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A Critical Discourse Analysis of Surah *Tāhā* based on James Paul Gee's Model

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Abstract

This study conducts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the dialogue between Moses and God in Surah *Tāhā* of the Quran based on James Paul Gee's discourse analysis framework. Drawing on Gee's building tasks and tools of inquiry, the research investigates how divine-human interaction linguistically constructs identities, relationships, power relations, and theological meanings within a sacred text. Adopting a mixed-methods descriptive-analytic design, the study integrates quantitative frequency analysis of discourse features with qualitative interpretation of contextualized meanings and figured worlds. The findings reveal that identity construction and relationship building are the most prominent building tasks in the Moses-God discourse, highlighting the centrality of prophetic identity formation and divine authority. Among Gee's tools of inquiry, situated meanings and figured worlds occur most frequently, indicating that theological concepts are communicated through context-dependent meanings and implicit models of divine-human relations. The analysis further demonstrates that power relations are asymmetrical yet compassionate, combining divine sovereignty with responsiveness to human concerns. By applying Gee's comprehensive framework to Quranic discourse, this study bridges traditional Quranic exegesis with

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contemporary linguistic analysis. It contributes to critical discourse studies by extending the applicability of CDA to religious texts and demonstrates the analytical value of Gee's model in examining spiritually and theologically complex discourse. Ultimately, the research advances interdisciplinary dialogue between linguistics and theology and enriches the critical study of sacred scriptures.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, James Paul Gee, Quran, Surah *Tāhā*, Moses, Religious Discourse, Identity Construction.

An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse as a discipline of linguistic research developed in the late 20th century with a focus on how language represents and constitutes social realities, power relations, and ideological structures. In contrast to classical linguistic analysis, which mainly looks at grammatical forms and syntactic patterns, Critical Discourse Analysis explores the role of language in larger social, political, and cultural contexts. CDA acknowledges that language serves not only as a neutral means of communication but also as a means whereby power relations are formed, sustained, and challenged.

The origins of CDA can be traced to 1970s critical linguistics at the University of East Anglia by scholars such as Roger Fowler, Gunther Kress, and Robert Hodge. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, CDA was made into a distinctive methodological theory through the works of Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk, among numerous others who sought to merge linguistic analysis with social theory.

CDA is characterized by several important principles. Firstly, it theorizes discourse as social practice that is both constructive and constructed by social structures concurrently. Secondly, it focuses on the way language is utilized to depict, constitute, and legitimize power relations. Thirdly, it is problem-oriented, with frequent focus on social issues and inequality. Lastly, it is multidisciplinary, drawing from linguistics, sociology, psychology, and political science. Finally, it aims to be transformative, making conscious of the ways in which language can be utilized to reinforce or contest prevailing ideologies.

The Critical Discourse Analysis field has evolved through diverse strands, each characterized by specific theoretical orientations and methodological instrumentation. The principal frameworks are:

- 1) Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model: Fairclough's model examines discourse in terms of three interconnected dimensions: Text (the linguistic features), discursive practice (the processes of producing and interpreting texts), and social practice (the broader social context). His model highlights the dialectical relationship between discourse and social structures, showing how language not only reflects but also constitutes social reality.
- 2) Socio-Cognitive Approach of Teun van Dijk: Van Dijk's approach is concerned with the interplay among cognition, discourse, and social structures. The literature informs that "Van Dijk sees social cognition and mental models as mediating between discourse and the social," forming "A dialectical relationship between societal structures and discursive interaction." His method necessitates "A contextual model founded upon Moscovici's (2000) theory of social representation," with the awareness that

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the "Social actors involved in discourse do not just draw upon their own experience, but more so upon shared schemes of interpretation."

3) Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach: Wodak brings historical context together with discourse analysis, emphasizing the importance of examining how discourse unfolds through time. Her work is particularly valuable in apprehending how past events and stories shape ongoing discourse.

4) Theo van Leeuwen's Social Actor Analysis: It concentrates on how social actors are represented in discourse through the examination of exclusion/inclusion, role allocation, and personalization v. impersonalization dimensions.

5) Michel Foucault's Genealogical Method: Not a CDA practitioner in the technical sense, Foucault's work on discourse, power, and knowledge has influenced the field in a lasting way. His discourse theory as constitutive of social reality and his analysis of how power operates through discursive practice form the foundation of CDA.

6) Michael Meyer's Multi methodical Approach: Meyer advocates for methodological pluralism in CDA, suggesting that researchers must adapt their methodology to fit the specific research question and context under study.

7) Frame Analysis by Erving Goffman: Goffman examines how people organize experience through the use of interpretive frames or "Frames," which guide perception and understanding of social scenes.

8) James Paul Gee's Building Tasks and Tools of Inquiry: Gee's theory identifies seven building tasks of language (significance, activities, identities,

relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems/knowledge) and six tools of inquiry (situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, discourses, and conversations) for analyzing how language constructs meaning in context.

Religious writings are particularly significant contexts for critical discourse analysis for several reasons. First, religious writings are often foundational texts that inform belief systems, social norms, and institutional practices. Second, they typically involve complex power relations between divine and human actors, religious elites and followers, and competing interpretations. Third, religious discourse commonly employs special linguistic techniques to establish authority, convey spiritual concepts, and guide behavior.

Using CDA on religious texts can show:

1. The way divine authority is established and authorized by linguistic choices;
2. How religious identities are constructed and negotiated in language;
3. How religious groups sustain or contest power relationships;
4. How theological concepts are communicated through specific discursive means;
5. How historical and cultural contexts shape religious interpretations;
6. How intertextuality functions to connect various religious narratives and traditions.

Researchers like van Dijk and Wodak have noted that religious discourse functions through "Social Representations" and "Collective frames of perception," and is therefore highly suitable for critical analysis. Religious texts frequently use specific discursive methods to create authority, to give voice to abstract notions, and to influence the behavior of the faithful.

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Among the many CDA approaches, James Paul Gee's framework is especially well-suited to analyze Moses and God's speech in Surah *Tāhā* due to the following reasons:

- 1) Holistic Identity Theory: Gee's theory incorporates an elaborate theory of identity formation, which describes identity as "Being recognized as a certain "Kind of person," in a given context." This approach is of specific importance in analyzing the process by which prophetic and divine identities are formed in religious texts.
- 2) The Multifaceted Nature of Identity: Gee outlines four various approaches to identity: The nature approach (N-identities), the institutional approach (I-identities), the discourse approach (D-identities), and the affinity approach (A-identities). This wide range allows for a more sophisticated analysis of the mechanisms by which various facets of identity operate in divine-human dialogue.
- 3) Emphasis on Building Tasks: Gee's seven building tasks of significance, activities, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems/knowledge offer a systematic way to examine how language makes meaning in religious discourse. These terms are especially helpful to discern how religious texts constitute what is meaningful, what activities are acceptable, what relationships between the divine and human beings are formed, and what kinds of knowledge are privileged.
- 4) Investigative Methods: Gee's six tools of inquiry in methodology, situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, inter textuality, Discourses, and Conversations, provide windows for bringing to light the various levels of meaning in sacred texts. The notion of "Figured Worlds" is of particular

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significance in examining the tacit theories regarding how the divine interfaces with humanity in religious narratives.

5) Consideration of Context: Gee stresses the role of context in making meaning, which aligns with the necessity of knowing the cultural, historical, and theological contexts of Quranic discourse.

6) The integration of micro and macro approaches: Gee's framework facilitates the undertaking of detailed linguistic examinations (micro) alongside the assessment of expansive social and cultural dynamics (macro). This characteristic renders it particularly advantageous for exploring the relationships between particular linguistic selections in the Quran and broader theological notions.

In spite of the long tradition of Quranic exegesis, there is a paucity of application of contemporary discourse analysis approaches, especially Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to the Quranic texts. The dialogue between Moses and God in Surah *Ṭāhā* is an extraordinary divine-human conversation that shapes religious identities, power dynamics, and theological meanings. Yet, this conversation has not been critically examined through James Paul Gee's theoretical framework, which provides penetrating insights into how language functions to construct identities and relationships in this religious text.

Earlier research has predominantly been on Quranic texts via traditional exegetical methods, prioritizing theological reading over linguistic examination. Where there has been linguistic analysis, it has tended to stress stylistic elements or rhetorical devices but not as part of critical discourse analysis frameworks. This absence is a missed opportunity to discern the

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language construction in divine-human interaction in one of the world's most significant religious scriptures.

This study focuses on the subsequent research questions:

1. How does the meeting of Moses and God in Surah *Ṭāhā* constitute their individual identities as founded upon Gee's theory of identity?
2. What are the frequencies of Gee's six tools of inquiry and seven building blocks in the dialogue between Moses and God in Surah *Ṭāhā*?
3. How does the discourse presented in Surah *Ṭāhā* define power relations, import, and connotations between human beings and God?
4. Which figured worlds and situated meanings are called upon in the Moses-God dialogue, and how do they contribute to supporting the theological import of the surah?

This study makes the following key contributions to religious studies and discourse analysis:

1. It demonstrates the relevance of modern linguistic theory to ancient religious writings, spanning conventional and contemporary methodologies of sacred communication.
2. It provides knowledge of how divine-human communication is constructed linguistically in the Quranic text to enable further exploration of religious communication patterns.
3. It offers a model for systematically examining other religious texts in the context of Gee, and possibly for new directions in comparative research.
4. It is part of an emerging field of linguistic approaches to religious scriptures, which has developed force in recent years but is underdeveloped in the case of the Quran.

5. It enhances understanding of how religious texts construct identities, relationships, and theological concepts through particular linguistic choices and patterns.

1. Theoretical Framework

The study is pursued on the theoretical grounds that blend together four major theoretical elements:

1. Analytical framework of James Paul Gee's Discourse Analysis Model incorporates his identity theory, the construction of tasks, and the inquiry tools.
2. Quranic Studies: Derived from classical and contemporary understanding of the Quranic structure, themes, and narrative themes, particularly in Surah *Ṭāhā*.
3. Religious Discourse Theory: Examining how religious texts construct authority, convey divine messages, and form religious identities.
4. Linguistic Anthropology: Based on the way language constructs cultural and theological meanings within specific religious contexts.

These components are integrated to form a composite strategy for analyzing the Moses-God dialogue in Surah *Ṭāhā*, as illustrated in Figure 1.

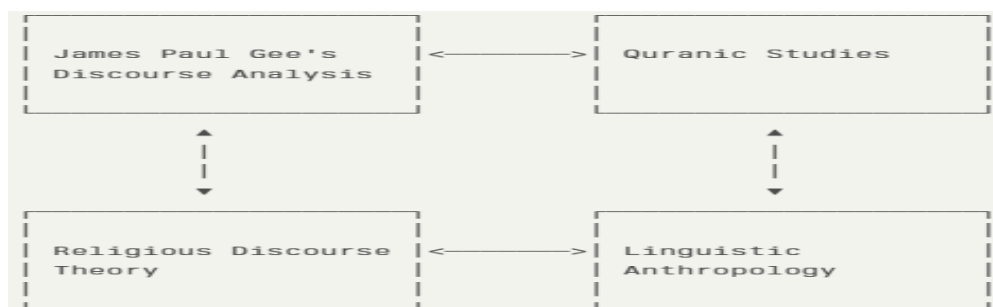


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for CDA of Surah *Ṭāhā*

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Critical Discourse Analysis developed from its origins in critical linguistics as an interdisciplinary methodology committed to the investigation of the place of language in social contexts. For Fairclough and Wodak (1997), "Discourse is the medium by which societal structures are enacted, instituted, legitimated, confirmed or challenged by text and talk." This axiomatic statement of faith reveals the symmetrical relation between discourse and society whereby language reproduces and exerts influence on social realities. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model stresses that "Social actors engaged in discourse do not solely use their own personal experiences, but draw upon shared cognitive representations termed social representations." This model calls attention to the key role played by shared mental models in acting as a middleman between personal language choice and more extensive social structures and ideologies.

Recent advances in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have highlighted the necessity of employing interdisciplinary methods that combine linguistic analysis with knowledge drawn from sociology, psychology, history, and political science. Reisigl and Wodak (2016) have promoted methodological pluralism in CDA and recommended that researchers must tailor their analytical tools to fit the precise contexts and research issues under examination.

2. James Paul Gee's Discourse Analysis Framework

James Paul Gee has developed a comprehensive discourse analysis toolkit that encompasses identity theory along with analysis tools intended to examine how language builds meaning and social reality.

2.1. Identity Theory

Gee's identity theory offers a sophisticated framework for analyzing processes of identity construction and recognition in discourse. Gee describes the concept of identity as "Being recognized as a certain kind of person, in a given context." and explains four distinct views of identity:

1. Nature Perspective (N-identities): Identities that arise from natural factors, e.g., sexual distinctions such as male and female. However, the authenticity of these identities is subject to culture, insofar as "N-identities must always derive their power as identities from the work of institutions, discourse and dialogue, or affinity groups."

2. Institutional Perspective (I-identities): Identities that are formulated by institutional authorities, for example, the identity of a student or a professor. These identities can be "Imposed on a person, like that of a prisoner, or can be a calling for the person, like the role of a college professor."

3. Discourse Perspective (D-identities): Identities formed by discourse and conversation with others, identified by the way one speaks, writes, or communicates.

4. Affinity Perspective (A-identities): A-identities that are created by shared practices within affinity groups, fashioned by participation in particular activities.

Gee notes that these viewpoints are not to be viewed as discrete categorizations but as interconnected elements of identity's operation in social arenas. The value of his model is its recognition that identity is not monolithic

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or static but that it is multifaceted and contextual, formed by many forms of recognition and validation.

2.2. Building Tasks and Tools of Inquiry

Gee's framework of analysis incorporates seven building tasks of language, or the manner by which language constructs meaning and reality:

1. Significance: The way language is employed to make some things significant or not significant;
2. Activities: The way language is utilized to perform activities or practices;
3. Identities: The way language is used to construct and recognize identities;
4. Relationships: The way language is used to construct, preserve, or transform relationships;
5. Politics: How language is used to express views of the distribution of social goods;
6. Connections: How language is used to unite or separate things;
7. Sign Systems and Knowledge: How language privileges or dis-privileges sign systems or kinds of knowledge.

In order to research these building tasks, Gee suggests six tools of inquiry:

1. Situated Meanings: The particular meanings words and phrases take on in a given context;
2. Social Languages: Various styles or varieties of language utilized in various social contexts;
3. Figured Worlds: Simplified, often unwitting, theories about how the world works;
4. Inter textuality: How texts borrow from and expand on other texts;

5. Discourses: Methods of integrating language with non-language actions, interactions, and thoughts;

6. Conversations: Social or cultural disagreements and debates that are familiar to insiders.

2.3. Implication of Gee's Framework in Analyzing Religious Texts

Although James Paul Gee's theory has been used in numerous discourse contexts, its use in studying religious discourse is a new but still growing field of study. Kouega and Baimada (2012) employed Gee's building tasks in examining African church sermons and discovered that religious discourse employs unique strategies in building meaning, identity, and relationships among members of religious communities. Their study revealed how preachers utilized certain linguistic options in claiming divine authority and establishing solidarity with their audience.

Albakry and Hancock (2008) used Gee's ideas of situated meanings and figured worlds to examine Islamic sermons, illustrating how religious discourse expounds moral templates and theological abstractions in specific linguistic forms. Their study reaffirmed that religious orators make extensive use of inter textuality, connecting their speech to authoritative religious texts to legitimize.

In Quranic studies, Panjwani (2012) applied aspects of Gee's theoretical model in analyzing how educational discourse of the Quran shapes the building of religious knowledge and authority. Even though the study did not directly engage with the Quranic text, the research showed the relevance of discourse analysis in interpreting and pedagogy of religious texts.

Rosowsky (2013) applied elements of Gee's model in studying Quranic literacy practices, such as how the holy book is read, recited, and interpreted

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in Muslim communities. His work was particularly focused on the necessity of considering both textual characteristics and social practices in the analysis of religious discourse.

However, the utilization of Gee's comprehensive framework, particularly his identity theory and related building tasks, remains largely untapped in the immediate analysis of Quranic stories. This represents a significant gap in the current literature, as Gee's approach offers vital tools for examining the formation of divine-human communication in sacred texts.

2.4. The Quran and Surah *Tāhā*: Context and Content

The Quran is the "Principal religious text of Islam, believed by Muslims to be a revelation from God to Muhammad."

It was communicated to Muhammad over a period of roughly 23 years and committed to writing a short time after his death. Islamic tradition states that the "Quran was committed to written form as the Uthmanic codex" within 20 years of Muhammad's death.

Surah *Tāhā* is the 20th surah of the Quran with 135 verses. Its central idea is the "Existence of God" treated through "Narrations about Moses and Adam." The surah is named after the unconnected letters "*Tāhā*" that open the surah whose meaning has been interpreted differently by Quran scholars.

The surah contains one of the Quran's most extensive descriptions of the prophetic call of Moses. Based on the summary in the search results, verses 8 to 50 recount the conversation between Moses and Allah, such as:

- Moses' sighting of the burning bush (verses 8-10);
- The deity addressing Moses (verses 11-12);
- The selection and guidance of Moses (verses 13-14);

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- God declaring Judgment Day to arrive (verses 15-17);
- God giving miracles and signs (verses 18-24);
- Instruction given to Moses to draw near unto Pharaoh (verse 25);
- Moses praying for Aaron's assistance (verses 26-35);
- God reminding Moses of past favors (verses 36-42);
- Moses and Aaron's being sent to Pharaoh (verses 43-50).

This narrative progression offers fertile ground for discourse analysis, especially with regard to the construction of prophetic and divine identities, dynamics of power relations, and theological ideas.

Despite the extensive classical exegesis of Quranic narratives, like the narrative of Moses in Surah *Ṭāhā*, there is limited application of contemporary discourse analysis frameworks, particularly James Paul Gee's framework, on these texts. The literature shows several gaps:

1. Methodological Gap: Most Quranic discourse studies follow traditional exegetical methods or general linguistic examination rather than systematic application of contemporary CDA frameworks.
2. Theoretical Gap: There have been limited studies employing Gee's theory of identity in examining the construction of prophetic and divine identities in Quranic narratives.
3. Research Gap: Although some research has examined many Quranic stories through the lens of discourse analysis, the particular discourse between Moses and God in Surah *Ṭāhā* has drawn relatively less attention from this analytical lens.
4. Integrative Gap: Methods are required that would integrate conventional Quranic interpretation with modern discourse analysis approaches.

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This research aims to fill such gaps by applying Gee's rich theory to examine how the Moses-God dialogue in Surah *Tāhā* builds identities, relationships, and theological significance through distinctive language patterns.

2.5. Methodological Structure

The research uses an integrated strategy that intertwines quantitative and qualitative analysis within the descriptive-analytic framework. It uses the sequential explanatory research design where quantitative analysis is conducted initially and then feeds into the qualitative explanation. It allows for not only organized quantification of discourse patterns but also for in-depth analysis of their relevance and consequence.

The question remains throughout the following steps:

1. Data Collection: Identification and collection of relevant verses of Surah *Tāhā* covering the conversation of Moses with the Omnipresent;
2. Corpus Preparation: The organization of retrieved verses into a corpus suitable for analysis;
3. Quantitative Analysis: Evaluation of the frequencies of Gee's six inquiry instruments and seven basic elements in the corpus;
4. Qualitative Analysis: A descriptive analysis of the discourse using Gee's framework;
5. Integration: Combining quantitative and qualitative findings to answer research questions.

The main data source is Surah *Tāhā* of the Quran, specifically verses 8-50, which cover the conversation between God and Moses. The text is taken from the following credible online sources:

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1. Quran.makarem.ir: A comprehensive Quranic resource providing the Arabic text, translation, and commentary;
2. Quran.com is a well-known site for getting the Quran in different languages;
3. Anhaar.com: A specialized website offering detailed Quranic analysis.

The source texts are introduced with the original script with accurate translations to allow for easy exploration of the source language with respect to its translation counterparts. Credibility of the qualitative analysis was ensured mainly through the use of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English translation with other translations being used for the sake of comparisons.

The data collection methodology included the following phases:

1. These verses were determined through analysis of those containing direct speech between God and Moses (verses 8-50) within the narrative structure outlined in the summary of Surah Ṭāhā;
2. Text Extraction: Those verses were retrieved from the assigned sites in both English and Arabic;
3. Segmentation: Acquired text was segmented into discourse elements based on:
O! Speaker changes (God to Moses or Moses to God), the discussion illustrates changes in subject, narrative transitions or interludes;
4. Corpus Compilation: The segmented text was compiled into a complete corpus, along with metadata identifying the speaker, verse number, and discourse context.

2.6. Data Analysis Procedure

2.6.1. Quantitative Analysis

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The quantitative analysis involved systematic classification and counting of discourse features in accordance with Gee's theoretical model:

1. Coding Scheme Development: A detailed coding scheme was developed using Gee's six tools of inquiry and seven building blocks. A clear definition was given for each category using particular linguistic signs.
2. Systematic Coding: Two trained coders coded the data independently according to the coding structure established. Inter-coder reliability was tested using Cohen's Kappa with at least 0.8 as the minimal acceptable reliability.
3. Frequency Analysis: Frequency rate was established for each category which was as follows:
 - Raw frequency counts;
 - Percentage distribution across categories;
 - Distribution patterns by speaker (God vs. Moses).
4. Statistical analysis: We conducted Chi-square tests to detect statistically significant differences in category distribution across various speakers and discourse contexts.
5. Visualization: Outcomes were communicated using tables, bar charts, and network diagrams in order to illustrate patterns and connections.

2.6.2. Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis took a descriptive-analytical strategy in explaining the patterns of discourse that had been revealed through quantitative analysis:

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1. Meticulous Analysis: Detailed examination of specific portions of discourse that represent key patterns or categories.
2. Contextual Analysis: A study of linguistic choices within their narrative, cultural, and theological contexts.
3. Identity Analysis: The application of Gee's identity theory in analyzing the development of prophetic and divine identities.
4. Analysis of Relationships: An exploration of power relationships and social resources as expressed through discourse.
5. Inter textual Analysis: Identification of connections between the Moses-God discourse and other Quranic narratives.
6. Theological Implications: A study of how the discourse patterns affect the theological message conveyed in the surah.

2.7. Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure reliability and validity of analysis, numerous methodologies were applied:

1. Triangulation: Multiple data sources (different websites and translations) were used to verify textual accuracy.
2. Expert Consultation: Experts in the fields of discourse analysis and Quran studies were consulted to ensure methodological consistency and contextual sensitivity.
3. Systematic Coding: A detailed coding manual was developed, and the coders were trained to ensure uniform adherence to Gee's framework.
4. Inter-coder Reliability: Two independent coders analyzed the corpus, with disagreements resolved through discussion.
5. Transparency: All analytical procedures were documented in detail, and representative examples were provided to illustrate coding decisions.

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6. Contextual Validity: Interpreters placed the meanings within the right cultural, temporal, and religious contexts of the Quranic work.

3. Data Analysis

3.1. Quantitative Analysis: Frequency of Occurrences

The quantitative analysis reveals interesting patterns with respect to the distribution of Gee's probing devices across the major elements of the conversation of Moses with God as portrayed in Surah *Tāhā*. Frequency and percentage distributions of the categories are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Occurrences of Gee's Six Instruments of Inquiry in the Moses-God Discourse

Tool of Inquiry	Frequency	Percentage
Situated Meanings	42	31.8%
Figured Worlds	35	26.5%
Social Languages	23	17.4%
Inter textually	16	12.1%
Discourses	10	7.6%
Conversations	6	4.6%
Total	132	100%

Table 1 shows that figured worlds and situated meanings are the most common tools of inquiry in the discourse, together accounting for over 58% of the instances. This suggests that the communication between Moses and God relies heavily on context-specific interpretations and underlying theories

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about divine-human interactions. Furthermore, social languages, as defined by distinctive patterns of expression for specific contexts, are also prominently featured, with attention drawn to the specialized registers used by both divine and human communicators.

Table 2: Expression of Gee's Seven Building Blocks in the Moses-God Discourse

Building Block	Frequency	Percentage
Identities	38	29.2%
Relationships	31	23.8%
Significance	21	16.2%
Sign Systems/Knowledge	17	13.1%
Activities	13	10.0%
Connections	7	5.4%
Politics	3	2.3%
Total	130	100%

Table 2 shows that the most frequent elements of the discourse are identity construction and relationship building, together representing 53% of uses. This is also supported through the narrative's focus on the construction of Moses' prophetic identity and his relationship with the divine. Also highly represented are the construction of significance, that is, what is of concern, and the prioritization of certain forms of knowledge, which again reflect the religious nature of the discourse.

Fig. 2: Distribution of tools of inquiry for each Speaker

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Tools of Inquiry	Frequency (God)	Frequency (Moses)
Situated Meanings	42	12
Social Languages	10	23
Figured Worlds	35	10
Intertextuality	5	16
Discourses	10	4
Conversations	2	6

The chart in Figure 2 portrays the different speakers' uses of inquiry devices as varying significantly, reflecting interesting differences in the communicative styles of God and Moses. God's discourse contains more instances of situated meanings and figured worlds, depicting the divine role in establishing context-specific meanings and theological frameworks. By contrast, the speech of Moses uses comparatively higher instances of social languages and inters textually to reflect his engagement with different contexts of discourse and references to communal knowledge.

3.2. Qualitative Analysis: Descriptive-Analytic Interpretation**3.2.1. Identity Construction in the Moses-God Discourse**

The conversation that occurs between God and Moses in Surah *Ṭāhā* sketched out identities within different linguistic contexts that distinguish prophetic and divine roles. In accordance with Gee's theory of identity, identities are constructed through the recognition of "A certain sort of person, within a particular context." This conversation with God and Moses allows for the creation of different aspects of identity:

1. The divine identity is constructed mainly through institutional perspectives (I-identity) and discourse perspectives (D-identity). As the supreme authority, God issues commands, gives signs, and makes declarations that define divine knowledge and power. For example, in verse 14, God states, "Verily, I am Allah: There is no god but I: So serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for My remembrance." This statement constructs God's identity through self-affirmation (I am Allah) and the assertion of institutional authority by ordering worship and prayer.

2. Construction of prophetic identity: The development of Moses's identity is achieved through the combination of natural (N-identity), institutional (I-identity), and discursive (D-identity) perspectives. He first exists as a mortal interacting with the divine (N-identity), then develops into the prophetic role (I-identity) due to his election and authorization by God. His discursive identity is forged through his questioning, which reflects his humility and agency within the human-divine interaction framework.

3. Transformative identity construction: The narrative shows the transformation of Moses's identity from being regular to being prophetic and thus reflecting Gee's theory that identities are not fixed but are developed through dynamic processes of recognition. It is also linguistically marked through the shifting of modes of address and the attribution of particular roles and symbols.

3.2.2. Situated Meaning in Divine-Human Interaction

The discourse employs numerous situated meanings, context-specific interpretations of words and phrases that convey theological concepts:

1. The instruction "Remove your shoes" in verse 12 carries a contextual meaning of entering sacred space, thus recognizing the sacred valley of *Tuwā*.

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The contextual meaning draws a line of demarcation between the profane and the sacred realms.

2. Signs: The term "Signs" in verses 22-23 carries multiple situated meanings: physical miracles (staff turning into serpent, hand becoming white), evidence of divine power, and symbolic representations of Moses's prophetic authority. These layered meanings construct both Moses's prophetic identity and God's divine power.

3. Remembrance: Commanding "Set up prayer for My remembrance," as clarified in verse 14, has a contextual meaning that transcends mere remembrance into one of continuous relationship, covenant maintenance, and spiritual presence. This contextual understanding produces not only action (prayer) but also relationship (divine and human relationship).

3.2.3. Figured Worlds in Sacred Scripture

The conversation involves many constructed realities, succinct assertions about the way things work in reality that demarcate theological systems:

1. Divine Commission: The narrative unfolds within a theoretical model in which prophets are appointed and commissioned by God instead of taking the role upon them. This theoretical model is maintained through statements like "I have chosen thee" (verse 13) and by being provided with signs and miracles.

2. Divine Human Hierarchy: It assumes a hierarchical universe where God has power such that man succumbs to it and establishes a clear power hierarchy. However, the hierarchy is complicated because God is also concerned with the fears of Moses, suggesting a hierarchical reality with empathetic and accommodating governance of the divinity.

3. Prophetic Mission: The account sketches out a theology of prophetic mission in which agents are sent to confront oppressive authorities with messages of divine origins. It is established through the call to Moses to go and speak to Pharaoh (verses 24-28) and through the command to speak with "Gentle speech." (verse 44)

3.2.4. Power Relations and the Distribution of Social Goods

The conversation creates clear power relationships and distributes social resources, i.e., status, power, and knowledge, via certain linguistic choices:

1. Divine Sovereignty: The language used by the Divine involves authoritative commands (Listen! Remove your sandals, Go to Pharaoh) that assert divine sovereignty and the right to command. However, this sovereignty is wielded with sensitivity, as seen in God's careful response to Moses' objections and provision of comfort.
2. Prophetic Authority: Moses' prophetic authority is founded on his being chosen by God and being given miraculous signs, which will authenticate him as a messenger. This authority is expressed linguistically in the divine decree, "I have chosen thee," together with the command to "Go with Our signs."
3. Knowledge Dissemination: The conversation demonstrates an asymmetrical distribution of knowledge, where God possesses absolute knowledge (I know what is hidden), and Moses gains partial insight through divine revelation. This knowledge exchange creates a hierarchical power relation whereby divine omniscience reinforces the prophet's authority.
4. Agency Negotiation: Despite the power differential in effect, Moses exercises controlled agency through the use of questions and entreaties, which suggests the negotiation of human agency within boundaries of divinely appointed power.

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3.3. Relevance to Extensive Theological Systems

The dialogue builds connections to wider theological concepts through specific linguistic patterns:

1. Monotheism: The declaration "Truly I am Allah: There is no god but I" (verse 14) establishes the connection between the account of Moses and the Islamic principle of monotheism. This connection is reinforced through contrast with the false declaration of divinity made by Pharaoh.
2. Revelation Structure: The account is connected to a larger framework of prophetic revelation found in the Quran, thus creating continuity between Moses' experience and the prophetic ministry of Muhammad. The connection is designed through similar discursive structures and theological themes.
3. Divine Support: The assurance expressed in the sentence "Fear not, for I am with you both: I hear and see (everything)" (verse 46) is connected to the theological theme of divine assistance given to prophets during their missions. This connection provides a conceptual paradigm in which prophets face opposition but are successful through celestial help.

4. Discussion

The analysis of the conversation of Moses and God in Surah *Ṭāhā* through James Paul Gee's analytic framework reveals some interesting patterns that deepen our understanding of the ways religious discourse creates identities, builds relationships, and produces theology. This part discusses the research implications of such findings in terms of the research questions.

4.1. Research Question 1: Building of Identity

The early research question addressed the way in which discourse constitutes the personal identities of God and of Moses according to Gee's theory of identity. An analysis reveals that there is a complex interplay of identity construction through different standpoints:

The identity of God is largely constructed through institutional authority (I-identity) and discursive structures (D-identity) that outline divine qualities of sovereignty, wisdom, and mercy. The linguistic features that mark this identity construction are self-referential assertions (I am Allah), imperatives, and explanations of divine attributes. These structures align with El-Sharif's (2012) model of "Authority Discourse" in religious texts, where the identity of the divine is confirmed through commanding speech acts and heightened self-reference.

The identity of Moses undergoes tremendous transformation, shifting from one of everyday ordinariness (N-identity) to one of prophetic identity (I-identity) due to commissioning and election from God. This transformation illustrates Gee's postulate that identities are never fixed but are instead constructed through processes of recognition. As noted by Panjwani (2012) in his analysis of religious identity formation, prophetic identity in Islamic discourse typically takes the pattern of "divine vocation, human resistance and divine affirmation," something clearly evident in the case of Moses.

The fact that identity formation accounts for the largest percentage (29.2%) of the building blocks in the discourse establishes the centrality of identity in religious discourse. This also supports the contention of Albakry and Hancock (2008) that religious discourse puts significant emphasis on the formation of divine and human identities that are the core part of theological analysis.

4.2. Research Question 2: Prevalence of Discourse Features

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The second research question was directed towards instances of Gee's tools of inquiry and seven building blocks within the conversation of Moses and God. In quantitative analysis, it was revealed that the most dominant tools of inquiry were situated meanings (31.8%) and figured worlds (26.5%), while identities (29.2%) and relationships (23.8%) were the most frequent building blocks.

The outcomes confirm that the conversation occurs primarily through context-dependent meanings and tacit structures concerning divine-human interactions with an eye towards identity construction and relational dynamics. This preference is different from the one noted with Kouega and Baimada's (2012) analysis of religious sermons where the emphasis was on meanings and relational relationships. This discrepancy can reveal the distinct features of divine-human conversation as opposed to human-to-human religious discourse.

The very low frequency of politics (2.3%) as an underlying element is interesting, especially given the fact that the story deals with a challenge to the Pharaoh's political power. However, this could indicate that the discussion frames the conflict in theological, rather than political, terms, emphasizing the precedence of divine authority over human political structures.

4.3. Research Question 3: Power Relations Dynamics and Interconnections

The third research question probed into the way discourse creates power relations, centrality, and interdependence. Analysis reveals a multifaceted power relationship where divine power is absolute but expressed with compassion and sensitivity towards human concerns. This is illustrative of the

theory of "Compassionate Authority" as defined by Rosowsky (2013) in religious discourse where power imbalance occurs alongside goodwill.

The construction of significance within the text puts supreme value on divine unity, the prophetic mission, and spiritual practice, especially prayer. This is in line with the Quran's theological paradigm, which emphasizes monotheism, prophetic guidance, and ritual observance as the essential elements of religious life.

The relationships established within the discourse operate on dual levels: internally, to connect the prophetic call of Moses with his individual context; and externally, to connect the narrative with wider theological concepts while positioning Moses' experiences within broad systems of divine guidance and revelation. These interconnections produce what van Dijk terms "Coherence Relations" within religious discourse, in which individual narratives are meaningful due to their placement within wider theological systems.

4.4. Research Question 4: Understanding Context and Conceptual Foundations

The fourth research question concerned the contextualized meanings and constructed worlds alluded to in the discourse. The analysis uncovered several key contextual meanings, including the understanding of sacred space, the idea of signs as multivalent evidence, and the notion of remembrance as a relationship-sustaining mechanism. These contextualized meanings create a theological paradigm in which ordinary things (places, objects, and practices) take on sacred significance through divine attribution.

The constructed realities within the discourse establish crucial theories with regard to divine choice, call to prophetic vocation, and hierarchies of the divine and the human. The constructed realities provide analytical templates

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not only for the narrative of Moses but for any narrative of the prophets within the Quran. Constructed realities are "Simplified, often unconscious theories about the way the world works," that guide interpretation and action. Within religious discourse, constructed realities provide theological templates for understanding relationships of the divine and the human.

4.5. Theoretical Implications

The findings have many theoretical implications for understanding religious discourse through Gee's theory:

1. The relevance of identity construction within the discourse makes Gee's theory of identity of especially crucial concern for the analysis of religious texts because the demarcation of divine and human identities is crucial for the determination of theological meaning.
2. Contextual interpretation: The widespread prevalence of context-dependent meanings illustrates the importance of performing contextual analysis within religion discourse debates as such as challenges approaches that treat religious language as fixed or literal.
3. Asymmetry of discourse: Differences in patterns of discourse of the divine and human speakers as illustrated in Figure 2 reveal that Gee's theoretical model can account for the linguistic creation of power asymmetry in religious texts.
4. That all seven building tasks are present in the discourse but with varying frequencies supports Gee's argument that language simultaneously works in several capacities to construct social reality.

4.6. Implications

The analysis also has important practical implications for Quranic studies and religious discourse analysis:

1. Integrating Methodologies: This research demonstrates the scope for synthesizing modern approaches to discourse analysis with established methods of Quranic exegesis to deepen each discipline.
2. Scope for Comparison: The methodology used in this research can be applied to explore other divine-human dialogues in the Quran and other religious scriptures, thus enabling comparative studies.
3. Educational Implications: The findings could offer direction for methods in teaching Quranic narratives, highlighting how linguistic constructions influence theological meanings and associations.
4. Interfaith Dialogue: The examination of the linguistic construction of divine-human relationships in religious scriptures can facilitate interfaith dialogue by making explicit both commonalities and differences in discourse patterns across traditions.

Conclusion

The research draws upon the discourse analysis model developed by James Paul Gee to examine the conversation of Moses with God as it appears in Surah *Tāhā* of the Quran. Through such analysis, religious discourse creates identities, builds relationships, and communicates theological meanings through particular linguistic organization.

This research has several findings as follows:

1. Identification formation: The passage analyzes prophetic and divine identities from different standpoints with special focus on the I-identity of

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God as well as proposing a transformation of N-identity to I-identity of Moses.

2. Discourse Patterns: Situated meanings and figured worlds dominate the tools of inquiry, while identity construction and relationship building are the most frequent building blocks. This pattern reflects the discourse's focus on establishing theological frameworks and divine-human relationships.

3. Power Dynamics: The address creates a complicated power relationship that unites God's sovereignty with empathy towards human problems and thus creates what may be termed as "Compassionate Authority" as the model for human-divine interaction.

4. Theological Frameworks: The paper employs specific linguistic processes to express theological concepts such as monotheism, the prophetic calling, divine guidance, and ritualistic devotion, thus framing the narrative of Moses within general Islamic teachings.

It is worth mentioning that there are some limitations that should be acknowledged:

1. Reliance on Translation: While the study analyzed the Arabic text, the primary analysis relied on English translations, which could have missed nuances present in the original language.

2. Scope Limitation: The study focused specifically on the Moses-God discourse in Surah *Ṭāhā*, not examining how this discourse relates to other Moses narratives in the Quran.

3. Methodological Challenges: Applying a contemporary Western analytical framework to a classical Arabic text involves cross-cultural and cross-temporal interpretation challenges.

4. Interpreting Variability: Interpreting scripture has a great deal of variability to it, and the analysis here is only one of many possible approaches.

Based on the results and limitations identified, several avenues for future questions are indicated:

1. A comparative analysis that would expand the scope of applying Gee's framework to other divine-human dialogues within the Quran would enable an exploration of discourse structures within different prophetic narratives.

2. Cross-Religious Comparison: Using similar analytical methods to the divine-human relationships in other religious traditions (e.g., biblical narratives) can reveal similarities and differences with respect to how sacred texts describe divine-human relationships.

3. Arabic linguistic analysis: A close analysis of the Arabic language, especially with regard to different linguistic features like verb conjugation, pronouns, and rhetorical devices can give more in-depth insight into the making of meaning within the source language.

4. Reception Studies: A study of how modern readers interpret the Moses-God dialogue would be a valuable contribution to understanding how religious discourse functions within religious communities.

5. Development of methodology: An explanation of Gee's theory of religious text analysis may enable the construction of specially adapted analytical tools directed towards analysis of religious discourse.

This work demonstrates the importance of applying contemporary discourse analysis techniques to traditional religious texts. By examining the exchange between Moses and God in Surah *Tāhā*, and how it constructs identities, relationships, and theological meanings through specific linguistic structures, this project makes a contribution to religious studies and discourse analysis.

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The research points to religious language existing within complex linguistic systems that demarcate the boundaries of human and divine identities construct multifaceted power relationships and articulate theological concepts through context-dependent meanings and created realities. The research suggests that understanding religious texts requires not only focus on their content but also investigation of the way their linguistic patterns produce meanings and realities.

The work outlined here attempts to integrate traditional Quranic exegesis methodologies with contemporary discourse analysis, thus forming a unifying research methodology. It recognizes the religious role of sacred texts alongside simultaneously applying insights drawn from linguistic theory with analytical exactness. It is potentially capable of strengthening each discipline and fostering greater insight into the ways religious discourse impacts human life and belief systems.

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Online Resources

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