The Story of Prophet Musa and Al-Khidr (Surah Al-Kahf 60-82): A CDA Analysis

Instructor Maysoon Kahdim Ali

Tikrit University / College of Arts / English Department

Mobile: 07709801220

Emil: maysoonkadhim@tu.edu.iq

قصة النبي موسى والخضر (سورة الكهف ٦٠ـ٨٢): تحليل نقدي خطابي

م.   ميسون كاظم علي جبر

جامعة تكريت / كلية الاداب / قسم اللغة الإنكليزية

المستخلص

هذا المفهوم يجسد الادراك القائل "نحن لا نعلم شيئا والعلم كله لله وحده" وكذلك صورة الانسان الذي يقاد بالسلطة الإلهية قصة موسى مع الخضر كما وردت في سورة الكهف (٦٠ـ٨٢). تعتمد هذه الدراسة على انموذج فيركلوف ثلاثي الابعاد لبيان كيفية تصوير القصة لعلم الله المطلق في مقابل محدودية المعرفة البشرية، كما هو موجود في النص القراني الإسلامي ويبحث البحث في الممارسات اللغوية و الخطابية و الاجتماعية المتفاعلة في مرحلة تحليل النص.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحقيقة المطلقة، الممارسة الخطابية، الممارسة الاجتماعية

Abstract

The concept of the perception that "we know nothing, and only God knows" and the one who is led by divine authority are portrayed in the tale of Musa sailing with Al-Khider (Al-Kahf 60-82). Fairclough') 3-D model is utilised in the present research to depict how the story narrates about God's absolute knowledge vs human restrictedness of knowledge as inscribed in Arabic Islamic Qur'anic text. The research investigates linguistic, discursive and social practices at work in the text phase.

Key terms: absolute truth, discursive practice, social practice

1. Introduction

The Qur'anic dialogue is a fruitful field of the relive lessons not confined to any particular age. The stories are not merely superficial stories, they are profound spiritual and philosophical messages for meditation and growth (Merchant, 2018). In Sura Al-Kahf, verses 60–82: the story of

Musa and Al-Khidr, is a parable on the limits of human knowledge and certainty that warns against pride in one's own abilities.

On Musa's quest for knowledge and his encounter with Al-Khidr, he fails to comprehend al-khidr's perplexing actions. He himself is not able to resist his curiosity and impatience when he watches what Al-Khidr does (breaking a ship, killing a boy, repairing a wall for inhospitable householders). These strokes may, one was initially inclined to think, be unjustifiable, but in the end the logic behind them should make sense -- or perhaps let us say instead that what is at first a straightforward narrative of events--an encounter between a prophet and an enigmatic servant of God --comes to seem on reflection multilayered exposition about absolute Truth and human inadequacy (Bajwa. 2012:191). This Qur'anic exegesis underscores the principle of unquestioning obedience to divine will, and God's sovereignty over human judgement.

Drawing on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, the article examines what sense is inculcated by the text, how knowledge hierarchies are created and how theological ideology is upheld. Fairclough's tri-dimensional model, namely; Textual analysis, Discursive practice and social practice, can be used as a systematic tool to investigate how the story of Musa and Al-Khiꞏr whispers in subtle tones an deep theology: Truth from God is absolute, human reason should accept what ever it does not perceive/know (Fairclough 2001).

This study analyzes the linguistic and rhetorical decisions made in these verses, but also the linguistic decisions that frame and contribute to wider social and epistemological norms of Islamic knowing. The rhetorical force of the story comes from the way it builds and naturalizes epistemic submission, teaching that to defer to divine authority is not a compromise but an act of deep faith.

2. Fairclough's Framework

The emergence of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), led by Norman Fairclough, and others, is widely recognized as a significant intellectual accomplishment in the discipline of media & genre studies. It intends to investigate matters of inequality, racism and abuse of power as they both occur in written and spoken language. CDA attempts to investigate how interlocutors manifest their beliefs, thoughts, and agendas. CDA itself

takes an interdisciplinary approach and it also refers to a range of discourse analysis methods developed in the disciplines of social sciences and humanities (Khafaga, 2017).

Fairclough provides a comprehensive and systematic model of three dimensions: text, discourse and society. Language and discourse contribute to the building and maintenance of social power relations according to him, thus becoming very powerful mechanisms for exploring the way in which discourse mirrors as well as shapes society (Fairclough, 1992).

Three stages of CDA analysis align with the three dimensions of discourse (Fairclough, 2015):

1- Description stage: It examines the form and structural properties of the text, such as vocabulary and grammar.

2. Interpretation stage: It regards text as discursive practice in context. It investigates the processes of production, distribution and consumption under the.

3- Explanation stage: It is the phase in which discourse and social practices are related to. It explores how discursive production is formed by social structure.

The Fairclough framework is illustrated in boxes; each box represents a level of analysis (1995) as shown below:
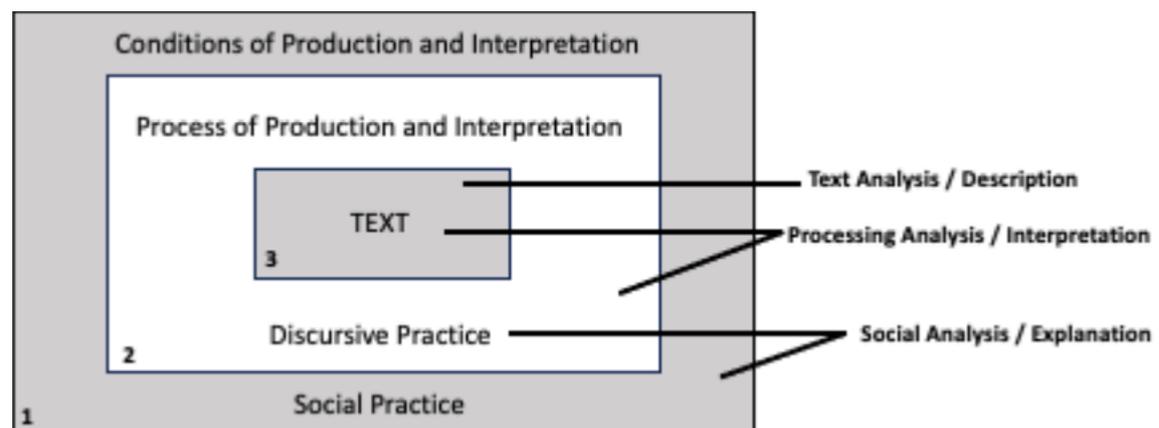

Figure 1: Fairclough's three stages of discourse

2.1 Description Stage

At this stage, the problem was focused on three linguistic levels of a text, namely language vocabulary, language grammar and language text. According to Fairclough (2015), three linguistic values distinguish the functions of language:

1. Experiential value: It is a history of the ideology and worldview of the producers.

2. Relational value: It maps power relations among actors.

3. Expressive value: It follows the producers' assessment of reality.

These values are considered in the three language dimensions: vocabulary, grammar and text organisation.

2.1.1 Vocabulary:

Fairclough (2015) emphasizes that words are shaped and reshaped by particular worldviews, power relations, and emotional attitudes. Accordingly, Fairclough (2015:129-135) restricts the analysis of vocabulary to the following main questions and their sub-questions.

A. What experiential values do words have? The answer to this question reflects how the speaker or writer represents reality, drawing attention to content, ideology, and worldview. From this central question, more sub-questions could be derived:

1. What classification schemes are drawn upon? Words such as: freedom fighter" vs. "terrorist"; "unborn child" vs fetus" can be used to ideologically categorise people, actions, and/or concepts.

2. Are there ideologically contested words? Meanings of terms such as "martyr," "justice," "progress," and "reform." vary across contexts or groups

3. Is there rewording or overwording? Such as substituting a term like "housewife" with "domestic engineer" or "disabled" with "differently abled." Another example is the excessive use of synonyms or repetition to highlight a particular idea, e.g., "How to boost your confidence, enhance your courage, and increase your inner power" (to overemphasise the concept of self-support).

4. Are there meaningful relations between words? Within synonymy, Words with similar meaning can be used to reinforce a point, e.g., "strength," "power," "force." Subordinate categories can be included under a general term, as in the use of hyponymy e.g., "rose," "tulip," and "daisy" under "flowers." It is also possible that Oppositional meanings, that construct binaries, are used for ideological motivation as in antonymous words such as e.g., "believer" vs. "disbeliever"; "civilized" vs. "primitive."

What relational values do words have?

These indicate how the social relationships between the participants are enacted and shaped by vocabulary choices.. Relational values depend on the following sub-questions:

1. Are there euphemistic expressions? Such as "passed away" instead of "died"; "collateral damage" for "civilian deaths."

2. Are there markedly formal or informal word choices? This provides an indication of social distance and power dynamics, e.g., Formal: "Esteemed colleagues," "I hereby submit…"

Informal: "Hey guys, let's wrap it up."

3. Does word choice assume shared knowledge or solidarity? Certain expressions depend on the common ground between speaker and audience, e.g., Racist slurs or coded language understood only within a specific in-group.

What expressive values do words have?

These convey the speaker's attitudes, judgments, or emotions. They are tied to the speaker's ideology within a communicative context. For example, the words "exhibiting," "incarceration," and "humiliation" in a psychiatric text reveal the hidden negative emotions or evaluation of the text producer against the practices described in the text.

What metaphors are used?

Metaphors play a significant role in shaping experiential meaning and emotional response. Metaphors notably establish ideology and often signal which interpretation is being privileged. This means the choice of metaphor is rarely neutral; it implicitly or explicitly favours specific

perspectives, values, or power structures, e.g., "The cancer of corruption is spreading…" — frames corruption as a deadly, uncontrollable force, justifying urgent or drastic action.

2.1.2 Grammar

Grammatical structures can carry ideology and relational dynamics. In connection with this perspective, Fairclough (2015:135 138) suggests the following questions:

1. What experiential values do grammatical features have? This includes the following sub-questions:

• Is the agency unclear?

• Are processes what they seem?

• Are nominalizations used?

• Are sentences active or passive?

• Are sentences positive or negative?

2. What relational values do grammatical features have? Its sub-questions are:

• What modes (declarative, grammatical question, imperative) are used?

• Are there essential features of relational modality?

• Are the pronouns we and you used, and if so, how?

3. What expressive values do grammatical features have?

• Are there essential features of expressive modality?

4. How are (simple) sentences linked together? This includes:

• What logical connectors are used?

• Are complex sentences characterized by coordination or subordination?

• What means are used for referring inside and outside the text?

At this level, the focus is concentrated on how the overall structure of the text organises meaning and guides interpretation. Fairclough (2001:110 116) suggests asking the following questions:

1. What interactional conventions are used? This includes the following sub-questions:

- What is the turn-taking system?
- Are there ways in which one participant controls the contributions of others?

2. How is the text structured to position the reader? This question may include: Narrative progression, and Foregrounding vs. backgrounding

The following figure illustrates Fairclough's **Values of Linguistic Features:**

Level	Experiential Value	Relational Value	Expressive Value
Vocabulary	Content, beliefs, classification	Social roles and status	Attitudes, evaluations
Grammar	Agency, modality, aspect	Pronouns, speech roles	Mood, stance
Text Structure	Information flow, cohesion	Reader positioning	Thematic emphasis

Figure 2: Values of Linguistic Features (Fairclough, 2015:131)

2.2 Interpretation Stage

In Fairclough's descriptive stage of discourse analysis, the focus is on both the linguistic characteristics of a text and the values it conveys. However, these textual features do not directly shape society. The textual influence is mediated through "discourse"; discourse in this sense covers

the broader social interactions in which texts are created and understood. For these linguistic values to become socially active, they must be integrated into real-world social interactions. Within this framework, texts are produced and interpreted based on shared "common-sense assumptions" and background knowledge, which Fairclough terms "members' resources (MR)." MRs are the collective understandings that allow individuals to assign meaning and value to linguistic elements. Therefore, the "interpretation stage" of Fairclough's model examines these complex discourse processes – how texts are produced and understood within their social context, drawing upon the shared resources of these members (Fairclough, 2015, p. 145).

Fairclough (2015:156) identifies six dimensions at the interpretation stage (discursive practice .Four dimensions belong to the interpretation of text, while the other two are connected tothe understandin of context. The four dimensions are:

- The surface of utterance, which deals with the recognition of text based on the knowledge of the interpreter.

- The meaning of an utterance is related to the process of assigning meaning to the constituent parts of a text.

- Local coherence: which refers to the meaningful connections between utterances and how utterances relate to each other in terms of their meaning. Rather than considering the overall meaning of an entire document, local coherence focuses specifically on how one utterances are logically connected to the one immediately preceding it.

- Text structure and point: This level moves beyond understanding the connections between individual utterances to grasp the overall purpose and organizational framework of a text. This level includes a schema of a text to a previous schema, such as a telephone conversation, where, once it is recognized, the interpreter expects a sequence of events to take place (opening, topic, turn-taking, farewell, and ending).

The last two dimensions refer to the interpretation of context, specifically the interpretation of situational and textual contexts. The former relies on external cues and mental representations, which include features of the physical situation (such as a classroom), properties of participants (such as age, gender, dress, social status, and roles.) and what has previously been said. At this level, individuals also draw on their mental representations of their internalized knowledge structures to make sense

of the external context. Inn interpreting a context (Fairclough, 2015:157-8)

Fairclough (2015:159 adds that individuals arrive at interpretations of the situational context which determines the appropriate discourse type by answering four questions:

1- What is going on (activity, topic, purpose) that is related to the contents?

2. Who is involved? That is related to the subjects.

3- In what relation? That is related to the relation.

4- What is the role of language in what is going on? That is related to the connections.

2.3 Explanation Stage

The last stage of the framework views discourse as part of social process (more specifically, about ideology), i.e. it connects the interpretation of texts to broader social processes. Discourse over time can have significant and cumulative effects on these social structures, either sustaining them or changing them. The social structures influence MR, and this in turn influences and shapes discourse. Discourse over time maintains or changes MR, and finally, MR sustain or alters social structures. (Fairclough, 2015:172). In other words, discourse can be considered as a social practice influenced by social structures (particularly power relations) and how discourses, in turn, can cumulatively sustain or transform those structures. MR mediates this relationship: social structures shape MR, which then shape discourse, and discourse affects MR, which ultimately affects structures.

Explanation has two dimensions (Fairclough, 2015:173):

1. Process/Effects: examines how discourses are part of ongoing social struggles and how they contribute to or impact social structures and the future.

2. Structure/Determinants: This examines how existing power relationships (outcomes of past struggles) determine discourses, emphasising the past.

Both the social effects and determinants of discourse should be investigated at three levels: societal, institutional, and situational. Even seemingly harmonious discourses can subtly manifest and reproduce power relations, contributing to social struggles. The key is to view the same discourse from different "filters" (situational, institutional, societal) rather than looking for other features.

The relationship between participants and MR can be normative (simply following established MR in unproblematic situations) or creative (adapting and transforming MR in problematic or crisis situations, often linked to overt social struggle). Innovative use of MR can lead to long-term transformations of MR and underlying social relations. In other words, the explanation stage views MR as ideologies, meaning the assumptions embedded within MR are understood in terms of how they are shaped by power relations and how they contribute to maintaining or changing those relations.

Fairclough (2015:175) summarises all about the explanation stage in three questions:

1. Social determinants: What power relations at the situational, institutional, and societal levels shape this discourse?

2. Ideologies: Which elements of MR are ideological?

3. Effects: How does this discourse contribute to social struggles at different levels? Is it normative or creative, and does it sustain or transform existing power relations?

3. DATA ANALYSIS

To reach a critical discourse analysis for the selected verses (Surah Al-Kahf 60–82), the following will be taken into consideration: Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model: Description stage, interpretation stage, and explanation stage. Tafseer Ibn Katheer will be used in the interpretation of the selected verses, with the translation provided by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

3.1 Description stage

1.Vocabulary

Experiential Values		
a. Classification Schemes		
1. Godly Qualities	Examples	Significance
	1. رَحْمَةً (*raḥmatan – mercy*) – 18:65 2. عِلْمًا (*ʿilman – knowledge*) – 18:65 3. أَمْرًا (*amran – command/will*) – 18:82	Words such as mercy, knowledge and command are Godly qualities.
2. Human Agents and Actions	1. مُوسَى (*Mūsā – Moses*) – 18:60 2. فَتَاهُ (*fatāhu – his servant*) – 18:60 3. عَبْدًا (*ʿabdan – servant*) – 18:65 4. خَرَقَهَا (*kharaqahā – he damaged it*) – 18:71 5. قَتَلَهُ (*qatalahū – he killed him*) – 18:74 6. أَقَامَهُ (*aqāmahū – he repaired it*) – 18:77	These actions highlight **human agency** and test moral intuitions. Khidr's actions especially appear **morally questionable** until explained, creating **discursive tension** between action and interpretation.

4. **Natural Elements**	1. مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْن (*majma□ al-ba□rayn* – *meeting point of two seas*) – **18:60** 2. سَفِينَة(*safīnah* – *ship*) – **18:71** الصَّخْرَة(□*akhrāh* – *rock*) – **18:63**	The spatial elements represented by these expressions refer to the contextual settings of the story.
5. **Moral Qualities**	1. نَفْسًا زَكِيَّة(*nafsan zakiyyah* – *pure soul*) – **18:74** 2. صَالِحًا(□*āli□an* – *righteous*) – **18:82** 3. صَبْر(□*abr* – *patience*) – **Repeated in 18:67, 68, 72, 75, 78**	These expressions reflect the moral theme of the story: purity and righteousness are valued, patience is important, and the narrative is ethically serious.
b. Ideologically Contested Words	1. عِلْم(□*ilm* – *knowledge*) – **18:65, 66** 2. عِلْم لَدُنِّي(□*ilm ladunnī* – *knowledge from Our presence*) – **18:65** 3. رُشْدًا(*rushdan* – *right guidance*) – **18:66** تَأْويل(*ta□wīl* – *interpretation*) – **18:78, 82**	These expressions show a hierarchy of knowledge. The Devine knowledge is over the human knowledge.
c. Rewording / Overwording		
1. **Patience**	Examples	Significance
	لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا(*lan tasta□ī□a ma□iya*	Repeated thrice, emphasizing that **patience is a spiritual capacity**

	□abran – *You will not be able to have patience with me*) – **18:67, 72, 75**	that Musa lacks — highlighting **human epistemic limitation**.
2. **Knowledge**	1. عِلْم – **18:65** 2. عِلْم لَدُنِّي – **18:65** 3. رُشْدًا – **18:66** 4. (خُبْرًا)(*khubran – understanding*) – **18:68** 5. تَأْوِيل – **18:78, 82**	The **lexical field of knowledge** is **overlexicalized** to underscore its **centrality and ideological weight**. Different terms point to different **levels and sources of insight**.

d. Meaning relations		
Types	Examples	Significance
1. **Synonymy**:	1. عِلْمًا and رُشْدًا **18:65–66** 2. خَيْرًا and رَحْمَة **18:65, 18:81**	These pairs suggest **convergence of moral and spiritual concepts**. Knowledge and guidance; mercy and goodness are treated as **mutually reinforcing** in divine speech.
2. Hyponymy:	1. عِلْم ⊂ عِلْم لَدُنِّي 18:65 2. عَبْدًا ⊂ *human agents* – 18:65 3. فِعْل ⊂ أَقَامَهُ, قَتَلَهُ, خَرَقَهَا – 18:71, 74, 77	The expressions show the following hierarchical classification: supreme Divine Knowledge and a specific type of divine action performed by Al-Khidr as they have a Divine source.
3. Antonymy	1. زَكِيَّة (pure) vs. نُكْرًا (monstrous) – **18:74** 2. طُغْيَانًا (tyranny) vs. رَحْمَة (mercy) – **18:80–81** 3. نَسِيتُ , نَسِيًا vs. صَبْر **18:61, 63**	These opposite expressions present the difference between divine knowledge and human knowledge.

2. Relational Values		
Formality	1. **لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا** (*laqad jiʾta shayʾan imran – You have done something monstrous*) – **18:71**	Musa's emotional expression "You have done something monstrous") is of formal linguistic structure, balancing human frailty with reverence

3. Expressive Values		
a. **Negative Evaluation**	Examples	Significance
	1. **نُكْرًا**– *monstrous* – 18:74 2. **إِمْرًا**– *grave act* – 18:71 3. **غَصْبًا**– *by force* – 18:79	These expressions have a tone of strong disapproval to show human evaluation of apparently wrong actions.
b. Positive Evaluation	1. **زَكِيَّة**– *pure* – **18:74** 2. **رَحْمَة**– *mercy* – **18:65, 82** 3. **صَالِحًا**– *righteous* – **18:82** 4. **رُشْدًا**– *right guidance* – **18:66**	These expressions of righteousness and mercy highlight a divine theme.
Wondrous	**عَجَبًا**(ʿajaban – wonder) – **18:63**	The fish escape expresses surprise and wonder, signalling the beginning of Musa's journey in his search for knowledge.
Fatigue/Strain	**1. نَصَبًا**(naṣaban – fatigue) – 18:62 2. **عُسْرًا**(ʿusran – hardship) – 18:73	These expressions of physical and emotional stress support the fact that **human knowledge is limited**.
Certainty & Apology	**1. تَسْتَطِيعَ**(innaka lan tastaṭīʿ) – 18:67 2. **لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي**(lā tuʾākhidhnī – do not blame me) – 18:73	These expressions convey an apology, indicating Musa's final submission and **recognition of human limitation**.

4. Metaphor		
1. Meeting of Knowledge	Examples	Significance
	مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْن(majmaʿ al-baḥrayn) – **18:60**	Symbolizes the convergence of **two realms of knowledge**— prophetic (Musa) and divine/esoteric (Khidr). It marks the threshold of a **spiritual and epistemic journey**.
Journey as Growth	سَفَرْنَا(safarinā) – **18:62**	Represents **epistemological and spiritual growth**. The physical journey mirrors the internal transformation in understanding divine wisdom and human limits.
Destiny	**فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْر** (ittakhadha sabīlahu fī al-baḥr) – **18:61**	The fish's escape metaphorically signifies **divine intervention and hidden fate**. It introduces the idea that events unfold **beyond human control or logic**.
Forgetting as Shaytan's Work	**وَمَا أَنْسَانِيهُ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ** (wa-mā ansānīhu illā al-shayṭān) – **18:63**	Casts forgetfulness as **externally caused**, implying that human error is linked to **spiritual distraction or weakness**, reinforcing the need for divine guidance.
Knowledge as Divine Light	عَلَّمْنَاهُ ,آتَيْنَاهُ ,عِلْم لَدُنِّي – 18:65	Frames knowledge as a **divine gift**, not attainable through human effort alone. These metaphors position truth as **emanating from God**, not through deduction.
Patience as Capacity	**لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ... صَبْرًا 18:67, 72,**	Patience is **lacking when faced with divine mystery**, reinforcing the limits of human endurance.

2. Grammar

1. Experiential Values		
a. Process		
1. Material Processes (Action)	Examples	Significance
	1. قَالَ – *"He said"* "qāla" Repeated over 20 times 2. خَرَقَهَا – *"He damaged it"* kharaqahā (18:71) 3. قَتَلَهُ – *"He killed him"* qatalahū (18:74) 4. أَقَامَهُ – *"He repaired it"* aqāmahū (18:77)	The action in the story initially perceived as harmful or irrational, but then are recognised as part of divine wisdom — reinforcing the ideological theme that **truth is revealed, not assumed**.
2. Mental Processes (Cognition/Intention)	1. نَسِيت – *"I forgot"* nasītu (18:63): 2. أَرَدْنَا – *"We intended"* "aradnā" (18:81) 3. وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي – *"I did not do it of my own accord"* "wa-mā faᵓaltuhu ᵓan amrī" (18:82)	Emphasize human limitation (forgetfulness), divine volition, and Khidr's **subordinate agency**, illustrating that **intention and understanding are veiled unless divinely granted**
3. Relational Processes	كَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ – *"It belonged to poor people"* kānat li-masākīn (18:79)	Define states, identities, and background conditions that justify later actions. These affirm the Quranic principle of justice grounded in unseen contexts.
b. Agency		
1.Clear human agency	Examples	significance
	Musa and Khidr	Highlights active roles, speech, and response — yet their agency is bounded and often corrected

		by divine revelation.
2. Divine agency obscured	1. آتَيْنَاهُ– "We gave him" ātaynāhu (18:65) 2. عَلَّمْنَاهُ– "We taught him" □allamnāhu" (18:65)	These plural pronouns express divine control while masking the mechanics of divine action, elevating the sacred and unseen authority behind events.
c. Nominalization	Examples	Significance
	1. تَأْوِيل– *"Interpretation" or "final outcome" : ta□wīl (18:78)* **2. فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ**– *"This is the separation between me and you" "firāqu baynī wa-baynika"* 18:78)	Condense complex events into singular, abstract forms. They serve to **resolve epistemic tension** and **signal narrative closure**, elevating the final interpretations over initial perceptions.
d. Polarity	**Examples**	significance
	1. لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا– *"You will never be able to have patience with me" "lan tasta□ī□a ma□iya □abran"* (18:67) **2. لَا تَسْأَلْنِي**– *"Do not ask me" "lā tas□alnī"* (18:70)	Polar constructions mark limits of human capability and discursive authority. Negation structures the ideological boundary between divine prerogative and prophetic inquiry.
e. Voice		
1. Active	**Examples**	Significance
	قَتَلَهُ– *"He killed him"* qatalahū (18:74)	The active voice assigns Al-Khidr as the doer of the killing triggering Musa's astonishment a device used to highlight the gap

		between the action and the truth behind it.
2. Passive	**أَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا؟** *"Have you scuttled it so that its people would be drowned?"* *Akharaqtahā li-tughriqa ahlahā?* (18:71)	The passive structure shifts focus from the doer to the outcome, creating ambiguity about responsibility and inviting reflection on divine intention.
f. Processes That Are Not What They Seem	**1.** **خَرَقَهَا** — *"He damaged it"* *"kharaqahā"* (18:71) 2. **قَتَلَهُ** — *"He killed him"* *"qatalahū"* (18:74) 3. **أَقَامَهُ** — *"He repaired it [the wall]"* *"aqāmahū"* (18:77) 4. **فَأَرَدْنَا... فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ** — *"So We intended... so your Lord intended""* *fa-aradnā... fa-arāda rabbuka"* (18:81–82)	1. Initially viewed as harmful, this action is later justified as a protective measure, questioning the reliability of quick moral judgments. 2. A morally shocking act presented as a preventive measure to prevent future parental grief — highlighting divine foresight that surpasses human understanding. 3. Musa's misunderstood generosity symbolizes unseen justice—serving orphaned children and defending inherited rights. 4. These phrases reveal that all actions were governed by divine wisdom, reinforcing the theme that **truth lies in God's will**, not human perception.

2. Relational Values of Grammar		
a. Modes		
1. Declarative:	Examples	Significance
	1. **فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا** — *("fa-lammā balaghā majma□a baynihimā" "Then, when they reached the junction between them…")* (18:61)	Presents narrative events in a straightforward, factual tone — reflecting the **epic structure** of a spiritual journey and grounding divine action in history.

2. Interrogatives	أَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيّةً بِغَيْرِ 1. نَفْسٍ؟ — (*"a-qatalta nafsan zakiyyatan bighayri nafsin?"* "Have you killed a pure soul without [having killed] a soul?"*) (18:74)	Shows **human moral confusion and resistance** to divine action — emphasizes the epistemological gap between divine wisdom and prophetic perception.
3. Imperative	لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي 1. — (*"lā tu□ākhidhnī"* "Do not blame me"*) (18:73) آتِنَا غَدَاءَنَا 2. — (*"ātinā ghadā□anā"* "Bring us our food"*) (18:62)	Reflects **relational dynamics and emotional tone** — plea (Musa's humility) and necessity (request for food), both marking **dependency and submission**.
b. Relational Modality		
	Example	Significance
1. Volition	لَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا — (*"lā a□□ī laka amran"* "I will not disobey your order"*) (18:69)	Expresses **commitment and loyalty**, reflecting Musa's willingness to submit despite confusion — essential to the theme of surrender to divine wisdom.
2. Prohibition	فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي — (*"fa-lā tas□alnī"* "So do not ask me…"*) (18:70)	Establishes **epistemic boundaries** — Khidr's command asserts authority and control over access to divine knowledge.
3. Prediction/Limit:	إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا — (*"innaka lan tasta□ī□a ma□iya □abran"* "Indeed, you will never be able to be patient with me"*) (18:67)	Foretells **inevitable human limitation** — central to the ideological message that **truth is inaccessible without divine permission or guidance**.

---

3. Expressive Values	Examples	Significance
	1. (" إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ– " *innaka lan tastaīa*" "Indeed, you will not be able…") (18:67) 2. لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا– *"laqad jita shayan nukran"* "You have done a dreadful thing" (18:74)	1. Expresses strong **epistemic certainty** about Musa's future failure. 2. Reflects **emotional intensity and moral discomfort** in Musa's reaction.

4. Sentence Linkage		
1. Temporal/Causal Connectors	Examples	Significance
	1. فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ فَانْطَلَقَا– ("*fa-inalaqā*" "So they set out") (18:66) 2. إِذَا أَتَيَا– ("*idhā atayā*" "When they came…") (18:77) 3. لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا– ("*li-tughriqa ahlahā*") "So that you would drown its people?" (18:71)	1. Shows **logical progression and continuity** in the journey, highlighting the structured unfolding of divine lessons. The connector *fa-* links cause and consequence in a purposeful spiritual sequence. 2. Introduces a **new narrative event** with temporal framing. It builds suspense and connects present action to anticipated divine wisdom. 3. This **causal structure** (with *li-*) reflects **Musa's misunderstanding** of Khidr's action, reinforcing the **gap between perceived harm and hidden wisdom** — a core theme of the passage.
2. Explanatory structure:	أَمَّا السَّفِينَةَ فَكَانَتْ...– ("*ammā as-safīnatu fa-kānat…*" "As for the ship, it belonged	This **contrastive-explanatory formula** (ammā… fa-) marks a **shift from mystery to revelation**. It provides clarity, structure, and resolution, emphasizing that **only**

to...") (18:79)	God reveals the "true meaning" (taʾwīl) behind events.

Discussion:

The grammar of Surah Al-Kahf[18:60-82] reflects this that divine truth is absolute and transcends human perception. That is, the syntactical choices in the passage are ideological maneuvers which enshrine divine will, curtail human freedom and substantiate the Quranic conception of truth as God's Alone. The repeated presentation of active and cognitive processes constitutes a contrast between what is immediately happening and its later significance. Degrees and orders of hierarchy are recognized wherein God's knowledge and absolute certainty is Al Khidr –manifesting divine authority whilst Musa seeks to expand his "limited understanding".

3. Textual Structure

a. Interactional Conventions (Turn-taking & Control)		
Aspect	Examples	Significance
Khidr controls the interaction	1. فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ – ("fa-lā tasʾalnī ʿan shayʾin" *Then do not ask me about anything")* (18:70) 2. قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل –(("qāla a-lam aqul" *Did I not say...")* (18:72, 75)	1. Al-Khidr puts a condition, in a reference of his authority by limiting Musa's questions. 2. Repeated mentioning of his condition.
b. Larger-Scale Structures		
Narrative Phase	Example	Significance
1. Introduction	وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِفَتَاهُ – ("wa-idh qāla Mūsā li-fatāhu" "And when Musa said to his servant…") (18:60)	Introduces the quest for knowledge and frames the spiritual journey.
2. Threefold Test خَرَقَهَا Structure	1. خَرَقَهَا ("Kharaqahā" "He damaged it"(18:71) 2. قَتَلَهُ – ("qatalahū"	Each act tests human judgment, appearing unjust until explained.

	"He killed him") (18:74) 3. قَامَهُ – ("*aqāmahū*" "He repaired it" (18:77)	
3. Climactic Revelation	سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيل – ("sa-unabbi□uka bi-ta□wīl') *"I will inform you of the interpretation…"* (18:78)	Marks the moment of divine disclosure—where true meaning is unveiled.
4. Didactic Resolution	…أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ – ("ammā as-safīnatu fa-kānat..." *"As for the ship, it belonged to…"*) (18:79)	Begins the final explanation, showing how divine wisdom corrects human misunderstanding.
5. Separation/Closure	هَٰذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ – ("hādhā firāqu baynī wa-baynika" *"This is the separation between me and you"*) (18:78)	Symbolizes the end of the pedagogical journey and the limit of human access to divine knowledge.

Discussion

The narrative in Surah Al-Kahf (18:60-82) begins with a moral quest and concludes with divine certainty. Al-Khidr is the dominant speaker; Musa remains passive and reactive. Tale of event-reaction-rebuke, repeated This narrative tells you that divine truth is concealed, opaque, and visible only to the lowly.

3.2 Interpretation Stage

1. Situational Context Interpretation

Category	Example
Activity Type	A journey narrative where Musa (Moses) seeks divine knowledge and Khir (the servant of God) enforces silence and patience as conditions of learning.
Subjects	Moses (prophet-learner), Khidr (divine agent), and an implied audience (believers seeking wisdom).
Relations	Hierarchical (Khidr as superior in knowledge); Moses' humility contrasts with initial assertiveness.
Role of	Didactic narrative to convey theological truths. Language

Language	legitimizes Khidr's authority and frames Moses' limitations as normative.

2. Intertextual Context & Presupposition

Category	Example
Presupposed Knowledge	Moses is a prophet, and Al-Khidr is a figure of divine wisdom who carries out God's orders.
Manipulative Presupposition	Actions such as damaging a boat, killing a boy, repairing a wall appear unfair but are later justified, challenging the limitation of human logic in comprehending ultimate truth.

3. Discourse Type

Category	Example
Sacred Pedagogical Discourse	It is a sacred Quranic discourse of a narrative type blended with dialogue and moral testing where divine knowledge is concealed and revealed only later.
Connections	Khidr's refusals and Musa's protests align with ritualized communicative roles—*one unveils*, the *other fails to wait*. This framing shapes readers' expectations and interpretations.

4. Speech Acts

Speaker	Utterance of speech act and ideological function
Khidr	1. ("Do not follow me," v. 67),Directives : Asserting authority. 2. ("لَا نُبَدِّلُ قَوْلِي" 18:69), Directive: Asserting authority 3.("ذَٰلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ " " This is the interpretation…," v. 82), Assertive: Final verdicts silencing doubt.
Moses	("أَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً" "Did you kill an innocent soul?", v. 74) Challenges: transgressions against epistemic hierarchy.

5. Schemata, Frames, and Scripts

Category	Example
Schemata	A test narrative structured as (quest → failure → revelation).
Frames	Divine wisdom" as a topic: moral acts may appear unjust without full divine context.
Scripts	"Righteous disciple": Musa's (Moses) repeated failure reflects a common believer's struggle with accepting unseen wisdom.

6. Topic and Point

Category	Example
Experiential Topic	The contrast between human limitation and divine omniscience.
Relational Point	Surrender to God's wisdom is the true piety.
Expressive Point	It channels Moses' frustration into empathy for the reader, culminating in humility before the divine

Discussion:

The example of Moses and Khidr underlines how storytelling functions in the shaping of understanding by imbuing roles with ideology in relation to its narrative framework, it s hierarchical situations, speech acts and didactic language. It points readers toward thinking about how they personally respond to the mysteries of life and what it means to have trust in wisdom greater than their own. The blood is an image of the guilt, divine truth appears as absolute and the limitations entail human (as well as brutal facts) are inevitable but in spiritual terms also shaping.

3.3 Explanation stage:

Social sources of power include situational power (wherein submission is dominant for spiritual growth and similar to Khidr's dominance), institutional power (which places authority in scholars, prophets, and the Qur'an) and societial power (rejecting secular rationalism by claiming that divine revelation trumps reason and moral intuition).

The theological-neutral stance in MR is that no one but God possesses truth with a capital "T," and man's reasoning, sans divine intervention, will be left wandering on the landscape of limited understanding. Myopia is excused by the presumed righteousness of Khidr's sins, to reassure us that there is a method behind divine madness even if it disrupts our moral convention.

Effects in Social Struggle:

The dialogue supports Islamic views of omniscience and compliance. At the same time, it is also an indirect criticism of secular rationalism in that it delivers a sacred substitute for making sense of suffering and injustice.

Reproduction and Transformation:

The text makes unequal access to the truth work, reasserting the divine opacity and confirming in the religious scholars' authority. It focuses on

rationalism's defeat by sacred mystery, as a kind of social reflection; but also as the lever for shifting attitudes toward knowledge, authority, and faith.

Conclusions:

Vicissitudes in Surah Al-Kahf (60–82) delves into the dichotomy of what is seen and unseen, transmitting a belief that truth isn't always clear. It nurtures humility, forbearance and reliance on the wisdom of Allah.

Drawing upon his three-dimensional model of language, description-interpretation-explanation, this study demonstrates how the Qur'anic discourse linguistically constructs these!deologies and operationalizes co-textual meaning potentials around the\following tension between divine truth and human finitude:

The specific lexis and grammar in the Qur'anic text reflects ideological meanings. Vocabulary such as the word "علم" ⬜ilm, "صبر" ⬜abr and "تاويل" ta⬜wīl also used, in addition to grammar including negation and imperatives demonstrate key concepts by which Khidr is depicted as someone who knows by prophecy from God with Musa grasping what was beyond common reasoning. The hierarchy of knowledge and morals is also instilled, as the moral aspect progresses through levels, solidifying it with a tripling test structure in which both the character and child are held accountable for their behaviour.

And a combination of linguistic features such as deferred explication and agentless passives locates humanity as learners under divine guidance, thus cohering with religious principles of forbearance, faith and obedience. It serves as a linguistic and ideological tool to maintain the authority of Qur'ian and authenticate divine wisdom, frequently in an incomprehensible way.

The tale of Musa and Khidr represents within an Islamic perspective a view in which the ultimate truth comes from God with whom humanity does try to submit. With grammaticato-syntactic devices such as coordinated foreafter explanations and clauses in passive (à la Traugott 1989 et al.), the text casts humans as learners 'under' divine tutelage and highlights patience, trust, submission. It operates as a linguistic and ideological means to uphold the authority of the Qur'an, and divine wisdom's inscrutability.

References

6. Bajwa, R. (2012). *Divine storytelling as self-presentation: An analysis of Sūrat al-Kahf* (Doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University).

7. Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Longman.

8. Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (3rd ed.) (pp.58, 130). Routledge.

9. Ibn Kathir. (2003). *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-□A□īm*. Darussalam.

10. IslamHouse. (n.d.). *Tafsir surat Al-Kahf (Chapter 18)*. https://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single/en_tafsir_surat_al_kahf_chapter_18.pdf

11. Merchant, J. A. (2018). *The parable of Moses and Khidr in the Holy Qur'an: Inner meaning of Surah Kahf, verses 60–82*. Simerg. https://simerg.com/parables/the-parable-of-moses-and-khidr-in-the-holy-quran-an-ismaili-interpretation/

12. Narwan, A. (2019). *The story of Musa and Khidir in QS. al-Kahfi (18): 60–82 according to Al-Alusi's perspective* (Undergraduate thesis, State Islamic University of Walisongo).

13. van Dijk, T. A. (1989). *Elite discourse and racism*. Sage.

14. van Dijk, T. A. (2001). *Discourse and power*. Palgrave Macmillan.

15. van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society, 26*(6), 660–665. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926515589994

16. Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2008). *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed.). Sage.

17. Wodak, R., & Reisigl, M. (2001). Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism. In R. Wodak & M. Reisigl (Eds.), *Racism and antisemitism* (pp. 89–106). Routledge.

18. Khafaga, A. F. (2017). Discourse interpretation: A deconstructive, reader-oriented approach to critical discourse analysis.