On Coherence in Quranic Discourse: A Linguistic Analysis

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Abstract

The reader may assume that adjacent sentences in a given running text are coherent, logically ordered, conceptually related, semantically homogeneous, and, most importantly, enjoy continuity of the text pivotal thought. However, this may not be so since the prerequisites of coherence are varied and the criteria are language and culture specific. Cohesion plays a pivotal role in the realisation of coherence, in particular, and the texture of the text, in general. In Quranic Arabic, some of the linguistic mechanisms through which the text producer aims to attain coherence do not occur in other languages. Thus, the contribution to knowledge and originality applies to the current work. The plugging of a

research gap in this field of linguistics can be demonstrated in the need to explain the prototypical discourse characteristics of Quranic Arabic. This is represented in the attainment of coherence through (i) morphological relatedness, (ii) the text producer's selection of a grammatical category such as verb/noun/adjective that is fundamental to the central idea of the statement, (iii) the selection of a specific comparative adjective, (iv) the selection of a specific comparative God's epithet, and (v) the selection of a specific sentence-final God's couplet epithets. For the purpose of this paper's analyses, a sample of Quranic lexical items has been selected from different sūrahs (chapters) and are provided with a discourse-oriented analysis with a view to their attainment of coherence.

Key Words

coherence, cohesion, sūrahs, Quranic Arabic, Quranic linguistics.

1. Introduction

The present work is concerned with Quranic discourse coherence which is characterised by a central thought (theme, leitmotif) around which Quran Arabic is organised.

Coherence is a major prerequisite of textuality. For Hellman (1995:195/196), coherence “is often equalled with discourse comprehension”. For her (ibid:191), coherence is regarded as “a property that is constitutive of texts”. Coherence, in the view of Levy (2003:172), refers to a description of events that has systematic connectedness. This is corresponding to the definition of coherence in Webster’s Dictionary which views it as “systematic or methodical connectedness or interrelatedness, especially when governed by logical principles”. A coherent text is required to demonstrate logical order of its thoughts. This is the continuity of thoughts (senses) which guarantees clarity and smooth textual flow of thoughts. The notion of ‘continuity of thought’ has been widely linked to the notion of ‘coherence’. Among linguists who are proponents of this claim are Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), Hellman (1995), Rickheit and Habel (1995) and Abdul-Raof (2019). Because the thoughts are logically ordered, there have to be lexical links among the thoughts to make the text coherent. Levy (2003) has also addressed the notion of ‘logical coherence’ but in children’s narrative discourse. Coherence in discourse, in the view of Wang and Guo (2014:460), is “the

semantic relationship between propositions or communicative events in discourse”, which is a feature of the perception of discourse. This is in line with Bublitz’s view in Bublitz *et al.* (1997:1) that “coherence has found its place as a key concept, perhaps even the key concept, in discourse and text analysis”.

2. Linguistic Mechanisms of Coherence

According to Chestennan (1997:111), coherence in Quranic text generally refers to “the logical arrangement of information, at ideational level”. In the pages that follow, we are going to put forward six major mechanisms through which coherence is achieved in the Quranic text. Thus, the Quranic linguistic mechanisms of coherence are: (1) continuity of thought, (2) linearization, (3) morphological form, (4) grammatical form, (5) conjunctions, and (6) lexical links. In other words, these are the major factors which can achieve coherence in Quranic discourse as discussed below.

2.1 Continuity of Thought

The major communicative aim of the writer/speaker is to deliver his/her thought (message) to the reader/listener. In terms of coherence, there are three linguistic mechanisms through which the main thought continues in Quranic discourse. These are: (i) between consecutive sentences of the same sūrah, (ii) between consecutive sūrahs, and (iii) between consecutive sūrahs (beginning-end-beginning of sūrahs). The above continuity of thought mechanisms are discussed below:

(i) Between consecutive sentences of the same surah:

This is concerned with the sequentiality (connectivity, dovetailing) of the theme(s) of the sentence which represent the text producer's thought. We believe that the continuity of senses is a prototypical feature of coherence in Quranic discourse. This is illustrated by the following example:

Example 1:

wala tadʿu maʿa allahi ilahan akhar – Do not invoke with God another deity → *la ilaha illa hu* – There is no deity except Him → *kullu shaiʿin halikun illa wajhahu* – Everything will be destroyed except His face → *lahu al-hukmu* – He is the judgement →

ilaihi turja'un – To Him you shall all be brought back, (Q28:88).

As seen above, we have a series of different messages (text segments) each with a similar thought and intended meaning, and, most importantly, all point to the same illocutionary force intended by the text producer, namely 'monotheism'. We are instructed by the initial message not to invoke with God another deity. In other words, the main thought is monotheism. Then, the continuity of this thought is realised through the subsequent statements which also focus on monotheism. Thus, we have what Levy (2003:172) calls 'systematic connectedness'. It is worthwhile to note that the subsequent statements are all no-main-verb nominal sentences. For further details, see section (v) below. This is the pivotal thought of the interlocutor (text producer). The underlying sense of this command continues in the subsequent messages. A further example which validates our argument that dove-tailing is a feature of coherence in Quranic discourse, is in the following example:

Example 2:

qul huwa allahu ahad – Say He is Allah the One
 → *allahu al-samad* – Allah the Self-sufficient

Master → *lam yalid. walam yulad* – He begets not,
 nor was He begotten → *walam yakun lahu kufwan*
ahad – and there is none co-equal or comparable
 unto Him. (Q112).

In the above text, the main thought is monotheism represented by the word (ahad - one) which is the focus (leitmotif) of the sūrah. Since this thought is the focus of the sūrah, the subsequent statements (2-5) have dove-tailed in order to achieve the continuity of the main thought (monotheism). Q112:2 highlights the thought of monotheism through the lexical item (al-samad - the Self-sufficient Master), Q112:3 highlights the thought of monotheism through the negated verbal clause (*lam yalid* – He begets not), and through the other negated verbal clause (*walam yulad* – nor was He begotten), and Q112:5 highlights the notion of monotheism through the negated no-main-verb nominal sentence (*walam yakun lahu kufwan ahad* – and there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him). Further grammatical back-up to this claim is demonstrated by the employment of the coordination conjunction particle (adat al-^catf) the (wa – and) among the supporting statements. However, Q112:1 and Q112:2 have no

coordination particle (wa – and). This is a stylistic mechanism employed in Quranic discourse called asyndeton (al-fasl) whose pragmatic (communicative) function is giving focus to the main thought. In other words, asyndeton has produced an elevated style in support of the main thought. We also encounter an interesting example in Q3 that touches upon the continuity of thought and coherence among consecutive statements of the same sūrah:

Example 3:

wa man ya'tasim billahi faqad hudiya ila siratin mustaqim – whoever holds firmly to God, then he is indeed guided to a straight path (Q3:101).

Here we have the thought (theme, notion) of (ya'tasim billahi – to hold firmly to God) followed by the theme of (siratin mustaqim – a straight path). To achieve continuity of thought, we are introduced to a similar thought in the following sentence:

Example 4:

i'tasimu bi habli allahi jami'an wala tafarraqu – Hold firmly to the rope of God all together and do not become divided (Q3:103).

Here, we can make the following textual analysis observations:

(1) The thought of (i^ʿtisam – holding firmly to someone or something) is introduced through the imperative verb (i^ʿtasimu) which is a continuity of the same thought in Q3:101 and;

(2) The expressions (habli allah – the rope of God) and (la tafarraqu – do not become divided) also represent continuity of the same thought of (siratin mustaqim – straight path) in the previous sentence. Thus, the text has achieved continuity of thought and lexical cohesion through reiteration (Halliday and Hasan 1976:278, 318) of the same verb (ya^ʿtasim / i^ʿtasimu).

(ii) Between consecutive sūrahs (end-beginning of sūrahs): This is continuity of thought through end and beginning of consecutive sūrahs. The continuity of thought and coherence can also be observed among consecutive sūrahs. For instance, the end of Q10:108-109 presents the thought of prophethood (qul ya ayuha alnasu qad jaakum alhaqq min rabikum fa man ihtada fa inama yahtadi li nafsih wa man dallah fa inama yadillu alaiha wa ma ana alaikom bewakel – O you mankind, now truth has come to you from your Lord.

So, whoever receives guidance, he does so for the good of his own self; and whosoever goes astray, he does so to his own loss; and I am not set over you as a disposer of your affairs to oblige you for guidance) (Q10:108) which refers to the prophethood of Muhammad. This main thought of prophethood continues in Q11:2 (inani lakum minhu nathir wa bashir – I am unto you from Him a warner and a bringer of glad tidings). Likewise, dove-tailing, i.e., connectivity, of the main thought of monotheism and God's epithet is encountered in Quran 10:109. Coherence between Q10 and Q11 is represented by the verb (yahkum – gives judgement) and the active participle (al-hakim – the Best of judges) of Q10:109. This main thought of God's epithet continues in Q11:1-2. The main thought of God's epithet and monotheism is repeated in the following sūrah Q11:1-2 where the verb (uhkimat – perfected), the active participle (hakim – All-wise) and monotheism (alla ta'budu ila allah – Do not worship except God) are presented.

A further example which illustrates coherence and focus through dove-tailing is the end of Quran 38:87 and the beginning of Quran 39:1. The main thought of Quran 38:87 is prophethood (in huwa illa dhikrun lil-^calamin – It is only a

Reminder for all the mankind and jinn) through reference to the Quran. The thought of prophethood continues in the beginning of Quran 39:1 (tanzil alkitab min allah al-^caziz al-hakim – The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Almighty, the All-wise) where reference to prophethood has been made the focus through its repetition at the introduction of the sūrah.

A further example of continuity of the same thought between the end of a sūrah and the beginning of the following sūrah is encountered in Quran 56:96 (fasabbih bismi rabikka al-^cadim – So glorify with the praises the Name of your Lord, the Most Great) and Quran 57:1 (sabbaha li-allah ma fi alsamawat wa alard – Whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah) where monotheism as a main thought is focused.

(iii) Between consecutive sūrahs (beginning-end-beginning of sūrahhs): This is concerned with the continuity of a thought that occurs at the beginning of a sūrah, at the end of the same sūrah, and at the beginning of the following sūrah, as in Q38:1, Q38:87 and Q39:1. The main thought of the beginning of Quran 38:1 is reference to the Quran as a Scripture. This is affirmation of the prophethood of

Muhammad: (wa alquran thi al-thikr – By the Quran full of remembrance). To achieve coherence, the same thought of prophethood continues at the end of the same surah Quran 38: 87 (in huwa illa thikrun lil-caalamin – It is only remembrance to all mankind and jinn). The continuity of thought is semantically achieved through the repetition of the same noun (dhikr – remembrance, Q38:1) + (dhikr – remembrance, Q38:87), and the presentation of the same thought of prophethood at the beginning of Q39:1 (tanzil al-kitab min allah al-^ʿaziz al-hakim – The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-mighty, the All-wise). It is interesting to note that the coherence of the main thought of prophethood continues at the beginning of the subsequent surah, Q40:2 (tanzil alkitab min allah alaziz alalim – The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-mighty, the All-knower) which further continues in the subsequent sūrah Q41:2-3 (tanzil min alrahman alrahim. kitabun fussilat ayatahu qurana arabiaa – A revelation from Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. A Book whereof the Verses are explained in detail a Quran in Arabic).

Another example of the continuity of a thought that occurs at the beginning of a sūrah, at the end of the same sūrah, and

at the beginning of the following sūrah is encountered in Q21:1 (iqtaraba lil-lnasi hisabuhum wa hum fi ghaflatin mu^ʿridun – Draws near for mankind their reckoning while they turn away in heedlessness), Q21:109 (wa'in adri a qaribun am ba^ʿidun ma tuw^ʿadun – And I know not whether that which you were promised (i.e. the torment or the Day of Resurrection) is near or far) and Q22:1 (inna zalzalata alsa^ʿati shaiun ^ʿadim – Verily, the earthquake of the Hour is a terrible thing) where the main thought is resurrection (the day of judgement).

(iv) Through ayah-final couplet epithets: Coherence in Quranic discourse is also characterised by ayah-final epithets. However, the occurrence of epithets is not haphazard. Rather, the macro-lexical (semantic) context plays a pivotal role in the selection of befitting epithets which contribute to the achievement of coherence, as in (ghafur rahim – forgiving and merciful, Q2:173, 182, 192, 199, 218, and 226).

2.2 Linearization of Sentence Constituents

The thoughts should be arranged in a relevant manner. The configuration of words (word order) delivers the

writer's/speaker's concepts to the text receiver. Word order also plays a major role in the delivery of the illocutionary force of the message involved in the text. We can argue that the purposeful organisation of sentence constituents achieves coherence. For instance, coherence is achieved through a prepositional phrase which is more relevant to be placed sentence-initially. In other words, a given word order is more relevant than another in terms of the attainment of coherence, as in: *ila allahi turja^u al-umur* – To God all matters will be returned (Q22:76), and *bil-akhirati hum yuqinun* – In the hereafter they firmly believe (Q2:4).

In order to achieve coherence and continuity of thought, the prepositional phrases (*ila allahi* – to God) and (*bil-akhirati* – in the hereafter) are placed sentence-initially. This is due to the fact that through this word order, focus is achieved. In other words, the prepositional phrase is the focus of the message. Therefore, it is highlighted by being placed at the beginning of the sentence. Let us consider the following example which demonstrates how the text producer's thoughts are well-arranged in a relevant manner and how the configuration of words relays the writer's/speaker's concepts to the text receiver (reader/listener).

Example 5:

qul huwa allahu ahad – Say He is Allah the one →
 2. *allahu al-samad* – Allah the self-sufficient
 master → 3. *lam yalid. walam yulad* – He begets
 not, nor was He begotten → 4. *walam yakun lahu
 kufwan ahad* – and there is none co-equal or
 comparable unto Him. (Q112).

Here, the main thoughts are monotheism (see 2.1 above) and the unity of God represented by the words (*ahad* - one) and (*Allah* – God). This is reiterated in Quran 2:1 and Quran 2:2 respectively.

2.3 Morphological Form and Relevance

Coherence in Quranic discourse is concerned with relevance which is realised through the semantic relatedness of lexical items. In other words, how a lexical item is well-selected rather than other alternative words because it is more relevant and can contribute more in the realisation of coherence. Let us consider the following examples:

Example 6:

*inna alladhina la yu'minuna bil'akhirati
 layusammuna al-mal'ikata tasmiyata al-untha* –

Verily, those who believe not in the Hereafter name the angels with female names → *wama lahum bihi min ʿilm in yattabiʿuna illa al-zann* – but they have no knowledge thereof . . . → *dhalika mablaghum min al-ʿilm inna rabbaka huwa ʿlam biman dalla ʿan sabilihi wahuwa ʿlam biman ihtada* - that is what they could reach of knowledge. Verily, your Lord it is He who knows best him who goes astray from His path and He knows best him who receives guidance . . . → *huwa ʿlam bikum idh ansha'akum min al-ardi wa'idh antum ajinnatun fi butuni ummahatikum fala tuzakku anfusakum huwa ʿlam biman ittaqa* – He knows you well when He created you from the earth and when you were fetuses in your mothers' wombs. So, ascribe not purity to yourself. He knows best him who fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him (Q53:28-32).

We can observe the close relatedness between morphological form and lexical cohesion for the purpose of cohesion as a requirement of textuality. In the above example, we have six morphologically-related lexical items

(^ʿilm – knowledge) and (a^ʿlam – most knowing). We can argue that the selection of the lexical item (a^ʿlam - most knowing) is more relevant than its alternative verb form (ya^ʿlam – to know). The selection of this specific morphological form is for a good textual and contextual purpose. The lexical item (a^ʿlam - most knowing) has achieved textuality and enhanced lexical cohesion, continuity of thought, and ultimately, coherence.

Example 7:

wama hum bikharijin min al-narr – They are never to emerge from the Fire (Q2:167).

In the above example, the active participle (kharijin – never to emerge from the fire) is selected instead of its alternative verb form (yakhrujun – they get out) in order to portray the impossibility of their emergence from the punishment of the fire, i.e., the active participle designates the thought of perpetual punishment. However, the use of the verb (yakhrujun – they get out) can lead to the thought that their punishment is not perpetual, i.e., [– Permanency], [– Continuity], and [+ Renewability], i.e., their punishment is renewed every other time but not constantly. In another

example where the morphological form is more relevant than the verb form, the Quranic discourse in Quran 18 exemplifies this:

Example 8:

wa kan allahu ala kul shaiin muqtadira – And Allah is able to do everything (Q18:45).

We can note here that the ayah used the lexical item (*muqtadira* - able to do everything) which we argue is more relevant than its alternative verb form (*yaqdir* – can). The selection of this specific morphological form is for a good textual and contextual purpose. The lexical item (*muqtadira* - able to do everything) has achieved textuality and enhanced coherence. A similar pattern of Quranic discourse and the achievement of coherence through the semantic relatedness of lexical items and relevance can be seen in Q19:

Example 9:

wa ma kan rabuka nasyya – And your Lord is never forgetful (Q19:64).

Here, we observe the use of (*nasyya* – forgetful) instead of its alternative verb form (*yansa* – forget) to achieve textuality, and ultimately coherence.

Example 10:

an da'au li al-rahman walada – That they ascribe a son to the Most Gracious → *wa ma yanbaghi li al-rahman an yattakhitha walada* – But it is suitable for the Most Gracious that He should beget a son → *in kulu man fi assamawati wa alardi ill aati al-rahman walada* – There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Gracious as a slave (Q19:91-93).

In this example, we observe use of the epithet (al-rahman - the Most Gracious). This epithet has occurred 16 times in Q19 to suit the context. Thus, it is the most relevant lexical item for Q19 through which coherence is achieved.

2.4 Grammatical Form and Sentence Structure

Coherence in Quranic discourse is also related to the selection of a given grammatical structure other than alternative structures. According to Chesterman (2000:48), Quran “brings formal issues to the fore, with the implication that grammatical form also carries meaning”. Among the grammatical and sentence structure mechanisms which are employed to achieve coherence are:

(i) The active participle (ism al-faʿil): This grammatical form is employed rather than its alternative passive participle (ism al-mafʿul) for the sake of coherence. The active participle has the pragmatic functions of [+ Permanency], [+ Continuity], [+ Renewability], the verb has the pragmatic functions of [+ Action Taking Place], [+ Renewability], [– Continuity], and [– Permanency], and the comparative adjective designates the pragmatic functions of [+ Better Than]. Let us consider the following examples:

Example 11:

innahu ʿalim bidhat al-sudur – He is the all-knower
of that which is in men's chests (Q39:7).

In the above example, the active participle (ʿalim – all-knower) is employed for the purpose of focus rather than the alternative verb form (yaʿlam – to know).

Example 12:

inna allaha la yahdi man huwa musrif kadhdhab –
verily, Allah guides not one who is an oppressor, a
liar (Q40:28).

Here, the active participles (musrif – oppressor) and (kadhdhab – liar) are employed for the purpose of focus

rather than their alternative verb forms (yusrif – to oppress) and (yakdhib – to lie).

Example 13:

dhalika al-kitabu la raiba fihi hudan lil-muttaqin -

This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of God. → *alladhina*

yu'minuna bil-ghaibi wayuqimuna al-salata wamimma razaqnahum yunfiqun - Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what

We have provided for them. → *walladhina*

yu'minuna bima unzila ilaika wama unzila min qablika wabil-akhirati hum yuqinun - And who

believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and of the hereafter they

are certain in faith. → *ula'ika 'ala hudan min*

rabbihim wa'ula'ika hum al-muflihun - Those are upon the right guidance from their Lord, and it is

those who are the successful (Q2:2-5).

Here we have the active participle (muttaqun – the conscious of God) rather than the alternative verb form (yattaqun) or the alternative grammatical pattern (alladhina yattaqun – who are conscious of God) which can form a

stylistic symmetry with the following relative clauses (alladhina yu'minuna . . . – who believe in . . .) and (alladhina yu'minuna . . . – who believe in . . .). However, syntax-based coherence requires the active participle to fulfil the sequentiality of thoughts, and the illocutionary force of [+ Continuity] and [+ Permanency] which represent the text producer's intended meaning. The use of the active participle in sentence 2 is also backed up by the active participle (al-muflihun – the successful) in sentence 5. Based on sentence 2, the Qur'an (al-kitabu – the Book) is a guidance for a specific category of people labelled as (muttaqun) and in the concluding sentence 5, they are also referred to in the active participle and defined as (muflihun).

(ii) Parallelistic grammatical structures: Coherence is also achieved through the repetition of the same analogous grammatical constructions in adjacent sentences. This can also achieve syntactic parallelism and assonance on the stylistic level, as in the following examples:

Example 14:

idha al-sama'u infatarat – When the heaven is cleft
asunder. → *wa idha al-kawakibu intatharat* – And

when the stars have fallen and scattered. → *wa idha al-biharu fujjirat* – And when the seas are burst forth. → *wa idha al-quburu bu^{ct}hirat* – And when the graves are turned upside down and bring out their contents, (Q82:1-4); *inna al-abrara lafi na^cim* – Verily, the pious and righteous will be in Paradise. → *wa inna al-fujjara lafi jahim* – Verily, the disbelievers and evil-doers will be in the blazing Fire, (Q82:13-14).

Coherence here is attained through syntactic parallelism (*al-jinas*) in the above examples. The same grammatical sentence structure is employed in Q82:1-4 where we have the temporal particle (*idha* – when) + subject + a verb. Similarly, in Q82:13-14, we encounter grammatical parallelism through the repetition of the same syntactic structure: affirmation particle *inna* + subject + prepositional phrase complement. Thus, the smoothness of the main thought is being maintained which is glossed by the musical phonetic factor of assonance to attract the listener's/reader's attention.

Similarly in:

Example 15:

fiha ʿainun jariyatun – Therein will be a running spring. *fiha sururun marfu^{ca}tun* –Therein will be thrones raised high (Q88:12-13); *wa akwabun mawducatun* – And cups set at hand. *wa namariqu masfufatun* - And cushions set in rows. *wa zarabiyyu mabthuthatun* –And rich carpets all spread out (Q88:14-16); *afala yanzuruna ila al-ibili kaifa khuliqat* – Do they not look at the camels how they are created. *wa ila al-sama'i kaifa rufi^cat* – And at the heaven how it is raised. *wa ila al-jibali kaifa nusibat* – And at the mountains how they are rooted and fixed firm. *wa ila al-ardi kaifa sutihat* – And at the earth how it is outspread (Q88:17-20).

Here we also encounter a repeated pattern of parallelism in Q88 above. In Q88:12-13, we see grammatical parallelism through the replication of the adverb (*fiha* – therein) which has contributed to the constancy of thought (description of paradise) and thus maintained coherence and attracted the listener's/reader's attention. Also in Q88:14-16, a continued pattern of parallelism is observed with the repeated use of the conjunction (*wa* – and) in the succinct ayahs which

describe the enjoyment in paradise. Similarly, in Q88:17-20, parallelism is achieved through the repetition of the interrogative question beginning with (afala yanzuruna – Do they not look at). Thus far, we have four parallelistic grammatical structures that have played a role in the achievement of coherence. These are in: (1) temporal/affirmation particles, (2) adverbs, (3) conjunctions, and (4) interrogative questions.

(iii) The grammatical nominal status of the sentence: The grammatical form and sentence structure plays a pivotal role in the achievement of coherence in Quranic discourse. Let us consider the following example:

Example 16:

inna allaha huwa al-razzaqu dhu al-quwwati al-matin – Verily, Allah is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, Most Strong, (Quran 51:58).

It can be observed that the continuity of the thought of monotheism in the previous sentences (Q51:50-51, 56-57) and the continuity of the thought that God is main supplier of provision (Q51:57) is achieved through the following grammatical features of Q51:57 as listed below:

(1) the grammatical nominal status of the sentence,

- (2) the employment of the affirmation particle (inna - verily),
- (3) the employment of the subject noun at the beginning of the sentence,
- (4) the employment of the hyperbole form (razzaqu – All-Provider), and
- (5) the employment of the affirmation noun phrase (dhu al-quwwati al-matin – Owner of Power, Most Strong).

The selection of all the above grammatical characteristics other than an alternative grammatical structure adds further support to our argument that the nominal sentence is pivotal to the realization of coherence in Quranic discourse.

2.5 Conjunctions

For Halliday & Hasan (1976), cohesive devices play a major role in the achievement of texture and coherence. Khan and Choudhary (2017:169) also add that “cohesion has a substantial role in forming linguistic elements into a combined whole text”. The employment of context-based conjunctions contributes effectively to the realisation of coherence, i.e. cohesiveness of text, as in Q22:5 below:

Example 17:

*ya ayuha alnas in kuntum fi raibin min alba^cth fa
inna khalaqnakum min turabin thumma min
nutfatin thumma min alaqatin thumma min
mudghatin mukhalaqattin wwa ghair mukhalaqah
li nubayyn lakum* – O mankind if you are in doubt
about the Resurrection, then verily We have
created you from dust, then from foetus, then from
a clot, then from a little lump of flesh – some
formed and some unformed – that We make it
clear to you (Q22:5).

Where the employment of the temporal conjunction (thumma – then) is compatible with its context, i.e., with the specific stage of the development of the foetus in the womb. According to Sanders and Noordman (2000:38), “words that are included in larger discourse segments, such as ‘because,’ ‘and,’ ‘not,’ and so on, indicate causal logic, conceptual associations, and coherence relations between linguistic segments”. Other forms of conjunctions are like (likaila – so that Q22:5) and (dhaalika – because , Q22:6 and 10), (faka'annamaa – as though, Q22:31), and (lakin – but, Q22:2, 37).

2.6 Lexical Links

These are cohesive links which represent the employment of some of the constituent elements of cohesion. In the view of Levy (2003:169), “coherence does not emerge in isolation of language, but that it depends on the use and manipulation of specific linguistic forms, such as the clause linking devices that form part of the cohesive system, the text-forming component of language”. We can claim that the mechanisms which represent lexical links and which are related to cohesion include the following:

(i) The use of pronouns replacing their nouns to avoid the repetition of the same nouns: Cohesive ties between sentences stand out more clearly because they are the only source of texture (Halliday and Hasan 1976:9). Levy (2003:171) has also discussed ‘the logical coherence across repeated units of discourse and focused is on the level of the lexico-grammatical devices that occur in discourse, and in particular on devices used to link clauses’. She (ibid) has also proposed that ‘coherence does not arise in isolation of language, but that it emerges from the use and manipulation of lexico-grammatical devices’ (ibid).

Thus, we can argue that the cohesive devices are the means through which the coherence in the text can be established. This is referred to as cohesion referential relations (Hellman 1995:196) which contribute to discourse comprehension. Through the following examples, we aim to demonstrate that a text without conjunctions (cohesive devices) suffers from discontinuity of thought and ‘breaks in the on-going flow of events’ (ibid:200). Therefore, ‘coherence is built up, created or maintained by such cohesive markers’ (ibid:198).

Example 18:

qul allaha a^cbudu mukhlisan lahu dini – Say:
‘God alone do I worship, sincere to Him in my
religion’ (Q59:14).

In the above example, the central thought is monotheism where the object noun (allaha – God) is mentioned followed by the employment of its pronoun within the prepositional phrase (lahu – to Him). The continuity of thought is also achieved through the employment of lexical item (mukhlisan – sincere). The third person singular masculine pronoun (hu – Him) signals a connection back to the noun (allah – God) in the first part of the sentence. Thus, the two segments of the sentence are related (linked together), i.e.,

the chain of connection is achieved (Gee 2018:94, 104). Such links are part of what stitches a passage together into a meaningful whole; they are like threads that tie language, and, thus, also, sense/meaning together (ibid:104).

(ii) the employment of synonyms and/or antonyms, as in:

Example 19:

ya aiyuha al-nasu ittaqu rabbakum – O mankind.

Fear your Lord ... → *walakinna ʿadhaba allahi*
shaded – but severe will be the Torment of Allah
(Q22:1-2).

In the above text, we have a shift from the noun (*rabb* – Lord) to its synonym (*allah* – God). Similarly, in Q23, the synonyms (*rabb*) and (*allah*) has occurred recurrently. The noun has occurred in Q23:26, 29, 39, 52, 58, 59, 60, 72, 76, 86 (twice), 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 106, 107, 109, 117, and 118. However, the noun (*allah*) has occurred in Q23:14, 23, 24, 28, 32, 38, 85, 87, 89, 91 (twice), 116, and 117, all point to the same illocutionary force intended by the text producer, namely ‘servanthood to God’. This form of Quranic discourse, which is pivotal to the thought (theme) of the text, is also for assertion and lexical cohesion purposes.

(iii) morphological relatedness:

Example 20:

waman azlamu mimman iftara ʿala allahi al-kadhiba wahuwa yudʿa ila al-islam wallahu la yahdi al-qawma al-zalimin – Who could be more wrong than someone who invents lies against God when called to submit to Him? God does not guide the wrong-doers (Q61:7).

Here we have the superlative noun *ism afʿal al-tafdil* (*azlamu* – more wrong) is repeated in the form of an active participle (*zalimin* – wrong-doers). Thus, through this morphological link, coherence is established. The following two examples also illustrate further this linguistic mechanism which helps achieve coherence in terms of clarity and smooth textual flow of thoughts:

Example 21:

wa'in taʿfu wa tasfahu wa taghfiru fa'inna allaha ghafurun rahim – If you pardon, overlook and forgive, then indeed God is forgiving and merciful (Q64:14).

where we have the verb (*taghfiru*– to forgive) is repeated in the form of an active participle (*ghafurun* – forgiving). This morphological link has established coherence and logical

sequentiality (continuity of thought). Another example can also be observed in Q66:

Example 22:

daraba allahu mathalan lillathina kafaru imraat nuh wa imra'at lot – Allah sets forth an example for those who disbelieve the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot ... → *wa daraba allahu mathalan lillathina amanu imraat feraun* – And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh (Q66:10-11).

Where the verb (*daraba* – to present, to give), its subject noun (*allahu* – God), and its object (*mathalan* – an example). Thus, through repetition, the text has achieved reiteration and lexical cohesion on the linguistic level, and epizeuxis on the rhetorical (stylistic) level. This has also contributed to the realisation of coherence and continuity of the central thought which is the example of disobedient and disbeliever wives of the Prophet Noah and the Prophet Lot contrasted to an obedient and a believer wife of Pharaoh. On the rhetorical level, coherence and continuity of thought is also established through the rhetorical device of antithesis between Q66:10 and Q66:11.

Example 23:

illa allathina amanu wa amilu alsalihati wa tawasaw bi alhaq wa tawasaw bi alsabr– Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds and advise each other to the truth and patience (Q103:3).

In the above text, the verb (tawasaw – to advise each other) is repeated to contribute to the achievement of cohesion through reiteration and coherence, i.e., the continuity of the main thought which is advising each other about the truth and patience.

Based on the above four linguistic mechanisms, we can claim that the text should not be merely coherent, but it should also be cohesive. Thus, the strong bond between coherence and cohesion. The above linguistic mechanisms can maximise the accessibility (comprehension) of the text by its text receivers because the text has become coherent (logically ordered) and clear.

3. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to provide an account of coherence in Quranic discourse. From a discourse analysis point of view, the paper has shown that in Quranic Arabic,

some of the linguistic mechanisms through which the text producer aims to attain coherence do not occur in other languages. It is when the devices of coherence are realised that a better understanding of the discourse, be it spoken or written, can be achieved.

Making several contributions to the fields of pragmatics and discourse analysis, the current paper also adds to a growing body of literature on Quranic Arabic and Quranic discourse. According to Elhindi (2017:19), “Quranic studies gave rise to several Arabic disciplines including literary criticism, rhetoric and stylistics”. Further investigation and experimentation into focus and coherence, amongst other linguistic features, in Quranic discourse is strongly recommended to further explain the prototypical discourse characteristics of Quranic Arabic in the light of modern European theoretical linguistics.

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Appendices

Arabic Transliteration System

Throughout this paper, the Library of Congress Arabic Transliteration System has been utilised. This system is explained in the following table:

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
أ	a	ص	ṣ
ء	'	ض	ḍ
ب	b	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	th	ع	ʿ
ج	j	غ	gh
ح	h	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w
		ي	y

- Available at:

<http://archimedes.fas.harvard.edu/mdh/Icromanization.pdf>