

Cohesion in Qur'ānic Narrative: A Study of Monologue and Dialogue Patterns in *Sūrat al-Kahf* (Chapter of the Cave)

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ABSTRACT

Cohesion is the use of grammatical and lexical ties to connect text segments. While cohesion in Qur'ānic discourse has received scholarly attention, the mechanisms by which it operates in narratives that shift between monologue and dialogue remain understudied. This gap limits our understanding of how the Qur'ān maintains narrative unity and rhetorical coherence across complex discourse structures. This study aims to fill this gap by identifying and analyzing grammatical cohesive devices in the story of the Companions of the Cave in *Sūrat al-Kahf*, applying Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model to uncover how cohesion supports narrative unity and rhetorical function. The study applies both qualitative and quantitative analyses, examining the frequency, function, and distribution of cohesive devices in relation to monologue and dialogue structures. The findings reveal that grammatical cohesion is primarily achieved through references and conjunctions, which establish semantic connections between *ayahs* (verses). The monologue pattern exhibits a higher density of referential cohesion, while dialogue pattern relies more on conjunctions to achieve textual flow. The study identifies two levels of referential cohesion: micro-level cohesion, where uncommon referents contribute to coherence within individual *ayahs*, and macro-level cohesion, where branched referents extend coherence across larger segments in the story. Additionally, the study highlights the interplay of multiple and interchangeable referents, particularly personal and demonstrative pronouns, which facilitate smooth transitions between monologue and dialogue sections. The additive conjunction (*wa/and*) plays a crucial role in maintaining discourse flow and textual continuity. These findings contribute to linguistic and Qur'ānic studies, providing insights into the stylistic and structural uniqueness of Qur'ānic narrative techniques.

Keywords: Cohesion; Qur'ānic discourse; Demonstratives; References; Halliday and Hasan's Model

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INTRODUCTION

Cohesion refers to the linguistic ties that link different elements in a text, helping to create a clear and unified whole rather than a collection of unrelated statements. Halliday and Hasan (1976) describe cohesion as a system in which words, phrases, and sentences are linked through grammatical and lexical devices, such as references, ellipsis, and conjunctions, allowing a reader to follow the flow of ideas smoothly. More recent studies (Tanskanen, 2006; de Beaugrande & Dressler, 2011) have expanded on this framework, emphasizing the role of cohesion in discourse processing and how it shapes text interpretation in different genres.

Cohesion is particularly important in narrative discourse, where elements such as pronouns, demonstratives, and conjunctions ensure continuity and coherence across different parts of a story. Studies on Arabic discourse cohesion (al-Saqqaf, 2004; Abdel-Malek, 2010) highlight how referential devices in Arabic texts contribute to textual unity, but limited research has focused specifically on Qur'ānic cohesion, particularly in narratives with shifting discourse patterns. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the use of cohesive devices in the narrative discourse of *sūrat al-Kahf* (chapter of the cave), focusing on the story of the companions of the cave.

While Halliday and Hasan (1976) pioneered the study of cohesion in English, classical Arabic grammarians had long explored similar concepts in their linguistic analyses. Al-Jurjani (1954) in *Dala'il al-I'jaz* emphasized the importance of *naẓm* (textual arrangement), arguing that meaning emerges from the syntactic and semantic interrelations between words. His work laid the foundation for understanding how grammatical structures contribute to cohesion in Arabic discourse. Furthermore, Sibawayh (1966) in *al-Kitab* examined cohesion through syntactic dependencies, discussing how pronouns, conjunctions, and ellipses create connectivity in Arabic sentences. Similarly, Ibn Jinni (1952) in *al-Khasais* analyzed phonological and morphological cohesion, particularly focusing on how derivation and word structure contribute to textual unity.

Modern scholars have extended these classical insights. For instance, al-Khuli (1993) explored the role of anaphoric reference and conjunctions in Qur'ānic discourse, while al-Saqqaf (2004) examined lexical cohesion in Arabic rhetoric. Such studies confirm that cohesion in Arabic is deeply rooted in both syntactic and rhetorical traditions, making it essential to consider these linguistic features when analyzing Arabic texts. Abdel-Malek (2010) highlights how grammatical cohesion in Arabic is deeply tied to syntactic structures, particularly through conjunctions, pronouns, and ellipses that maintain textual coherence. He argues that the Arabic language exhibits a high degree of textual interconnectivity, where syntactic flexibility contributes to cohesive patterns unique to Arabic discourse. Furthermore, al-Ghalayini (2011) emphasizes that cohesion in Arabic is not only governed by grammatical rules but also by semantic and rhetorical principles. He discusses how *takrar* (repetition) and parallelism function as cohesive devices, reinforcing meaning while maintaining the fluency of discourse. His work provides a comprehensive analysis of how classical Arabic grammar facilitates textual unity, particularly in literary and Qur'ānic texts.

The story of the companions of the cave in *sūrat al-Kahf* (chapter of the cave) is particularly significant because it combines monologue and dialogue structures, creating a complex discourse pattern that requires sophisticated cohesive mechanisms. Unlike conventional storytelling, where narrative shifts are typically marked by explicit transitions, Qur'ānic discourse often employs implicit referential shifts and cohesive ties that serve both structural and rhetorical functions (al-Zamakhshari, 2005). Examining these patterns contributes to a deeper understanding of Qur'ānic discourse strategies and how cohesion operates in sacred texts.

Understanding cohesion in Qur'ānic narratives is essential for both linguistic and Qur'ānic studies. From a linguistic perspective, it provides insights into how Arabic cohesion functions in sacred texts, where referential shifts, conjunctions, and ellipsis play structural and rhetorical roles. From a Qur'ānic studies perspective, it deepens our understanding of how the Qur'ān constructs meaning and organizes discourse, which is relevant for interpretation, translation, and exegesis.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite growing scholarship on cohesion in Arabic discourse (Mulovic, 2023; Majli & Ghazali, 2024; Eid, 2025; Ghorbani & Mesgar, 2025; Dehbi, 2025), the specific mechanisms by which cohesion functions in Qur'ānic narratives - especially during shifts between monologue and dialogue - remain underexplored. This gap limits our understanding of how the Qur'ān maintains narrative unity, clarity, and rhetorical force across complex discourse structures. While lexical cohesion has been widely studied for its role in thematic continuity (Kherghani, 2020; Navidi, 2023; Taghavi, Yazdani & Akbari, 2024; Saedavi & Mousavi, 2025), grammatical cohesion - crucial for signaling structural relationships (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) - has received comparatively little attention. Focusing on grammatical cohesion allows for a more systematic and replicable analysis of how the Qur'ān sustains coherence across narrative transitions.

Therefore, this study addresses the gap by analyzing grammatical cohesive devices in the story of the Companions of the Cave in Sūrat al-Kahf (18:9–26). This narrative uniquely integrates extended divine narration with embedded dialogues among clearly identifiable participants: the young believers who withdraw from their community to preserve their faith, their exchange with one another before retreating to the cave, and the subsequent interactions between the people of the city and those who discovered them centuries later (Ibn- Kathīr, 2015). The discourse also includes divine commentary that frames and interprets these events, creating a layered structure that alternates between narration and dialogue (ibid). Thematically, the passage engages with trials of faith under persecution, the passage of time as a sign of divine will, and the ultimate reality of resurrection—elements that contribute to its thematic depth and structural complexity (al-Zamakhshari, 2005). These features make it an ideal case study for examining how grammatical cohesion operates to maintain narrative unity and structural coherence to guide the reader through shifts in speaker, scene, and temporal frame in sacred discourse.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to highlight the role of cohesive devices in creating coherence between the Qur'ānic verses in the narrative discourse of the story of the companions of the cave in the chapter of the cave. This study aims to:

1. Identify the types and frequency of cohesive devices in the narrative discourse in story of the companions of the cave.
2. Compare the distribution of cohesive devices across different narrative types within the story.
3. Analyze the most frequently used cohesive device in relation to Arabic linguistic traditions.
4. Demonstrate how cohesive devices contribute to the textual texture and coherence of Qur'ānic narrative discourse.

By achieving these objectives, the study provides a deeper linguistic insight into the cohesive structures of Qur'ānic narratives, bridging modern linguistic theory with classical Arabic grammar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cohesion is central to text comprehension (Mandarani et al., 2022), narrative flow (Crossley et al., 2016), and structural coherence (Alharbi, 2021). In religious and classical texts, cohesive devices fulfil both textual and cognitive functions, as shown by recent studies such as Jinam (2023) and Esmatt (2024). In Arabic discourse research, most attention has been given to modern expository texts (Hani, 2023; Faizin, 2023). However, Qur'ānic discourse differs significantly, relying heavily on referential variation, repetition, and elliptical constructions (Ryding, 2014).

Several studies have applied Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model to the Qur'ān—for example, Abbas (2020) on Sūrat Yūsuf and Benyahia (2021) on Sūrat al-Baqarah—but these generally focus on cohesion within a single narrative form. Kurniawan et al. (2018), for instance, analyse conjunctions in the story of Moses in Sūrat Ṭāhā, yet do not address how cohesive devices function when the text alternates between monologue and dialogue.

While lexical cohesion in Qur'ānic discourse has been widely examined for its role in thematic unity (Kherghani, 2020; Navidi, 2023; Taghavi, Yazdani, & Akbari, 2024; Saedavi & Mousavi, 2025), grammatical cohesion—especially in contexts of shifting discourse structures—has received far less systematic attention. This underexplored dimension is key to understanding how the Qur'ān maintains structural unity across such transitions. Addressing this gap, the present study focuses exclusively on grammatical cohesive ties, allowing for a detailed, systematic, and replicable analysis without overextending the scope.

These studies have laid the groundwork for analyzing Qur'ānic cohesion, but they have not addressed how cohesion operates in structurally hybrid narratives. This is where the present study contributes: by examining grammatical cohesion in the story of the Companions of the Cave, it adds a new dimension to Qur'ānic discourse analysis—one that captures how cohesion is maintained across narrative shifts and speaker transitions. The analysis adopts Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion framework because it offers a systematic taxonomy—reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions—that allows for precise identification and classification of grammatical cohesive ties. While the model was not originally designed for sacred texts, its structured categorization enables replicable analysis and provides a clear baseline from which to identify patterns unique to Qur'ānic discourse. This methodological choice facilitates both comparability with prior cohesion studies and the development of context-specific adaptations to account for the Qur'ān's distinctive rhetorical and theological functions.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

HALLIDAY AND HASAN'S MODEL OF COHESION

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion is what distinguishes a well-formed text from a random sequence of sentences by establishing semantic and structural links between words and phrases. Cohesion is achieved through grammatical cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction) and lexical cohesion (word choices that are semantically related). Grammatical

cohesion ensures that sentences are logically and structurally connected, while lexical cohesion reinforces meaning through vocabulary choices. Halliday and Hasan emphasize that these cohesive ties are essential for textual texture, meaning they help establish continuity and coherence across different parts of a discourse. Figure 1 below presents the major categories of grammatical cohesion, as outlined by Halliday and Hasan (1976), which will serve as the analytical framework for this study.

Aspect	Type	Category	Sub-type
Cohesion	Grammatical	References	Personal Pronoun
			Demonstrative
			Comparative
		Substitution	Nominal
			Verbal
			Clausal
		Ellipsis	Nominal
			Verbal
			Clausal
		Conjunction	Additive
			Adversative
			Causal
			Temporal
	Lexical	Reiteration	
		Collocation	

FIGURE 1. Analytical Framework for Grammatical Cohesion Devices (Adapted from Halliday and Hasan, 1976)

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), reference connects elements within a text to other entities that clarify their meaning in context. References can be classified as endophoric (when the referent is within the text) or exophoric (when it is inferred from the situational context). For example, in the verse “And when they saw it, they thought it was a cloud of locusts” (Q 46:24), the pronoun *it* is an endophoric reference because its meaning is found earlier in the text. An example of an exophoric reference can be seen in “This day I have perfected for you your religion” (Q 5:3), where *this day* refers to a specific historical occasion understood by the audience but not explicitly detailed in the verse. Endophoric references are further divided: anaphoric references look back to something mentioned earlier, as in “Indeed, We gave Moses the Book, so do not be in doubt about receiving it” (Q 32:23), where *it* refers back to the Book; cataphoric references point forward to something later in the text, as in “When it was said to them, ‘Settle in the city...’” (Q 7:161), where *it* refers forward to the following command. Substitution involves replacing one item or sequence with another, as in “Some of them believed, and some did not” (Q 2:253), where *some* substitutes for of them. Ellipsis refers to omitting an item from its expected place, as in “And if you are in doubt... then produce a surah like it” (Q 2:23), where the omitted item after like is understood to be the Qur’ān. Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain that, unlike other cohesive devices, conjunctions are cohesive through their meanings, not by directly referring to other parts of the text. They connect ideas by signaling that what follows is logically related to what came before. Table 1 illustrates the semantic categories of conjunctive relation.

TABLE 1. Semantic Categories of Conjunctive Relation

Types of conjunction	Simple	Complex	Apposition	Comparison
Additive	and, and also nor, or, or else	Furthermore in addition besides incidentally	that is I mean for instance thus	likewise similarly the same way by contrast
adversative	Yet though only but however	in fact actually as a matter of fact but, and	instead rather on the contrary	in any case in either case anyhow at any rat
Causal	so, then hence therefore	for it follows to this end because	then otherwise	in this respect in that regard aside from this
Temporal	then next	at once thereupon soon	first ... next Finally	up to now hitherto to sum up in short

Halliday and Hasan (1976), along with Khaleel and Khalaf (2016), classify narrative techniques into two main types: internal and external. In internal narration, the narrator is an active character in the story. External narration, which is predominant in the Qur'ān, is often delivered by Almighty Allah, who—while not a character in the traditional sense—is referred to as "We" in some passages and "Our Lord" by characters in others, thus asserting His divine authority within the narrative. Narrative discourse in the Qur'ān may manifest as either monologue or dialogue. In monologues, Allah, as the omniscient narrator, provides insight into characters and events, often using cohesive devices such as pronouns to enhance narrative continuity and emphasis. Dialogues, by contrast, involve exchanges between characters and often serve argumentative, moral, or explanatory purposes. Flashbacks, as noted by Yimam (2008), function as temporal shifts that recount past events within the narrative.

Recent studies in Arabic discourse and Qur'ānic linguistics further support this classification and enrich the understanding of cohesion in sacred texts. For instance, Mir (1987), Abbas (2020) and Kurniawan and Mustaniruddin (2024) examine coherence and thematic unity in Qur'ānic narratives through rhetorical structure and nazm. Esmatt (2024) highlights the interplay between consistency, cohesion, and harmony in both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, emphasizing the structural integrity of Qur'ānic discourse. Alharbi (2021) offers a detailed linguistic analysis of coherence mechanisms within the Qur'ānic text, while Al-Majeedy (2023) explores thematic coherence through the concept of taswīr as a domain of Qur'ānic inimitability. Khiveh et al. (2025) present a systematic approach to understanding surah coherence through structural principles. Additionally, the model of interreligious dialogue discussed by Ghazali and Kamal (2023) underscores the narrative strategies of interaction and cohesion in prophetic discourse, providing an applied example of cohesion across religious and communicative contexts. These perspectives collectively affirm the richness and complexity of Qur'ānic cohesion, particularly as it relates to narrative design, divine voice, and dialogic interaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed-method approach to examine grammatical cohesive devices in the story of the Companions of the Cave in *Sūrat al-Kahf*, focusing on how these devices maintain structural coherence during shifts between monologue and dialogue. Based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model, the analysis is limited to reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction, allowing for a focused and replicable investigation. While lexical cohesion has been widely explored in Qur'ānic discourse, grammatical cohesion in such transitional structures remains underdocumented. The study analyzes the frequency, density, and function of these devices across discourse patterns to examine how these grammatical devices contribute to the structural connectivity and flow of Qur'ānic narrative discourse.

DATA SELECTION AND SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

The study focuses on the narrative discourse in the story of the companions of the cave due to its distinctive alternation between monologue and dialogue patterns, which allows for a comparative analysis of cohesion across different narrative structures. Given the Qur'ān's unique linguistic features, the analysis will be conducted directly on the Arabic text, ensuring an accurate examination of grammatical cohesive devices.

Ilm al-Tafsir (the science of exegesis) is regarded as crucial knowledge to understand the content of the Qur'ānic text (Nordin, 2015). Accordingly, this study relies on three *Tafsir* (exegeses of the Qur'ān), namely the commentary books of al-Zamakhshari (1075–1144 CE), that provides a rhetorical and syntactic perspective on Qur'ānic cohesion; Ibn Kathir (1301–1373 CE), that offers semantic and contextual insights on grammatical structures; and al-Tabari (839–923 CE), that focuses on philological and grammatical analysis, helping validate cohesive patterns. Abdul-Ghafour et al. (2017) state that "such exegeses are prominent, and they are dependable as they can provide the precise meanings of the Qur'ānic verses and are also useful in explaining the context of these verses which need a considerable attention as sacred texts." (p. 263)

The English translation of Yusuf Ali (2008) will be used as a reference for coherence analysis. While Qur'ānic Arabic has unique linguistic features that do not always have direct equivalents in English (al-Badani et al., 2014b), Ali's translation has been noted for its clarity in conveying intended meanings (al-Badani et al., 2016). Ali's translation holds authoritative status and is widely used in academic settings (Abdalhussein and Jawad, 2024).

IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF COHESIVE DEVICES QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

While quantitative analysis examines frequency and distribution patterns, qualitative analysis focuses on linguistic and rhetorical interpretation. In the first stage, quantitative analysis will measure the frequency of each grammatical cohesive device across monologue and dialogue sections to identify which devices are most dominant in structuring the narrative. This involves a close reading of the Arabic text to systematically identify and classify grammatical cohesive devices, following Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy—reference (personal, demonstrative, comparative), substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions (additive, adversative, causal, temporal). Determining the relative frequency of each device is essential for pinpointing the type of grammatical cohesion that plays the most prominent role in Qur'ānic narrative discourse. This ensures that the subsequent in-depth analysis focuses on the most representative and recurrent

device, allowing for a targeted and methodologically sound investigation into its contribution to maintaining structural coherence across shifts between monologue and dialogue.

In the second stage, quantitative findings will be contextualized through qualitative analysis, focusing on how the most frequently used grammatical cohesive device contributes to structural coherence in Qur'ānic narrative discourse, particularly in managing shifts between monologue and dialogue. The analysis also considers how the most frequently used grammatical cohesive device functions within Arabic linguistic traditions, such as al-Jurjānī's theory of structural coherence. While lexical cohesion can contribute to thematic unity and overall textual texture, it is not examined in this study in order to maintain a clear and focused scope on grammatical cohesion.

From the complete narrative, the grammatical cohesive device with the highest frequency of occurrence will be identified and selected for detailed examination. A purposive sample of āyāt (verses) containing dense or functionally varied uses of this device will then be chosen. This sampling strategy ensures that the selected verses capture both the monologue and dialogue patterns present in the narrative, while concentrating the analysis on the most dominant form of grammatical cohesion, thereby allowing for a focused and methodologically consistent investigation.

To ensure rigor and reliability, the study employs theoretical triangulation, integrating insights from modern linguistic frameworks and classical Arabic scholarship. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion model provides a systematic classification of grammatical cohesion, which serves as the foundation for identifying cohesive devices. To validate the interpretation of these findings, the study incorporates traditional Arabic rhetorical perspectives by referencing al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Tabarī, whose works offer philological, semantic, and syntactic analyses of Qur'ānic discourse. This multi-perspective approach strengthens the study's conclusions by demonstrating how grammatical cohesive devices function within both modern discourse theory and Arabic linguistic traditions.

ANALYSIS

DISCOURSE STRUCTURE OF THE STORY OF THE COMPANIONS OF THE CAVE

Sūrat al-Kahf, classified as a Meccan *sūrah*, is the 18th *sūrah* in the Holy Qur'ān and consists of 110 verses (al-Razi, 606H/1209). Within this *sūrah*, four narratives are presented: *the companions of the cave*, *the two men with gardens*, *Moses and Khidr*, and *Dhul-Qarnayn* (al-Zamakhsharī, 2005). The story of the companions of the cave is the initial story mentioned in *sūrat al-Kahf* and exhibits a combination of monologue and dialogue patterns. The story commences with a monologue pattern in which Allah describes the Holy Book, the believers, and the disbelievers (al-Suyūṭī, 911H/1505). Through this monologue, Allah narrates the tale of young believers who, fleeing from their disbelieving tribe, sought refuge in a cave where they slumbered for an extended period of time (Hanif, 2014). This particular extract is referred to as 'A Trial of Persecution on One's Beliefs' (Hanif, 2014). Within the monologue, Allah provides a description of the young believers' circumstances prior to their sleep (al-Razi, 606H/1209). The introduction underscores the profound significance of faith in Allah for all of humanity (al-Suyūṭī, 911H/1505).

The narrative then transitions to a dialogue pattern, where the cave dwellers engage in discussions about their beliefs and those of their tribe (Hanif, 2014). Following the dialogue, the story returns to complete the initial monologue, shedding light on how Allah protected them during their slumber (al-Zamakhsharī, 2005). The final pattern of the story takes the form of a dialogue among the awakened youths (ibid.).

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL COHESIVE DEVICES IN THE NARRATIVE

In the story of the Companions of the Cave, the total number of words is 372. Of these, 183 words (approximately 49.2%) are in dialogue form, while 189 words (approximately 50.8%) represent monologue. As shown in Table 2, the narrative slightly leans toward a monologue pattern, primarily consisting of divine narration by Almighty Allah, who reports the events from the youths' flight from the disbelievers to their eventual discovery by the people of the city.

TABLE 2. Distribution of Monologue and Dialogue in the Story of the Companions of the Cave

Narrative Type	Number of Words	Percentage of Total (%)
Monologue	189	50.8%
Dialogue	183	49.2%
Total	372	100%

The grammatical cohesive devices employed in the monologue and dialogue patterns within the story of the companions of the cave are illustrated in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Distribution and Frequency of Grammatical Cohesive Ties in Monologue and Dialogue Patterns

Cohesive device	Type	Monologue pattern		Dialogue pattern	
		The Frequency of occurrence	Percentage%	The Frequency of occurrence	Percentage%
Reference	Personal	64	24%	85	32.3%
	Demonstrative	4	1.5%	3	1.1%
	Relative	2	0.7%	1	0.3%
	Definite articles	15	5.7%	6	2.2%
Conjunction	Additive	21	7.8%	20	7.6%
	place	4	1.5%	4	1.5%
	Causal	6	2.2%	0	0
	Temporal	7	2.6%	3	1.1%
Substitution	Nominal	0	0	0	0
	Verbal	0	0	0	0
	Clausal	0	0	0	0
Ellipsis	Nominal	4	1.5%	5	1.9%
	Verbal	6	2.2%	0	0
	Clausal	3	1.1%	0	0

The percentages in Table 3 represent the proportion of each grammatical cohesive device within the total number of cohesive ties used in either the monologue or dialogue sections respectively. For example, 32.3% of all cohesive devices used in the dialogue portion are personal references, while 24% of those in the monologue are personal references.

The story also contains a total of 263 grammatical cohesive devices, which is approximately 70.6% of the total text. Among these, 127 are found in the dialogue part, accounting for approximately 48.3% of the dialogue pattern, and 136 are found in the monologue part, accounting for approximately 51.7%. This indicates that the monologue part facilitates the creation of structural coherence.

According to Table 3, the most frequently used grammatical cohesive device in the story is reference, with 180 cohesive ties (85 in the monologue pattern and 95 in the dialogue pattern). This dominance of reference—particularly in the dialogue sections—can be attributed to the interactive nature of exchanges between identifiable participants, such as the young believers (the Companions of the Cave) speaking among themselves, their interaction with members of their community, and the divine narration addressing Prophet Muhammad, his contemporaries, or humanity at large. In such contexts, pronouns and noun phrases are essential for maintaining coherence between speakers, tracking participants across turns, and ensuring that referents remain clear throughout the exchange.

Dialogue in the narrative occurs primarily between the young believers (the Companions of the Cave) and between them and members of their community. Such exchanges rely heavily on anaphoric references to previous utterances or shared knowledge, which is reflected in the higher number of anaphoric relations in dialogue (93), compared to monologue (58). In contrast, the monologue sections, which are more expository and narrative-driven, employ cohesive strategies that connect specific ideas—such as explanations of divine actions (“So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears in the cave for a number of years. Then We raised them up...” Q 18:11–12), descriptions of the sleepers’ miraculous preservation (“...and you would have thought them awake, while they were asleep...” Q 18:18), or theological affirmations about resurrection and divine power (“...that they might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there is no doubt about the Hour...” Q 18:21)—across extended stretches of text. These sections often rely on conjunctions and other structuring devices to link sequential statements (so, then), clarify cause–effect relationships (that in Q 18:21 indicating divine purpose), and mark thematic transitions (and thus in Q 18:21 signalling a move from narrative description to theological conclusion).

Conjunctions come in second place, with a total of 65 ties distributed as 38 in the monologue part and 27 in the dialogue part. This slightly higher occurrence in monologue reflects the need for logical progression and explanatory structure, especially in divine narration. Table 3 also reveals the categories of conjunctions used in the story: additives score the highest with a total of 41 ties (21 in the monologue and 20 in the dialogue), followed by 8 conjunctions of place (4 in the monologue part and 4 in the dialogue part), 6 causal conjunctions found only in the monologue part, and 10 temporal conjunctions (7 in the monologue part and 3 in the dialogue part). The presence of causal and temporal conjunctions primarily in monologue reinforces its explanatory function, where sequences of events and divine purposes are laid out clearly for the audience.

According to Table 4, the endophoric references are identified as follows: 151 anaphoric relations (58 in the monologue and 93 in the dialogue pattern), and 6 cataphoric relations (4 in the monologue and 2 in the dialogue). As for exophoric relations, 23 instances are found in the monologue pattern. This aligns with the function of divine narration, which often references entities or concepts understood from broader religious or historical context, rather than from within the immediate text. Overall, the data shows that reference dominates in dialogue due to the interactive nature of these exchanges, which require frequent use of pronouns and noun phrases to maintain clarity about the speaker, the addressee, and other participants being discussed. In the dialogue sections of the narrative, referents must be continuously tracked across turns to ensure

that the audience can follow shifts between speakers, questions and responses, or changes in focus. Anaphoric references, in particular, allow participants to refer back to entities or ideas mentioned in previous utterances, reducing repetition while preserving coherence throughout the exchange. On the other hand, conjunctions, particularly causal and temporal, are more prominent in monologue for structuring divine exposition and narrative flow.

TABLE 4. Phoric relations used in the monologue and dialogue patterns in the story

References		Monologue pattern		Dialogue pattern	
Phoric Relation	Type	The Frequency of occurrence	Percentage%	The Frequency of occurrence	Percentage%
Endophoric reference	anaphoric relation	58	32.2%	93	51.7%
	cataphoric relation	4	2.2%	2	1.1%
Exophoric reference		23	12.7%	0	0

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION OF PRONOUNS IN SELECTED VERSES

Exophoric references are commonly used in the narrative of the Companions of the Cave (verses 9–26 of Sūrat al-Kahf), where the situational context provides the definition and interpretation of the referred entities. The contemporary audience of that time easily recognized and understood these references because they were familiar with them. This is evident in two examples from the narrative of the Companions of the Cave, verse: 6

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَلِّغٌ نَفْسِكَ عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

Thou wouldst only, perchance, Fret thyself to death, Following after them, in grief, If they believe not In this Message.

and verse :7

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

That which is on earth We have made but as A glittering show for the earth, In order that We may test Them—as to which of them Are best in conduct.

In verse 6, Allah addresses Prophet Muhammad, who is saddened by his tribe's disbelief, using the third personal pronoun هم (them), in which the context of the āyah exophorically points to Prophet Muhammad's tribe. In verse 7, it is understood from the situational context that the third personal pronoun in لِنَبْلُوهُمْ (in order that We may test them) exophorically refers to mankind.

It is worth mentioning that when there are several referents, it can be difficult to identify which one the reference pronoun is referring to. In general, linguists rely on a semantic rule called 'Aboutness' or 'The focus', i.e., the referent that the text revolves around. For example, in verse: 1

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا

Praise be to God, Who hath sent to His Servant The Book, and hath allowed Therein no Crookedness

Al-Andalusī (1993) argued that the pronoun in (لَهُ) has two referents, namely the Book or His servant. However, it should fall back on *the Book*, and not on *His servant* since *the Book* is the focus of the verse, which calls for praising Allah for sending the Book. This interpretation goes along with the rule of proximity, i.e., the pronoun falls back on the nearest compatible referent. The coordinating conjunction و (and) joins the negative sentence

وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا

and hath allowed Therein no Crookedness

with the preceding affirmative sentence

أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

Who hath sent to His Servant The Book

where the negative sentence is an accusative adverb of *the Book* (the focus of the text). Depending on the proximate rule, the attached pronoun in فِيهِ in ayah: 3

مُكْتَبِينَ فِيهِ أَبَدًا

Wherein they shall Remain for ever

refers to أَجْرًا حَسَنًا (a goodly Reward) not to بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا (a terrible Punishment), in which it describes the believers' stay.¹ However, the notion of 'Aboutness' or 'proximate rule' is not applicable in all cases. Some examples show indeterminacy in identifying the referent. The problem of inevitable inconsistency occurs when a pronoun could fall back on two referents. In Ayah 5:

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ

No knowledge have they Of such a thing

the attached pronoun in بِهِ can refer back to both Allah or the claimed son. Al-Andalusī (1993) comments that it refers back to the claimed son since (مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ) is an adjectival phrase describing the son. The researchers believe that

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ

No knowledge have they of such a thing

is not an adjectival phrase since it does not occur within the claimers' direct speech in verse:4

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا

“ Allah hath begotten a son

and if so, then it would be:

مَا لَنَا بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ

No knowledge have we of such a thing

¹ Al-Zamakhsharī (2005) comments that بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا means afterlife punishment while أَجْرًا حَسَنًا is Heaven.

Other scholars, like al-Tabari and Ibn-A'tya, believe that it falls back on Allah; they explain that the disbelievers have no knowledge of Allah, so they claim that Allah has begotten a son. Al-Andalusī (1993) argues that the pronoun in *بِهِ* falls back to the disbelievers' saying, so the ayah should be read:

مَا لَهُمْ بِقَوْلِهِمْ هَذَا مِنْ عِلْمٍ

No knowledge have they of this saying

The researchers believe that the pronoun in *بِهِ* falls back to the omitted verbal noun *الاتخاذ*, which is derived from the verb *hath begotten* *أَتَّخَذَ* mentioned in Ayah:4. The disbelievers said that Allah has begotten a son; the process of begetting –generating offspring– means that the one is incompetent and powerless. However, Allah is eternal, self-sufficient, and does not require any progeny or descendants. The ayah could be read:

مَا لَهُمْ بِالَاتِّخَاذِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ

No knowledge have they of the taking

As Allah is distinct from His creation and is not bound by human attributes or limitations. Several aspects concerning personal pronouns are examined in detail, including the analysis of the domain of references, multiple referents, interchangeable referents, and uncommon referents.

DOMAIN OF REFERENCES

The domain of reference refers to the characteristics of the relation between the referent and the reference element, such as direction, distance, and size. As for the direction of reference, the analysis shows that there are 23 exophoric references pointing outward referents in the external context; as such, they have no contribution to text cohesion. However, endophoric references contribute to cohesion, as the analysis shows 107 endophoric references pointing inward to their referents. There are 153 anaphoric backward relations in the story, whereas 6 cataphoric forward relations are found. Cataphora's contribution to the cohesion of the text is not considered since the referent occurs within the sentence frame (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 56), as in verse: 4:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا

Further, that He may warn those (also) who say, "Allah hath begotten a son"

The pronoun *those* refers cataphorically to *who say "Allah hath begotten a son"*.

As for the distant parameter, the anaphoric pattern involves the referent being in the preceding sentence, or it can also be shifted further backward. For example, in verse (5):

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا

No knowledge have they Of such a thing, nor Had their fathers. It is a grievous thing that issues From their mouths as a saying. What they say is nothing But falsehood !

all the reference items refer back to *those who say "Allah hath begotten a son"* mentioned in Ayah:4. As regards the cataphora, the distance is short; the referent is immediately after the reference item, as in verse: 5:

كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً

It is a grievous thing that issues

where the attached pronoun cataphorically refers to the immediately following referent. The parameter of size can vary from a single word to a whole text. Personal pronouns either refer to a single item, as in ayah:2

أَنَّهُ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا

that they Shall have a goodly Reward

where the attached pronoun refers back to الْمُؤْمِنِينَ, or to a single verbal/nominal group, as in verse:5

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا

No knowledge have they Of such a thing, nor Had their fathers. It is a grievous thing that issues From their mouths as a saying. What they say is nothing But falsehood !

in which all the personal pronouns refer to *those who say "Allah hath begotten a son"*.

MULTIPLE REFERENTS

According to classical Arabic grammarians such as Sibawayh (1966) and Ibn Jinni (1952), the referential system in Arabic plays a crucial role in maintaining textual unity, particularly in Qur'ānic discourse. In the story, the primary referent—the companions of the cave—appears most frequently, serving as the central node around which other referents are structured. In addition to this main referent, other entities, such as the cave, the youths' people, and the youths' dog, also function as referents within the story (see Table 5). These secondary referents, which are linked through personal and demonstrative references, contribute to textual cohesion, as described by Halliday and Hasan (1976) in their cohesion framework. Their contribution to coherence is twofold: (1) through their semantic relation with their references, and (2) through their associative connection with the main referent. This interconnected system mirrors what al-Jurjani (1954) refers to as *naẓm* (textual arrangement), where meaning emerges not only from individual lexical items but also from their structural interrelations.

TABLE 5. Referents and their respective number in the story of the companions of the cave

The companions of the cave	The Youths' People	The Youths' Dog	The Cave
68	17	8	5

The cumulative effect of these referential ties is particularly evident in Qur'ānic discourse, where cohesion is not merely syntactic but also rhetorical. Al-Zamakhshari (2005) notes that the interplay of multiple referents in the Qur'ān is often deliberate, reinforcing the thematic unity of the narrative. In this case, cohesion is primarily achieved through personal references, such as possessive determiners, which serve as connective elements linking different segments of the text.

This aligns with the findings of Abdel-Malek (2010), who argues that Qur'ān cohesion relies heavily on pronominal reference chains that reinforce continuity across ayahs.

By establishing referential relationships at both the micro and macro levels, the use of multiple referents contributes to the fluidity and coherence of the discourse, ensuring that the narrative remains interconnected while maintaining its stylistic and structural integrity.

INTERCHANGEABLE REFERENTS

It should be noted that the companions of the cave appears in various linguistic forms throughout the narrative and, therefore, cannot be regarded as an independent, fixed referent. Instead, the Qur'ān employs referential variation, a common rhetorical and grammatical feature in Qur'ānic discourse that serves both cohesion and thematic progression (al-Jurjani, 1954). The multiple denominations referring to the same referent—such as the youths, the two parties, the sleepers, the cave dwellers, and the companions of the inscription—demonstrate a sophisticated system of textual interconnectivity (al-Zamakhshari, 2005).

This phenomenon aligns with Halliday and Hasan's (1976) notion of cohesion through lexical repetition and referential expansion. From a classical Arabic grammatical perspective, Ibn Jinni (1952) explains that referential multiplicity in Arabic serves to maintain discourse fluidity, ensuring that different segments of a text remain semantically linked while avoiding redundancy. This is particularly evident in Qur'ānic narratives, where referents shift and evolve to maintain reader engagement and reinforce thematic unity (al-Ghalayini, 2011).

The cumulative function of these branched referents is integral to structuring Qur'ānic discourse. As al-Saqqaf (2004) notes, cohesion in Arabic texts is often achieved not through rigid repetition but through referential variation, which creates a network of interconnected meanings. This referential expansion enhances cohesion by linking different narrative components and establishing intertextual relationships across the story.

Thus, the use of multiple and interchangeable referents in the story exemplifies a deliberate textual strategy aimed at enhancing coherence, reinforcing semantic relationships, and ensuring a smooth transition between narrative segments. This supports the broader linguistic claim that grammatical cohesion in Qur'ānic discourse operates beyond syntactic structures, incorporating rhetorical and thematic elements to guide textual interpretation (Abdel-Malek, 2010).

UNCOMMON REFERENTS

Certain referents, such as *The Youths' Dog* and *The Cave*, are infrequently utilized and function only within the specific segment in which they appear. As al-Zamakhshari (2005) explains, such referents serve a localized cohesive function, contributing to the internal unity of a passage but not necessarily to its broader narrative structure. Table 6 presents the frequency of the uncommon referents in the narrative of the Companions of the Cave (verses 9–26 of Sūrat al-Kahf).

TABLE 6. Uncommon referents and their respective number in the story

The Youths' Dog	The Cave
8	5

This phenomenon aligns with Halliday and Hasan's (1976) distinction between global cohesion (which links larger text units) and local cohesion (which operates within a limited textual span). In Qur'ānic discourse, referents may exhibit varying degrees of textual prominence, a concept discussed by al-Jurjani (1954) in his theory of *as nazm* (textual arrangement), where he argues that coherence arises not from isolated words but from their interdependent roles in structuring meaning.

The presence of uncommon referents suggests that each Qur'ānic narrative consists of segments in which some referents serve a temporary, context-specific role, while others—such as the primary referent *the companions of the cave*—extend their significance beyond their immediate segment, connecting different sections of the text. This supports Ibn Jinni's (1952) assertion that Arabic grammatical cohesion often relies on referential extension, where referents operate at multiple textual levels.

In the story of the Companions of the Cave, these interconnected segments collectively contribute to the coherence and unity of the narrative as a whole. Al-Saqqaf (2004) emphasizes that this type of cohesive structuring is particularly evident in Qur'ānic storytelling, where referents are used strategically to guide the reader through thematic shifts such as transitions between divine narration and character dialogue, changes in narrative setting, and shifts in temporal frame, thereby supporting the rhetorical progression of the discourse. Thus, while uncommon referents may appear limited in scope, their presence reinforces the narrative's layered structure, ensuring that each segment maintains its internal cohesion while remaining linked to the overarching discourse.

DEMONSTRATIVE REFERENCES

Demonstrative references are examined in detail in terms of referring to a lexical referent or a text reference (see Table 7). Although their contribution is limited in the text, they still hold different parts of the text together. It is worth mentioning that many demonstrative pronouns refer back to one or more ayahs consisting of clause complexes.

TABLE 7. Demonstrative references and their respective ayahs in the story

Ayah No.	Lexical reference	Text reference
15	هَؤُلَاءِ (these)	
19	هَذِهِ (this – feminine singular)	
23	ذَلِكَ (that)	
17		ذَلِكَ (that)
19		كَذَلِكَ (likewise)
21		كَذَلِكَ (likewise)
24		هَذَا (this – masculine singular)

The role of demonstrative references should not be underestimated, as they significantly contribute to the cohesiveness of the text. The analysis reveals that all the demonstrative references are endophoric. Furthermore, the analysis highlights certain features of the referential relations of demonstrative references, including size, direction, and distance. In terms of size, they can be classified into two types: single lexical items or text references. Regarding single lexical items, the demonstratives in verses 15: هَؤُلَاءِ (these), 19: هَذِهِ (this – feminine singular), and 23: ذَلِكَ (that) have

their referents in the form of a single noun, whereas the demonstratives in verses 17: ذَٰلِكَ (that), 19: كَذَٰلِكَ (thus/likewise), 21: كَذَٰلِكَ (thus/likewise), and 24: هَٰذَا (this – masculine singular) are associated with text references. In ayah: 17

ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ ۖ

Such are Among the Signs of God

the demonstrative pronoun ذَٰلِكَ refers anaphorically to one of the Signs of Allah, that is "The sun when it rose declining to the right from their Cave and when it set turning away from them to the left while they lay in the open space in the midst of the Cave". Moreover, the demonstrative pronoun هَٰذَا in verse 24:

قُلْ عَسَىٰ أَن يَهْدِيَنِّي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَٰذَا رَشَدًا

and say, "I hope that my Lord Will guide me ever closer (Even) than this To the right road."
refers to the whole story of the companions of the cave.

In terms of direction, all demonstrative references are anaphoric except in Ayah 15, where the demonstrative "هَٰؤُلَاءِ" cataphorically refers to 'the youths' tribe'; Ayah 19, where كَذَٰلِكَ refers to 'raising the youths up from sleep'; and Ayah 21, where كَذَٰلِكَ refers to 'their case known to the people'. In terms of distance, the referents of demonstratives with lexical item relations and text references are found within the same environment as the ayah itself.

DISCUSSION

Cohesion in the story of the Companions of the Cave is primarily achieved through a complex network of referential structures, which serve distinct textual, structural, and rhetorical functions. While Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model classifies reference as a form of grammatical cohesion, its application to Qur'ānic discourse reveals distinctive patterns that go beyond syntactic connectivity, functioning also as stylistic and rhetorical devices. This observation aligns with classical Arabic linguistic traditions, particularly al-Jurjānī's (1954) theory of nazm (textual arrangement), in which cohesion is regarded not only as a textual necessity but also as a deliberate rhetorical strategy.

The findings demonstrate that personal pronouns and demonstrative references are the most frequently used grammatical cohesive devices, supporting previous studies on Arabic cohesion (Abdel-Malek, 2010; al-Ghalayini, 2011). However, unlike referential structures in conventional narratives, Qur'ānic referential cohesion operates beyond simple anaphoric tracking by functioning as a structural mechanism that sustains continuity between discourse units, manages transitions across monologue and dialogue patterns, and reinforces overall structural coherence. A key observation is that referential cohesion in the story of the companions of the cave is characterized by branched referents, which extend cohesion across multiple narrative segments. These include various denominations of the main referent (*the companions of the cave*), such as *the youths*, *the two parties*, *the sleepers*, *the cave dwellers*, and *the companions of the inscription*. The use of branched referents is not merely a lexical variation but serves as a macro-level cohesion strategy, connecting different segments of the *sūrah* and ensuring a smooth transition across monologue and dialogue patterns.

Moreover, the alternation between singular and plural pronouns serves a dual function. At the micro level, these referents act as cohesive ties that maintain structural linkage within individual verses (āyāt). At the macro level, they ensure continuity across narrative sections, enabling smooth transitions between monologue and dialogue structures. This supports al-Zamakhsharī's (2005) view of Qur'ānic referential cohesion, in which variation in pronoun forms sustains reader orientation and textual connectivity. Unlike classical prose, which often maintains fixed referential patterns, Qur'ānic discourse employs referential flexibility as a grammatical strategy to accommodate shifts in speaker, addressee, and narrative focus.

These results expand on previous studies that have examined cohesion in modern Arabic discourse (Abdel-Malek, 2010; al-Saqqaf, 2004). While these studies primarily address cohesion in linear text structures, the current research demonstrates that Qur'ānic cohesion operates at multiple discourse levels, integrating syntactic organization, rhetorical structuring, and theological framing through referential choices. For instance, the alternation between singular and plural first-person pronouns in "...We turned them to the right and to the left..." (Q 18:18) and "...My Lord is most knowing of their number..." (Q 18:22) organizes the syntax by signalling changes in speaker and grammatical agreement. Similarly, the use of demonstrative references such as هَؤُلَاءِ (these) in Q 18:15 provides rhetorical structuring by directing attention to a specific group within the unfolding narrative. Theological framing is evident in the referent وَعَدُ اللَّهِ (the promise of Allah) in Q 18:21, which recalls a doctrinal concept beyond the immediate text, embedding the narrative within the Qur'ān's broader theological discourse. The findings indicate that Halliday and Hasan's model, while effective in identifying cohesion types, requires contextual adaptation when applied to Qur'ānic discourse. Unlike in secular texts, where cohesive devices primarily serve structural functions, in the Qur'ān they also operate as rhetorical tools to manage shifts in speaker, addressee, and narrative focus, and as theological devices to reinforce divine messaging. This supports Ibn Jinnī's (1952) argument that cohesion in Arabic texts is not merely a grammatical feature but a discourse-organizing mechanism.

The frequent use of referential shifts in the story is not merely a textual feature but reflects techniques rooted in oral storytelling traditions in Arabic culture. In oral societies, repetition and variation in reference—such as alternating between pronouns and explicit noun phrases—serve as memory aids, enabling audiences to follow complex narratives without losing track of participants or events. For example, in Q 18:12, the divine narration refers to the sleepers with the pronoun هُمْ (they), linking back to their earlier introduction, while in Q 18:19 the phrase أَحَدُهُمْ (one of them) narrows the referent to a single speaker, signalling a shift into dialogue. Moreover, cohesion in Qur'ānic discourse differs from that in classical Arabic poetry and prose. Unlike poetic structures, which rely on parallelism and meter for coherence, Qur'ānic discourse employs referential flexibility to manage shifts in speaker, addressee, and narrative focus. For instance, in Q 18:21, the demonstrative كَذَلِكَ (thus) marks a transition from recounting events to emphasising their significance, guiding the listener or reader through the unfolding discourse while maintaining continuity.

These findings contribute to a broader linguistic understanding of Qur'ānic cohesion, revealing that while it is grounded in grammatical structures, it also carries rhetorical and theological functions. Specifically, referential cohesion in the Qur'ān operates beyond mere textual linkage; it contributes to the unfolding of meaning by clarifying participant roles, signalling shifts in speaker or addressee, and maintaining continuity between related events. For example, in Q 18:12, the pronoun هُمْ (they) links back to the sleepers after their introduction, and in Q 18:19, أَحَدُهُمْ (one of them) narrows the referent to a single speaker, guiding the reader through the narrative

sequence. Theological emphasis is seen in Q 18:21, where the referent **وَعْدُ اللَّهِ** (the promise of Allah) connects the immediate story to the doctrinal belief in resurrection. Moral instruction appears in Q 18:22, where the shift to **رَبِّي** (my Lord) personalises the speaker's submission to divine knowledge, modelling humility for the audience. Unlike secular narratives—such as modern short stories, where reference primarily ensures structural clarity and narrative flow—Qur'ānic cohesion is often employed to reinforce divine authority (“We relate to you their story in truth”, Q 18:13), guide interpretation (“...Do not dispute about them except with clear proof”, Q 18:22), and evoke spiritual reflection (“...so that they might know that the promise of Allah is true”, Q 18:21).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the role of grammatical cohesion in structuring the mixed-mode narrative discourse in *Sūrat al-Kahf* (chapter of the cave), focusing on the story of the companions of the cave. Specifically, the research investigated how cohesive devices contribute to textual coherence, how they function across monologue and dialogue patterns, and how Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion model can be applied to Qur'ānic discourse.

The findings reveal that grammatical cohesion in the Qur'ān is not merely a structural necessity but also a rhetorical and thematic device that enhances the interconnectedness of narrative elements. The predominant use of references, particularly branched and multiple referents, serves as a textual bridge that connects different narrative segments and facilitates thematic continuity. This is particularly evident in the alternation between monologue and dialogue patterns, where cohesive devices, such as personal pronouns, demonstrative references, and conjunctions, ensure a smooth narrative transition. The anaphoric dominance of referents reinforces cohesion by linking discourse elements across ayahs, while cataphoric references remain limited, primarily functioning as structural markers rather than key contributors to textual connectivity.

These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of cohesion in Qur'ānic discourse, reinforcing the text's unique organizational structure. While Halliday and Hasan's model is effective in identifying cohesion types, the study demonstrates that its application to Qur'ānic discourse requires adaptation, as cohesive devices in the Qur'ān serve multi-dimensional roles beyond simple syntactic connectivity. This aligns with classical Arabic linguistic theories (e.g., al-Jurjānī's, Ibn Jinni, and al-Zamakhsharī), which emphasize the interplay between cohesion, rhetoric, and textual meaning.

Beyond theoretical contributions, these insights hold practical significance for Qur'ānic exegesis and linguistic analysis, as understanding cohesion can aid in interpreting complex narrative structures. Additionally, they are practically significant for Arabic discourse studies, particularly in comparing Qur'ānic cohesion with modern Arabic prose and poetry, and translation studies, where recognizing referential shifts and conjunctive patterns can enhance translation accuracy by preserving textual coherence and rhetorical intent.

The findings of this study offer relevant implications for contemporary discourse analysis, particularly in examining how cohesion contributes to textual unity in sacred and classical texts that employ non-linear narrative structures. The alternation between divine monologue and human dialogue in the story reveals a complex but purposeful use of grammatical cohesion that modern discourse frameworks must account for, especially in religious or rhetorical genres. Additionally, the interpretation of exophoric and ambiguous pronouns raises critical issues for translation studies. Translators must navigate multiple referents, cultural context, and theological sensitivity

when rendering cohesive ties across languages. Thus, this study contributes not only to Qur'ānic linguistic analysis but also to broader discussions in discourse theory and the translation of sacred texts.

Future research can expand this analysis to other Qur'ānic narratives, exploring whether similar referential and conjunctive patterns are present across different *sūrah*s. Additionally, employing corpus-based methodologies may provide a quantitative dimension to support the qualitative findings presented in this study. By bridging modern linguistic frameworks with classical Arabic discourse traditions, this research advances the study of Qur'ānic cohesion and provides a more nuanced understanding of how grammatical devices contribute to textual coherence in sacred texts.

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