

# A Discourse Analysis of Surah Al-Duha in the Holy Quran: Implications for Contemporary Discourse

Abdallah Abu Quba<sup>1</sup>, & Mohammad Alqatawna<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> English Language Center, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Abdallah Abu Quba, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: aabubuqa@kfu.edu.sa

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## Abstract

This study employs a discourse analysis (DA) framework to explore the linguistic and textual features of Surah Al-Duha in the Holy Quran and its implications for contemporary discourse. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the discursive elements and patterns of the Surah and its context to explain how language is used to shape meaning and construct social structures and ideologies. The study used a qualitative research design that draws on the principles of DA to analyze the Surah's grammar, syntax, lexicon, and metaphorical language. The study also explained the historical, social, and cultural context of the Surah to explore its relevance and implications for contemporary discourse. The findings of the study showed that several discursive strategies and patterns were employed in the text, including the use of metaphorical language, intertextual references, and repetition of certain words and phrases. These strategies and patterns contribute to the overall meaning and interpretation of the text and highlight how power, identity, and ideology are constructed and negotiated in religious discourse. The study presents an original and valuable contribution to the field of discourse analysis and the understanding of the Quran as a religious text.

**Keywords:** Discourse analysis, Surah Al-Duha, Holy Quran, Linguistic features, Metaphorical language, Intertextual references

## 1. Introduction

This study aims to explore the discursive elements and patterns of Surah Al-Duha in the Holy Quran through a discourse analysis (DA) framework. The article aims to explore the linguistic and textual features of the Surah and its context to gain a deeper understanding of its meaning and implications for contemporary discourse.

The Holy Quran is a central text of Islam, and it serves as a guide for religious beliefs and practices. The Quran contains various surahs, or chapters, that are composed of verses that guide a range of topics such as faith, ethics, and social issues (Dakake, 2006). Surah Al-Duha, the 93<sup>rd</sup> surah in the Quran, is composed of 11 verses, and it is considered to be a powerful message of hope and encouragement for Muslims who experience difficulties in their lives (Islamic Content, 2021).

Despite its significance, little research has been conducted on the linguistic and discourse features of Surah Al-Duha. To address this gap, this study employed a discourse analysis (DA) framework to explore the linguistic and textual features of the Surah and its context. DA is a method of analyzing language that aims to uncover how language is used to exercise power and reinforce social structures and ideologies (Fairclough, 2010; Wodak, 2002; Van Dijk, 2015).

This study highlights the importance of studying the Quran from a linguistic and discourse perspective, as language and discourse are powerful tools for shaping beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Abdul-Raof, 2003). By using a DA approach, this study shows the discursive strategies and patterns that are employed in Surah Al-Duha and explores the implications of these strategies and patterns in contemporary discourse.

The study is structured as follows: section one is the introduction, and the second section provides a review of the existing literature on DA and its use in the study of religious texts. Section three explores the methodology and explains the qualitative research design that is used in this study, including the procedures for data collection and analysis. The results are discussed in section four which presents the findings of the DA analysis, followed by a discussion of the implications of these findings for the study of religious texts and contemporary discourse. Finally, section five shows the conclusion, summarizes the key findings of the study, and suggests ideas for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

Surah Al-Duha is one of the surahs in the Quran that has received relatively little attention from scholars, despite its importance for Muslims. This section provides an overview of the literature on Surah Al-Duha and highlights the significance of this study.

Surah Al-Duha is the 93<sup>rd</sup> surah in the Quran and is composed of 11 verses. The surah is believed to have been revealed to the Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him (PBUH) during a period of difficulty and uncertainty in his life and, therefore, it is considered as a message of hope and encouragement for Muslims (Islamic Content, 2021). The surah begins with the Arabic phrase "Wad-duha," which

is often translated as "By the morning brightness" (Quran, 93:1). The surah encourages Muslims to be patient in the face of adversity and to trust in Allah's blessings. More specifically, the purpose of Surah Al-Duha is an oath by the morning brightness and the night that Allah has given away his messenger and what has he left behind; to promise prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that he would be off in the future than in the past; to remind the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) of Allah's blessings; and to thank Allah for these blessings.

Despite its importance, little research has been conducted on Surah Al-Duha from a linguistic and discourse perspective. Previous studies have focused primarily on the religious and spiritual aspects of the Surah, with limited attention paid to the linguistic and textual features of the Surah.

To fill this gap, this study employed a DA framework to explore the linguistic and textual features of Surah Al-Duha. DA has been widely used in the analysis of various types of discourse, including political discourse (Van Dijk, 1997), media discourse (Fairclough, 1995), and religious discourse (Lin, 2018). Previous studies have used DA to analyze various aspects of the Quran, including the use of metaphors, the representation of women, and the discourse on jihad (Abdul-Raof, 2003; Ubaid, 2014; Darzi, et. al, 2021).

To our knowledge, no previous study has employed a DA approach to analyze Surah Al-Duha. This study fills this gap by exploring the linguistic and textual features of the Surah, and by examining how these features were used to construct meaning and reinforce social structures and ideologies.

Benyahia (2021) discussed the divine nature of the Qur'anic discourse, which is unique and unparalleled in its sound, lexical, compositional, rhythmic, and deliberative levels. The study used a descriptive-analytical approach to investigate the linguistic aspects of coherence and consistency in the text. The study highlighted the aspects of the Qur'anic miracle by examining the means of text consistency, exploring the relationship between old criticism (rhetoric) and new criticism (linguistics of the text), and explaining the nature of Qur'anic rhetorical images and their common structures. The study suggested that the Qur'an is comprehensive and unified in its structure and meaning and provides numerous models that demonstrate the tools of consistency and harmony in the text, particularly in Surat Al-Baqarah.

Khan and Ali (2020) analyzed the use of war metaphors in the Quranic discourse. The study was based on a qualitative analysis of the Quranic text and focused on the metaphors that were used to describe argumentation and debate. The authors explained that the war metaphor is a dominant theme in the Quran as it reflects the combative and competitive nature of Islamic discourse. The authors concluded that a more nuanced understanding of the role of metaphor in the Quranic discourse helps to promote more constructive and collaborative approaches to argumentation and debate.

El-Awa (2017) discussed the phenomenon of repetition in the Qur'an and explained its relevance in the text. She explored that repetition serves various purposes, including emphasis, clarification, and rhetorical effect. El-Awa also explored the relationship between repetition and the Qur'anic concept of Tawhid (oneness of God), and she showed that repetition reinforces this central idea throughout the text. The study provided examples of repeated words and phrases in the Qur'an and analyzed their significance.

Oghiator (2022) investigated the graphological traits, lexico-semantic representations, and cohesive devices present in surah Al-Inshirah. The analysis revealed that the text utilized contains a multitude of discourse elements and linguistic structures. The elements encompassed in this analysis are the graphological and lexico-semantic structures, as well as the cohesive features, which consist of lexical and grammatical devices. The examination further elucidated the instructions and messages conveyed to Prophet Muhammad by Allah. The majority of the messages conveyed in the verses consist of figures of speech.

Saeed (2005) investigated how the Quran can be understood in today's world to meet the needs of Muslim societies. He delved into the interpretation of the ethical-legal content of the Quran, considering the changing nature of the modern world. Saeed addressed the debate surrounding the interpretation of the Quran and how it affects the contemporary understanding of this sacred text. He proposed a new approach that considers the historical and contemporary contexts of interpretation while maintaining the framework and core beliefs and practices of the Quran.

In terms of coherence in Quranic discourse, Alshenqeeti (2019) has investigated how Quranic passages are consistent with one another. In his study, Alshenqeeti has demonstrated, via the use of discourse analysis, that certain linguistic mechanisms through which the text producer seeks to achieve coherence are unique to Quranic Arabic. More specifically, Alshenqeeti has shown that the achievement of coherence in a text can be observed through several factors. Firstly, coherence is achieved through the use of morphologically related words. Secondly, the text producer's choice of a grammatical category, such as a verb, noun, or adjective, plays a crucial role in conveying the central idea of the statement. Thirdly, the selection of a specific comparative adjective contributes to the coherence of the text. Additionally, the use of a specific comparative epithet for God further enhances coherence. Lastly, the selection of specific epithets for God at the end of a sentence also contributes to the overall coherence of the text.

### 3. Methodology

The study used a qualitative research design that draws on the principles of DA (Silverman, 2004) to analyze Surah Al-Duha. The analysis focused on the linguistic and textual features of the Surah, including its grammar, syntax, lexicon, and metaphorical language to identify the discursive strategies and patterns that are employed. The study also analyzed the context of the Surah, including its historical, social, and cultural context, to explore its relevance and implications for contemporary discourse.

The analysis of Surah Al-Duha was conducted in several stages. First, a detailed linguistic analysis of the text has been carried out, with a focus on the use of particular lexical and grammatical features (Gutwinski, 2011). This was followed by an analysis of the discourse structure, which examined how the text is organized and the various rhetorical strategies that are employed. The next stage of the analysis involved identifying the various themes and topics that are addressed in the Surah and analyzing how these themes are constructed and conveyed. This was followed by an examination of the various intertextual references and allusions that are used in the Surah, and an analysis of how these references contribute to the overall meaning and interpretation of the text.

The final stage of the analysis involved an assessment of the dominant discourses and power relations that are embedded in the text. This included an analysis of how the text constructs particular social and cultural identities and an examination of how these identities are related to broader social and political contexts.

#### 4. Results and Implications

##### 4.1 Linguistic Features

**Grammar and Syntax:** Surah Al-Duha is composed of 11 verses; each one contains a range of grammatical and syntactic features. The Surah begins with the Arabic phrase "Wal-Duha," which is composed of the noun "Duha" and the preposition "Wa," meaning "and." The use of the preposition "Wa" is significant, as it indicates a connection between this Surah and the previous one, Surah Al-Layl. The Surah also contains a range of other grammatical and syntactic features, including the use of the perfect tense, the subjunctive mood, and the accusative case. These features contribute to the overall meaning and interpretation of the Surah.

**Lexicon:** The Surah contains a range of lexical features that are significant in the analysis of its meaning and interpretation. For example, the word "Duha" itself is a lexical item that has a range of possible meanings, including "sunrise," "daybreak," and "morning light." The Surah also contains several other keywords and phrases, including "naima" (blessing) and "yateeman" (orphan).

**Metaphorical Language:** Surah Al-Duha contains a range of metaphorical expressions that are significant in the analysis of their meaning and interpretation. For example, the use of the phrase "by the morning brightness" (Duha) can be interpreted metaphorically as a symbol of hope and renewal. Similarly, the use of the phrase "your Lord has not forsaken you" can be interpreted metaphorically as a symbol of divine love and care.

##### Linguistics Analysis of Verses with Translation (Abdel Haleem, 2010):

**Verse 1-2:** وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ - وَالضُّحَىٰ "By the morning brightness, And [by] the night when it covers with darkness"

This verse contains two noun phrases, "الضحى" (the morning brightness) and "الليل" (the night), which are in the nominative case. The noun phrase "وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ" (And [by] the night when it covers with darkness) is a conditional clause that describes the time of day. The verb "سَجَىٰ" (to cover with darkness) is in the third person singular past tense form and the subject is implied. This verse also employs a rhetorical device known as "qasam" (oath) which emphasizes the importance of the message that follows.

**Verse 3:** مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ "Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor has He become displeased".

This verse contains two verb phrases, "وَدَّعَكَ" (has forsaken you) and "قَلَىٰ" (has become displeased). Both verbs are in the third-person singular past tense form. The negation "مَا" is used to negate both verbs, which further emphasizes the reassurance being provided to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

**Verses 1-3** show the use of natural phenomena, such as the morning light and the night, which is significant because it reflects the cultural context of the Arabian Peninsula, where people were closely connected to the natural world. The use of this metaphor to remind believers of Allah's presence and support is also a reflection of the cultural values of the time, where people sought guidance and meaning in the world around them.

**Verse 4:** وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ "And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]."

This verse contains a comparative construction using the adjective "خَيْرٌ" (better) and the comparative particle "مِنْ" (than). The phrase "الاولى" (the first [life]) refers to the period before the revelation of the Quran and the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

**Verse 5:** وَأَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ "And, surely, your Lord will give you, and you will be satisfied."

This verse contains two verb phrases, "يُعْطِيكَ" (will give you) and "تَرْضَىٰ" (will be satisfied). The verb "يُعْطِيكَ" is in the third person singular future tense form and the subject is implied. The verb "تَرْضَىٰ" is in the second person singular future tense form and the subject is the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The use of the future tense provides reassurance and hope for the future.

**Verse 6:** أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ "Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge?"

This verse contains two verb phrases, "يَجِدْكَ" (found you) and "آوَىٰ" (gave [you] refuge). The verb "يَجِدْكَ" is in the third person singular past tense form and the subject is implied. The verb "آوَىٰ" is in the third person singular past tense form and the subject is Allah. The use of the past tense emphasizes the past blessings of Allah upon Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and serves as a reminder of His continued support.

**Verse 7:** وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ "And He found you lost and guided [you]."

This verse contains two verb phrases, "وَوَجَدَكَ" (found you) and "هُدًى" (guided [you]). The verb "وَوَجَدَكَ" is in the third person singular past tense form and the subject is Allah. The verb "هُدًى" is in the third person singular past tense form and the subject is also Allah. The use of the past tense again emphasizes the past blessings of Allah and serves as a reminder of His guidance.

**Verse 8:** "وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى" "And He found you poor and made [you] self-sufficient."

This verse contains two verb phrases, "وَوَجَدَكَ" (found you) and "أَغْنَى" (made [you] self-sufficient). The verb "وَوَجَدَكَ" is in the third person singular past tense form and the subject is Allah. The verb "أَغْنَى" is in the third person singular past tense form and the subject is also Allah. The use of the past tense emphasizes the past blessings of Allah and serves as a reminder of His provision.

**Verse 9:** "فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ" "So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him]."

This verse contains a verb phrase, "تَقْهَرْ" (oppress). The verb is in the second person singular present tense form and the subject is implied. The imperative "لا" is used to prohibit the action of oppression. This verse emphasizes the importance of justice and kindness towards orphans.

**Verse 10:** "وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ" "And as for the petitioner, do not repel [him]."

This verse contains a verb phrase, "تَنْهَرْ" (repel). The verb is in the second person singular present tense form and the subject is implied. The imperative "لا" is used to prohibit the action of repelling the petitioner. This verse emphasizes the importance of charity and generosity towards those in need.

**Verse 11:** "وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ" "But as for the favor of your Lord, report [it]."

This verse contains a verb phrase, "حَدِّثْ" (report). The verb is in the second person singular present tense form and the subject is implied. The imperative "ف" is used to emphasize the importance of reporting and expressing gratitude for the blessings of Allah. This verse reminds us to acknowledge and appreciate the blessings we have been given.

This analysis provides a breakdown of the meaning and grammatical structure of each verse in Surah Ad-Dhuha, the 93rd chapter of the Quran. The first verse employs the rhetorical device of "qasam" (oath) to emphasize the importance of the message that follows, while the remaining verses offer reassurance and reminders of Allah's blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), including guidance, refuge, and provision. The use of past and future tense verbs throughout the verses serves to emphasize both past blessings and the hope for future blessings. Overall, the chapter serves as a reminder of Allah's continued support and care for his believers.

All in all, the linguistic analysis of the Quranic verses provides a valuable tool for studying and understanding the text in greater depth, and for applying its teachings to our daily lives.

#### 4.2 Textual Features

**Discourse Structure:** The Surah is structured in a way that emphasizes the themes of hope and divine love, with each verse building upon the previous one to create a cohesive discourse. The DA analysis of Surah Al-Duha revealed several discursive strategies and patterns that are employed in the text such as:

1. **Emphasis on divine authority:** The Surah emphasizes the authority of Allah, which is constructed through various linguistic and textual features. For example, the use of the perfect tense and the imperative mood in verses 1-5 conveys a sense of command and authority, while the use of the third person singular in verse 3 emphasizes the power and omnipresence of Allah.
2. **Emphasis on individual responsibility:** The Surah also emphasizes individual responsibility, particularly about the care and support of others. For example, verses 8-11 emphasize the importance of caring for orphans and the needy, which can be interpreted as a call to action for individuals to take responsibility for the welfare of others in their communities.
3. **Use of metaphorical language:** The Surah employs a range of metaphorical expressions. For example, the use of the phrase "by the morning brightness" (Duha) in verse 1 can be interpreted metaphorically as a symbol of hope and renewal, while the use of the phrase "your Lord has not forsaken you" in verse 3 can be interpreted metaphorically as a symbol of divine love and care.

#### 4.3 Themes

The Holy Quran offers a lot of important themes (Nasr, 2004), and Surah Al-Duha contains many themes that can be gained from its analysis such as:

1. **Divine Favor and Blessings:** The Surah begins with Allah's expression of His favor and blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This theme of divine favor and blessings is a recurring theme throughout the Quran.
2. **Hope and Trust in Allah:** The Surah encourages believers to have hope and trust in Allah, even during times of difficulty and hardship. The Surah reminds the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that Allah has not abandoned him and that his future will be brighter than his past.
3. **Gratitude and Thankfulness:** The Surah emphasizes the importance of gratitude and thankfulness towards Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reminded of the many blessings that Allah has bestowed upon him and is encouraged to be grateful for them.

4. Encouragement to Give: The Surah encourages the believers to give in charity and help those in need. The Surah reminds the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) of the importance of helping the less fortunate and the rewards that come with giving.

#### 4.4 Intertextual References

The Surah contains a range of intertextual references to other parts of the Quran, as well as to pre-Islamic Arabian culture and poetry. These references highlight how the Quran draws upon a range of cultural and literary traditions. Moreover, the Surah emphasizes the importance of patience and perseverance, which could be analyzed in terms of how individuals and communities negotiate power and agency in the face of adversity.

#### 4.5 Power Relations

Despite the absence of the word "power" in Surah Al-Duha, we are able to infer its meaning by comparing it to other texts and applying the principle of interpretive reasoning (Ijtihad). Islam is a social and political religion, so it cannot simply ignore the idea of power. It is crucial to ontologically define the concept of power, its existential essence, function, and substantial or abstract factors of power since the holy Quran reveals that all power stems from God's will to power. Surah Al-Duha discusses the concept of guidance, which could be analyzed in terms of its relationship to power and authority and the Surah mentions the idea of social responsibility and caring for the needy, which could be analyzed in terms of the power relations between different groups in society and the responsibilities that comes with that power. In addition, the Surah highlights the power of the spoken word and emphasizes the importance of communication and dialogue, which could be analyzed in terms of how language is used to construct and reinforce power relations. In Surat Al-Duha, Allah is speaking to the Prophet Muhammad, assuring him that he has not abandoned or forsaken him. This highlights the ultimate power and authority of God in providing guidance and support to His chosen messengers. Here, the spoken word is a means through which God communicates His power and authority.

The implications of these strategies and patterns for contemporary discourse are significant. Firstly, the emphasis on divine authority can be seen as a challenge to contemporary discourses that emphasize individualism and secularism. By emphasizing the authority of Allah, the Surah calls into question the validity of discourses that prioritize individual rights and freedoms over collective responsibility and the authority of a higher power. Secondly, the emphasis on individual responsibility can be seen as a challenge to contemporary discourses that prioritize the role of the state and institutions in caring for the needy. By emphasizing individual responsibility, the Surah calls upon individuals to take an active role in caring for others in their communities, which can be seen as a call for greater social cohesion and collective responsibility. Thirdly, the use of metaphorical language can be seen as a strategy for constructing meaning and shaping discourse. By employing metaphorical expressions, the Surah invites readers to interpret its meaning in a range of ways, which can be seen as a challenge to discourses that prioritize a singular, literal interpretation of meaning.

In conclusion, the DA analysis of Surah Al-Duha reveals a range of discursive strategies and patterns that have implications for contemporary discourse on issues such as power, identity, and ideology (Van Dijk, 1995). By emphasizing divine authority, individual responsibility, and metaphorical language, the Surah offers a model for building social cohesion and resolving conflicts that can be applied to contemporary discourse.

### 5. Conclusion

The findings of the DA analysis of Surah Al-Duha reveal several discursive strategies and patterns that are employed in it. These strategies and patterns are significant in shaping the meaning and interpretation of the Surah, as well as in highlighting how power, identity, and ideology are constructed and negotiated in religious discourse.

One of the key discursive strategies employed in Surah Al-Duha is the use of metaphorical language. The text uses a range of metaphors, such as the metaphor of the morning brightness, to symbolize hope and renewal. This strategy is significant in shaping the emotional and psychological impact of the text on the reader or listener, as it helps to create a sense of optimism and positivity.

Another discursive strategy that is employed in Surah Al-Duha is the use of intertextual references. The text draws upon a range of cultural and literary traditions, including references to other parts of the Quran and pre-Islamic Arabian poetry. These references contribute to the overall meaning and interpretation of the text and highlight how religious discourse is situated within broader cultural and historical contexts.

The analysis also reveals the use of certain patterns in the text, such as the repetition of certain words and phrases, which helps to emphasize key themes and concepts (Tyler, 1994). For example, the repetition of the phrase "He found you" serves to reinforce the message of divine love and care. Moreover, some expressions have become clichés in the Arabic culture, which is an important part of the Arabic culture (Abu Guba & Abu Qub'a, 2020).

Further studies may explore how discursive strategies and patterns are employed in other religious texts, and how they shape the meaning and interpretation of those texts. Another avenue for research is to examine how religious discourse intersects with contemporary social and political issues, and how discursive strategies are used to construct and negotiate power and identity in these contexts.

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**Authors contributions**

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

**Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

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