyed for the sins you have committed and you have a gateway</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>for you to what? to get rescued from Allah [. . .] from the sin you have committed?</i></p> <p><i>And he now said, [. . .] what</i></p> |

is the rescue [. . .]?[Text 23]

ii. **Phatic Expression:** Alhamdullilah [Text 19]

iii. **Metaphor:** . . . rain from the sky . . . the essential ingredients . . . [Text 20]/. . . son of Adam . . . [Text 21]/. . . peace of Allah . . . [Text 23]

iv. **Simile:**Even if your sin is as much as the sky, from the sky to the earth . . . and even if your sin is as much as they the earth is

spread, your sin is spread like that . . . [Text 22]

A. i. Code Switching: [. . .] And from the Quran . . . [. . .], that is “from their Lord, I will accept their forgiveness.” [. . .]

[Text 17]/[. . .]. this is an excellent reward for the righteous workers[Text 18]/Seeking for forgiveness. [. . .] Allah said . .

. [Text 21]/[. . .] “Oh you the son of Adam . . .”. [Text 22].

ii. Code Mixing: Allah said, [. . .]. . . come to Allah [. . .] [Text 17] It's Aljaanah [. . .]. rivers [flow] in this paradise . .

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. [Text 18]/. . . Allah says [. . .] . . . from Allah [. . .] in all . . . because Allah [. . .] is ready . . . [Text 19]/. . . is that [. . .]  
 .]/[Text 20]/. . . [. . .] with wealth and children [Text 21]/. . . that was reported by [. . .][. . .][. . .] . . . may Allah be  
 pleased with him, says, "I heard the Prophet of Islam [SAW] [say] that Allah [. . .] said [. . .] .  
 . . 'Oh the son of Adam, [. . .]  
 . .], that is. . . from me Allah [. . .] . . . I will forgive you. [. . .] and . . . of these sins. . . [. . .] . . . if you come to Allah [. . .]  
 .] . . . That is the word from the Prophet of Islam [SAW][Text 22]/ And [. . .] said, [. . .] . . . [. . .]  
 .] said . . . from Allah [. . .]  
 . . . now said, [. . .] what is the rescue [. . .]? May the peace of Allah be with [. . .]. [. . .] say[s] [. . .] . . . from Allah [. . .]  
 .]/[Text 23].

B. Pronouns:      Text 17 – *them, I(x5), me*  
                                  Text 18– *you(x2), those (x2), they (x2), us*  
                                  Text 19 – *you*  
                                  Text 20 – *you (x3)*

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Text 21 – *I, it (x3), you (x2)*

Text 22 – *us, him, I (x4), you(x8), me (x3), you (x2)*

Text 23 – *I, himself, he (x2), it, you (x7)*

C. Complex Layer of Quotations:

**1st Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**2nd Layer:** Allah said . . .

**3rd Layer:** [ . . . ]

**4th Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**5th Layer:** Allah said . . .

**6th Layer:** I will accept their [what?] I will accept their forgiveness. . . . .[Text 17]

**1st Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**2nd Layer:** Allah says . . .

**3rd Layer:** Seek forgiveness from your Lord . . . [Text 20]

**1st Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**2nd Layer:** Allah said . . .

**3rd Layer:** I will increase your wealth [Text 21]

**1st Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**2nd Layer:** The Prophet of Islam [SAW] now told us from this hadith

**3rd Layer:** that was reported by [. . .][. . .][. . .]

**4th Layer:** I heard the Prophet of Islam [SAW] [say]. . .

**5th Layer:** that Allah [. . .] said

**6th Layer:** Oh the son of Adam . . . [Text 22]

**1st Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**2nd Layer:** [. . .] said

**3rd Layer:** I wonder for a person to let himself be destroyed when he has gotten a rescue

**4th Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**5th Layer:** [. . .] said [that]

**6th Layer:** how [will it be] . . .

**7th Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**8th Layer:** he now said . . .

**9th Layer:** what is the rescue . . .

**10th Layer:** (the preacher) says . . .

**11th Layer:** [. . .] say[s] . . .

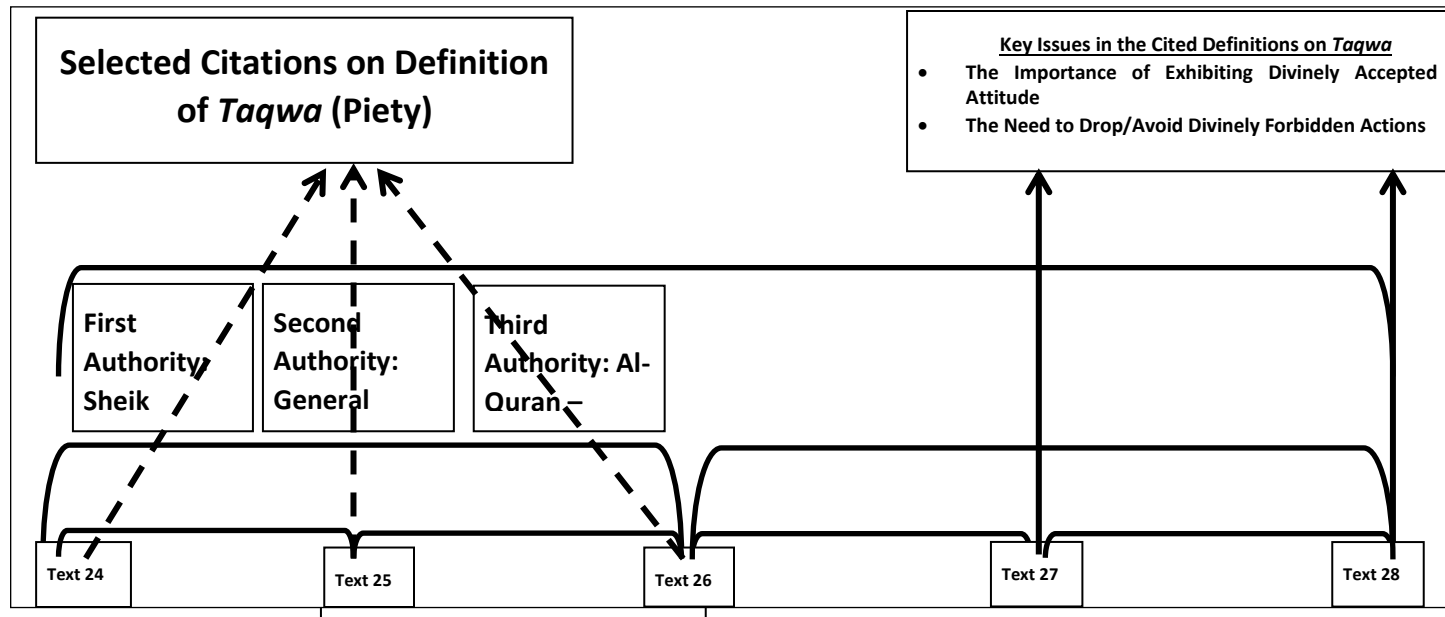
|                                             | <b>12th Layer:</b> What [is] the rescue here is seeking for forgiveness . . . [Text 23]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Socially<br/>Situated<br/>Identities</b> | <p>Quran 3 verse 136 [Text 17]</p> <p>People that come to Allah [Text 17]</p> <p>forgiveness [Text 17]</p> <p>their Lord [Text 17]</p> <p>forgiveness [Texts 17 – 23]</p> <p>Allah [Texts 17 – 23]</p> <p>reward for seeking forgiveness [Text 18]</p> <p>ingredient for seeking forgiveness in Islam [Text 18]</p> <p>Aljaanah [Text 18]</p> <p>Paradise [Text 18]</p> <p>eternally [Text 18]</p> <p>righteous workers [Text 18]</p> <p>good deeds [Text 18]</p> <p>a garden [Texts 18 and 21]</p> <p>Alhamdullilahi [Text 19]</p> <p>Quran 75 verse 10 to 12 [Text 21]</p> <p>rain [Text 22]</p> | <p>from the sky [Text 21]</p> <p>wealth [Text 21]</p> <p>money [Text 21]</p> <p>enjoyment [Text 21]</p> <p>children [Text 21]</p> <p>everything in abundance [Text 21]</p> <p>The Prophet of Islam [Text 22]</p> <p>hadith [Text 22]</p> <p>the son of Adam [Text 22]</p> <p>the sky [Text 22]</p> <p>the earth [Text 22]</p> <p>sins [Texts 22 and 23]</p> <p>a person [Text 23]</p> <p>a rescue [Text 23]</p> <p>a believer [Text 23]</p> <p>a Muslim [Text 23]</p> <p>a gateway [Text 23]</p> |

|  |  |                          |
|--|--|--------------------------|
|  |  | peace of Allah [Text 23] |
|--|--|--------------------------|

The analysis presents the discursive strategies employed in the selected sermon text. The categorisation of the thematic resources and linguistic devices used in the text allows for a deeper understanding of the key themes and rhetorical techniques employed by the speaker. The analysis begins by identifying the central theme of the text, which is the availability and importance of Allah's forgiveness for those who seek it. This is clearly illustrated in the introductory section, where the text emphasises that "Allah's forgiveness is available for everyone who will ask for it." The analysis reviews the various benefits that await those who seek forgiveness, such as gaining entrance into Paradise, experiencing increased wealth and prosperity, and enjoying Allah's constant willingness to forgive, as seen in the statements "Allah will increase your wealth" and "Allah will make a garden for you." The analysis also highlights the importance of both divine and human efforts in the attainment of Allah's forgiveness. It notes that the text underscores Allah's readiness to forgive, even for the gravest of sins, as exemplified by the quote "Even if your sin is as much as the sky, from the sky to the earth, no matter how much they are, once you seek my forgiveness, I shall forgive you." At the same time, the text emphasises the human responsibility to seek forgiveness, with the analysis observing that "it will therefore be foolish of any man to reject Allah's offer of rescue from the destruction awaiting those who do not have their sins forgiven by Allah." The identification and discussion of the various linguistic devices employed in the text, such as the use of figurative expressions and rhetorical questions, further enhances the analysis by shedding light on the speaker's rhetorical strategies and the impact they have on the audience. For instance, the analysis notes the use of the rhetorical question "how [will it be], you as a believer, as a Muslim, even if you have committed sins and you have a rescue from Allah [...], (why) will you be

destroyed for the sins you have committed and you have a gateway for you to what? to get rescued from Allah [...] from the sin you have committed?" which serves to drive home the point about the foolishness of rejecting Allah's forgiveness.

## Unit 5



### Critical Evaluation of the Graphical Token

The graph illustrates one of the themes of the text in the following order,

**A. Introduction:**

**Text 24** foreshadows the conceptual description of *taqwa* through the pronunciation of “Definition of piety.

**B. Body:**

**Texts 24 – 26** itemise different authoritatively approved definitions of *taqwaby* citing the views Sheik Abdullahi Abdulazeez, general Islamic ideology and Al-Quran – Quran 2 verse 41.

**C. Conclusion:**

**Texts 27** and **28** conclude the section by identifying the key points in the cited definitions of *taqwa*: (i.) the Importance of exhibiting divinely accepted attitude (ii.) the need to drop/avoid divinely forbidden actions.

| Categorisation of the Discursive Strategies on the Unit |                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thematic Resources                                      | <i>i. Definitions of Taqwa</i>                                                      |
|                                                         | <i>ii. Taqwa as an Exhibition of Divinely Accepted Attitude</i>                     |
|                                                         | <i>iii. Taqwa as a warning on the need to Drop/Avoid Divinely Forbidden Actions</i> |

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <p><b>Linguistic Devices</b></p> | <p>A. <u>Figurative Expressions</u></p> <p>i. <b>Metaphor:</b> . . . <u>fear of Allah</u> . . . <u>putting on</u> . . . <u>all the commandments</u> of almighty Allah [Text 24]/. . . fear <u>that day</u> . . . <u>You are from</u></p> <p><u>me</u>[Text 26]/. . . act of [. . .] . . .[Text 26]/. . . dropping what is forbidden . . . [Text 28].</p> <p>ii. <b>Euphemism:</b> . . . everyone of us we are <u>going to return</u> to Allah . . . you are <u>going to return back</u> to me . . . <u>every soul shall return</u></p> <p><u>back</u> to Allah[Text 26]</p> <p>iii. <b>Personification:</b> Allah would <u>ask about taqwa</u>[Text 26].</p> <p>iv. <b>Phatic Expression:</b> . . . My dear brothers and sisters in Islam [Text 27]/. . . dropping what is forbidden [Text 28].</p> <p>v. <b>Repetition:</b> islamically[Text 25]/. . . return back . . . [Text 26]/. . . <i>very, very</i> important . . . [Text 27].</p> <p>B.</p> <p>i. <u>Code Switching:</u> [. . .]. “fear . . .” [Text 26].</p> <p>ii. <u>Code Mixing:</u> According to the view of our . . . Sheik Abdullah Abdulazeez [. . .]. He define[s] taqwa to be [. . .]. . .</p> <p>[Text 24]/The taqwa [. . .], islamically, taqwa is [. . .]. Generallyspeakingislamically, piety is establishing</p> |
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|  | <p>the commandments of Allah. [. . .] lies . . . [Text 25]/Allah [. . .] . . . ask about taqwa[Text 26]/Allah accept</p> <p style="text-align: center;">all our [. . .], . . . act of [. . .], we need to be pious. [. . .] gave his own definition to be altaqwa [. . .][Text 27]/. . . meaning of taqwa[Text 28].</p>                                                                |
|  | <p>C. <u>Pronouns</u>:           Text 24 – He ourselves(x2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Text 26– <i>You (x3), me (x4)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Text 27 – <i>we (x2), I</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Text 28 – <i>You, them, us (x3)</i></p>                                                                                                             |
|  | <p>D. <u>Complex Layer of Quotations</u>:</p> <p><b>1st Layer:</b> (the preacher) says . . .</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2nd Layer:</b> . . . Sheik Abdullah Abdulazeez . . . define[s] taqwa to be . . .</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3rd Layer:</b> . . . worship by putting on, by enjoining on oursel[ves] all the commandments of almighty Allah [Text 24]</p> |

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|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><b>1st Layer:</b> (the preacher) says . . .</p> <p><b>2nd Layer:</b> Generally speaking islamically . . .</p> <p><b>3rd Layer:</b> piety is establishing the commandments of Allah . . . [Text 25]</p> <p><b>1st Layer:</b> (the preacher) says . . .</p> <p><b>2nd Layer:</b> . . . Al-Quran, Quran 2 verse 41 . . . says . . .</p> <p><b>3rd Layer:</b> . . . everyone of us we are going to return to Allah . . .</p> <p><b>4th Layer:</b> (the preacher) says . . .</p> <p><b>5th Layer:</b> Allah says . . .</p> <p><b>6th Layer:</b> “You are from me.”</p> <p><b>7th Layer:</b> (the preacher) says . . .</p> <p><b>8th Layer:</b> Allah says,</p> |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                              | <b>9th Layer: “You are from me and you are going to return back to me. So, fear me” [Text 8]</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Socially<br/>Situating<br/>Identities</b> | <p>Definition of piety [Text 24]</p> <p>Sheik Abdullah Abdulazeez [Text 24]</p> <p>worship [Text 24]</p> <p>commandments [Text 24]</p> <p>almighty Allah [Text 24]</p> <p>the purpose of fear of Allah [Text 24]</p> <p>piety [Texts 24, 25 and 28]</p> <p>taqwa [Texts 24, 25 and 28]</p> <p>Allah [Texts 24– 28]</p> <p>commandments of Allah [Text 25]</p> <p>Islamically [Text 25]</p> <p>Al-Quran, Quran 2 verse 41 [Text 26]</p> <p>everyone of us [Text 26]</p> <p>fear [Text 26]</p> <p>that day [Text 26]</p> <p>every soul [Text 26]</p> | <p>My dear brothers and sisters in Islam [Text 27]</p> <p>very, very important things [Text 27]</p> <p>a Muslim [Text 27]</p> <p>all our [ . . . ] [Text 27]</p> <p>all our actions [Text 27]</p> <p>worldly things [Text 27]</p> <p>worldly actions [Text 27]</p> <p>heavenly actions [Text 27]</p> <p>act of [ . . . ] [Text 27]</p> <p>be pious [Text 27]</p> <p>his own definition [Text 27]</p> <p>altaqwa [ . . . ] [Text 27]</p> <p>the definition [Text 28]</p> <p>forbidden [Text 28]</p> |

The analysis provides an examination of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed in the sermon on the topic of *taqwa* (piety or God-consciousness). It begins by outlining the thematic structure of the sermon, identifying three key themes: definitions of *taqwa* from authoritative sources, *taqwa* as an exhibition of a divinely accepted attitude and *taqwa* as a warning against engaging in divinely forbidden actions. The analysis highlights the use of figurative language, such as metaphor ("putting on... the commandments of Allah"), euphemism ("return to Allah") and personification ("Allah would ask about *taqwa*"). The prevalence of code-switching and code-mixing between Arabic and English is also noted, reflecting the preacher's attempts to draw on both religious and everyday language to communicate the concept of *taqwa*. Another aspect of the linguistic analysis is the examination of the pronouns used in the text. The shifting use of "you," "we" and "us" helps to create a sense of inclusive community and shared responsibility for cultivating *taqwa*. The complex layering of quotations, with the preacher citing the views of Sheik Abdullah Abdulazeez as well as broader Islamic teachings, further emphasises the authoritative grounding of the sermon's message.

### **General Discussions**

#### **Thematic Resources and Linguistic Devices Adopted by NASFAT to Perpetuate Its Ideology**

NASFAT's thematic focus leans towards spiritual empowerment and community development. Their sermons often address contemporary social issues while grounding their messages in Islamic teachings. The linguistic devices used by NASFAT include historical allusion and metaphors that connect historical Islamic figures to modern challenges, emphasising resilience and

moral fortitude. For instance, references to the lives of the Prophets serve to motivate the congregation towards positive action. NASFAT also employs repetitive structures in its discourse, which reinforce key messages and enhance memorability. This repetition often culminates in a call to action, encouraging listeners to implement the teachings in their daily lives.

**Generic Conventions Expressed in the Language Use of the NASFAT *Assalat* Group**

The analysis of the sermons from NASFAT illustrates several conventions that are underscored as the group's shared ideologies. These conventions reflect a common religious framework, moral teachings and linguistic strategies that reinforce the group's messages and foster a sense of community among its members. The conventions include invocation of Divine Authority (like reverencing Allah and citing the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)), use of figurative language and imagery, code-switching and code-mixing (of English and Arabic languages), moral imperatives and call to action.

**The Extent Discursive Strategies are Employed in the Sermons of the *Assalat* Group**

NASFAT employs strategies of code-switching and inter-textual references to establish connections between religious texts and the everyday lives of followers. This involves drawing on Qur'anic verses and Hadith to support the main issues in the sermons, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of the preacher's message. The juxtaposition of spiritual ideals against worldly temptations is also used to encourage congregants to aspire towards higher moral standards despite societal pressures. The use of complex layers of quotations—citing scholars, the Prophet and Qur'anic verses—creates an atmosphere for the exercise of religious authority, making the message compelling and authoritative. The *Assalat* group reflects an understanding of language's power in shaping religious identity and community cohesion. Through the strategic use of figurative language, phatic expressions, code-switching

and intertextuality, these group communicate their messages, encouraging followers to navigate their spiritual paths while fostering a sense of unity and purpose.

**Categorisation of how the Discourse of the NASFAT *Assalat* Group Enacts Socially Situated Identities of the Members**

The discourse of the NASFAT *Assalat* group enacts socially situated identities of its members through the following key categories: thematic resources, linguistic devices, code-switching and mixing, pronouns and the use of quotations. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in constructing a collective identity and reinforcing the group's ideological stance as demonstrated below.

**Thematic Resources**

Thematic resources in NASFAT sermons often centre around core Islamic principles such as faith, obedience and community. For instance, discussions about piety and spiritual growth align members with shared values and the group's mission. The emphasis on communal worship and the importance of adhering to Islamic teachings reinforces a collective identity that prioritises spirituality over individual desires.

**Linguistic Devices**

Linguistic devices, particularly figurative language, are employed to evoke emotional responses and articulate complex ideas. Metaphors and personifications are commonly used to describe spiritual concepts in relatable terms - for example, the personification of "piusness" as an entity that "will give you this opportunity" and the metaphorical reference to the "final house." Such imageries not only enhance sermonic messages but also solidify the group's identity as a cohesive unit.

### **Code-Switching and Mixing**

NASFAT sermons often incorporate code-switching between Arabic and English/local languages. This practice highlights the group's religious authority and connects them to a broader Islamic tradition. For instance, the use of Arabic phrases during prayers authenticates the spiritual experience and signifies the members' adherence to Islamic norms. This linguistic choice fosters a sense of belonging and elevates members' religious identities within the community.

### **Use of Quotations**

The integration of quotations from the Quran or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) enhances the sermons' authority and credibility. By quoting revered texts, the NASFAT group legitimises its teachings and reinforces the importance of adherence to Islamic principles. For example, referencing a Hadith that discusses the consequences of arrogance serves to remind members of the moral framework within which they operate, thus shaping their identities as devout Muslims committed to ethical living. In specific terms, the discourses of the NASFAT *Assalat* group employ thematic resources, linguistic devices, code-switching and quotations to enact and reinforce socially situated identities among its members. These elements work systematically to foster a sense of community, shared purpose and adherence to Islamic values, thereby shaping how members perceive themselves and their roles within the group and the larger society. The analysis consequently illustrates the intricate ways language can be used to construct and negotiate identity in a religious context.

### **Findings**

1. This paper reveals that the NASFAT *Assalat* group perpetuates its ideologies by adopting thematic resources and linguistic

devices such as

(a) Thematic Resources: *Essential ingredients of forgiveness in the Islamic perspective, taqwa as an Islamic doctrine*, and so on.

(b) Linguistic Devices: **Metaphor** – *fear of Allah . . . putting on . . . all the commandments of almighty Allah. . . fear that day . . . You are from me/. . . act of [. . .] . . ./. . . dropping what is forbidden and so on; Personification* – *Allah would ask about taqwa, . piousness . . . will give you this opportunity . . . signs . . . will make you . . ./. . . piety is not with*, and so on; **Rhetorical Question**– : *So, how do you help yourself?/Why do we say this 'dua ?*

2. The study identifies the following as the generic conventions expressed in the language use of the *Assalat* group:

- a. Affirmation of Being a Group that Leads People to the Right Path*
- b. Recommendation of Prayers for Deliverance from Supernatural Negative Behaviours*

3. The study also reveals that the NASFAT *Assalat* group employs the following discursive strategies in its sermons:

- i. **Categorisation of Members (into In-group against Out-group)** as in *This 'dua can help us be in control of situations surrounding us. It can help us build ourselves to be stronger*
  - ii. **Ideological Legitimation** through the use of *quotations/citations, descriptions, narrations and accentuation*.
4. The paper shows that the NASFAT *Assalat* group enacts socially situated identities of its members through sermonic discourses in the following ways,
- i. Profession of faith in Almighty Allah;

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- ii. Prophetic status recognition as in *Prophet Mohammed*;
  - iii. Entrenchment of faith-based principles (to substantiate attitudes that promote Islam as in *Ramadan, good deed, 'dua, forgiveness, taqwa/piety, preparedness for the hereafter*, and so on;
  - iv. Condemnation of un-Islamic behaviours (to denounce attitudes that do not promote the sanctity of Islam) as in *immorality, grudge, fornication*, and so on;
  - v. Benefits of being faithful to religious ideologies (to enliven listeners' hope) as in *gaining entrance into Paradise, enjoying Allah's willingness to always forgive those who seek forgiveness from Him, showering of rain in due season, experiencing increase in wealth, guidance of Allah, success in everything that you are doing*, and so on; and
  - vi. Vilification of Satan: (to create awareness about his wiles and banishment to eternal distress and destruction) as in *Shatan, the accursed*, and so on.
5. The study establishes that discourse practices of the NASFAT *Assalat* group include exercise of hegemony, identification and promotion of brotherhood, veneration, use of phatic expressions, prayer and double/multiple layers of quotations.

**Conclusion**

This research has critically investigated the hidden hegemonic tendencies that are embedded in the language use in selected sermons of the NASFAT *Assalat* group. From the study, the preachers of the sermons do not only take leading roles during sermon discourse deliveries. They are also recognised by their listeners as servants (or representatives) of Allah. That automatically places them on a higher plane – men with messages from a Supreme Being. Hence, the listeners presumably consider what they say divine and final. Meanwhile, regardless of the pious level the preachers have attained, they are still

human and prone to emotional tendencies. On that basis, discourse practices of the *Assalat* group are not completely free of some kind of disguised discursive attitudes that may be difficult to notice or perceive by many of its members. Some of the discursive attitudes are exercise of hegemony, identification and promotion of brotherhood, veneration, use of phatic expressions, use of prayer, use of double/multiple layers of quotations and code-mixing/switching. Through the discursive strategies, the sermonic discourses are used to establish generic conventions of being a container of Islamic knowledge, testimonies for following Islamic tenets, brotherhood affinity and categorisation of members (into in-group against out-group) and ideological legitimisation. However, the study does not condemn the use of the strategies for the achievement of religious ends. Rather, it has identified them to foreground how the strategies have been employed to identify, maintain and sustain the *Assalat* group's ideologies. For failure to make its followers live by the ideologies marks the beginning of the end of the group. Hence, the ideologies are made to live in followers from generation to generation through the perpetuation of the thoughts of the founding fathers of the group by the means of sermonic discourses.

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