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The Interplay of Semantic Relations and Its Role in Meaning Construction and the Cohesion of Qurʾanic Discourse: An Applied Analytical Study of Lexical Ambiguity, Synonymy, and the Convergence of Linguistic Cues in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ

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***Abstract*—**This study seeks to elucidate the dialectical relationship between semantic relations and the mechanisms of meaning production and discourse cohesion within the inimitable organization of the Qurʾān, taking Sūrat al-Nisāʾ as a focused field of application and inductive investigation. It addresses a central research question: How do semantic relations—lexical ambiguity, synonymy, and semantic proximity—converge with a multilayered system of morphological, syntactic, co-textual, and situational cues to resolve semantic indeterminacy and construct a tightly integrated textual fabric? To address this question, the study adopts a descriptive–analytical method that brings the depth of the Arabic linguistic and rhetorical heritage—legal theory, Qurʾānic exegesis and sciences, and Arabic philology—into dialogue with modern linguistic and semantic approaches, including semantic field theory, componential analysis of semantic features, and text and discourse linguistics. The study yields several principal findings. First, lexical ambiguity in Qurʾānic discourse does not constitute an arbitrary accumulation of meanings; rather, it is an instrument of inimitable expression governed by the principle of cue-guided interpretation. An ambiguous lexical item is never left open to indeterminacy but is embedded in a network of morphological, syntactic, and situational constraints that singles out the intended meaning. Second, what is conventionally termed "synonymy" in the Qurʾān is fundamentally a matter of semantic proximity and fine-grained distinctions that preserve the conceptual specificity and rhetorical nuances of each word. Third, the interdependence of lexical ambiguity, synonymy, and interpretive cues constitutes the backbone of textual cohesion and discourse coherence in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ, securing the sūrah's precise organic and legislative unity.

***Keywords*—**lexical ambiguity; polysemy; synonymy; linguistic cues; Sūrat al-Nisāʾ; textual cohesion.

Introduction

Qurʾānic discourse represents the highest degree of rhetorical and linguistic inimitability: its lexical items and structures coalesce into a tightly woven fabric that falsehood cannot penetrate from before or behind. Semantics is among the most distinguished and exacting branches of linguistic inquiry, for it enables the depths of meaning to be explored and the purposes of revealed texts to be clarified. Early scholars of Arabic—legal theorists, exegetes, linguists, and grammarians—recognized the problem of semantic relations among words and their role in formulating rulings and constructing concepts. They accordingly devoted extensive discussions to lexical ambiguity (al-mushtarak al-laf**dhi**), contextual senses and corresponding expressions (al-wuj**ou**h wa-l-na**dha**ʾir), lexical distinctions (al-fur**ou**q al-l**o**ughawiyah), and synonymy (al-tar**a**duf). The present study asks how these semantic phenomena interact within a s**u**rah whose legislative, social, and doctrinal character is as distinctive as that of S**u**rat al-Nisāʾ. The s**u**rah contains highly precise terms in sensitive legal contexts, including inheritance,

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marriage, financial transactions, armed struggle, and the rights of vulnerable persons. Any uncertainty concerning a word's meaning may therefore undermine the derivation of a ruling or the understanding of the divine purpose.

The significance of this study lies in its productive integration of the originality and rigor of the Arabic semantic and legal-theoretical heritage with modern linguistic approaches - semantic field theory, componential analysis, and discourse linguistics. This integration contributes to identifying further dimensions of the rhetorical inimitability of Qurʾ**a**nic composition. The study pursues the following objectives:

To establish an analytical and critical foundation for the principal semantic concepts: lexical ambiguity, synonymy, and interpretive cues.

To investigate lexically ambiguous expressions in S**u**rat al-Nis**a**ʾ and disentangle their semantic content across different contexts.

To substantiate the principle that absolute synonymy does not occur in the Qurʾān and elucidate the conceptual and aesthetic distinctions among semantically related terms in the sūrah.

To develop an analytical model that reveals the network of morphological and syntactic cues supporting Qurʾānic discourse and ensuring its cohesion and coherence.

I. Semantic Relations and the Theory of Interpretive Cues

1- Lexical Ambiguity (al-Mushtarak al-Lafdhī)

In linguistic and legal-theoretical terminology, al-mushtarak al-lafdhī is defined as "a single lexical form that signifies two or more distinct meanings on an equal basis among the speakers of that language" (al-Souyouṭi, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 369). Legal theorists distinguish the ambiguous lexical item (mushtarak) from the indeterminate expression (mujmal) and the interpretively construed expression (muʾawwal), The first encompasses multiple meanings by virtue of its original lexical assignment, whereas indeterminacy arises when an expression oscillates between two meanings and neither can be preferred without an external cue. Modern linguistics distinguishes two types of lexical ambiguity. The first is homonymy: identity of form accompanied by a complete difference in semantic origin and derivation, exemplified in the source by ʿayn, "eye" and "spring of water." The second is polysemy: a word has multiple meanings linked by a semantic connection or shared core from which these meanings develop through extension, figurative usage, and metaphor (Ullmann, 1962, p. 159)**.**

Classical scholars adopted three positions on the occurrence of lexical ambiguity in the Qurʾan. The first rejected it; Ibn Durustawayh (d. 347 AH), for example, maintained that ambiguity conflicts with the wisdom of clear expression and introduces uncertainty. The second affirmed it and was upheld by the majority of linguists and legal theorists, including al-Khalil, Sibawayh, Abū ʿUbayd, and al-Souyouṭi. They held that lexical ambiguity occurs both in Arabic and in the Qurʾān, and devoted specialized works to it under the designation al-wujouh wa-l-nadhaʾir. In the account presented here, wujouh denotes the different meanings assumed by the same expression in different passages, whereas nadhaʾir denotes distinct expressions that share a meaning. A third, intermediate position maintains that Qurʾanic lexical ambiguity is invariably constrained by cues that dispel any appearance of obscurity or confusion.

2-The Question of Synonymy

Etymologically, taraduf denotes riding one behind another. In technical usage, it refers to "individual expressions that denote the same referent in the same respect" (al-Jurjānī, 1405 AH, p. 68). Scholars of Arabic divided into two principal schools on this issue. One accepted the possibility of complete synonymy, as did Ibn Khalawayh and al-Rummani; some proponents even claimed to have memorized hundreds of names for a lion or a sword. The other adopted a critically discriminating position that rejected absolute synonymy in language generally and in the Qurʾān particularly. Its leading figures include Abū Hilal al-ʿAskari in al-Furūq al-lughawiyah, Ibn al-Aʿrabi, Aḥmad ibn Faris in al-Ṣaḥibi, and al-Raghib al-Aṣfahani in al-Mufradat. In the introduction to his work, Abū Hilal al-ʿAskari writes: "Evidence that differences in expressions and names entail differences in the meanings of actions is this: if by one expression you intend exactly what you intend by another in every respect, one of the two is superfluous and unnecessary; the wisdom of the Wise is above such superfluity" (al-ʿAskarī, 1997, p. 14)**.**

Within the inimitable organization of the Qurʾan, this principle is affirmed categorically: no word can replace another without depriving the verse of part of its distinctive meaning and expressive precision. The Qurʾan thus employs semantic proximity while preserving the conceptual distinctions and psychological and pragmatic nuances associated with each lexical item.

3-The Theory of Cues and Their Role in Semantic Interpretation

The interpretive cue is fundamental to determining the trajectory of meaning, resolving lexical ambiguity, and clarifying obscure structures. In legal-theoretical and linguistic terminology, a cue is "any verbal, semantic, or situational sign or indication by which the intended meaning is identified from among possible meanings" (al-Amidi, 2003, Vol. 1, p. 45). Scholars distinguish several principal categories:

Verbal cues comprise morphological cues, such as structure, derivation, and pattern; grammatical and syntactic cues, such as predication, grammatical interdependence, prepositions, and agreement; and lexical cues, such as collocation and antonymy.

Situational and pragmatic cues include the context of situation, the occasions of revelation (asbab al-nuzoul), the requirements of the communicative situation, and the overarching purposes of legislation.

This classical theoretical framework converges with modern pragmatics and the relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson. In this perspective, recipients draw on cues to minimize cognitive effort and arrive at the interpretation most relevant to, and most consistent with, the purposes of the discourse.

II. Manifestations of Lexical Ambiguity and the Role of Context in Surat al-Nisāʾ

Surat al-Nisāʾ is distinguished by an abundance of lexically ambiguous expressions that move across different semantic fields. This section examines representative examples that reveal how context and interpretive cues guide the interpretation of lexical ambiguity. A semantic network can be identified through the following expressions in the surah.

1-The Lexeme "Nafs"

The lexeme nafs and its plural anfus occur in approximately thirty places in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ, revealing a broad range of senses governed by the surah's precise contextual organization.

The primordial human origin and a single person. At the opening of the sūrah, God states: "**O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife** " (Sūrat al-Nisāʾ(1). The syntactic cue provided by the modifier waḥidah, "one," followed by "and created from it its mate," determines nafs here as the person of Adam, peace be upon him. This establishes the principle of a shared human unity and equality in rights and obligations.

The soul and biological life, which may not lawfully be taken. God states: "And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful" (Qurʾān, n.d., 4:29), and "And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein; and the Wrath and the Curse of Allâh are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him.[1]" (An-Nisa, 93). Here nafs is associated with the verb "to kill," which supplies a verbal cue excluding inward, psychological meanings. The intended meaning is therefore the taking of an inviolable life. The verse also conveys a rhetorical subtlety: a believer's killing of another believer amounts to killing oneself, given the unity of the body of believers.

The conscious self as the locus of volition, moral accountability, and inward thoughts. God states: "And when they come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allāh does not greet you and say among themselves, 'Why does Allāh not punish us'" (Qurʾān, n.d., 58:8; see Translation Note 2). He also states: "Lo! You are those who have argued for them in the life of this world, but who will argue for them on the Day of Resurrection against Allâh, or who will then be their defender?" (An-Nisa, 109) and "And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allâh's Forgiveness, he will find Allâh Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (An-Nisa, 110). Wrongdoing here is inflicted upon the self by burdening it with sins and their consequences in the Hereafter.

2-The Lexeme "Kitāb"

In Sūrat al-Nisāʾ, kitāb moves among several meanings

The Qurʾān. "Surely, We have sent down to you (O Muhammad صلى the Book (this Qur'ân) in truth that you might judge between men by that which Allâh has shown you (i.e. has taught you through Divine Revelation), so be not a pleader for the treacherous." (An-Nisa, 105). The cues are the act of revelation and the legislative purpose, "so you may judge between the people.

The Torah, the Gospel, and earlier scriptures generally. "The people of the Scripture (Jews) ask you to cause a book to descend upon them from heaven. Indeed, they asked Mûsâ (Moses) for even greater than that, when they said: "Show us Allâh in public," but they were struck with thunder-clap and lightning for their wickedness. Then they worshipped the calf even after clear proofs, evidences, and signs had come to them. (Even) so We forgave

them. And We gave Mûsâ (Moses) a clear proof of authority." (An-Nisa, 153). The cues are the construction ahl al-kitāb, "the People of the Scripture," and the challenge made by the Jews.

Divine ordinance and binding obligation. "When you have finished As-Salât (the congregational prayer), remember Allâh standing, sitting down, and (lying down) on your sides, but when you are free from danger, perform As-Salât (Iqamat-as-Salât). Verily, As-Salât (the prayer) is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours." (An-Nisa, 103). The morphological cue is the pattern fiʿāl used in the sense of mafʿūl—that is, something prescribed and made obligatory at specified times. The source also lists "the written sheet and the record of deeds" as an additional sense, without supplying an example .

3-The Lexeme "Ḍalāl"

In Sūrat al-Nisāʾ, ḍalāl and the related verbal forms aḍalla and yuḍillu occupy a multifaceted semantic network whose interpretation depends on their complements and contexts:

Unbelief and departure from monotheism. "**Verily, Allâh forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners (in worship) with Him, but He forgives whom He wills sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allâh, has indeed strayed far away**." (An-Nisa, 116). The cues are the conditional structure, the association with shirk, "associating partners with God," and the qualification of straying as baʿīd, "far." The expression signifies perdition and radical estrangement from truth

Satanic deception, misleading, and distortion. "**Verily, I will mislead them, and surely, I will arouse in them false desires; and certainly, I will order them to slit the ears of cattle, and indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allâh." And whoever takes Shaitân (Satan) as a Walî (protector or helper) instead of Allâh, has surely suffered a manifest loss**.[2]" (An-Nisa, 119). The passage recounts Satan's threat. Misleading here therefore consists in making evil attractive, whispering suggestions, and diverting hearts from their primordial disposition.

Human error and forgetfulness in testimony and adjudication. "So that if one of them [i.e., the women] errs, then the other can remind her" A related expression in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ is "And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it]" (An -Nisa135). In relation to inheritance and kalālah, the sūrah states: "They ask you for a legal verdict. Say: "Allâh directs (thus) about Al-Kalâlah (those who leave neither descendants nor ascendants as heirs). If it is a man that dies leaving a sister, but no child, she shall have half the inheritance. If (such a deceased was) a woman, who left no child, her brother takes her inheritance. If there are two sisters, they shall have two-thirds of the inheritance; if there are brothers and sisters, the male will have twice the share of the female. (Thus) does Allâh make clear to you (His Law) lest you go astray. And Allâh is All-Knower of everything."" (An-Nisa, 176). This means that God explains the rules so that people do not err in distributing inheritances. Straying here signifies ignorance of the ruling or error in implementing it.

Divine abandonment of a servant and the withholding of guidance. "143. (They are) swaying between this and that, belonging neither to these nor to those; and he whom Allâh sends astray, you will not find for him a way (to the truth — Islâm)." (An-Nisa, 143). The act of sending astray is attributed to God in a passage concerning the hypocrites. According to the Sunni account presented in the source, it means leaving them to their chosen course, withholding coercive guidance, and creating misguidance in their hearts as a consequence of their decision to deviate.

III. Synonymy and Semantic Proximity in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ: Shared Meaning and Semantic Differentiation

Sūrat al-Nisāʾ employs an inimitable rhetorical practice in its use of semantically related words: each expression is assigned to a precise context in which no other expression can perform the same function. The following discussion examines the principal lexical pairing.

1-Qatl, Wafāh/Tawaffī, and Mawt: Killing, Taking in Death, and Death

Some researchers regard mawt, wafāh, and qatl as synonymous terms that simply denote the cessation of life. A careful inductive examination of Sūrat al-Nisāʾ, however, establishes fundamental differences among them.

Qatl signifies the termination of life through direct human aggression and physical violence; it is consequently associated with criminal acts, retaliation in kind (qiṣāṣ), and blood money (diyah). God states: "It is not for a believer to kill a believer except (that it be) by mistake; and whosoever kills a believer by mistake, (it is ordained that) he must set free a believing slave and a compensation (blood-money, i.e. Diya) be given to the deceased's family unless they remit it. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you and he was a believer, the freeing

of a believing slave (is prescribed); and if he belonged to a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance, compensation (blood-money, i.e. Diya) must be paid to his family, and a believing slave must be freed. And whoso finds this (the penance of freeing a slave) beyond his means, he must fast for two consecutive months in order to seek repentance from Allâh. And Allâh is Ever All-Knowing, All-Wise." (An-Nisa, 92)**.**

Wafāh signifies the completion of the appointed lifespan and the soul's return to its Creator through the agency of angels acting at God's command. God states: "Verily, as for those whom the angels take (in death) while they are wronging themselves (as they stayed among the disbelievers even though emigration was obligatory for them), they (angels) say (to them): "In what (condition) were you?" They reply: "We were weak and oppressed on the earth." They (angels) say: "Was not the earth of Allâh spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?" Such men will find their abode in Hell — What an evil destination![1]" (An-Nisa, 97). In the earlier prescription concerning illicit sexual conduct, He states: "And those of your women who commit illegal sexual intercourse, take the evidence of four witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them (i.e. women) to houses until death comes to them or Allâh ordains for them some (other) way.[1]" (An-Nisa, 15). Thus, mawt denotes the ending of the appointed term, wafāh the full taking of life's breaths, and qatl a human criminal act. This inimitable rhetorical distinction is manifested in the response to Jewish claims concerning the Messiah, peace be upon him: "And because of their saying (in boast), "We killed the Messiah 'Îsâ (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), the Messenger of Allâh," — but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but it appeared so to them [the resemblance of 'Îsâ (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man)], and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not [i.e. 'Îsâ (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)] عليهما (An-Nisa, 157). The Qurʾān denies killing and crucifixion because they involve the physical taking of life by human agency, while elsewhere affirming taking and raising: "indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself".

2.Khawf and Khashyah; Kufr and Nifāq

Khawf and khashyah: fear and reverential fear. Khawf is a psychological response to an anticipated harm and may arise from weakness in the person who fears. Khashyah, by contrast, is fear accompanied by veneration and awe, arising from recognition of the greatness of the one feared. Hence the Qurʾānic statement, "So do not fear the people but fear Me", and the statement in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ that a group "feared men as they fear Allāh or with [even] greater fear" This rebukes hypocrites and the fainthearted who equate awe of created beings with the majesty of the Creator, exalted is He. Khawf, meanwhile, is used for contingent, material circumstances: "And if you fear dissension between the two" and "And when there comes to them something [i.e., information] about [public] security or fear" .

Kufr and nifāq: unbelief and hypocrisy. Kufr denotes the denial and concealment of the foundational truth of faith, outwardly and inwardly; nifāq denotes the outward profession of faith combined with inward unbelief. Sūrat al-Nisāʾ is distinctive in exposing the psychological constitution of hypocrites and their fate in the Hereafter: "Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire - and never will you find for them a helper" (Qurʾān, n.d., 4:145). They are assigned a lower depth than those who openly profess unbelief because of the gravity of their deception of the believing community and their erosion of its internal cohesion.

semantic Distinctions among Terms for Marital Payments: Ṣadāq, Ajr, Farīḍah, and Niḥlah

Rather than using a single term for the marital payment, Sūrat al-Nisāʾ varies its vocabulary to foreground a particular legal, legislative, or ethical dimension in each context.

Ṣaduqāt is the plural of ṣaduqah, vocalized with fatḥah on ṣād and ḍammah on dāl. It is derived from ṣidq, "truthfulness" or "sincerity," because payment of the bridal due evidences the sincerity of a man's desire, affection, and honorable intention in seeking marriage. God states: "And give to the women (whom you marry) their Mahr (obligatory bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) with a good heart; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it, and enjoy it without fear of any harm (as Allâh has made it lawful)." (An-Nisa, 4)**.**

Niḥlah denotes a gift freely and willingly bestowed, without a counter-payment or exchange. Its association with ṣaduqāt in the verse excludes the conception of the bridal due as a price or an act of purchase, thereby affirming the woman's dignity and financial independens

Ajr, plural ujūr, occurs in the statements: "Also (forbidden are) women already married, except those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Thus has Allâh ordained for you. All others are lawful, provided you seek (them

in marriage) with Mahr (bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) from your property, desiring chastity, not committing illegal sexual intercourse, so with those of whom you have enjoyed sexual relations, give them their Mahr as prescribed; but if after a Mahr is prescribed, you agree mutually (to give more), there is no sin on you. Surely, Allâh is Ever All-Knowing, All-Wise." (An-Nisa, 24), and "And whoever of you have not the means wherewith to wed free, believing women, they may wed believing girls from among those (slaves) whom your right hands possess, and Allâh has full knowledge about your Faith; you are one from another. Wed them with the permission of their own folk (guardians, Auliyâ' or masters) and give them their Mahr according to what is reasonable; they (the above said captive and slave-girls) should be chaste, not committing illegal sex, nor taking boy-friends. And after they have been taken in wedlock, if they commit illegal sexual intercourse, their punishment is half that for free (unmarried) women.[1] This is for him among you who is afraid of being harmed in his religion or in his body; but it is better for you that you practise self-restraint, and Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (An-Nisa, 25). Ajr here does not mean a hire payment. Rather, it denotes an entitlement associated with marital enjoyment and commitment to the marriage contract. The term is used in the context of marriage to enslaved women to emphasize that the bridal due belongs exclusively to the woman and is not the property of her master

Farīḍah denotes what God has imposed and legally prescribed such that it does not admit of cancellation. God states: "[These shares are] an obligation [imposed] by Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is ever Knowing and Wise"

IV. The Convergence of Morphological, Syntactic, and Situational Cues and Its Role in Textual and Discursive Cohesion

1.Morphological Cues and the Selection of Meaning

Morphological forms and the patterns of verbs and verbal nouns play a decisive role in guiding Qurʾānic meaning and identifying its purposes. Prominent examples in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ include the following.

Transitivity and intensification in tafʿīl as contrasted with ifʿāl. God states: "O you who have believed, believe in Allāh and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before". Exegetes and rhetoricians, including al-Zamakhsharī and Abū al-Suʿūd, noted a subtle morphological distinction between nazzala, whose doubled consonant suggests piecemeal delivery, gradualness, and repetition, and anzala, whose initial hamzah indicates revelation as a single whole. The Qurʾān was revealed in separate portions in response to events over twenty-three years, whereas earlier scriptures, such as the Torah and the Gospel, were revealed to their prophets all at once. This purely morphological cue thus conveys the historical and inimitable dimensions of the two modes of revelation .

The faʿūl and faʿīl patterns in the divine names at verse endings. Verses in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ conclude with endings framed by the most beautiful names of God, such as "Indeed, Allāh is ever Pardoning and Forgiving" "Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise", and "And ever is Allāh Appreciative and Knowing" These intensive and adjectival morphological patterns function as concluding cues linked to the legislative ruling at the beginning of the verse. Where the context concerns inheritance legislation or prescribed penalties, the ending "Knowing and Wise" indicates that the allocation proceeds from complete knowledge and consummate wisdom. Where the context encourages repentance and forgiveness, it concludes with "Pardoning and Forgiving

2.Syntactic and Grammatical Cues in Determining Meaning

Grammatical relations—predication, prepositional complementation, and variations in constituent order—converge to identify the intended meaning and resolve interpretive difficulty

Semantic incorporation (taḍmīn) in verbs and their prepositional complementation. In protecting the property of orphans, God states: "And give to the orphans their property and do not exchange (your) bad things for (their) good ones; and devour not their substance (by adding it) to your substance. Surely, this is a great sin.[2]" (An-Nisa, 2). The verb akala, "to consume," ordinarily takes its object directly, but here it is complemented by ilā, a preposition denoting direction toward an endpoint. This grammatical incorporation conveys the sense: "Do not add their wealth to your own while consuming it and greedily seeking to exhaust it." The preposition thus serves as a consequential syntactic cue in prohibiting even the wrongful combining of assets that leads to the consumption of an orphan's property

Conditional constructions, their consequents, and circumstantial qualifications. God states: "And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls, then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the slaves) that your

right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice." (An-Nisa, 3). The conditional connection between fearing injustice toward orphans and permitting plural marriage presents a syntactic problem clarified by the situational context and the occasion of revelation. A man might have under his guardianship an orphan girl endowed with wealth and beauty, wish to marry her, and reduce her bridal due unjustly. God therefore prohibited such marriages unless complete justice was observed, directing men otherwise to marry other women lawfully available to them. The relation between the conditional clause and its consequent is thus a decisive syntactic cue in construing the ruling.

V. Textual Cohesion and Discourse Coherence in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ

In light of the approaches to text linguistics developed by Halliday and Hasan in Cohesion in English and by de Beaugrande and Dressler in Introduction to Text Linguistics, Sūrat al-Nisāʾ may be approached as an extensive discursive structure in which linguistic cohesive devices work in conjunction with semantic and situational relations. This enables its diverse themes to be read within an organizing framework rather than merely as adjacent legislative units. A useful distinction is that between cohesion—the overt links in a text's linguistic structure—and coherence—the semantic and pragmatic relations that render the parts of discourse intelligible within a unified context. This distinction connects Halliday and Hasan's account of textual cohesive devices with de Beaugrande and Dressler's proposed standards of textuality, including cohesion, coherence, intentionality, and situationality (de Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981; Halliday & Hasan, 1976)**.**

1.Lexical Cohesion and the Construction of Semantic Fields

One aspect of the sūrah's cohesion is achieved through the recurrence of interconnected words and themes, including women, orphans, wealth, justice, bequests, covenants, and rights. The effect of this recurrence extends beyond linking one passage to another: it contributes to the construction of semantic fields that reappear and are renewed in different contexts. The discussion of orphans, women, and wealth at the beginning of the sūrah foregrounds the protection of rights. This concern subsequently broadens to encompass the regulation of familial, financial, and social relations and the community's accountability for honoring covenants and upholding justice.

A precise analysis requires that recurrence not be understood as direct verbal repetition in every instance. Lexical cohesion may be achieved through repetition, synonymy and semantic proximity, or the co-occurrence of words belonging to a common thematic field. The vocabulary of wealth, rights, and justice, for example, may be viewed as a semantic network extending beyond the occurrence of any individual word and revealing a sustained concern with protecting rights and preventing their violation. This is consistent with Halliday and Hasan's understanding of lexical cohesion as encompassing repetition and lexical relations rather than merely the reiteration of an identical expression (Halliday & Hasan, 1976)**.**

2. Reference and Textual Connectives

Reference—including pronouns, demonstratives, and relative pronouns—helps connect sentences and verses and recall referents previously mentioned or identifiable from context. These elements do more than provide economy of expression: they help recipients follow shifts between addressees and topics and perceive the relationships between a legal ruling and its operative basis, or between an instruction and its addressee. Conjunctions, conditional markers, causal connectives, and adversative expressions also perform linking functions that clarify succession, contrast, or explanation among the parts of discourse.

Describing such references nevertheless requires local analysis identifying the referent of each pronoun or referring expression. Some referents are determined by preceding linguistic context, whereas others depend on the communicative situation and shared knowledge. This observation demonstrates the importance of integrating grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic analysis rather than merely noting the abundance of pronouns or demonstratives. Discourse cohesion arises not from the presence of referential devices alone, but from the possibility of identifying their referential relationships in a manner that sustains understanding (de Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981; Halliday & Hasan, 1976)**.**

3.Thematic Coherence and the Progression of Topics

The sūrah moves among family and inheritance law, the organization of social relations, covenants, the positions of different groups, and matters relating to conflict and defense. This diversity reveals the discourse's multiple functions and domains. These themes may nevertheless be read in light of an organizing principle: the rectification of human relationships, the protection of rights, and the establishment of justice. Rulings concerning

women, orphans, and inheritance are inseparable from the construction of a social order governing the distribution of rights and responsibilities. The sūrah's injunctions to honor covenants and act justly in disputes extend this principle from the family to the community and societies.

The cohesion of Sūrat al-Nisāʾ is manifested through a tightly integrated network of cohesive and coherence-producing mechanisms.

Lexical cohesion and directed repetition. The recurrence of expressions such as nafs, women, orphans, bequests, divinely prescribed limits, covenants, and justice generates a dominant semantic field linking the opening of the sūrah with its middle passages and conclusion

Textual and situational reference. Pronouns, demonstratives, and relative pronouns converge to direct recipients to preceding and subsequent referents, preventing the fragmentation of Qurʾānic discourse.

Semantic and thematic coherence: The movement from legislation concerning family and inheritance in the first quarter to the regulation of society and the treatment of hypocrites, the People of the Scripture, and fighting in the second half, followed by the return to inheritance in the concluding kalālah verse—"They ask you for a legal verdict. Say: "Allâh directs (thus) about Al-Kalâlah (those who leave neither descendants nor ascendants as heirs). If it is a man that dies leaving a sister, but no child, she shall have half the inheritance. If (such a deceased was) a woman, who left no child, her brother takes her inheritance. If there are two sisters, they shall have two-thirds of the inheritance; if there are brothers and sisters, the male will have twice the share of the female. (Thus) does Allâh make clear to you (His Law) lest you go astray. And Allâh is All-Knower of everything."" (An-Nisa, 176) —achieves a remarkable organic unity. The sūrah begins with the rights of vulnerable persons, including orphans and women, and concludes with the rights of the vulnerable person who has neither child nor parent (kalālah). It thereby affirms that justice and mercy are the foundations of a cohesive human society.

Conclusion

This semantic study of Sūrat al-Nisāʾ has yielded several principal findings:

The regulation of lexical ambiguity in Qurʾānic composition. The study establishes that lexical ambiguity in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ is neither a semantic burden nor a source of confusion. Rather, it is an elevated rhetorical practice governed by a rigorous system of verbal and situational cues that removes indeterminacy and directs meaning with exceptional precision.

The rejection of absolute synonymy and the affirmation of semantic distinctions. The study demonstrates that semantically related expressions—such as qatl and wafāh; ṣadāq, niḥlah, and ajr; and khawf and khashyah—each retain their semantic and functional specificity. Replacing one with another disrupts the inimitable organization of the text and the legislative purpose of the verse.

The integration of linguistic and situational cues. The study shows that Qurʾānic meaning is not produced by considering a lexical item in isolation. Rather, it emerges through the simultaneous convergence of morphological cues, including pattern and structure; syntactic cues, including transitivity, predication, and conditionality; and situational cues, including the context of revelation and overarching purposes.

The construction of textual cohesion and discourse coherence. Linguistic analysis reveals that semantic relations —lexical ambiguity, proximity, and opposition—constitute the core of lexical cohesion and semantic coherence in Sūrat al-Nisāʾ. They bind its parts into a single textual and legislative fabric, from its opening account of creation from a single soul to its concluding ruling on kalālah.

Primary Text

The Noble Qurʾān, in the transmission of Ḥafṣ from ʿĀṣim

Muhammad Taqî-ud-Dîn al-Hilâli, Muhammad Muhsin Khân, Translation of the meanings of **THE NOBLE QUR'ÂN IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE** , KING FAHD COMPLEX FOR THE PRINTING OF THE HOLY QUR'ÂN, Madinah, K.S.A. 2021

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