

Patterns of Cohesion in Friday Sermons in the UAE and their Role in Enhancing Social Communication

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Abstract

Friday sermons portray patterns of lexical cohesion which can demonstrate how effective communication is achieved. This study proposes a model of lexical cohesion that fits the spoken discourse of Friday sermons in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). To that end, a corpus of 25 sermons was analyzed to identify patterns of cohesion and show the impact of cohesive devices on the delivery of these sermons. The sermons were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of this domain. Findings show that in addition to the three categories of Arabic cohesion viz., reiteration relations, collocations and semantic relations, a novel category is introduced known as prosodic cohesion. This new category refers to the use of dynamic prosodic aspects like stress, intonation and rhyming, to create unity and to communicate ideas clearly and more efficiently. The study found that repetition is highly used in the corpus due to the root repetition system in Arabic, where one consonantal root can generate numerous words, enhancing the unity of the text and highlighting core themes. As this study is limited to a sample of 25 sermons, future research should take larger samples to generalize the findings of this study. The study recommends incorporating prosodic aspects in teaching religious discourse to make sermons more impactful.

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Introduction

Text refers to a piece of language, written or spoken, which includes everything from sentences and paragraphs in written discourse to utterances and non-verbal communication like gestures in spoken

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discourse. A text is not merely a collection of words or utterances, but a cohesive entity that functions as a communicative unit as long as it meets specific criteria — or they would be deemed a non-text. De Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) maintain that a group of sentences should adhere to several standards in order to function as a text, including cohesion, coherence, acceptability, informativity, intentionality, situationality and intertextuality. Failure to use any of these criteria would render these sentences as a not-text. Cohesion is one of the essential requirements of text-ness. As defined by Halliday & Hasan (1980), cohesion stands for the semantic connections between linguistic and extralinguistic elements within a text and the context in which it is situated. Lexical items function cohesively only when the understanding of one item in the text relies entirely on another; no single item can create cohesion on its own. Cohesion is a requirement of text-ness because it ensures continuous flow (Hannay, Mackenzie, & Wekker, 1996) and therefore can help readers preserve a consistent comprehension of the text. Paltridge (2012) demonstrated that cohesion patterns reflect the integration of grammar and discourse within language. Tanskanen (2006) demonstrated that the role of cohesion in creating unity of a text is undisputed as it has a significant role in enhancing coherence.

While many linguists (Halliday & Hasan, 1980; Tanskanen, 2006) argue that cohesion is a vital element of the text, others (Gómez González, 2011; Martin, 1992) claim that while it is not an obligatory element of text-ness, the more cohesive ties a text has, the more coherent it is. Other linguists, Brown & Yule (1983) demonstrated that readers can understand a text based on the various semantic relations within the text, thus they find that cohesion is not enough to guarantee unity to the text. What matters more for them is coherence, without which these sentences fail to function as a unified whole even if they contain a great number of cohesive ties. Several studies show that two of the significant discourse elements necessary for clarity are coherence and cohesion. The former deals with language elements which are frequently employed inter-textually to enable connectedness between sentences and ideas (Asiamah & Israel, 2022; Smith & Frawley, 1983) whereas the latter is a set of extra-textual elements that enhances the perception of discourse.

However, much of the debate which surfaced in the past is on the connectivity which rules language organizability and relatability; that is, the relationship between cohesion and coherence. Halliday and Hasan's (1980) concept on cohesion is that the meaning of a text unfolds progressively semantically for the reader as sentences complement one another throughout the text. This makes texts the center of attention. Subsequent research argues against their point in that it does not take the reader into consideration making the reader's role obsolete (Brown & Yule, 1983; Carrell, 1982). To illustrate, in a religious discourse, a successful sermon relay requires two paramount variables: a pre-planned text that is cohesively tied and a form of shared knowledge from the audience (Asiamah & Israel, 2022).

Discourse is defined as a form of communicative language responsible for maintaining meaning between speakers of a language (van Dijk, 1992). The structure of discourse is defined by a language entity that is often a pre-requisite for the analysis of a sentence (Halliday & Hasan, 1980). For instance, the lead of a paragraph is responsible for defining audience attraction and paragraph topic. The value of discourse emerged from the fact that the structure of a language controls the use of the language. This language phenomenon is often referred to as *register*. The discourse of a football match commentator is certainly different from the discourse of a sermon preacher, for instance. Likewise, genres of a language differ in terms of the structure facilitated as religious discourse is inequivalent to that which is used in science discourse (Smith & Frawley, 1983). Therefore, discourse structure has been a point of interest for linguists and discourse analysts searching for the elements which contribute to a comprehensible piece of language.

Different models of cohesion have been proposed in different genres and in different languages and each utilizes distinct cohesive devices (Graesser et al., 2004). For instance, Tanskanen (2006) observed that cohesive devices may not be the same in all languages because spoken language is different from written discourse in many respects. A written discourse is syntactically more complex than spoken discourse where there may be differences in the cohesive devices employed in written and spoken discourse. Several recent studies (Cui, 2024; Dontcheva-Navratilova & Povolná, 2020; Liu, 2023), have pointed out that though both written and spoken discourse may use the same devices for creating cohesion, spoken discourse may use other features, particularly prosodic and paralinguistic elements. Despite a plethora of studies on cohesion (Louwerse et al., 2004; Martinková, 2013), it is not clear whether both spoken and written genres employ distinct cohesive devices (Gómez González, 2011; Swales, 1990; Taboada, 2004), and whether cohesion devices may vary across different languages (Tanskanen, 2006).

Religious discourse must be immediately understood the moment it is relayed; therefore, preachers should use appropriate cohesive devices to ensure unity and clarity of ideas (Asiamah & Israel, 2022). However, there is a dearth of studies on the use of cohesive devices in spoken religious discourse, particularly the Friday sermons, in the context of the United Arab Emirates. There is a dire need to study the patterns of cohesion within these sermons and how they help to achieve effective communication. The present study aims to fill this gap in literature by examining how cohesion operates in spoken religious discourse, attempting to identify the best cohesive aspects to use to enhance the unity, clarity and power of this type of discourse. Additionally, the study will offer insights into how cohesion in spoken religious discourse is compared to other types of discourses in Arabic. Moreover, it provides practical recommendations for preachers to enhance

comprehension of the sermons through the use of a set of specific features, particularly prosodic features.

The objectives of the study are outlined below: (1) To identify the cohesive devices utilized in Friday Sermons in the UAE, providing preachers with the elements that bring cohesion to the text. (2) To identify any unique cohesive devices used in Friday sermons other than those reported by Halliday & Hasan (1976). (3) To demonstrate how preachers in the UAE utilize cohesion to deliver the key message effectively and enhance understanding of these sermons. In order to meet these objectives and to fill the gap in the literature, the current study proposed a model of cohesion for the spoken discourse of Friday sermons in the UAE. The study examined the lexical aspects of cohesion and reports on any prosodic features in the corpus. For this purpose, three questions were examined, namely: (1) What are the lexical cohesive devices used in Friday sermons in the UAE? (2) To what extent are these devices consistent with those reported in previous models of cohesion? (3) How do preachers in the UAE use cohesive devices to deliver key messages?

Literature review

Halliday and Hasan's Discourse Model

Several works have been devoted to the analysis of cohesion, with the most comprehensive work of cohesion being Halliday and Hasan's seminal work *Cohesion in English* (1976). Their work has been emphasized as a benchmark in the field of discourse, which established and ensured that cohesiveness of discourse relies on certain linguistic elements. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) discourse model propose that cohesion is modified grammatically and lexically. The former is structural while the latter is semantical. They classified grammatical cohesion into four cohesive devices namely reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunctions whereas lexical consists of two types: repetition and collocation. In both types, cohesion occurs because the interpretation of one word is based on another in the same text.

Grammatical Cohesion

The first grammatical cohesive device is *reference* which refers to the relationship between elements in a text that construct meaning through discourse, and connects elements in discourse (Asiamah & Israel, 2022). It is one of the common grammatical cohesive devices, which ties the meaning within a text, making the lexical items bear a token reference to another lexical item. Halliday & Hasan (1976) argue that reference is found naturally in three forms which are personal, demonstrative and comparative, depending on the semantic and grammatical functions of the item; that is, its role in the sentence. This grammatical aspect of cohesion occurs when a pronoun is tied to another noun within the text itself. Reference can be either endophoric or exophoric. Endophoric reference refers to the case where a pronoun refers to another noun within the same text, creating a cohesive tie that functions cohesively. By contrast, the identity of exophoric reference is found outside the text; because it fails to establish a link within the text, it fails to function cohesively as it guides text receivers outside, assuming shared knowledge (McCarthy, 1991).

The second grammatical cohesive device of *substitution* is the grammatical aspect of cohesion which occurs when a word or phrase is replaced by some material somewhere in the text in the same grammatical slot (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Johnstone, 2002). Substitution is usually used to keep the flow of the text without redundancy (Vujević, 2012). Cohesion occurs because understanding one element is retrievable only by reference to another element within the same text. For example, in 'I bought a red jacket, but my brother bought a yellow one', the pronoun 'one' substitutes the word 'jacket' and the meaning of 'one' can be identified by reference to that word. It is also noted that substitution does not affect the role of cohesion in Arabic speeches in that preachers seek avoidance of potential vagueness of some expressions, and this is also true for ellipsis.

The third grammatical cohesive device of *Ellipsis* refers to deliberate omission of part of a sentence since it can be retrieved from the context. This aspect is often used to avoid redundancy, assuming that readers/listeners can infer the meaning. Halliday & Hasan (1976) refer to ellipsis as 'substitution by zero'. It is worth mentioning that this aspect can occur when the missing part is understood through implicit cohesive ties between the anaphoric element and elliptical structure. The fourth grammatical cohesive device of *conjunctions* is used to create cohesive links between sentences, phrases and paragraphs, assisting in creating logical relationships between ideas. They play an important role in unifying discourse language elements which lead to a coherent text (Smith & Frawley, 1983). Conjunctions carry out their grammatical function across clauses, to show that their purpose is to create balance linking between two clauses. This means that conjunctives do not inherently provide cohesion outside the clause spectrum.

Conjunctions are cohesive in the sense that textuality and meaning are created via corresponding elements with one another; however, they are not cohesive individually (Asiamah & Israel, 2022). It is noted that conjunctives add logical connectivity to discourse. Additionally, Halliday & Hasan (1976) provided that not only do conjunctions serve the purposes of connecting clauses, but their function is also complemented by the meaning they inherently have. Smith & Frawley (1983) affirmed that conjunction choice in discourse is

not necessarily structure-based but is heavily reliant on the semantics of the discourse; that is, it is semantically bound. They suggested that as conjunctives shape the texture of a text, they presumptuously connect the text differently depending on the type of the text which includes, but not limited to, fiction, journalism, religion and science. Halliday & Hasan (1976) suggested that unlike reference or substitution, conjunctive cohesive devices enact meaning indirectly. An example of this would be clause connectors such as conditionals where the conditional clause forces in an independent clause that is the answer for the dependent conditional clause. However, the same is not true with prepositional items.

Conjunctions are classified into coordinate and subordinate conjunctions (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Smith & Frawley (1983) argue that the subordinating conjunctions *whereas* and *whereupon* in English have a high frequency rate in religious discourse than other discourse genres. This can be translated to the fact that religious discourse is highly formal and has a static register in relay, classifying it as *frozen register*. In that regard, Smith & Frawley (1983) argue that there is a high correlation between conjunctions and sentences length in religious discourse where it incubates a high number of conjunctions with a short mean sentence length. They claimed that religious and fiction discourse are rich in conjunctives, however, not exclusively as other types of discourse may statistically employ a specific conjunctive that wouldn't normally exist in a fiction discourse for instance. They suggested that religious discourse, when analyzed *para-clausally*, out of sentence boundaries, has the potential of redefining conjunctive cohesion and broaden its scope to include punctuations such as the semicolon as conjunctive. The cohesive value of conjunctions lies in the fact that they create a set of meaning relations within the text, guiding readers through the transition of ideas and making the text clear and easy to follow. Conjunctions are classified into i) additive conjunctives which add new information to what has been mentioned, such as 'and', 'moreover' and 'further'; ii) adversative conjunctions which can express opposition or contrast between two sentences, such as 'however', 'but' and 'whereas'; (iii) causal conjunctives which are used to indicate cause, reason or explanation, such as 'because', 'due to' and 'as a result'; and iv) temporal conjunctions which tell the timing or sequence of events, such as 'then', 'after that' and 'before'.

Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion refers to the cohesive effect that results from the use of lexical words. Lexical cohesion is maintained by having a set of tokens that are relevant to the same register (Asiamah & Israel, 2022). Additionally, lexical cohesion is important to ease the interpretation of discourse (Asiamah & Israel, 2022) and is useful to link ideas by providing a semantic connection. Halliday & Hasan (1976) classified lexical cohesion into two main lexical devices, namely *reiteration* and *collocation*. Reiteration involves repeating lexical items, exactly or partially, or relating one lexical item to another through using sense relations (synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy). Several works have emphasized the role of lexical cohesion in creating unity within the text. For example, Hoey (1991) demonstrated that lexical cohesion can create cohesive links among different lexical item simultaneously, unlike grammatical cohesion, except for reference, which can only create connections between two lexical items at the same time. Hoey (1991) added that analyzing cohesion in a given text should involve the patterns of lexical items within the text.

Hasan (1984), however, excludes collocation because of its intersubjective nature. In his model, cohesion falls into two categories: general category, including repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and meronymy, covering equivalence, naming and semblance. Moreover, Halliday & Hasan (1976) offer a new approach that categorizes lexical cohesion into repetition, synonymy, and collocation. The originality of this model lies in the inclusion of synonymy as a separate category, containing synonymy, subordinates, hyponymy, meronymy and antonymy. McCarthy (1988) claims that spoken discourse should have distinct analysis from written discourse, highlighting the role that intonation plays in creating unity. The proposed model of lexical cohesion contains equivalence, inclusion, and oppositeness and excludes exact repetition. A prior study demonstrates that intonation is essential to create cohesion. The study found that non-native speakers who used intonation patterns more effectively scored better in international exams. It shows that intonation is 'a meaning-bearing grammatical system'.

Hoey (1991) proposes a model of lexical cohesion that consists of repetition, paraphrase, substitution, co-reference, ellipsis and deixis. Thus, we find that where ellipsis and substitution belong to grammatical category of cohesion in Halliday and Hasan's model, Hoey demonstrated that they act more like lexical cohesion in that they enable authors to say something again. Eggins (2004), too, proposed a model of lexical cohesion that is based on paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Paradigmatic relations comprise elaboration, which contains repetition, synonymy and hyponymy, extension relations, including meronymy and co-meronymy. Syntagmatic relations refer to collocations. Tanskanen (2006) proposed a model of lexical cohesion based on Halliday and Hasan's model. Her model comprises: reiteration, including simple repetition, substitution, equivalence, generalization, specification, co-specification, contrast, and collocation which includes ordered set, activity-related collocations and elaborative collocations.

In another study, Gómez González (2010) analyzes lexical cohesion in spoken discourse of telephone conversations. Findings showed that lexical cohesion falls into three categories: lexical repetition (exact and inexact), inclusive cohesion (synonym, oppositeness and inclusion) and associative relations (collocations).

Buitkiené (2005) examined the frequency of cohesive devices across three registers: legal, narrative and journalistic registers. The study showed that the frequency of cohesive devices is strongly determined by registering. Al-Jabr (1987) demonstrated that narrative discourse primarily used co-reference compared to editorials and scientific texts which usually cohere lexical aspects of cohesion.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the use of cohesion in Friday sermons. This research is guided by Halliday & Hasan's seminal work (1976), supplemented by insights from Hoey (1991), Eggins (2004) and Tanskanen (2006). The analysis was limited to lexical and prosodic aspects of cohesion.

Sampling and Data Collection

A corpus of 25 Friday sermons in the UAE was selected to cover different topics in different occasions during 2022-2024. This corpus included 20 written sermons available on Google. It also comprised of 5 sermons available on YouTube to identify any prosodic features that can impact cohesion. The length of these sermons varied between 8-20 minutes. The language of the sermon was Modern Standard Arabic with some shift to colloquial Arabic on some occasions.

Data Analysis

Sermons available on YouTube were transcribed and analysed for the cohesive ties involved in them. The analysis focused on capturing the lexical aspects of cohesion in an attempt to propose a model of lexical cohesion that fits the spoken discourse of Friday sermons in the UAE. Lexical aspects were categorized according to their percentages per 1000 words because of the variation in the length of sermons. Several works were referred for the analysis, e.g., Halliday & Hasan (1976), Hoey (1991), Eggins (2004) and Tanskanen (2006). Such cohesive devices were captured that were specific to the spoken discourse of Friday sermons in the UAE other than those reported in Halliday & Hasan (2014). To ensure the reliability of the study, two blind raters were recruited who assessed 25% of the sample and verified the coding of cohesive devices. The raters provided some feedback on the inclusion of paraphrase and summary sub-categories under semantic relations rather than reiteration relations.

Results and findings

This study aimed at proposing a model of lexical cohesion in the spoken discourse of Friday sermons in the UAE. This proposed model contained four categories: reiteration relations, semantic relations, collocation relations and prosodic cohesion. Below is an analysis of each of these categories.

Reiteration Relations

Reiteration relations in many previous models (e.g., Johnstone, 2002), comprise repetition of lexical items, exactly or inexactly. Due to the morphological nature of Arabic, we suggested a new sub-category of reiteration: *root repetition*. Analysis of the data shows that repetition is a vital cohesive device in Friday Sermons. It involves the exact repetition of lexical items or the repetition of any form that shares the same root. The following excerpt taken from one of Friday sermons speeches hints at this reiteration.

*Fal-qadarijja humu al-laḍi:na **jakfuru**:na bil-qadar aj junkiru:na taqdi:ra alla:h li-ba'd al-ašja:? wa qad qa:la al-ʿulama:? ʔinna man qa:la šajʔin wa:ḥidin ʔinnahu jaḥsulu biḡajri maši:ʔat alla:h faqad **kafar**..... al-laḍi:na qa:lu bikufri martakib al-kabi:rah bal minhum man **jukaffiru** al-ḥa:kima ʔḡa: **ḥakama** biḡajr al-šar ʿ...bal jukaffiru:na al-raʿijjah kaḡa:lik.*

[The Qadariyyah are those who disbelieve in predestination, meaning they deny God's determination of some matters. The scholars have said that whoever claims about a single thing that it happens without God's will has committed disbelief. Among the sects that deviated from the Muslim community are the Khawarij, who declared the one who commits a major sin to be a disbeliever. In fact, some of them declare a ruler to be a disbeliever if he rules by something other than Islamic law, even if he does not consider it permissible, even in a single matter; they still declare him to be a disbeliever.]

In this example, root repetition serves as a cohesive device used to enhance semantic unity by repeating key terms. The root *k-f-r* has been repeated in the following words: *jakfuru:n* (they disbelieve), *kafara* (to disbelieve), *kufri* 'disbelief', and *jukaffir* (they declare that someone is a disbeliever). Similarly, the two words *ḥakama* 'to rule' and *ḥa:kim* 'ruler' are derived from the root *ḥ-k-m*. The frequent root repetition can enhance cohesion through the passage by creating a set of lexical links among words that share the same consonantal root. Moreover, by repeating different words of the same root, preachers capture listeners' attention to one notion and thus emphasize it.

Semantic Relations

Building on studies like McCarthy (1988) and Tanskanen (2006), sense relations were analyzed using the discourse-specific approach. This means that two words are synonymous because they carry the same meaning in one context without depending on the lexical meaning of them, instead of the lexical-semantic approach. The corpus contains many instances of semantic relations between different lexical words. These instances are categorized as sameness of meaning, oppositeness of meaning, generalization, specification or co-specification.

Sameness of Meaning

This category includes two sub-categories: synonymy and paraphrase. Synonymy refers to lexical items with the same meaning, such as big and large (Eggins, 2004; Palmer, 1981). Some linguists, e.g. Bolinger (1977), Palmer (1981), deny the existence of absolute synonymy, claiming that two words cannot be used in the same sense in all contexts. Synonymy differs from repetition because repetition involves two or more identical lemmas, whereas synonymy involves two different words with the same meaning. Synonymy has appeared in all models of cohesion under different names such as simple paraphrase (Hoey, 1991), and equivalence (Taboada, 2004; Tanskanen, 2006). It was found that there are many synonymous expressions which can serve rhetorical functions, i.e. help avoid repetition, and enhance the overall unity of the text. See the following extract:

Wa ha:da al-laḍi jana:lu bihi al-ʿabdu ḥubba mawla:hu ḥatta janšuru subḥa:nahu ḥubba ʿabdihi.....fama aqbala bil-ša:liḥa:ti muxlišan lila:h ʔilla aqbala ʿalajhi biqulu:b al-muʔmini:na ḥatta tanaluhu mawaddatuhum.

[This is what brings the servant the love of his Master, until Allah spreads the love for His servant in the hearts of His other servants. Whenever the servant approaches Allah with righteous deeds, sincerely and directed solely toward Him, Allah turns the hearts of the believers toward that servant, so that he receives their affection.]

Fafi al-ḥadi:θ baja:nun wa tawḍi:h anna manʿahu ʿiba:dihi al-muttaqi:n min baʿḍi amu:ra al-dunja huwa lajsa maqtan wa la ḡaḍaban wa la suḡtan bal ḥubban wa raḥmatun min alla:h.

[The hadith clarifies and explains that God's withholding of certain worldly matters from His righteous servants is not out of displeasure, anger, or wrath, but rather it is out of love and mercy from Him, the Almighty.]

Fahuwa wasi:lat wiʔa:min wa ḥalaqatu waṣlin waltiʔa:min wa min aham al-qijam al-ʔidztima:ijja an jaku:na al-mudztamaʿ ḥari:šan ʿala maʿa:ni al-wiḥdah wat-taʔa:luf wat-tama:suk wat-taka:tuf.

[It is a means of harmony, a link of connection and unity. Among the most important social values is that the community should be keen on the concepts of unity, cohesion, and solidarity.]

In the above examples, the synonymous pairs **ḥubb** wa **mawadda** (love and affection), **maqtan**, **ḡaḍaban** and **suḡtan** (hatred, anger, and displeasure), **wiʔa:m** **waltiʔa:m** (harmony and unity) and **al-wiḥdah** **wat-taʔa:luf** **wat-tama:suk** **wat-taka:tuf** create various cohesive ties within the text, enhancing key ideas targeted by the preacher through repetition of synonymous pairs that emphasize central themes. By synonymous pairs, preachers avoid monotonous repetition and ensure a smooth flow of their ideas by varying their usage of words.

Paraphrase has also been shown to be an effective cohesive device. It is used by writers/speakers to clarify vague expressions to ensure a smooth flow of ideas. An example of the paraphrase strategy is the sentence *Fafi al-ḥadi:θ baja:nun wa tawḍi:h anna manʿahu ʿiba:dihi al-muttaqi:n min baʿḍi amu:ra al-dunja huwa lajsa maqtan* 'In the hadith, there is clarification and explanation that His withholding of some worldly matters from His righteous servants, glory be to Him', which is rephrased as *al-ḥadi:θ juwaḍḍihu anna alla:ha ʿindama jamnaʿu baʿḍ al-aṣja:ʔ ʿan ʿiba:dihi al-muttaqi:n fa-ha:da lajsa dali:lan ʿala ḡaḍabih* 'The hadith clarifies that when God withholds certain things from His righteous servants, this is not a sign of His anger'. Emphasizing the same idea in different wording creates a cohesive link; this helps preachers make their audience more focused and engaged without any redundancy. It can also ensure that listeners from various backgrounds understand the message successfully.

Oppositeness in Meaning (Antonymy)

Oppositeness involves a semantic contrast between two or more lexical items (Jones, 2012). The relation of oppositeness is known by different labels, e.g. antonymy (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), opposition (Gómez González, 2010), and complex repetition or paraphrase (Hoey, 1991). Let's look at the antonyms such as the *ḥasana:t* (good deeds) and *as-salbijja:t* (bad deeds); *al-quwwa waḍ-ḍaʿf* (strength and weakness) and *waṣ-ṣiḥḥa wal-maraḍ* (health and illness). These antonymous pairs contribute to the overall cohesion of the text by creating lexical ties between opposing ideas to emphasize the message. They also create a logical flow of ideas,

as each opposing term relates to its counterpart.

*wa-qa:la an-nabij bi-ʔan jaṇḍur kul minhuma ʔila **ḥasana:t** al-a:xaṛ wa-la jaqif ʿinda **as-salbija:t**.*

[The Prophet (peace be upon him) reminded both spouses to focus on each other's good qualities and not dwell on the negatives.]

ʔinna alla:ha taʿa:la xalaqa al-xalq wa dʒaʿalahum mutafawiti:n fil-quwwa waḍ-ḍaʿf waṣ-ṣiḥḥa wal-maraḍ wal-ḡina wal-faqr.

[Allah the Almighty created creation and made them different in strength and weakness, in health and illness, and in wealth and poverty.]

Generalization (hyponymy)

The semantic relation of hyponymy, also known as generalization, general-specific, or superordinate, refers to the relationship where the meaning of one item is within a more general item (Lyons, 1977; Tanskanen, 2006). One example of the hyponymy relation is the word 'dog', which is included in the word 'animal'. This category has been extensively used in the corpus to create cohesion as seen in the examples below:

Al-ʔiḥa:r xuluqun ʿaḍi:m min axla:q al-ʔisla:m wa xluqun jatamajjazu bihi al-muslimu ʿan ḡajrihi min an-na:s.

*[Altruism is a great virtue in Islamic ethics, and it is a behavior that distinguishes a Muslim from others.]
Laqad arsa al-ʔisla:m aususan mati:naḥ takfal lil-baṣarijja kulluha fa-ʔamara bil-ʿadl wal-ʔiḥsa:n wa-ʔawla ʿina:ja kubra bil-ʿausra wal-atʔa:l wa-dʒaʿala riʿa:ja al-ʔiḥṣa:n ama:na ʿaḍi:ma fi ʿunuq al-walidajin.*

[Islam has laid down solid foundations that guarantee happiness for all of humanity. It enjoins justice and benevolence, and has given great care to the family and children. It has placed the care of the child as a great trust upon the shoulders of the parents.]

In the first example, the word *Al-ʔiḥa:r* (altruism) is a hyponym of the more general term *axla:q al-ʔisla:m* (Islamic morals), creating a lexical tie that enhances the semantic unity of the text. In the second example, the words *il-ʿadl* (justice) and *al-ʔiḥsa:n* (benevolence) are included in the broader concept *al-ʔusus* (foundations) and the terms *bil-ʿausra* (family) and *al-atʔa:l* (children) are hyponyms of the more general concept *al-baṣarijja* (humanity). This general-specific relationship enhances unity by helping preachers have a clear structure that can guide the audience to understand the layers of meaning.

Specification (meronymy)

Meronymy, also referred to as general-specific inclusion and specification, refers to the semantic relation between a general item and a more specific one, i.e. one item is part of something. For instance, the semantic relation between a wheel and a car is meronymy because the wheel is part of the car. The cohesion in this semantic relation lies in the fact that the existence of the part and the whole creates a connection between different lexical items and thus can lead to the more logical flow of ideas. In the example given below, the terms *ajja:m wa-laja:li* 'days and nights' are meronyms of the more general term *šahr šaʿba:n* 'Shaʿban month' since this is part-to-whole-relationship.

Ma:zilna naʿi:š nafaḥa:t šahr šaʿba:n wa hiya ajja:m wa-laja:li tariq fi:ha al-qulu:b.

[We are still living in the spiritual breezes of the month of Shaʿban, in these days and nights when hearts become tender.]

Collocation Relations

A significant factor that contributes to the cohesiveness of spoken religious discourse is the use of collocations. A collocation is a combination of two or more words that usually appear together. These lexical items are almost predictable, even though the meaning of words is sometimes illogical. Moreover, the cohesion in using this aspect lies in the fact that it creates expectations about what is to come next. When collocations appear within a text, the text flows smoothly which increases readability of the text. In the example below, the underlined collocations create several lexical ties which are habitually associated together. In these collocations, such as *al-kalimu al-ṭajjib* (good word) and *al-ʿamal aṣ-ṣa:liḥ* (good deeds), there is a strong association between them, therefore if the words *al-kalimu* and *al-ʿamal* occur, the other words would be *al-ṭajjib* and *al-ṣa:liḥ*, respectively. The use of these collocations also enhances the semantic unity through using collocations that emphasize righteous and moral deeds.

Famina al-masa:dʒid jaṣʿadu al-kalimu al-ṭajjib wal-ʿamal aṣ-ṣa:liḥwa fi riḥa:biha jadztamiʿu al-muʔinu:na ʿala at-ṭa:ʿah wal-iba:dah.

[From the mosques, good words and righteous deeds ascend, and on their pulpits, Friday preachers deliver sermons reminding Muslims of matters of their religion. In their spacious courtyards, believers gather for obedience and worship, becoming acquainted and meeting one another in friendship and love.]

Another manifestation of collocation appears in collocations that frame collocation patterns (Martin, 1992; Tanskanen, 2006). Tanskanen (2006) demonstrated that 'Frames are knowledge structures evoked by lexical items: for example, if a text begins with arraignment, it evokes the arraignment frame, and following items, such as magistrate and charges are interpreted according to this frame, thus creating coherence in the text'.

It was found that the topic of the sermon triggers several collocations that belong to the arraignment frame. This enhances clarity and improves the flow of the sermon. In the following example, in the Friday sermon about 'the disabled', this topic triggers several related collocations within the frame of disability, including *naḡrat takri:m* 'a view of honor and dignity', *tanmijāt ta:qa:tihum wa-quḡdra:tihim wa-maha:ra:tihim* 'develop their capacities, abilities and skills', *tar'a ḡibda'a:tihim* 'enhance their creativity', *ri'a:jah ṣiḡḡijjah* 'health care', *tagḡijjah salī:mah* 'proper nutrition', and *taḡhi:l badanj* 'physical rehabilitation'. The use of these collocations that belong to the same frame emphasizes the message of the sermon and therefore makes it clearer, as in the following example:

ṡiba:da alla:h : ḡinna al-ḡisla:ma jaḡduru ḡila al-mu'a:qi:na kal-a'ma wal-a'radḡ wal-aṡam wal-abkam wa-ḡarihim naḡrat takri:m wa-jad'u ḡila ri'a:jatihim wal-wuqu:fi bi-dḡa:nibihim wa tanmijāt ta:qa:tihum wa-quḡdra:tihim wa-maha:ra:tihim wa taḡwi:r ḡibda'a:tihim.....ḡinna dawlat al-ḡimara:t al-'arabijja al-muttaḡidah tar'a al-mu'a:qi:na ri'a:jatan la: naḡi:ra laha.....faḡad banat lahum muḡassasa:tin jan'amu:na fi:ha bil-ri'a:jah aṡ-ṡiḡḡijjah, wat-tagḡijjah al-salī:mah, wat-taḡhi:l al-badanj.

[O servants of Allah: Islam views people with disabilities, such as the blind, the lame, the deaf, and the mute, with honor and dignity, and calls for their care, support, and the development of their capacities, abilities, and skills, as well as the enhancement of their creativity... The United Arab Emirates provides unparalleled care for people with disabilities, and this is a clear indication of the wise leadership's dedication to them. The country has built institutions where they enjoy health care, proper nutrition, physical rehabilitation, and education.]

Prosodic Cohesion

It has been observed that preachers used prosodic units, including intonation, stress, and rhythm, to create cohesion. To begin with stress, it was found that within each utterance, preachers tended to emphasize some words by making them more prominent than other words. This helps preachers attract the attention of listeners to key ideas and guide them through sermons. For instance, in the following example, the preacher stressed the underlined words to emphasize the central theme of the sermon: the fear surrounding the Prophet and complete reliance on Allah; stressing these words is important for the understanding of the sermon to keep listeners focused. For example, the word *ḡa:r* 'cave' is stressed to project listeners with a vivid picture of the danger that was surrounding the Prophet Muhammad, peace upon him, and to emphasize the spiritual message on how he relied on Allah in this isolated spot. Similarly, stressing the word *qatlah* 'to kill him' serves the central theme of fear and danger around the Prophet and emphasizes hostility of disbelievers in wanting to kill him, as in the following example.

ha:ḡihi al-ra:ḡa al-naḡsijja ḡa:qaha nabijjuna fi ḡa:r ḡajjiq wal-kuffa:ru min ḡawlihi juridu:na qatlahu waṡ-ṡaḡa:batu ḡawlih jaḡulu:na la taḡzan ḡinna alla:ha ma'ana.

[This sense of inner peace was experienced by our Prophet (peace be upon him) in a narrow cave, while the disbelievers surrounded him intending to kill him, and his companions around him reassured him, saying: "Do not grieve, indeed Allah is with us.]"

There are a few other prosodic elements that are used to create cohesion such as intonation or phonological repetition. Intonation is defined as the use of pitch over some utterances to communicate some functions. Intonation has been effectively used by preachers to signal a new topic and to serve some rhetorical functions. Phonological repetition (rhyming or *sadḡ*) is also another prosodic pattern that involves repeating some rhymes consistently across different utterances. It is a stylistic feature that is used to draw the attention of listeners and keep them focused. For instance, words like *alfala:h* wal-ṡala:h 'success and righteousness', and *muḡsinan* 'benovelent', *mutaḡḡḡilan* 'generous', *dḡazi:lan* 'abundant', *ḡali:lan* 'shaded'. This technique can enhance unity through its auditory appeal.

Discussion

This study offers a new model to the discourse of Friday sermons in UAE. This model comprises: reiteration relations (root repetition), semantic relations, collocation relations and prosodic cohesion. The novelty of model is the introduction of root repetition and prosodic cohesion, which play a significant role in enhancing the cohesiveness of Friday sermons. The use of the four categories impacted the successful communication of preachers' ideas by making their sermons connected and enhancing the smooth flow of sermons. By contrast, most previous models of cohesion in Arabic, written or spoken, comprise three

categories: repetition of lexical items, semantic relations, and collocations (Al-Rashdan, 2007). As this study addresses spoken corpus, it finds out that prosodic aspects, including stress, rhyming, and intonation, should be taken seriously by Friday Sermons preachers to enhance the unity and successful communication of their ideas by emphasizing the key messages of the sermon. Unlike written discourse, spoken discourse contains dynamic prosodic elements such as stress and intonation, which add effectiveness to discourse by emphasizing core themes and getting the audience emotionally attached.

Moreover, the inclusion of prosodic aspects can help keep listeners engaged and make the messages more persuasive as monotonous speech can make the audience lose focus. Therefore, the training of novice preachers should incorporate prosodic features. The inclusion of prosodic features in spoken language in Arabic needs to be elaborated by taking data from larger speech samples from different text types to have a better understanding of the impact of these aspects on the communication and unity of these texts. This finding agrees with McCarthy (1988) who showed that spoken discourse should not be analyzed using models of written discourse because intonation plays a significant role in creating cohesion. The study's findings emphasize that the training plan of novice preachers should focus on prosodic training, including stress and intonation. By mastering these aspects, preachers can deliver their sermons more effectively and clearly. Quantitatively, the analysis of the sermons revealed that they contained a rich number of cohesive devices, totaling 3,158 lexical ties. The rate of cohesive ties per 1000 words was found to be 189 cohesive ties distributed as follows: reiteration (49.5%), semantic relations (25.4%), collocation relations (19.3%) and prosodic cohesion (5.8%). These findings are congruent with previous studies that emphasize the role of lexical cohesion in enhancing the unity of text (Hoey, 1991; Tanskanen, 2006).

Repetition of lexical items has long been recognized as an essential tool for creating cohesion in different languages (Taboada, 2004; Tanskanen, 2006). For example, Tanskanen (2006) demonstrated that repetition plays a significant role in the cohesiveness of different text types, such as mailing lists and academic writing. Al-Ameedi & John (2011) show that repetition is a vital rhetorical aspect in language, which can contain repetition of sounds, morphemes, phrases and sentences. Johnstone (2002) maintains that repetition is an inherent feature of Arabic which serves to create linguistic cohesion and to perform rhetorical functions. Repetition in this study is addressed under 'repetition of root' to suit the morphological status of Arabic. That is, consonantal root in Arabic can generate a number of related words that all belong to the same semantic field. This means that repetition in Arabic does not only involve repetition of lexical items but rather generating several words taken from the same root. The extensive usage of repetition in Arabic may be accounted for by referring to the morphological system of Arabic which is based on 'root and pattern'; that is, words are composed of a consonantal root and pattern which refer to the vowels used to generate different words. Root and pattern are a key feature of Arabic morphology; the root, such as d-r-s-, provides the basic meaning whereas patterns of vowels generate several related, yet different words, such as *dars* 'lesson', *dira:sa* 'studying', *mudarris* 'teacher', *madrasa* 'school'. In this way, root repetition can create a number of cohesive ties that lead to semantic unity (Mashaqba et al., 2020).

Semantic relations in spoken religious discourse help Friday sermons preachers in delivering their messages clearly and more effectively. For example, in using hyponymy relation, preachers can break down complex ideas/structures into smaller ones so that illiterate audiences can make sense of them. For instance, in using 'al-ʿaql wal-ʿilm wat-taqwa hijja arka:n tafi:l al-luġa al-ʿarabijja' (reason, knowledge and piety are the pillars of activating Arabic), the three hyponyms 'al-ʿaql wal-ʿilm wat-taqwa' (reason, knowledge and piety) help the audience understand the more general abstract concept 'arka:n tafi:l al-luġa al-ʿarabijja', which makes the speech more communicative and meaningful. Moreover, using various synonyms within the same sermon can emphasize the clarity of an idea by raising one idea in different wording, which allows listeners to understand more deeply. For instance, the synonyms 'al-ʿilm' (knowledge) and 'al-fihm' (understanding) are used within one sermon to reinforce the significance of both aspects of learning: knowing and understanding. Antonyms can also present two opposing concepts, where audience should follow one and neglect the other. For example, the use of the antonyms 'taqwa' (piety) and 'ġafla' (heedlessness) makes the value of taqwa more pronounced as well as helps the audience recognize the intended meaning.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications

This study provided a proposed model to lexical cohesion in Friday sermons in UAE, consisting of four categories: reiteration relations, semantic relations, collocations, and prosodic cohesion. The four categories collectively help preachers communicate their messages more efficiently with a smoother flow of ideas. As reiteration relations are the highest, we argue that the morphological system of Arabic, which is based on root and pattern, accounts for the high number of repetitions in the corpus. The analysis of collocations emphasizes their role in predictability and coherence, showing that they use collocations to enhance audience comprehension. As previous models on cohesion comprise reiteration relations, semantic relations and collocations, the study asserts that prosodic features such as stress and intonation, are significant cohesive tools that contribute to the unity and effective communication of sermons. The study's findings inform that the teaching of religious discourse should focus on lexical relations (reiteration, semantic relations and

collocations) and prosodic aspects. Moreover, the proposed model can enhance natural language processing systems by enhancing text generation and speech recognition models. The study recommends further research on the role of prosody in creating unity and in understanding speech. Comparative studies may also examine how different languages use prosodic aspects like stress and intonation to maintain cohesion.

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