

The Construction of Collective Identity in  
Terrorist Discourse: A Case Study of ISIS'  
*Rumiyah Magazine*

By

Dr. Marwa Mohamed Khamis El-Zouka

Associate Professor

English Department

Faculty of Arts

Alexandria University

## **Abstract**

Using Koller's (2014) model for analyzing collective identity and van Dijk's (2000) ideological square, the present study investigates how collective identity is constructed in two sections of ISIS' *Rumiyah* magazine. These are: the series of articles entitled "Establishing the Islamic State" and the interviews held with ISIS' leaders. Results show that a number of discourse features and linguistic devices, such as social actor representation, evaluation, modality, and intertextuality, are employed at the micro-level of texts to present the Islamic State positively and its enemies negatively, and to construct some collective identities for ISIS such as being the defender of Islam and Sunni Muslims, and the implementer of Shariah. Results also show how the discourse goals at the meso-level of analysis and the socio-political context at the macro-level account for the use of different discourse features and linguistic devices at the micro-level.

**Keywords:** collective identity – ideological square – ISIS – Rumiyah – socio-political context

## **المخلص**

**بناء الهوية الجماعية في الخطاب الإرهابي: دراسة حالة لمجلة رومية الخاصة بداعش**  
باستخدام نموذج كولر (٢٠١٤) الخاص ببناء الهوية الجماعية بالإضافة إلى المربع الأيديولوجي الخاص بفان دايك (٢٠٠٠) يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة بناء الهوية الجماعية في جزءين من مجلة رومية الخاصة بداعش وهما سلسلة المقالات التي تحمل عنوان "بناء الدولة الإسلامية" واللقاءات التي تم عقدها مع عدد من قادة داعش. وتوضح النتائج أن هناك عدد من سمات الخطاب والأدوات اللغوية، مثل تمثيل العنصر الاجتماعي والتقييم والكيفية والتناس، يتم استخدامها على المستوى الجزئي للنصوص لتقديم الدولة الإسلامية بشكل إيجابي وتقديم أعداءها بشكل سلبي، وأيضاً لبناء بعض الهويات الجماعية لداعش مثل كونها الحامية للدين الإسلامي والمسلمين السنة وكذلك كونها المطبقة للشريعة. كما تبين النتائج كيفية قيام أهداف الخطاب على المستوى المتوسط للتحليل وكذلك السياق الاجتماعي والسياسي على المستوى الكلي بتفسير استخدام سمات الخطاب والأدوات اللغوية المختلفة على المستوى الجزئي.

## **1. Introduction**

Terrorism has become a widespread phenomenon that threatens peace, stability and security in different countries. It is motivated by the desire of terrorist groups and organizations to realize political, religious or ideological goals. One terrorist organization that uses terror to reach its goal is the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) which has received international attention over the past few years due to the acts of terrorism it carries out in many parts of the world. Because ISIS always seeks to raise funds, spread its messages, disseminate extremist ideologies, convince people of these messages and ideologies, and recruit new members, the Internet is an essential global medium of communication for this organization. An important means used by ISIS to achieve these ends is to construct its collective identity in a way that would make its ideologies and acts appeal to a wide audience worldwide. ISIS' online magazine *Rumiyah* is a key media outlet employed for the construction of collective identity and hence dissemination of ideologies, radicalization and recruitment.

## **2. Aims of the Study**

Because information can be easily and quickly spread via the Internet, ISIS makes use of it to propagate its ideas and mobilize support for them. More importantly, ISIS uses the Internet to "address their messages directly and without censorship to the public" (Rothenberger, Muller, & Elmezeny, 2016, p. 2). The online magazine *Rumiyah* is a key propaganda tool for ISIS to justify its use of violence, instill fear in its opponents and express its worldview which is based on dividing the world into believers and non-believers. According to Ingram (2016), "for IS, the world is sharply divided between true Muslims, that is, IS-aligned Sunnis, and literally everybody else. From IS's perspective, the world is steeped in a state of *jahiliyyah* caused by all those outside its narrow in-group" (p. 3). This demarcation between ISIS' followers, who are deemed to be true believers, and non-followers, who are considered non-believers and enemies, is attributed to ideological and identity differences. Thus, ISIS uses its websites and online platforms to construct its collective identity as the protector of Sunni Muslims and its enemies as "malevolent others" (Ingram, 2016, p. 5). ISIS uses certain linguistic tools to establish this identity and shape people's perception of its worldview. In light of the above, the present study examines how ISIS constructs its collective identity in its online magazine *Rumiyah*. It attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What are the collective identities that ISIS constructs in *Rumiyah*?
- 2- What are the discourse features and linguistic devices that ISIS uses to construct its collective identities in *Rumiyah*?
- 3- What are the discourse goals and functions of the analyzed linguistic devices?
- 4- Why does ISIS construct these collective identities?

## **3. Data and Methodology**

There are a number of groups and organizations that have been officially designated as "terrorist" due to their involvement in acts of terrorism. These include: Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra Front, Ansar Al-Sharia, Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiyya, Ansar Bait Al-

Maqdis, and Jamaat Ansar Al-Sunna. However, ISIS has been chosen for the purposes of the present study due to its currently strong presence on the world stage. It is also "more successful at recruiting young individuals from Western countries than any other jihadist group" (Vergani & Bliuc, 2015, p. 7). As ISIS seeks to spread its ideology and recruit new affiliates, it utilizes its online propaganda magazine *Rumiyah* to that end. Thirteen issues of this magazine have been released since it was first launched online in September 2016 until September 2017. *Rumiyah* has been chosen for analysis since it was the official online mouthpiece for ISIS from September 2016 to September 2017. It includes a series of articles that cover a range of topics including recruiting women, describing tactics to carry out lone-wolf attacks, and launching terrorist operations. *Rumiyah* also includes interviews with key ISIS' leaders and a series entitled "Establishing the Islamic State". All articles in this series and all interviews with ISIS' leaders have been collected from the thirteen issues of *Rumiyah* and analyzed in the present study because they prominently and significantly portray how ISIS constructs its collective identity to reach a global audience and attract more adherents. The analyzed data consists of four articles and five interviews found in the thirteen issues of *Rumiyah*.

To analyze the data, the thirteen issues of *Rumiyah* have been downloaded from the Clarion Project which is a non-profit organization that aims at exposing and challenging Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. Interviews conducted with ISIS' leaders and the series of articles entitled "Establishing the Islamic State" are analyzed using Koller's (2014) model for analyzing collective identity in discourse since it is comprehensive and provides a clear account of the linguistic tools used to construct collective identity. Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square is also employed along with Koller's model. The two approaches employed in the study help show how ISIS uses language to construct a collective in-group and out-group identity via the Us vs. Them dichotomy. The frequency of occurrence of the linguistic devices used to represent the in-group positively and the out-group negatively is provided and interpreted. Extracts that show the use of different linguistic devices to construct collective identities are also given and explained.

#### **4. Theoretical Background**

##### **4.1 Terrorism**

Terrorism constitutes a threat to people's lives since the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center twin towers and the Pentagon. Since then, the attention of the international community has turned to the serious challenge of terrorism, and several measures have been taken to combat it. To be able to do so, it was deemed necessary to clarify the meaning of a terrorist act. Therefore, it was defined by the Council of the European Union (2001) as:

One of the following intentional acts which...may seriously damage a country or an international organization, as defined as an offence under national law, where committed with the aim of (i) seriously intimidating a population, or (ii) unduly compelling a government or an international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act, or (iii) seriously

destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization: (a) attacks upon a person's life which may cause death; (b) attacks upon the physical integrity of a person; (c) kidnapping or hostage taking; (d) causing extensive destruction to a government or public facility...a public place or private property, likely to endanger human life...; (e) seizure of aircraft, ships or other means of public or goods transport; (f) manufacture, possession, acquisition, transport, supply or use of weapons, explosives or of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons...; (g) release of dangerous substances, or causing fire, explosions or floods the effect of which is to endanger human life; (h) interfering with or disrupting the supply of water, power or any other fundamental natural resource, the effect of which is to endanger human life; (i) threatening to commit any of the acts listed under (a) to (h); (j) directing a terrorist group; (k) participating in the activities of a terrorist group, including by supplying information or material resources, or by funding its activities in any way... (pp. 93-94)

This definition underscores the fact that terrorism involves the deliberate use of different forms of violence against individuals, governments or societies. Since terrorism is motivated by various political, ideological or religious goals, terrorist groups and organizations "can be distinguished by the reasons that lead to the arousal and strengthening of their motives" (Rothenberger & Kotarac, 2014, p. 92). Accordingly, Post (2005) distinguishes between three types of terrorism: social-revolutionary terrorism, nationalist-separatist terrorism, and religious fundamentalist terrorism, which is the focus of the present study. According to Post, "social-revolutionary terrorism...includes those acts perpetrated by groups seeking to overthrow the capitalist economic and social order...Nationalist-separatist terrorism...includes those groups fighting to establish a new order or state based on ethnic dominance or homogeneity "(p. 56). Religious fundamental terror groups reject secularism, kill in the name of God, and radically interpret verses of the Quran to justify their terrorist acts (Post 2005). In religiously-motivated terrorism, the fusion of the individual and the group is a must. The reason for this is that:

Once recruited, there is a clear fusing of individual identity and group identity...The subordination of individual identity to collective identity is found across all organizations regardless of ideological affiliation. As individual identity succumbs to the organization, there is no room for individuality...There is an overarching sense of the collective that consumes the individual. This fusion with the group seems to provide the necessary justification for their actions and absolution, or loss of responsibility, to the individual: if the group says it's OK, then it's ok. If the authority figure orders an action, then the action is justified...Again this is intensified among Islamist groups who feel they have a moral obligation to the cause and a religiously sanctioned justification for their actions. (Post, 2005, pp. 65-66)

Technology has revolutionized modern terrorism by giving rise to cyber-terrorism as terrorist organizations seek to build their identity and extend their influence via social media platforms, like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, books, audio recordings and online magazines like *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Because the Internet is inexpensive, constantly available, quite accessible, and can easily reach a vast audience around the globe, it is an essential medium for terrorists to promote extremist ideologies. Indeed, terrorists use the Internet for communication purposes and to propagate their identities and activities, including recruiting and radicalizing new members, raising funds, inciting violence and explaining different tactics of terrorism such as bombings, shootings, assassinations, cyber-attacks, suicide attacks, armed attacks, kidnappings and hijacking. That the Internet is essential for terrorist groups to spread their propaganda is indicated by Weimann (2006) who holds that "in 1998, fewer than half of the groups designated as foreign terrorist organizations by the U.S. State Department maintained websites; by the end of 1999, nearly all these terrorist groups had established their presence online" (p. 15).

#### **4.2 ISIS**

ISIS is one terrorist organization that makes great use of technology and which has posed a major challenge to peace and stability in the Middle East and worldwide since its appearance on the international scene in 2014. ISIS' radical interpretation of Islam is responsible for its extremist ideological worldview as well as its ultimate goal of establishing a unified Muslim territory or an Islamic state to implement its extremist beliefs (Gladu 2015). ISIS seeks to dominate the world by overthrowing all contemporary regimes which are regarded as apostates, and establishing the caliphate, deemed to be the only legitimate Islamic state, which is ruled by the Caliph according to Sharia (Islamic law) and to which all Sunni Muslims must migrate (Beauchamp, 2015; Gerges, 2017; Nissay, 2017). Because of ISIS' fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, its members view themselves as the only true Muslims and all those who oppose them as unbelievers. Thus, ISIS' exclusionist ideology is used to justify the use of excessive violence and perpetrating atrocities against all Muslims and non-Muslims who do not pledge loyalty to it (Al-Ibrahim, 2015; Hashim, 2016).

As the acronym of ISIS indicates, the so-called Islamic State or Islamic Caliphate has seized vast territories in Iraq and Syria. Indeed, this terrorist organization originated in Iraq and Syria due to the political instability and turmoil in these two countries which "provided ISIS with a fertile ground to implant, expand, and consolidate itself" (Gerges, 2017, p. 5). Today's ISIS was originally founded by the Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi under the name of *Jamaat Al-Tawhid wal Jihad* (JIJ) in Jordan after his return from Afghanistan where he was part of Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network (Charles River Editors, 2014). Upon the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Zarqawi and his militant group travelled to Iraq to fight U.S.-led troops. In Iraq, Zarqawi declared allegiance to Al-Qaeda and renamed his group *Al-Qaeda in Iraq* (AQI). This group comprised Iraqi and foreign fighters who wanted to end the American occupation and bring down the US-formed Shiite-led government.

In 2004, Zarqawi declared himself the emir of AQI and presented himself and his group as the defenders and protectors of Sunni Muslims. From 2004 to 2006, AQI used indiscriminate violence and brutal techniques, like public beheadings and mass executions, and also carried out terrorist attacks against opponents including fellow Sunnis. Accordingly, they were deemed more radical than Al-Qaeda. In 2006, Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike, and leadership of AQI passed to Egyptian Abu Ayyub Al-Masri, also known as Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir, who renamed it *Islamic State of Iraq* (ISI) and appointed Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi as the leader of ISI (Charles River Editors, 2014; Chengu, 2017; Gerges, 2017; Hanna, 2016; Kemp, 2016).

ISI began to be weakened upon facing a number of defeats at the hands of U.S. troops and the political movement known as *Sahwa* (Awakening) which was created by Sunni tribes in Anbar Province to counter ISI's brutal violence and rising influence. In 2010, Masri and Baghdadi were killed and Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi became the new leader of ISI. When the civil war erupted in Syria, Baghdadi sent Abu Mohammed Al-Joulani to Syria to take part in the fight against President Bashar Al-Assad. Joulani established Jabhat Al-Nusra and achieved military successes. In 2013, Baghdadi merged ISI and Jabhat Al-Nusra and renamed the group *Islamic State in Iraq and Syria* (ISIS) to reflect the desire to expand in Syria and seize control of the country to protect the Sunni community and establish the Islamic caliphate (Beauchamp, 2015; Cassis, 2015; Charles River Editors, 2014; Hanna, 2016).

#### **4.2.1 ISIS and the Internet**

ISIS is one of the first terrorist organizations that has effectively used modern media such as online journals and social media to spread its ideologies and reach a large audience in different parts of the world (Styszynski, 2016). ISIS' reliance on technology and the Internet is indicated by Bilton (2016) who holds that:

ISIS utilizes almost every social app imaginable to communicate and share its propaganda, including mainstays like Twitter and Facebook; encrypted chat apps such as Telegram, Surespot, and Threema; and messaging platforms including Kik and WhatsApp. The terror group shares videos of beheadings on YouTube and even more gruesome clips on LiveLeak. They use the remarkably secure Apple iMessage to communicate. They preach to their disciples across the world using Internet radio stations. When a terror attack takes place, they use Twitter to claim responsibility and their followers subsequently cheer with favorites and retweets. (para. 2)

ISIS' ability and success in recruiting more followers than any other terrorist group is attributed to its extensive use of the Internet as it "overwhelmed the media scene of terror in Europe in 2014 and 2015 with considerable online dissemination of videos, blogs, and social media profiles" (Monaci, 2017, p. 2843). Moreover, ISIS uses its websites not only for recruitment and fundraising but also for organization and communication, both textual and visual. Indeed, ISIS uploads pictures that display their leaders, group members and scenes from places in countries in which members of this terrorist group carry out terrorist operations. Its websites also include

audio content like songs and video content like interviews and documentaries (Seib & Janbek, 2011).

ISIS' intensive propaganda efforts include launching Al-Hayat Media Center which is a media branch that "follows ISIS' general media strategy of distributing diverse materials in several languages, including new videos and subtitles for existing videos, and also articles, news reports, and translated jihad materials" (MEMRI, 2014, para. 2). The target audience of Al-Hayat Media Center is "jihad supporters and potential supporters, and even potential recruits, in the West and other non-Arabic speaking countries" (MEMRI, 2014, para. 5).

Online magazines, such as *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, are important propaganda tools published by Al-Hayat Media Center and used by ISIS to recruit new members, spread its views, and legitimize its terror acts. *Dabiq* was published in 2014 after the establishment of the caliph. The name of the magazine refers to a town in North Syria which is mentioned in a prophetic statement that describes some of the events of the Malahim (Armageddon) where Muslims will be triumphant in the greatest battle that will take place between them and the crusaders or non-believers (Saltman & Winter, 2014). It focuses "on issues of tawhid, manhaj, hijrah, jihad, and jama'ah. It will also contain photo reports, current events, and informative articles on matters related to the Islamic State" ("Until it Burns," 2014, p. 3).

Another online magazine produced by Al-Hayat Media Center for recruitment and propaganda is *Rumiyah*, first published in September 2016. It replaced *Dabiq* after ISIS suffered territorial losses as Turkish-backed forces gained control over the Syrian town of Dabiq, which was captured by ISIS. By publishing this propaganda magazine under the name *Rumiyah*, ISIS "shifted its emphasis from the Syrian town of Dabiq to Rome. Each issue of *Rumiyah* opens with a line attributed to Abu Hamza al Muhajir ...'O muwahhidin, rejoice, for by Allah, we will not rest from our jihad except beneath the olive trees of Rumiyah (Rome),' Abu Hamza is quoted as saying in the magazine" (Joscelyn, 2016, para. 7).

*Rumiyah* focuses on advancing the political and theological ideologies and stance of ISIS, rejecting opposition to it and gloating about acts of terrorism (Clarion Project, 2014). The title of the magazine "refers to Rome, which the Islamic State wishes to conquer, both as a political goal but also as a symbolic one, since they view western civilization as a continuation of the ancient Roman Empire, against which the early Muslims fought" (Clarion Project, 2014, para. 4). *Rumiyah* resembles *Dabiq* in structure and content type, and like its predecessor, it was translated into several languages such as German, English, French and Russian (Monaci, 2017).

### **4.3 Identity**

Identities play an important role in presenting how individuals and groups, including terrorist groups, view the world. Thus, they construct their identities so as to convince audiences of their worldview. According to Colvin (2009), "identity derives both from what we do in language (who we say we are, or are not), and from what language does to, or says about us" (p. 1). In terrorism, language and violent action are closely related because terrorist groups, like ISIS, manipulate language to justify



extremism, radicalize individuals and encourage them to engage in violent terrorist acts that are politically motivated (Ingram, 2016; Rothenberger et al., 2016).

This kind of collective action is effected when terrorist groups construct a shared collective identity on the Internet to legitimize actions of the in-group and delegitimize those of the out-group. The aim of these terrorist groups is to spread their ideologies and motivate audiences to identify with them, share their view of the world, and ultimately join them. To this end, creators of these online texts use language in a way that would "create an attachment, a sense of belonging" (Rothenberger & Kotarac, 2014, p. 94) to radicalize followers and establish a collective identity. Therefore, "examining language constructions of identity can be a first step in deciphering the underlying motives of a terrorist act" (Rothenberger et al., p. 5).

Establishing collective identities is essential for dominant powerful groups that seek to exercise power over less powerful ones, and manipulate or control their minds and acts. Collective identities are defined as "socio-cognitive representations, which are held by people who identify as members of a group. They are further theorised as being constructed, negotiated and changed through discursive interaction within and between groups" (Koller, 2012, p. 20). The notion of socio-cognitive representations (SCRs) is an important component of collective identities as it is part and parcel of ideologies held by groups, and thus it helps establish power relations between them (Koller, 2014). This is indicated by Koller (2014) who holds that SCRs are "the coherent cognitive structures that are jointly acquired, held and presupposed by members of a group. As such, they combine beliefs/knowledge, values, norms, goals and emotions, and give rise to attitudes and expectations" (p. 151). SCRs are constructed, communicated and negotiated in discourse, and are thus considered cognitive structures or social knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values that are shared by particular groups (Koller, 2012; van Dijk, 2016). Members of these groups "draw on linguistic resources to encode combinations of beliefs, values, norms, goals and emotions – i.e. SCRs – in order to gain and/or maintain power and influence" (Koller, 2012, p. 22).

Collective identities in discourse are seen as socio-cognitive representations as "people engage in social, including discursive, practices and in doing so act on specific SCRs about themselves and others" (Koller, 2014, p. 152). Indeed, powerful members of specific groups produce influential texts that reflect their SCRs. When receivers of these texts repeatedly receive them under the same conditions, their SCRs are influenced by those of the text producers. Accordingly, the SCRs held by a text producer about a specific group are reflected in constructing a particular collective identity in the text by using various linguistic devices to represent groups, whether they are allies or opponents, in certain ways (Koller, 2012, 2014).

Koller (2014) developed a framework for analyzing collective identity in discourse by combining discourse analytical procedures and socio-cognitive categories to describe the linguistic tools used in texts and interpret them by analyzing the discourse practice and social contexts. Koller's model involves three levels for

analyzing collective identity in discourse: the macro-level, the meso-level and the micro-level. These are shown in figure (1) below.

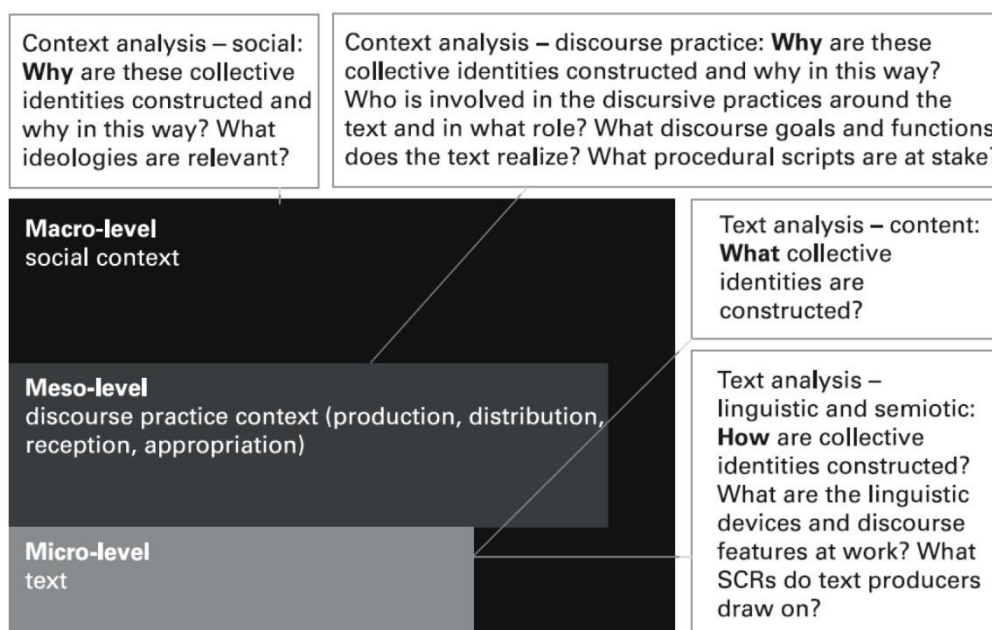


Figure (1): Levels of analyzing collective identity in discourse (Koller, 2014, p. 153)

According to Koller (2014), "the discourse analytical procedures involve the content and semiotic analysis of texts at the micro-level as well as the analysis of contexts at the meso- and macro-levels" (p. 153). Whereas discourse features and linguistic devices are examined at the text level (micro-level), discourse goals and functions are interpreted at the context level (macro- and meso-levels). As for socio-cognitive categories, while they are "relevant at both the text and context levels, they are most pertinent at the explanation stage, which involves context analysis; this is because SCRs cannot simply be read off texts but have to be inferred from the linguistic findings" (Koller, 2014, p. 153). To explain the interrelation between the three levels of discourse, Koller holds that:

Both discourse, as instantiated in textual interaction at the micro-level, as well as the models of collective identity that it communicates are shaped by the meso-level contexts of text production, distribution, reception and appropriation, which are in turn linked to the changing socio-political context and its ideologies at the macro-level. (p. 148)

Analysis at the micro-level of discourse is divided into content analysis and linguistic as well as semiotic analysis. While content analysis is concerned with what identities are or are not constructed, linguistic and semiotic analysis "looks at how identities are constructed by investigating discourse features and linguistic and, where relevant, other semiotic devices" (Koller, 2014, p. 154). In this part of analyzing texts, the discourse features used, such as modality or turn-taking, and the linguistic devices which realize them, such as modals or interruptions, are investigated. Koller (2014)

holds that the links between discourse features "reinforce, supplement or contradict particular textual constructions of collective identity" (p. 154).

A number of discourse features are examined to analyze collective identities in discourse. These are: social actor representation, process types, evaluation, modality, intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Social actor representation "bridges content and linguistic analysis at the text level, asking what groups and individuals are referred to and how, and whether social actors are included or excluded, genericized or specified, activated or passivized" (Koller, 2014, p. 154). Socio-cognitively, text producers convey specific SCRs of social groups, "including beliefs and/or knowledge about them, the attitudes towards and expectations of them that ensue from beliefs and/or knowledge, and the emotions that accrue to them" (Koller, 2012, p. 23).

Process types associate a particular social group with certain actions, thereby making the collective identity at stake. This discourse feature, along with social actor representation, "helps to investigate patterns of transitivity in texts" (Koller, 2012, p. 24). In the transitivity system, there are two types of verbs, namely relationals and actionals. According to Reah (1998), relational verbs "refer to relations" (p. 78). They also "involve relations of being, becoming, or having (possession) between entities, for example '100 demonstrators are dead'" (Fairclough, 1994, p. 180). They can express an equal state between two nouns as in "John is President", indicate possession as in "Bill has courage", or express the relationship between a subject and a quality as in "Paula is brilliant" (Kress & Hodge, 1981, p. 120; Reah, 1998, p. 78). Actional verbs indicate actions and refer to mental or physical processes, both of which can be transactive or non-transactional (Kress & Hodge, 1981; Reah, 1998). Transactional structures have an agent who carries out an action and a person or an entity, i.e. a patient that is affected by that action (e.g. "Pamela reported her son to the authorities" (physical process) and "He saw the bird" (mental process)). In non-transactional structures, the agent carries out the action and is affected by it, i.e. no patient is affected by the action of the agent (e.g. "Paula Yates went voluntarily yesterday to Chelsea police station" (physical process) and "He looked for the recipe" (mental process)) (Kress & Hodge, 1981, pp. 46-47; Reah, 1998, pp. 77-78).

Evaluation is concerned with the qualities attributed to groups and individuals and how they are evaluated, i.e. whether evaluation is positive, negative, explicit or implicit. This discourse feature highlights the norms and values of a certain SCR of groups and the related emotions. It also helps infer the stereotypes and ideal types text producers hold about social actors represented in texts (Koller, 2012, 2014).

In modality, a text producer "conveys what they perceive a social group to be like in the past, present and future, constructs possible developments for them (epistemic modality) and indicates what they see as desirable for the group (deontic modality)" (Koller, 2014, p. 154). Not only does this analysis of likelihood and desirability help ascertain the beliefs held by text producers about a social actor group but also communicate these beliefs and determine its goals. Analyzing modality is related to the norms and values identified by analyzing evaluation as goals are driven by values since social actors seek to achieve what they consider good, important and thus desirable (Koller, 2012, 2014).

Intertextuality and interdiscursivity reveal the other texts, genres and discourses text producers appropriate, align themselves with, or refute. In addition to examining inter-group relations, analysis of these discourse features impacts on collective identity as it reflects the features that text producers borrowed to construct a particular identity (Koller, 2012, 2014). Analyzing these discourse features also reflects on SCRs about social actor groups because "to the extent that intertextuality and interdiscursivity can be used to align or distance the text producer with or from the producers of other texts and discourses, this feature also addresses the norms and values that are part of the text producer's SCRs about their own and other social groups" (Koller, 2014, p. 155).

In examining the meso-level of the discourse practice context, the focus is on:

the discursive practices that surround the text, i.e. the roles of, and relationships between, members of a discourse community, asking who is communicating to whom about what, and whether the text is designed for a particular audience, e.g. by drawing on assumed shared knowledge. A further point of interest is under what conditions production, distribution, reception and appropriation of texts takes place... (Koller, 2014, p. 155)

Analysis of this level of discourse also involves examining the discourse goals, i.e. the aim for "using language as a social practice, such as out-group denigration or self-enhancement" (Koller, 2014, p. 155). These discourse goals are realized via discourse functions such as politeness or impoliteness. Such discourse functions translate in discourse features which are expressed using linguistic tools. Thus, discourse functions link context analysis (macro- and meso-levels) to text analysis (micro-level) (Koller, 2014).

The macro-level of social context influences discourse practice and its SCRs as the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts and conditions allow participants in discourse to have – or not to have – access to ways of text production and distribution. Context analysis at the macro- and meso- levels of discourse reveals relevant ideologies and thus "helps to account for the findings from text analysis by discussing what roles the wider social context and the ideologies at stake in it allocate to social actors..." (Koller, 2014, pp. 155-156). Context analysis is also explanatory as it explains the reason for constructing, or not constructing, particular identities. It also explains why identities are constructed in the way described in the analytical stage of text analysis. To interpret the findings of the text analysis, context analysis makes use of the social context (macro-level) and discourse practice context (meso-level) and their cognitive bedrocks (Koller, 2014).

#### **4.4 Ideology and the Ideological Square**

Terrorist groups like ISIS establish their collective identity in light of their shared beliefs or ideologies which not only influence their worldview but also shape their goals and actions. According to van Dijk (2000), ideologies are "political or social systems of ideas, values or prescriptions of groups or other collectivities, and

have the function of organizing or legitimating the actions of the group" (p. 3). Ideologies also enable members of a group to determine what is "good or bad, right or wrong, for *them*, and to act accordingly" (van Dijk, 2000, p. 8). Thus, ideologies have a number of cognitive and social functions:

First of all, ...they organize and ground the social representations shared by the members of (ideological) groups. Secondly, they are the ultimate basis of the discourses and other social practices of the members of social groups as *group members*. Thirdly, they allow members to organize and coordinate (joint) actions and interactions in view of the goals and interests of the group as a whole. Finally, they function as the part of the socio-cognitive interface between social structures (conditions, etc.) of groups on the one hand, and their discourses and other social practices on the other hand. (van Dijk, 2006a, p. 117)

Ideologies allow social groups to control the attitudes of group members by justifying and legitimizing their objectives, values and actions. Moreover, ideologies define the identity of a group because they represent systems of belief that are socially shared by members of a group (Tahir, 2013; van Dijk, 2006a). The important role that ideologies play in identity building is indicated by van Dijk (2000) who holds that "if ideologies monitor the way people as *group members* interpret and act in their social world, they also function as the basis of their social identity" (p. 68). This is because ideologies are socio-cognitive representations of the beliefs of social groups in terms of who each group is, what it stands for, its activities, goals, norms and values, relationships with other groups, especially enemies and opponents, and its resources. Based on their nature and functions, ideologies are structured according to a number of categories, or group schemata, which form the co-ordinates of social groups and the conditions of their existence and reproduction" (van Dijk, 2000, p. 70). These categories are:

- *Membership*: Who are we? Where are we from? What do we look like? Who belongs to us? Who can become a member of our group?
- *Activities*: What do we do? What is expected of us? Why are we here?
- *Goals*: Why do we do this? What do we want to realize?
- *Values/norms*: What are our main values? How do we evaluate ourselves and others? What should (not) be done?
- *Position and group-relations*: What is our social position? Who are our enemies, our opponents? Who are like us, and who are different?
- *Resources*: What are the essential resources that our group has or needs to have? (van Dijk, 2000, pp. 69-70)

These categories define the identity and interests of social groups as they are the basis for the representation of the in-group and out-group, i.e. the ideological polarization between Us and Them, because they determine "how group members see themselves and how they see Others" (van Dijk, 2000, p. 68). This comparison

between the in-group and the out-group creates the ideological square or the Us vs. Them dichotomy of social groups according to which the in-group is presented positively and the out-group negatively. According to van Dijk (2000), "positive self-presentation and negative other presentation seems to be a fundamental property of ideologies" (p. 69). The strategies of the ideological square are as follows:

- Emphasize Our good things
- Emphasize Their bad things
- De-emphasize Our bad things
- De-emphasize Their good things (van Dijk, 2006b, p. 734)

Van Dijk's ideological square "is a way of perceiving and representing the world – and specifically 'our' and 'their' actions, position and role within the world" (Richardson, 2007, p. 51). According to this polarization, social groups present their ideological beliefs, actions, goals and values positively, and present those of the out-groups, i.e. enemies or opponents, negatively (van Dijk, 2000). This is achieved by:

emphasizing (what is called foregrounding) 'their' negative characteristics and social activities and de-emphasizing (or backgrounding) 'their' positive characteristics and social activities. Conversely, 'our' positive characteristics and social activities are foregrounded and 'our' negative characteristics and social activities are backgrounded. (Richardson, 2007, p. 51)

Although there is a plethora of literature on terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, few academic studies have been conducted on ISIS from a linguistic perspective. Research on this terrorist organization has focused on the recruitment of women (Kneip, 2016; Musial, 2016; Obonova, 2017; Raghavan & Balasubramanian, 2014; Saltman & Smith, 2015; Spencer, 2016; Winter, 2015). It has also examined ISIS' radicalization techniques either in its online magazine *Dabiq* only (Al-Hassan, 2017; Ingram, 2016; Monaci, 2017; Musial, 2016; Vergani & Bliuc, 2015) or in both *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* (Latif, 2017; Obonova, 2017; Seijbel, 2017). Previous studies also investigated the linguistic strategies employed by ISIS and other terrorist groups to establish their identities on their websites (Al-Hassan, 2017; Rothenberger & Kotarac, 2014; Rothenberger et al., 2016). There is a dearth of research that conducts a linguistic analysis of ISIS' online magazine *Rumiyah* only or that examines particular messages, ideologies or propaganda strategies in all the published issues of this magazine. Moreover, to the researcher's knowledge, no previous research has examined the construction of collective identities of terrorist groups in online platforms, studied this topic in *Rumiyah*, or applied Koller's (2014) model for analyzing collective identity and van Dijk's (2000) ideological square to terrorist discourse. Thus, the present study seeks to bridge the above-mentioned gap in the literature by using Koller's framework and van Dijk's ideological square to examine the collective identities constructed by ISIS in *Rumiyah*, the linguistic devices employed to construct these identities, the reasons for constructing them as well as the discourse goals and functions realized in the analyzed data.

## **5. Analysis and Discussion**

In this section, the micro-, meso- and macro-levels of discourse are analyzed to examine the collective identities constructed in ISIS' *Rumiyah*. It answers the research questions by analyzing the discourse features and linguistic devices employed at the text level (micro-level) then the results obtained are interpreted with reference to the discourse practice (meso-level) and social context (macro-level), respectively.

### **5.1 The Micro-Level of Texts**

On the micro-level of texts, the data at hand is analyzed for social actor representation, process types, evaluation, modality, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity.

#### **5.1.1 Social Actor Representation**

Two main social actors are represented in the data. These are ISIS' allies and its enemies and opponents. The first group represents insiders who are members in this organization, whereas the second group represents outsiders who oppose ISIS and take part in fighting it. The two social actors are represented via the use of the first person plural pronoun, the second person pronoun and naming.

##### **5.1.1.1 The First Person Plural Pronoun**

The first person plural pronoun "we" occurs 86 times and its derivatives "us" and "our" occur 24 times and 15 times, respectively. "We" and its derivatives are used inclusively in the data to engage the members and supporters of ISIS, i.e. the in-group, in a collective identity to promote a sense of solidarity. They are used differently with respect to members and non-members of ISIS. When used in reference to ISIS' members, inclusive "we" is employed to praise members and allies of the Islamic State and their deeds, and to explain how matters are handled in the different bodies of the organization, as shown in extracts (1) and (2):

- (1) We give glad tidings to the ummah of our prophet, Muhammad, that their sons, the mujahidin, will continue with their fight until there is no fitnah and the religion, all of it, is for Allah...the soldiers of the Khilafah obey the command of their Lord to fight all those who wage war against His religion and show enmity towards His awliya. Yes, we fight and make takfir of them all. We openly declare our enmity and hatred towards them, and we condemn their democracy and shirk as our Lord has commanded, for we are not from among those who seek to purchase their love or pursue their pleasure for a fleeting portion of the Dunya, nor are we from among those who seek the means to come closer to them. ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 13)

In extract (1), inclusive "we" is used to show that ISIS' members consider themselves "the soldiers of the Khilafah" and thus praise themselves for being true Muslims because they fight their opponents who, by opposing ISIS, are considered to

be God's enemies "who wage war against His religion and show enmity towards His awliya". "We" is also used inclusively to shed light on the deeds carried out by members of the Islamic State, saying "we fight and make takfir of them all...commanded". The aim is to praise members and allies of ISIS by showing that they act in accordance with what their "Lord has commanded" and do not try to have a relationship with their enemies as they "are not from among those who seek to purchase their love or pursue their pleasure for a fleeting portion of the Dunya".

- (2) With cooperation between the Da'wah Center and the Hisbah Center, the soldiers of the Islamic State implement Shar'i programs for giving da'wah to the people and teaching them the religion. We ask Allah for success in these programs. We also print and disseminate da'wah booklets and pamphlets on aqidah issues, and hold da'wah expeditions in which we focus on strengthening the tawhid of Muslim commoners and warning them against all forms of shirk and apostasy. ("Interview with the Amir of Hisbah," 2017, pp. 14-15)

In extract (2), inclusive "we" is used to show the cooperation between two bodies of the Islamic State, namely the Da'wah Center and the Hisbah Center so that members of ISIS succeed in teaching Islam to the people. The pronoun in question is thus used to provide details about how members of the Islamic State work to attain their goal of "strengthening the tawhid of Muslim commoners and warning them against all forms of shirk and apostasy" by distributing "da'wah booklets and pamphlets on aqidah issues".

When inclusive "we" and its variants "us" and "our" are used in relation to non-members of ISIS, they serve to threaten opponents of the Islamic State and instill fear in them. They are also used to criticize other attempts to establish the Islamic State. These uses are shown in extracts (3) and (4):

- (3) And indeed, your disbelief and arrogance is the path to your destruction, either by a punishment from Allah or by our hands...I say to the enemies of Allah...we are lying in wait to ambush you, and we will soon be victorious...And seeking the aid of the Jews and Crusaders in waging war against us will not benefit you...They continue to be defeated at our hands in every land in which they fight us...And I say to the apostate soldiers of the tawaghit...if we overpower you, there will be nothing for you from us but death. ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 55)

Inclusive "we" and its derivatives "us" and "our" are employed in this extract to address non-members of ISIS who are enemies and are thus categorized as outsiders. They are used to threaten them by assuring them that their "disbelief and arrogance" will trigger their end. These pronouns are also used to instill fear in ISIS' enemies by asserting the power and ability of members of the Islamic State to defeat and kill their enemies and opponents.



(4) This long-term development of the Rafidi religion gives a living example of what can happen if ways that have deviated from the straight path are pursued when calling to establish the Islamic State. This shows us that when they make these deviations obligatory for the people to follow, as part of establishing their religion, then their end will be that they inevitably alter the original religion to correspond with their heresy. This is the case in which we find many such calls to establishing the religion and ruling by the Shari'ah today. ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 11)

Extract (4) shows that "we" and "us" are used to criticize the call to establish the Islamic State made by proponents of the Rafidi sect, a term used to refer to Shia Muslims because they rejected the leadership of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman after the death of the Prophet (The Status, 2007). In ISIS' view, followers of the Rafidah made changes in "the original religion" in attempting to establish "their religion". Accordingly, methods adopted by the Rafidis and what ISIS considers "many such calls" to establish the Islamic State and hence "the religion and ruling by the Shari'ah" are inappropriate because they "have deviated from the straight path".

#### **5.1.1.2 The Second Person Pronoun**

The second person pronoun "you" and the possessive determiner "your" are used as involvement techniques in the data to directly address ISIS' enemies and members or prospective recruits. The second person pronoun and the possessive determiner are used 77 times in the data. Table (1) shows the frequency of occurrence of "you" and "your" in the data to address each of the two groups.

Table (1): The number of "you" and "your" used to address ISIS' enemies and members/prospective recruits

<b>Target group</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>Your</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>ISIS' enemies</b>	36	15	51
<b>ISIS' members/recruits</b>	16	10	26

Table (1) shows that "you" and "your" are used 51 times (66% of the total number of occurrences of "you" and "your" in the data which is 77) to directly address ISIS' enemies or opponents and 26 times (34% of the total which is 77) to address its members or potential recruits. The frequency of occurrence of "you" and "your" shows that ISIS seeks to inform its target groups that it knows them very well and that it has different messages for each group. By using "you" and "your" to directly address its enemies, ISIS aims at criticizing and threatening them, as in the following extract:

(5) I say to the enemies of Allah, you, O cowardly tawaghit, continue to increase in your kufr and transgression, you spread corruption in the

land, and you inflict the worst of torment on the weakened Muslims. You wish to cover your defeats and your weakness in your war against the soldiers of the Islamic State but you will not be able to do so...And we are aware of the extent of torture and abuse which you inflict on the muwahhidin in your prisons, and of the fact that you openly declare that you oppose and wage war against Allah, His Messenger, and the believers. So we warn you of the evil consequences of your deeds...And if your eyes remain blind and your ears remain deaf to this warning...you will not enjoy a moment of security... and then you will never be successful. ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 55)

"You" and "your" in extract (5) are used to address "the enemies of Allah", who are also the enemies of ISIS and thus considered the out-group, to explicitly list their actions which ISIS disapproves of by saying "...you, O cowardly tawaghit...defeats..." and "And we are aware...the believers" This is done to criticize this out-group, prove its weakness and inability to defeat the Islamic State (you wish to cover...to do so), and justify intimidating and threatening it (so we warn you...you will never be successful).

In addition to addressing its enemies or opponents using "you" and "your" to criticize and threaten them, ISIS employs the second person pronoun to show that it tries to guide its enemies and encourage them to choose and tread what is considered the right path by following in ISIS' footsteps. This is seen in the extract (6):

(6) ...we do not want anything but guidance for you...we call you, we order you to repent, we wish Islam and guidance for you, and we hope for you to follow the path of the final prophet – Muhammad – and the path of his companions, their successors, and those after them. ("Interview with the Amir of Hisbah," 2017, p. 15)

The enemies and opponents of ISIS are addressed, in this extract, using the second person pronoun "you" to show that they still have a chance to deviate from what is deemed the wrong path and "follow the path of the final prophet...after them". By so doing, ISIS attempts to appeal to members of the out-group and make them feel special by showing that it tries to convince them to choose the right path and join its forces.

The second person pronoun "you" and the possessive determiner "your" are used to directly and explicitly address ISIS' members and potential recruits. Extract (7) manifests the use of "you" and "your" to address members of ISIS or what ISIS calls "the soldiers of the Islamic State".

(7) Indeed, your Lord is near and responsive. He sees your place and hears your speech. You relied upon Him and adhered to the means of success with which He has commanded. You ordered good, prohibited evil, established the religion, and fought the kuffar and murtaddin. Your Lord did not decree affliction for His slaves except in order to separate the

good from the evil and the truthful from the claimants. And it is not for Allah to reveal to you the unseen. ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 13)

Extract (7) shows that ISIS uses "you" and "your" in addressing its members and followers to praise them by showing that God is on their side and supports them because they "adhered to the means of success with which He has commanded" and "ordered good...murtaddin". "You" and "your" are also used to encourage ISIS' members to put up with hardships and "affliction" encountered because these are God's means "to separate the good from the evil and the truthful from the claimants".

Extract (8) manifests the use of the second person pronoun and the possessive determiner to address potential recruits and sympathizers:

(8) I say to those Muslims in Misr...you must revive the call to tawhid and jihad for the cause of Allah, join your brothers in the Islamic State, and adhere to the Jama'ah. If you are unable to reach the Islamic State, seek Allah's aid...And you will not be harmed by those who oppose you or abandon you, for you are the victorious group which prevails over its enemy... ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 54)

Muslims in Egypt are addressed in extract (8) as potential recruits using "you" and "your" to motivate them to "revive the call to tawhid and jihad" by showing that they do so "for the cause of Allah". "You" is also used to talk to recruits and sympathizers into joining the Islamic State by assuring them that their enemies and opponents will not be able to harm or defeat them as they are "the victorious group which prevails over its enemy".

### **5.1.1.3 Naming**

Naming is one linguistic device that reflects the ideologies and viewpoints of speakers towards different entities, persons and groups and shapes how they are perceived and viewed. Thus, it can be employed to determine who belongs to a certain group, i.e. insiders, and who does not, i.e. outsiders, through an Us vs. Them dichotomy by presenting the self or the in-group positively and the other or the out-group negatively.

In the data, naming is used to create a separatist ideology and shape audiences' perception of the Islamic State and its members, on one hand, and non-members of ISIS, on the other hand, by presenting a positive image of the former and a negative one of the latter. It is effected via code-switching by using religious Arabic words to refer to members of ISIS who are represented positively because they are insiders, and non-members who are considered enemies and are thus represented negatively since they are categorized as outsiders. Table (2) presents the names used to refer to the Islamic State, its members, and non-members and their frequency of occurrence.

Table (2): Frequency of occurrence of names given to the Islamic State, its members, and non-members

<b>The Islamic State and its members</b>	<b>Frequency of occurrence</b>	<b>of Non-members of ISIS</b>	<b>Frequency of occurrence</b>
Islamic State	34	Shirk	30
Khilafah	15	Mushrikin	19
Wilayat	14	Kufr	12
Ummah	7	Kafir/kuffar	34
Sharia	26	Crusader/crusaders	13
Jihad	20	Murtaddin	17
Tawhid	19	Apostasy/apostates	15
Mujahidin	46	Disbelievers	6
Soldiers of the Islamic State	20	Enemies of Allah	13
Soldiers of the Khilafah	9	Tawaghit	36
Muwahiddin	6	Taghut	9
Allah's slaves	10		
Believers	8		

In table (2), names referring to the Islamic State and its members indicate that they are the cornerstone of the ideology of this organization, and are thus used to create a positive self-image of it. This is seen in the frequency of occurrence of "Islamic State" (34 occurrences) which represents the background according to which ISIS attempts to establish its alleged state. The word "Khilafah" occurs 15 times to highlight the goal of the organization which is the establishment of the caliphate. This is indicated by the use of the word "wilayat" 14 times to refer to the provinces of the Islamic State, and "ummah" (7 occurrences) which refers to the Islamic community – the caliphate – in which ISIS' members, who are considered the only true Muslims, are governed according to Islamic law. It is also shown by using "Sharia" 26 times to assert that all those who have joined ISIS carry the banner of Islamic law which is seen as the only solution to all their problems. This idea is further upheld by the occurrence of "jihad" 20 times and "tawhid" 19 times to show that ISIS calls on all Muslims to unite and wage war against all their opponents who, in ISIS' view, fight true Islam.

Table (2) also shows that ISIS positively presents its members by using "mujahidin" (46 occurrences), "soldiers of the Islamic State" (20 occurrences), "soldiers of the Khilafah" (9 occurrences), and "muwahiddin" (6 occurrences) to highlight the military aspect of the Islamic State, and convey the message that the goal of establishing the caliphate will only be attained through war. ISIS also positively designates its members by using "Allah's slaves" (10 occurrences) and "believers" (8 occurrences) to inject a divine note into the messages conveyed to them so as to convince them, as well as potential recruits, of its explanation and

understanding of Islam so as to remain committed to what is seen as a just cause, and adopt the violent methods they are told about to realize the goals of the organization.

Table (2) shows that non-members of ISIS are depicted as the out-group by using a number of names to refer to them. Using these names indicates that ISIS divides the world into Muslims and non-Muslims by showing who is considered a true Muslim and who is not. Outsiders to ISIS are of two categories. The first comprises groups that practice a different religion and are referred to using words like "shirk" (30 occurrences), "mushrikin" (19 occurrences), "kufr" (12 occurrences), "kafir/kuffar" (34 occurrences), and "crusader/crusaders" (13 occurrences). The second category includes Muslims who, according to ISIS, have abandoned real Islam and are referred to as "murtaddin" (17 occurrences), "apostates" (15 occurrences), and "disbelievers" (6 occurrences). ISIS considers both groups worthy of killing as they are "enemies of Allah" (13 occurrences) and "tawaghit" (36 occurrences), and their regimes are "taghut" (9 occurrences). The labels used to designate ISIS' enemies and opponents indicate that this organization focuses on representing them negatively to show that they have to be killed because they oppose real and righteous Islam, fight true Muslims, and resist the establishment of the caliphate.

Extracts (9) and (10) show the use of the above-mentioned names to designate the Islamic State, its members as well as its enemies.

(9) The most important thing the mujahidin face in Misr is the absence of the reality of tawhid from a large section of the population... showing allegiance to those who commit this type of shirk, and showing enmity to the believers who fight so that rule is entirely for Allah...The tawaghit have taken them away from the true religion...at times through the means of their corrupt media, which had them showing allegiance to the tawaghit and showing enmity to the mujahidin under the pretext of countering terrorism. And this is an important act of apostasy from the religion of Islam...and thereafter it is upon them to not expose the mujahidin's secrets. Rather, they should even support them and give them refuge, and set out with them to fight these tawaghit, thus waging a jihad that is obligatory upon them. ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 53)

(10) Eight months of waging jihad against the enemies of Allah and endeavoring to establish His law on His earth have gone by. There were conquests and victories...in order to forcefully take the land from them and it thereby attains the honor of returning to the embrace of the Khilafah, the authority of the Shariah, and the divine laws after centuries of misguidance. Thereafter, they attacked once again in a battle in which the mujahidin sacrificed...everything precious and dear to them to protect the issue of tawhid and defend the boundaries of the Shari'ah, a battle in which the soldiers of the Khilafah were victorious in its first days when they chose death in the path of Allah so that the murtaddin

would not take a step in Dar al-Islam. ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 10)

The above two extracts demonstrate the bipolar view ISIS has on its members, who are real and obedient Muslims who follow "the path of Allah" and thus constitute the in-group, and non-members, who are considered the out-group because they oppose "the true religion", return to the "Khilafah", and the implementation of the "Shariah". Accordingly, ISIS' members are represented positively as "mujahidin" and "believers" who wage "a jihad that is obligatory upon them" and sacrifice "everything precious and dear to them to protect the issue of tawhid and defend the boundaries of the Shari'ah". On the other hand, non-members of ISIS are represented negatively as "tawaghit", "enemies of Allah", and "murtaddin" who show "enmity to the mujahidin under the pretext of countering terrorism". Therefore, according to ISIS, this is considered "an apparent act of apostasy from the religion of Islam".

### **5.1.2 Process Types**

Relational and actional verbs, both transactive and non-transactive, are employed in the data to reflect the political ideologies held by ISIS and its view on its allies and enemies by presenting the actions carried out by each of the two groups. Table (3) presents the number of relational and actional verbs used to refer to the actions of ISIS' members and its enemies.

Table (3): Frequency of occurrence of relational and actional verbs referring to the actions of ISIS' members and enemies

<b>Verbs</b>	<b>ISIS' Members</b>	<b>ISIS' Enemies</b>
<b>Relational verbs</b>	36	35
<b>Actional verbs</b>		
<b>Mental Processes</b>	11	8
<b>Physical Processes</b>	62	27
<b>Total number of actional verbs</b>	73	35

Table (3) shows that the number of relational verbs used to refer to the actions of ISIS' members and its enemies are almost the same (36 vs. 35). This shows that ISIS gives equal importance to expressing the relation between the subjects involved in actions carried out by members of ISIS or its enemies. Table (3) also shows that ISIS relies on actional verbs more than relational ones when referring to the actions of its members and enemies. The total number of actional verbs used to refer to the actions of ISIS' members is 73 while the number of relational verbs is 36. This indicates that ISIS focuses on highlighting the actions conducted by its members rather than expressing the relation between nominals that refer to them. Moreover, relational and actional process verbs are equally important for ISIS in realizing the goal of presenting its enemies negatively, hence their occurrence the same number of times (35 occurrences) to refer to the actions carried out by ISIS' enemies.

Furthermore, the number of actional verbs used to talk about the deeds perpetrated by ISIS' members outnumbers those that refer to the deeds of the enemies of this organization (73 vs. 35). This is an indication that ISIS relies heavily on actional verbs that would positively represent its actions and those of its members to depict itself as a powerful group that is capable of defeating its foes, and thus convey the message that it should be joined rather than opposed.

The following extracts demonstrate the use of relational verbs with respect to ISIS and its members:

(11) Indeed, the Islamic State is the only means to establishing the religion and spreading justice among the people... ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 9).

(12) His slaves are victorious...The best of their sons are those who are fighting today... ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 12).

(13) And we emphatically warn you to stay away from any places where the Christians gather or where their interests are to be found, and likewise from any places where the army and the police gather and where the political and economic interests of the government are to be found, and also from any places where the citizens of the Crusader nations of the West are found, and other such places. These are all valid targets for us... ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 55)

These extracts express the relationship between the subjects and the attributes that follow the verbs. In extracts (11) and (12), ISIS is described as "the only means to establishing the religion". Its members are described as "victorious" and "the best of their sons are those who are fighting..." These positive descriptions contribute to constructing a collective identity by presenting ISIS and its members as one harmonious group that is united by the common goal of establishing the religion and the Khilafah, and fighting disbelievers. In extract (13), the places which ISIS seeks to demolish are listed and described as "valid targets" to show that it is intent on destroying them because they are places where enemies of ISIS, who are considered disbelievers and atheists, gather.

Relational verbs used to refer to the enemies and opponents of ISIS are exemplified below:

(14) And indeed, your disbelief and arrogance is the path to your destruction, either by a punishment from Allah or by our hands ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 53).

(15) ...and all the united Crusader nations that have dug themselves in for war against the Khilafah...do not have the power to draw benefit to themselves or ward off harm...Likewise, they are more lowly and insignificant than to wage war against Allah or exercise enmity towards His

awliya...They curse one another, their hearts are divided...They are disunited... ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, pp. 12-13)

Extracts (14) and (15) show that enemies and opponents of ISIS are attacked so as to be shown in a bad light. In extract (14), they are threatened that they will be killed because of their "disbelief and arrogance", implying that repentance and following the path of ISIS can guard against their death. In extract (15), ISIS' enemies are negatively presented by being described as incapable of benefitting or harming themselves, "more lowly and insignificant than to wage war against Allah", "divided", and "disunited". The aim is to attempt to convince ISIS' followers that they are strong and capable of defeating their opponents, and to show the latter that they are too weak to defy this organization. Therefore, they should stop fighting ISIS because they will be defeated. The reason for this is that they "wage war against Allah" by opposing and fighting the Islamic State.

Extracts (16) and (17) show the use of mental process verbs to refer to ISIS' members:

(16) ...the office has committees that visit the various prisons in the Islamic State in order to meet with the prisoners and those under investigation so they can look into their affairs and take their complaints if they have any. There are also committees that visit the frontiers and the ribat lines in order to follow up on the soldiers' circumstances and look into their issues. ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 12)

(17) So it is not enough to defend Muslim land and incite oneself to do so, but one must hate the kuffar and long for causing them harm in their own lands ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 11).

In the above extracts, the verbs "look into" and "hate" are used in transactive structures. In extract (16), "they" which refers to members of the committees of the Central Office for Investigating Grievances is the agent, and "their affairs" is the patient. In "there are also committees...look into their issues", "committees" is the agent and "their issues" is the patient and it refers to "the soldiers" of ISIS. Both patients are affected by the actions of their agents because when the committees of this office handle the affairs of "the prisoners" of the Islamic State, they are affected because their complaints and problems are taken into consideration. This is intended to present the Islamic State and its different offices and committees positively. Because ISIS wants to establish the caliphate in which people are ruled by Sharia, ISIS' members are affected by knowing that this is a place where justice prevails as their leaders eliminate different forms of injustice and adhere to Islamic Law because it will enable them to follow what is deemed the right straight path. In extract (17), "one" is the agent and it refers to members and followers of ISIS while "the kuffar", which is used to describe the enemies of ISIS, is the patient that is affected by the action of the agent. More specifically, ISIS' members are told they have to hate their



enemies who, in turn, are affected by this hatred as they will be subject to death because they are considered disbelievers who fight real Islam.

Extracts (18) and (19) show the use of mental process verbs to refer to enemies of ISIS:

(18) We say to those miserable, stubborn, disbelieving apostates who wage war against the mujahidin...and who hate the Shari'ah... ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 12).

(19) The tawaghit...always strived their utmost to enforce a strong barrier between their young followers and the mujahidin, fearing that their youth would follow the muwahhidin and would grasp the way of truth... ("Interview with the Amir of Hisbah," 2017, p. 14).

In the previous two extracts, the mental process verbs "hate" and "fearing" are used in non-transactive structures. In extract (18), the agent is "those miserable, stubborn, disbelieving apostates" which is used to refer to enemies of ISIS. The enemies are affected by hating "the Shari'ah" because in ISIS' view, this hate is what drives them to "wage war against the mujahidin". In extract (19), "the tawaghit", which is used to describe opponents and foes of ISIS, is the agent that is affected by the action of "fearing that their youth would follow the muwahhidin..." The reason is that this fear causes ISIS' enemies to work on convincing their own followers that ISIS is an organization that should be fought rather than joined because it misinterprets Islam and carries out terrorist attacks accordingly.

The following extracts demonstrate the use of physical process verbs to refer to the actions of ISIS' members:

(20) ...the Islamic State established various bodies responsible for preventing the people from wronging one another and for eliminating injustice when it occurs from any individual or any party ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 11).

(21) They were then killed...after having infuriated and massacred the patrons of Shaytan...They departed while advancing and not retreating...The muwahiddin – both Arab and non-Arab – continue to arrive from all places to fulfill the obligation of jihad...They cross the deserts to fight those who disbelieve in the Lord of the heavens and the earth...the soldiers of the Khilafah obey the command of their Lord to fight all those who wage war against His religion... ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, pp. 12-13)

In extract (20), the verb "established" is used in a non-transactive structure in which the Islamic State is the agent that causes the action and is affected by it. This is because establishing bodies that are concerned with doing justice to members of the Islamic State is intended to present ISIS positively and thus encourage non-followers to join the organization. Thus, the Islamic State is affected by establishing such

bodies. In extract (21), the verb "massacred" is used in a transactive structure in which "they", which refers to members of ISIS, is the agent and "the patrons of the Shaytan", which refers to enemies of ISIS, is the patient that is affected by being murdered at the hands of ISIS' members. The verb "departed" is used non-transactively as the agent "they", which refers to members and recruits of ISIS, is affected by departing because it implies a significant loss. The verb "fight" is used transactively in "they cross the deserts to fight those..." in which "they", which refers back to "the muwahiddin", is the agent and "those who disbelieve in the Lord of the heavens and the earth" is the patient. The verb "fight" is also used in a transactive structure in "the soldiers of the Khilafah...His religion" in which "the soldiers of the Khilafah" is the agent and "all those who wage war against His religion" is the patient. In both instances, the patients refer to enemies and opponents of ISIS and they are affected by the deeds of the agents, namely "the muwahiddin" and "the soldiers of the Khilafah" as they face defeat and death at the hands of ISIS. This use of physical process verbs presents ISIS positively so as to attract more members by showing that it is a powerful organization that is capable of defeating its enemies even though it might suffer some losses.

Extracts (22) and (23) manifest the use of physical process verbs to refer to deeds done by enemies of ISIS are as follows:

(22) From the grace of Allah upon His mujahid slaves in Sinai Wilayah is that they...remained patient during tribulation and hardship...despite the enemies of Islam attempting day and night to harm and eliminate the mujahidin of the wilayah ("Interview with the Amir of Hisbah," 2017, p. 12).

(23) The city of Tadmur was conquered by the grace of Allah, after the kuffar's defenses collapsed...Russia was incapable of directing the battle against the Islamic State...they employed dozens of vehicles...that took them into a field of landmines that led to a number of them being killed and wounded, following which they withdrew...And in the face of some simple attacks and assaults, they fled. ("Interview with the Military Amir," 2017, pp. 37-38)

In extract (22), the verbs "harm" and "eliminate" are used in a transactive structure in which "the enemies of Islam" is the agent and "the mujahidin of the wilayah" is the patient. The actions of the enemies of ISIS affect its members, who are referred to as "the mujahidin" because they are harmed and killed. Despite these actions, they "remained patient". This shows that ISIS seeks to present its members positively and its enemies negatively by showing that the former is patient and persistent while the latter is vicious and evil.

In extract (23), the verbs "collapsed", "withdrew", and "fled" are used non-transactively. "The kuffar's defenses" is the agent of "collapsed" and "they", which refers to enemies and opponents of ISIS, is the agent of "withdrew" and "fled". These agents are engaged in a war against ISIS. Therefore, they are affected by the above-

mentioned actions because when defenses collapse and ISIS' enemies withdraw and flee, they lose the battle against ISIS which then becomes victorious. This is in line with the positive image ISIS draws for itself and the negative one it presents for the out-group.

### **5.1.3 Evaluation**

ISIS' view of the world as being divided into Muslims, i.e. all recruits, followers, and members of this organization, and non-Muslims, i.e. all opponents and non-members of ISIS, is seen in the use of evaluative phrases that not only reflect its worldview but also the collective identity it constructs so as to recruit more members. Explicit evaluation is employed to present the in-group, i.e. ISIS' members who are deemed true Muslims, positively, and the out-group, i.e. opponents and non-members of ISIS who are considered fake Muslims and enemies, negatively. Whereas the in-group is positively evaluated 70 times in the data, there are 102 instances of negative evaluation of the out-group. The difference in the frequency of occurrence of phrases used to evaluate the in-group and out-group reflects ISIS' determination to emphasize the negative qualities of its enemies to create enmity towards them and strongly urge its members to fight and kill them. Positive evaluation of the in-group is presented below:

(24) It is a war the mujahidin have entered with tranquility, being certain of victory from Allah after the best of our shuyukh and leaders raced to meet their Lord...Allah granted his slaves the tawfiq to confront them in one of the greatest battles of tawhid in our era, in defense of a land ruled by the Shari'ah at the hands of Allah's slaves, who supported themselves with tawhid and deemed their small numbers to be much greater...They fought the enemies of Allah...and they carried out 120 istishhadi operations targeting the murtaddin and their convoys, in addition to hundreds of explosive devices and ambushes that shattered the murtaddin, killing and injuring nearly 5000 of them until now...The mujahidin were not weakened or shaken by the Crusader-Lybian coalition's planes...nor by the thousands of rockets and artillery and tank shells. ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 11)

(25) From the grace of Allah upon his mujahid slaves in Sinai Wilayah is that they held onto the rope of Allah altogether, fought in order for Allah's word to be supreme, and remained patient during tribulation and hardship...Sinai Wilayah did not increase...except in strength and firmness, and its soldiers did not increase except in faith and steadfastness. The mujahidin of the wilayah continued to strike – with their lesser numbers – the multitudes of the disbelievers, and continued to implement the Shari'ah of Allah as much as they could in all the areas over which they held control. And despite the war ignited here between Islam and kufr, the centers and offices of the shar'i dawawin...continue to be active and to do their work on the ground... ("Interview with the Amir of Hisbah," 2017, p. 12)

Extracts (24) and (25) throw light on how ISIS positively represents its members by praising them, saying that they are "Allah's slaves" who are fighting "the enemies of Allah". Because ISIS' members "supported themselves with tawhid" and "held onto the rope of Allah", they were steadfast and heavily defeated their enemies in a war that is taking place "between Islam and kufr". Positive representation of the in-group serves to glorify ISIS to show that it is an ideal organization that will constantly be victorious because it is supported by God. This is intended to encourage audiences to see ISIS in a different light so as to attract more followers.

Negative evaluation of the out-group is shown in extracts (26) and (27):

(26) And they have gone to extremes in lying against the Prophet and his family, and even upon their absent Mahdi... They even rewrote the history of past generations from anew in accordance with their whims and their beliefs. And as such, the Rafidah... were not content with merely building their religion on the corrupt principle of divine imamah. Rather, they wrote the history of mankind anew so that it would coincide with this false theory... ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 4," 2017, p. 24)

In this extract, the Rafidis are negatively represented by being accused of telling lies about the Prophet and rewriting "the history of past generations anew in accordance with their whims and their beliefs" concerning the issue of "imamah". According to ISIS, because the Rafidis established their religion on "the corrupt principle of divine imamah", they are considered an out-group worthy of criticism because they made changes in the original religion.

(27) As for the murtaddin's desperate efforts in battle, they are motivated by their hatred of tawhid and its people, and their wish for the Shari'ah to disappear, in addition to their adherence to the orders of their Crusader masters who fight the Muslims so that they might disbelieve in Allah... They fight the Muslims so that they might throw Allah's Shari'ah behind their backs and disbelieve in it, believe in democracy, and abandon jihad. ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 11)

Opponents of ISIS, in extract (27), are described as being "motivated by their hatred of tawhid and its people". They are negatively depicted as fighting "the Muslims", i.e. ISIS' members because they are against God's laws and "wish for the Shari'ah to disappear". They are also represented as being driven by a desire to make "the Muslims" lose their faith and "disbelieve in Allah... believe in democracy, and abandon jihad".

#### **5.1.4 Modality**

Modality is employed in the data to serve the ideological purposes of ISIS. It helps shed light on the beliefs, convictions and ideological stances of this organization regarding groups deemed true Muslims due to their affiliation to the Islamic State, and

groups considered to be enemies since they are not Muslims or judged as non-true Muslims either because they are not members of ISIS or take part in wars against it. Table (4) demonstrates the frequency of occurrence of the most significant deontic and epistemic modals that reflect the worldview of ISIS in the data.

Table (4): Frequency of occurrence of the most significant deontic and epistemic modals

Modal	Deontic		Epistemic	
	Members of ISIS	Non-members of ISIS	Members of ISIS	Non-members of ISIS
Should	6	---	---	6
Must	6	---	---	9
Will	20	---	21	14

Table (4) shows that the modals "should", "must", and "will" occur in different frequencies and are used deontically and epistemically to address members and non-members of ISIS. The modal "should" is used deontically to address ISIS' members 6 times and epistemically to address non-members the same number of times. This reflects an equal concern on the part of ISIS' leaders to convey certain messages to members and non-members of ISIS. By using "should", ISIS seeks to inform members of the Islamic State of the actions deemed necessary or required with respect to their relationship with members and non-members of ISIS, as shown in the following extracts:

(28) There should be no misunderstanding about the excellence of this deed, as taking this wealth is in accordance with the command of Allah...And as this wealth is ghanimah, one fifth of it should be set aside and given to the Khalifah... ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 14).

(29) If anyone is wronged by his brother and wants to reclaim his right from him, the doors of the Central Office for Investigating Grievances as well as those of other offices tasked with this matter are open before him. He should forward his grievance to us, and if there is a right that belongs to him we will take back that right from whoever wronged him. ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 12)

(30) Rather, they should even support them and give them refuge, and set out with them to fight these tawaghit, thus waging a jihad that is obligatory upon them ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 53).

These extracts show that "should" is used deontically to urge ISIS' members to cause financial harm to their enemies by taking their wealth after defeating them and giving one fifth of it to "the Khalifah". This modal is also used to show ISIS' members some aspects concerning the nature of the relationship among them. For example, if an ISIS' member is wronged by another member, he has to resort to one of the ISIS'

offices responsible for restoring rights. ISIS' members are also required to support each other and co-operate to defeat their enemies. This indicates that the deontic use of "should" is intended to give a positive impression of ISIS by showing that it is founded upon the principles of equality, justice and co-operation among its members who, in turn, are united in their fight against opponents.

The modal "should" is used epistemically when non-members of ISIS are the subject of the topic under discussion to express the speaker's viewpoint on their beliefs. This is seen in extract (31):

(31) ...hundreds of movements, parties and factions have arisen over the course of the past century claiming to be working for the return of the khilafah, the implementation of the Shari'ah, and the establishment of the religion on the earth...the aforementioned aspirations were never achieved in their entirety except by the Islamic State...One of the main things that they burdened themselves with is that which they innovated of work methodologies which their leaders, theorists, and scholars put in place for them...their perceptions and desires inspired to them methods of work that should be followed in order to reach the desired goal – the establishment of Allah's religion on the earth...As a result, they tread the path of absolutes...These suppositions were based on the notion that the path towards establishing the religion should involve reaching a level-based goal or surmounting a major obstacle...And this is where the trouble lies for those movements, because...they would treat the theories of other groups...as if they were established formulas that should be adhered to... ("Establishing the Islamic State," 2017, p. 7)

In this extract, the modal "should" is mainly used to criticize the attempts made by other groups that have the same goal as ISIS, namely "the return of the khilafah, the implementation of the Shari'ah, and the establishment of the religion on the earth". These groups believed in the correctness of the methods they used to realize their goals. However, in ISIS' view, they failed to achieve their goals because they adopted the wrong methods, and did not follow what ISIS considers the straight path which dictates waging wars against enemies and disbelievers. Rather, these groups resorted to what ISIS sees as the "absolutes", thinking that "the path towards establishing the religion should involve reaching a level-based goal or surmounting a major obstacle". This path led to their misguidance because they believed in the truth of their theories and theories put forward by other groups "as if they were established formulas that should be adhered to".

As shown in table (4), the modal "must" is used deontically 6 times to address ISIS' members, and epistemically 9 times when talking about non-members of ISIS. The data shows that this modal is used to discipline ISIS' members and tell them how to deal with groups considered enemies and disbelievers. It is also used to encourage recruits to join ISIS. These uses are shown in extracts (32) and (33):

(32) The Muslim in Dar al-Kufr must constantly be on guard from the widespread evil that may affect his heart, and one of the most dangerous of evils is nifaq (hypocrisy), which can creep into the heart of anyone who wrongly views his relation to the kuffar...So it is not enough to defend Muslim land...but one must hate the kuffar and long for causing them harm in their own lands. And this must be done with the pure intention of seeking to make the word of Allah the highest... ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 15)

(33) It is obligatory on anyone who has been entrusted by Allah with anything of the affairs of the Muslims to prevent those he is responsible for from suffering injustice, and if it reaches him that this has occurred, he must endeavor to remove the injustice from them ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 11).

These two extracts demonstrate that the modal "must" is used deontically to inform followers of ISIS as well as potential recruits of obligatory attitude and behavior towards each other and towards disbelievers so as to shed light on some principles underlying the ideology of ISIS. For instance, all Muslims living in what ISIS considers "Dar al-Kufr" must beware of hypocrisy when dealing with "the kuffar" because it is obligatory to hate them and "long for causing them harm in their own lands". Muslims are obliged to do so for God's sake. "Must" is also used to highlight the necessity of removing all forms of injustice which Muslims may experience in the Islamic State.

Extract (34) demonstrates the use of the modal "must" epistemically when talking about non-members of ISIS.

(34) We are able to summarize the main principle upon which the religion of the Rafidah has stood and it is that upon which all of their misguidances and deviances are built until this very day. It is their belief that the Islamic State cannot be established without an imam who fulfills their conditions, for which Allah gave no authority...And it is not enough for them that this imam possess these traits, but he must be unique among men, having no peer or equal, and that whoever disputes him in any of that is a taghut...The point of reference for this corrupt principle is their belief that the imam must be obeyed and followed just as the Prophet is obeyed and followed. As such, it is not possible that he be from the "regular" Muslims, those who may be ignorant, err, forget, and have desires. Rather, he must know everything that he wants to know...Likewise, he must have no peer to rival him in authority, lest there be fitnah, just as he must have no peer in knowledge, lest his view be opposed and division occurs. Since these stipulated traits are hidden matters...they concluded that this imam must be chosen by Allah, just as He chose the prophets. ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 3," 2017, pp. 37-38).

The modal auxiliary "must" is used epistemically to present the beliefs held by the Rafidah followers, who, like ISIS, seek to establish the Islamic State, but, unlike it, think that it "cannot be established without an imam who fulfills their conditions". In ISIS' view, the beliefs and principles of the Rafidah are the cause of "all of their misguidances and deviances". Therefore, "must" is employed to criticize the Rafidah because of the conditions that are considered obligatory and have to be fulfilled by the person chosen as an "imam". ISIS believes that "Allah gave no authority" to these conditions, therefore they should not be the criteria for choosing the "imam" as this belief would hinder the establishment of the Islamic State.

As for the modal auxiliary "will", table (4) shows that it is used deontically to address ISIS' followers 20 times and epistemically 35 times, 21 of which when exposing beliefs firmly held by ISIS and 14 times to address non-members of ISIS. The deontic use of "will" is demonstrated in the extracts below:

(35) He should forward his grievance to us, and if there is a right that belongs to him, we will take back that right from whoever wronged him – and we will not be dissuaded in that regard by the blame of any critic, by Allah's permission ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 12).

(36) We give glad tidings to the ummah of our prophet, Muhammad, that their sons...will continue with their fight until there is no fitnah and the religion, all of it, is for Allah...Jihad for the cause of Allah...and fighting his enemies will not be stopped by the condition of any ruler ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 13).

(37) There are still some large shirk lodges in the regions of Sinai and Egypt beyond the areas under the authority of the Khalifah. By the permission of Allah, those lodges will be a target for the hisbah and jihad of the Khilafah as soon as its soldiers conquer these regions. Indeed, the mujahidin will continue on their mission to guide people and bring them out of darkness and into the light. ("Interview with the Amir of Hisbah," 2017, p. 14)

The above extracts of the modal auxiliary "will" show that it is used deontically when addressing ISIS' members to present ISIS positively to ensure that its members will always remain loyal to it and will not switch allegiance. This is also intended to attract more followers by showing that all ISIS' members enjoy equal treatment because justice prevails among them. ISIS is also presented positively by showing that it is an organization whose members have a mission "to guide people and bring them out of darkness and into the light". Thus, "will" is used deontically to show that it is an obligation for Muslims to join it and fight for what is deemed a just cause of enlightening people and fighting enemies "until there is no fitnah and the religion, all of it, is for Allah".

Extracts (38), (39), and (40) demonstrate the epistemic use of the modal auxiliary "will" to refer to matters of knowledge on the part of ISIS' members:



(38) This long-term development of the Rafidi religion gives a living example of what can happen if ways that have deviated from the straight path are pursued when calling to establish the Islamic State. This shows us that when they make these deviations obligatory for the people to follow, as part of establishing their religion, then their end will be that they inevitably alter the original religion to correspond with their heresy. ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 11)

(39) The mujahidin will always be superior. The Crusaders and their murtadd followers will be defeated and humiliated upon their divided paths...You will see the tawaghit of the United Nations and all those who are insolent towards our Lord today kneeling on the Day of Judgment...We say to those...apostates...you are fighting an ummah that has not become barren and a creed that will not be defeated. ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 12)

(40) Indeed, Allah will not make lost the blood that has flowed in defense of the Shari'ah and to repel its enemies. Allah will surely support those who support Him...Our Lord has promised those hwo gather for His obedience with victory, consolidation, succession to authority, inheritance of the land, that the best outcome will be for them, and that He will drive them to Jannah in groups. ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, pp. 12-13)

These extracts show that the modal "will" is used epistemically to express judgments made by ISIS based on their firmly-held beliefs and worldviews. This modal is used to convince ISIS' followers that the ideologies adopted by other groups, which ISIS considers out-groups, will lead to their destruction because they "have deviated from the straight path" in their alleged attempt to establish the Islamic State. "Will" is also used epistemically to reflect the belief that members of ISIS "will always be superior" as well as the belief that they will constantly be victorious because God is on their side. In other words, "will" is employed epistemically to manipulate the minds of both ISIS' members and prospective recruits by convincing them that they can never be defeated because by joining this organization, they made the right decision as they chose "the straight path" which God supports and will take its followers "to Jannah in groups".

The use of the modal auxiliary "will" epistemically to address non-members of ISIS is shown in the following extracts:

(41) Thereby, they assert that the people's religion cannot be established without this imam, and that when people believe completely in their imams, obeying them in all that they command, then their affairs will be set straight and their State will be upon the prophetic methodology ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 3," 2017, p. 37).

(42) He thinks that the disbelievers are above us and subduing us, that they have escaped us, that they have become dominant so there is none who can defeat them, that they will extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, and that Allah will not perfect His light ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 13).

(43) It is either Islam, jizyah, or war and your weapons will be of no avail to you, nor will the allegiance of the apostate tawaghit and their soldiers to you, for they cannot protect themselves from the soldiers of the Khilafah...You wish to cover your defeats and your weakness in your war against the soldiers of the Islamic State but you will not be able to do so...And seeking the aid of the Jews and Crusaders in waging war against us will not benefit you...if we overpower you, there will be nothing for you from us but death...And if your eyes remain blind and your ears deaf to this warning...you will not enjoy a moment of security...and then you will never be successful. ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 55)

The above extracts show that "will" is used epistemically when addressing ISIS' enemies and opponents to expose their ideologies and firmly-held beliefs. This is indicated by presenting the conviction of the Rafidah followers that when they "believe completely in their imams...then their affairs will be set straight and their state will be upon prophetic methodology" and in showing that "disbelievers" think that "they will extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, and that Allah will not perfect His light". By presenting these beliefs, ISIS aims at showing disapproval of them as they contradict its own ideologies. Accordingly, "will" is also used epistemically to threaten all Muslims and non-Muslims who not only do not hold the same ideologies and views of ISIS but also wage war against "the soldiers of the Islamic State", telling them that "they will not be able to do so...will never be successful".

In addition to deontic and epistemic modality, unmodalized categorical assertions are used to inform the audiences all over the world of the fundamental tenets of ISIS' philosophy and worldview. Categorical assertions in the data include:

(44) Indeed, the establishment of the religion is not fully actualized except with the removal of all forms of injustice, and this is what the Islamic State is working to achieve ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 10).

(45) We are all soldiers of the Islamic State in the land of Sinai and Misr, fighting so that the word of Allah becomes supreme ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 53).

(46) ...the only relationship the Muslim has to the kuffar is that of the sword, i.e. physically waging jihad against them. And any attack on the kuffar...is jihad. In this regard, any wealth taken from the kuffar through

deception or defeat is considered ghanimah...and the representative of Allah's Messenger is the Khalifah. ("Establishing Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 14)

The use of the above-mentioned categorical assertions shows that ISIS seeks to depict and assert its supremacy by presenting its views as indisputable. It aims at instilling confidence in its followers and recruits to assure them that joining the Islamic State is the right decision to make because it wages war against the so-called disbelievers "so that the word of Allah becomes supreme". ISIS also aims to instill fear in its enemies to convince them of their weakness and inability to defeat it since the ruler of the Islamic State, known as the "Khalifah", is considered "the representative of Allah's Messenger". Thus, it is ISIS' belief that God supports its soldiers especially that it works on removing "all forms of injustice" and "spreading justice among the people".

### **5.1.5 Intertextuality**

ISIS' leaders in the data employ intertextuality to enhance the credibility of their speech and thus persuade their audience to act as desired. To this end, they incorporate verses from the Quran, Prophet Muhammad's sayings, and the words of religious figures in their speech. The majority of references are made to the Quran (36 instances) followed by the speech of Prophet Muhammad (23 instances) and religious figures (10 instances). By relying on verses from the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad more than the speech of religious figures, ISIS' leaders seek to give their statements legitimacy and authority so as to convince their audience of the truth of what they say by relating their speech to the messages of the Quran and Prophet Muhammad as these are trusted sources for Muslims. Therefore, references to these sources serve the discursive goals of the speakers. In the data, the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's sayings are quoted for three common purposes: show the necessity of causing harm to those deemed disbelievers or non-Muslims or even killing them, prove that obeying those in authority is a must because it is obedience to Allah, and assert that God forbade injustice and ordered people to do justice to each other and prevent wrongdoing. The following extracts from the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's sayings used in the data for each of these purposes. Extracts (47) and (48) show the first purpose:

(47) Allah said, "Indeed the disbelievers are a clear enemy to you" (An-Nisa 101)...He then mentioned the order to kill all those who claim partners for Allah, saying, "So when the sacred months have passed, then kill the mushrikin wherever you find them...(At-Tawba 5) ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 13).

(48) Allah's Messenger said, "I have been commanded to fight all people until they testify that there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah, establish the prayer, and pay the zakah. If they do that, then they have guarded their blood and their wealth from me

except by the right of Islam; and their account is upon Allah" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Ibn Umar). ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 13)

Extract (49) demonstrates the second purpose:

(49) Allah said, "O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best way and best in interpretation" (An-Nisa 59). And the Prophet said, "Whoever obeys me has indeed obeyed Allah, and whoever disobeys me has indeed disobeyed Allah. And whoever obeys my amir has indeed obeyed me, and whoever disobeys my amir has indeed disobeyed me (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah). ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 3," 2017, p. 38)

The following extracts manifest the third purpose:

(50) Allah said, "Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded" (An-Nahl 9). He also said, "And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice. None can alter His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing" (Al-An'am 115). He likewise negated injustice from Himself; He said "Indeed, Allah does not wrong the people, but it is the people who wrong themselves" (Yonus 44). ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 10)

(51) The Prophet said, "Come to your brother's aid whether he is the wronged or the wrongdoer." A man asked, "O Messenger of Allah, I will come to his aid if he is wronged, but if he is the wrongdoer how can I come to his aid?" He said, "By obstructing him or preventing him from doing injustice, for to do so is to come to his aid" (Reported by al-Bukhari from Anas). ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 11)

In addition to the above-mentioned common purposes, intertextuality is employed by quoting from the Quran and the Prophet's sayings for different purposes. For example, Quranic verses are cited to show that the Islamic State is established according to the prophetic methodology and Islamic rulings convince ISIS' members that they will win because they fight for the sake of Allah, and highlight the necessity of targeting churches. Extracts (52), (53), and (54) demonstrate these three reasons, respectively:

(52) Allah said, "Then is one who laid the foundation of his building on taqwa from Allah and seeking His approval better or on the edge of a bank about to collapse, so it collapsed with him into the fire of Jahannam? And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people. Their building which they built will not cease to be a [cause of] skepticism in their hearts until their

hearts are stopped. And Allah is Knowing and Wise" (At-Tawbah 109-110). ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 3," 2017, p. 36)

(53) Allah said, "They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses except to perfect His light, although the disbelievers like it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although the mushrikin dislike it" (At-Tawbah 32-33). ("Interview with the Amir of Hisbah," 2017, p. 12)

(54) Targeting these churches is part of our fight and our war against kufr and its people, and that is in response to the command of Allah, "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled" (At-Tawbah 29). ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 53)

Prophet's Muhammad's sayings are quoted for two reasons, namely to legalize taking wealth from disbelievers through deception, and show that the Islamic State will expand to several areas and defeat its enemies. These reasons are indicated in the extracts (55) and (56), respectively.

(55) In this regard, any wealth taken from the kuffar through deception or defeat is considered ghanimah. Allah's Messenger said, "War is deception" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim by Jabir Ibn Abdillah) ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 14).

(56) Allah's Messenger said, "Indeed, Allah gathered for me the earth, then I saw its east and its west, and the rule of my ummah will reach all that was gathered for me of it" (Reported by Muslim from Thawban). Indeed, these great battles which the mujahidin are engaging in today and the entrance of thousands of muwahiddin into the arenas of jihad seeking the places of shahadah are all good tidings of the dispersing of oppression and the emergence of the truth. ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 13)

References are made to the speech of religious figures to convince ISIS' members and potential recruits that their enemies fear them because being "the slaves of Allah" and "His awliya", they are considered true believers. This is shown in the following extract:

(57) Abu Muslim al-Khawlani said, "Fear the judgment of the believer, for indeed Allah has placed the truth upon his tongue and heart" (Ibn Abdil-Barr: Bahjat al-Majalis) ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 13).

Religious figures are also quoted to criticize the Rafidi sect, and refute the Rafidis' claims that Ali bin Abi Talib should have been the successor of Prophet Muhammad who allegedly appointed him and his descendants as imams. This is indicated in extract (58):

(58) But they have no evidence of this nass, other than what they have fabricated of false interpretations of texts from the Book and the Sunnah. In fact, the established evidences negate what they claim, like the saying of Umar, "If I were to not appoint a successor, then indeed Allah's Messenger did not appoint a successor. And if I were to appoint a successor, then indeed Abu Bakr appointed a successor" (Reported by Muslim). This shows that the Prophet did not appoint Ali or any of the Sahabah as his successor. Also, al-Aswad said, "It was mentioned in front of Aisha that Ali was an heir (to authority), so she said, "When did [the Prophet] appoint him? For indeed I was holding him to my chest when he called for a washbowl and then his body drooped and I did not realize that he had died. So when did he appoint him? (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim). ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 3," 2017, p. 37)

### **5.1.6 Interdiscursivity**

Since ISIS seeks to sell its ideologies to the audience to attract followers and sympathizers worldwide, it establishes interdiscursive links between its religious discourse and the discourse of advertising which "aims to influence and change the will, opinions, and attitudes of its recipients" (Teodorescu, 2015, p. 115). To manipulate the minds of their audience, ISIS' leaders incorporate three linguistic features from the discourse of advertising in their speech to "make the message sound warm and affable, narrow the gap between the sender and the receiver, and make the audience perceive the message as being designed to help and care for them" (Teodorescu, 2015, p. 116). These features are: the second person pronoun (see section 5.1.1.2), imperatives and metaphorical language.

#### **5.1.6.1 Imperatives**

According to Teodorescu (2015), "inducing the desired kind of action is best achieved by means of imperatives" (p. 116). The number of imperatives used in the data is 30, 10 of which are directed to enemies and opponents of ISIS, 12 to potential recruits, and 8 to its members. Imperatives are used to address each of the three groups for different purposes. When directed to ISIS' enemies and opponents, imperatives are used to persuade them to join the Islamic State by inviting them to learn about Islam, as in the next extract:

(59) So come to a word that is equitable between us and you – that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him... We say to you, learn tawhid and iman... And know that the mujahidin did not go forth and wage jihad except to establish tawhid and remove shirk, and that they readily sacrificed their blood, fighting the most tyrannical nations of kufr on the face of the earth. ("Interview with the Amir of Hisbah," 2017, p. 15)

The imperatives "come" and "learn" are used in this extract in an attempt to convince enemies and opponents of ISIS to act as ISIS' members so that they would "not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him". The imperative "know" is used to explain to ISIS' enemies the reason for which ISIS' members, who are referred to as "mujahidin", wage war against them and even "sacrificed their blood". They did so to "establish tawhid and remove shirk". Accordingly, it is used to justify fighting people and governments who are not members of ISIS because they are considered disbelievers, as indicated in "...fighting the most tyrannical nations of kufr on the face of the earth". The implied message to the addressees – ISIS' enemies and opponents – is that they are ignorant about Islam and should thus join the Islamic State to learn true Islam. The implication is that if they do not do so, they deserve to meet the same destiny as non-members of ISIS, namely to be fought and even killed. To avoid this destiny, they have to join ISIS.

Imperatives are also used to order ISIS' enemies to reconsider their ideological stance and defy their governments. This is shown in extract (60):

(60) And I say to the apostate soldiers of the tawaghit, repent from your apostasy, disavow yourselves of this government, and show enmity towards it before we overpower you... ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 55).

ISIS' enemies are addressed using the imperatives "repent", "disavow", and "show" to tell them that they have to act as ISIS orders them. ISIS' enemies have to repent from their apostasy, disavow themselves of their government, and show enmity towards it to guard against the dire consequences of not giving in to what ISIS desires. In other words, the imperatives are used to warn ISIS' enemies and opponents against not joining the Islamic State.

The following extract demonstrates the use of imperatives to address potential recruits:

(61) ...join your brothers in the Islamic State, and adhere to the jama'ah. If you are unable to reach the Islamic State, seek Allah's aid, take precaution, prepare your strength as much as you are able, and plan operations against the Christians and the apostates. Cause them tremendous harm and detriment, and let them see from you the might of the believers as well as your eagerness to attain shahadah for the cause of Allah. And know that there is no other option when we fight aside from attaining victory or being killed and achieving shahadah. Beware of being detained by the soldiers of these tawaghit, and have patience and conviction, for indeed Allah will grant us conquest of this land. ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p.54)

Extract (61) shows that imperatives are used for three reasons. First, they are used to invite and encourage recruits and sympathizers to join the Islamic State. They are also used to tell them how to overcome obstacles that they might face and which can hinder them from joining ISIS, and thus becoming true believers. If recruits or

sympathizers face obstacles, they have to "seek Allah's aid...apostates". Second, imperatives are used to tell recruits how to treat "the Christians and the apostates" who are considered enemies to ISIS. They are ordered to "cause them tremendous harm...the cause of Allah". Finally, imperatives are used to tell recruits that after they join the Islamic State, they have to do three things: fight its enemies and either win or be killed and achieve "shahadah", take care while fighting so as not to be "detained by the soldiers of these tawaghit", and be patient and confident that God is on their side and will grant them victory.

Imperatives are used to address ISIS' members, as shown in the following extract:

(62) Allah said, "And we have already written in the Psalms, after the Remembrance, that the land shall be inherited by My righteous slaves...Upon you is the book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Take hold of them, cling firmly to them, and implement them in your lives. Do not be in awe of your enemy, and have certainty in Allah's promise to His believing slaves... ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 55)

Extract (62) shows that when imperatives are directed to ISIS' members, they are used to tell them to make the Quran as well as the sayings of Prophet Muhammad the doctrine that they live by. They are ordered to "take hold ...your lives". Imperatives are also used to urge ISIS' members not to "be in awe of" their enemies and to have faith in "Allah's promise" that they will be victorious because they are "His believing slaves". This is intended to make ISIS' members act as they are told by their leaders and tolerate any hardships encountered in the course of attaining the goal of establishing the caliphate because God promised "that the land shall be inherited by My righteous slaves".

#### **5.1.6.2 Metaphorical Language**

Metaphors are an important persuasive linguistic tool used to shape ideologies as they help arouse and inspire particular feelings by representing the addresser's view of the world in a different light using certain images. Therefore, they can be used to construct identities due to their power to manipulate the addressees' minds and perception of the world. Metaphors in the data are derived from two main semantic fields, namely family and motion. The family metaphor occurs 20 times and is indicated by the use of the words "brother", "brothers", "sisters", and "son", as shown in the following extracts:

(63) The duty of the soldiers is in assisting their brothers in doing their job, these brothers who've been tasked with investigating grievances ("Interview with the Amir of the Central Office," 2016, p. 11).

(64) The murtaddin called on the Crusader planes for help, leading to our knights rejoicing in shahadah in the path of their Lord, in support of their



brothers and sisters, and in defense of the Shari'ah ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 12).

(65) What connects us with our brothers, the soldiers of the Khilafah in Sinai Wilayah, is a relationship of brotherliness, love, and allegiance – may Allah bless them ("Interview with the Amir of the Soldiers," 2017, p. 53).

(66) So we call on you to stand with your mujahid sons in the Islamic State to deter others from fighting them... ("Interview with the Wali," 2016, p. 12).

In these extracts, "brothers" and "sons" are used to refer to ISIS' members who are considered "the soldiers of the Khilafah" and "the mujahidin". The family metaphor fulfills a solidarity-promoting and fostering purpose to create a sense of belonging to the in-group, i.e. the Islamic State, and bonding with its members as they are united by the common goal of fighting the out-group, i.e. non-members of ISIS who are considered disbelievers. It is also used to create a dramatic appeal to recruits and sympathizers to invite and encourage them to join ISIS by creating a vision of equality, love, and brotherhood prevailing among those belonging to ISIS, and living happily in the caliphate as one family.

Motion metaphors occur 24 times in the data and are used to highlight the difference between two paths that are part and parcel of the ideology of ISIS. These are: the straight path and the path of misguidance and deviance. Motion metaphors used in the data include:

(67) This is the condition of many of those who claim to follow Allah's prophets and messengers while having abandoned the Sunnah and treaded the path of whims and heresies, thus straying from the straight path ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p.9).

(68) Some of them even reached the level of treading the path of shirk... ("Establishing the Islamic State," 2017, p. 8).

(69) And with Allah's permission, we will strive...to give more examples of this understanding, explaining the consequences of the paths of misguidance and comparing that to the prophetic methodology, which the Islamic State follows today ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 2," 2017, p. 11).

(70) As we discuss the methods of establishing the Islamic State, between those who follow the prophetic method and those who follow the paths of deviance... ("Establishing the Islamic State: Part 3," 2017, p. 37).

In these extracts, the motion metaphors are indicated by referring to two kinds of paths, the first of which is "the straight path" which ISIS assumes it follows. The second is "the path of whims and heresies", "the paths of misguidance", "the paths of

deviance", and "the path of shirk" which ISIS believes is followed by all those it describes as non-true Muslims and enemies of Islam. Accordingly, these extracts reflect ISIS' view concerning the Islamic State. This organization believes that its terror tactics are right and justified, and are thus considered the straight path that will ultimately lead to establishing the so-called caliphate because it follows the "prophetic methodology". It also believes that all those who do not follow its "straight" path are following the paths of "misguidance", "deviance", and "shirk". Therefore, they deserve to be killed as they hinder the establishment of the Islamic State, or the caliphate, according to true Islamic laws. These motion metaphors show that ISIS represents the in-group positively and the out-group negatively, thereby underscoring its viewpoint on believers, who are accepted as members of the in-group, and disbelievers who belong to the out-group.

The discourse features and linguistic devices employed in the data indicate that producers of texts in *Rumiyah* draw on the socio-cognitive representation (SCR) of the Islamic State as the protector of the religion and the only organization that is capable of restoring the glory of Islam because it is more faithful to it than other Muslims. They also reflect the SCR of the out-group as enemies to God and to Islam, and are thus considered bad Muslims, apostates and crusaders who should be tortured and killed because they do not hold ISIS' ideology.

## **5.2 The Meso-Level of Discourse Practice**

The discourse features and linguistic devices analyzed at the micro-level of texts are interpreted at the meso-level of discourse practice by relating them to the discourse goals and text production, distribution, and reception. By employing these features and devices, ISIS' speakers aim at attaining four discourse goals. First, ISIS seeks to inform readers of *Rumiyah* of its long-term goal of establishing an Islamic caliphate which is ruled by a Caliph, who is considered God's delegate on Earth, according to Sharia (Islamic Law). Because ISIS wants the caliphate to encompass the world's Sunni Muslims, it seeks to overthrow all existing governments in Muslim countries, which ISIS believes are ruled by apostates, and surmount all obstacles encountered while trying to establish its theocratic state, thereby allegedly defending the Muslim community, or ummah, against its enemies by being responsible for the Muslim population worldwide.

Second, ISIS wants Muslims worldwide to reject their national governments and contemporary societies, and migrate from what it believes to be the lands of apostasy and disbelief to those controlled by the Islamic State and ruled according to Islamic law. Upon performing this "hijrah", Muslims are urged to join the fight against disbelievers and enemies of the Islamic State who pose a threat to it and to Islam. According to ISIS, the acts of "hijrah" and "jihad" are an essential sacred duty that all Muslims must carry out to defend the faith and the Muslim community. Therefore, those who heed the call are deemed true Muslims and are among the in-group which includes the brothers and sisters of the caliphate. Those who do not comply and choose to reject the call constitute the out-group as they become enemies not only of ISIS but also of Islam, and thus they deserve to be killed. To convince its

members to kill enemies of the Islamic State, ISIS uses language "that has been interpreted not only to permit killing but where killing in the name of God becomes a sacred obligation" (Post, 2007, p. 160).

Third, ISIS tries to sell its religious ideology to Muslims, particularly young ones, to lure them into adopting it and joining the organization. ISIS' attempts to appeal to Muslims is motivated by a desire to spread its hard-core ideologies, recruit more followers, and mobilize large numbers of foreign fighters who are required to migrate to the Islamic State. However, if, after joining ISIS, followers are unable to move to ISIS-held territory, they are required to pledge allegiance to the organization wherever they live and carry out lone-wolf attacks. This is in line with ISIS' desire to have followers and supporters all over the world because this fulfills an important aim for ISIS which is removing man-made borders and taking the battle against those seen as disbelievers and apostates to Europe and the United States under the pretext of defending Islam in the whole world, and not just in the Middle East. Thus, followers in different countries partake in the ultimate goal of establishing the caliphate.

Finally, ISIS divides the world into two identity groups: Us and Them. Muslims who join the Islamic State belong to Us, i.e. the in-group which includes devout Muslims who follow "the straight path" of ISIS. All Muslims or non-Muslims who do not join ISIS belong to Them, i.e. the out-group which includes all groups that strayed from the right path by opposing the Islamic State and waging war against it. Thus, ISIS develops a collective identity and promotes a bipolar worldview by showing who belongs to Us, faithful Muslims who defend Islam, and who belongs to Them, enemies who want to destroy Islam and threaten the Muslim community. By drawing the line between the in-group and the out-group, ISIS enhances a sense of inclusion and belonging to the in-group values and identity and exclusion from the out-group whose members, according to ISIS, have drowned in misguidance, disbelief, ignorance, and darkness.

The articles and interviews analyzed in the study are produced by important figures and key leaders in the Islamic State who have unrestricted access to *Rumiyah*, a privilege not accorded to all members of this organization. Since the texts are produced in a freely accessible online magazine, their production concurs with their distribution as well as reception. This is because texts in *Rumiyah* have worldwide and unlimited distribution and can thus have a wide readership. They are also produced for a specific primary audience, namely followers and members of ISIS, potential recruits, and enemies. Because ISIS seeks to convince the three target groups of its worldview, it directly addresses each group to express the ideologies held by the organization explicitly, elaborately, and polemically.

### **5.3 The Macro-Level of Social Context**

ISIS' extremist and polarized worldview and ideological conflict with its foes are explained in light of the socio-political context that gave rise to the Islamic State. The civil wars that erupted in Iraq and Syria resulted in adverse social and political conditions which were largely responsible for the development and flourish of ISIS.

In Iraq, the U.S. invasion and occupation led to social and political unrest which caused a sectarian divide between Sunnis and Shiites and prompted the emergence of ISIS. Shia Muslims, who form the majority in Iraq, were suppressed by Saddam Hussein's Baath regime which was chiefly Sunni. However, the U.S. invasion of the country and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein turned the tide as Saddam Hussein's once dominant Sunni machinery was replaced by a predominantly Shiite regime. Moreover, the Iraqi army was disbanded, thousands of government workers were dismissed, and officials associated with Saddam Hussein's regime were ousted and prohibited from political involvement. Therefore, economic hardships, impoverishment, and political marginalization stirred up Sunni Muslims' rage at the sectarian policies of the Shia-led and American-backed regime in Iraq.

In 2011, the Arab Spring uprisings that erupted in a number of countries sparked a wave of peaceful demonstrations in Syria against President Bashar Al-Assad to demand an end to corruption and democratic economic and political reforms. Because Syrian authorities used force to curb the protests, violence escalated, unrest spread, and calls for the President's resignation swept the country. Growing clashes between pro-government forces and protesters aroused armed opposition and ignited Syria's civil war. Unlike Iraq, the majority of Syrians are Sunni Muslims whereas the Assad family belongs to the Alawite minority which is a sect of Shia Muslims. Therefore, religion played a significant role in Syria as the conflict became sectarian in nature although the 2011 protests were not. The increasing confrontation and sectarian clashes between the different forces in Syria allowed radical Islamist groups, like ISIS, to flourish and engage in the anti-regime struggle.

Because Iraq and Syria slid into war and chaos, they were an open ground for ISIS which made significant gains in both countries and used anti-regime rhetoric that appealed to many Iraqis and Syrians. Thus, poverty, unemployment, and the growing Sunni-Shia rift and struggle over power, resources and territory fuelled the emergence of ISIS, and determined its deeds. The difficult socio-political conditions and the hardships that Sunni Muslims in Iraq and Syria faced help explain "why the organization justifies its actions as a defense of the poor and disfranchised as well as why it targets areas with natural and raw resources" (Gerges, 2017, p. 11). They also gave ISIS the opportunity to step in and present itself as "a solution and an alternative" (Melki & Jabado, 2016, p. 94).

Taking advantage of the social, economic and political inequities felt by Sunni Iraqis and Syrians, ISIS sold its ideologies and worldviews to them through the perspective of Sunni-Muslim identity by presenting itself as a defender and guardian of Sunnis. ISIS used this religious identity to depict Shias, Alawites and all regional and world powers that got involved in the Iraqi and Syrian conflicts as a common enemy to all Sunni Muslims. It also used this identity to advance its socio-political agenda and show its military strength so as to convince Sunni Muslims that ISIS is the only actor in the Iraqi and Syrian scenes that is capable of fighting enemies of Sunnis, and is thus the only party to be trusted.

Capitalizing on the notion of Sunni-Muslim identity, ISIS presented itself as the custodian of the moral values of Sunni Islam, and began to promote the

establishment of the Islamic State or the caliphate which is ruled according to Islamic law by the Caliph who is regarded as God's Messenger on earth and should thus be obeyed and revered as a religious symbol. The caliphate is portrayed as a holy place that unites all Muslims and where they can restore their rights because the different bodies and offices responsible for the issues of Muslims ensure that justice prevails and equality is achieved. Accordingly, ISIS urges Muslims worldwide to migrate to the caliphate to join the organization, pledge allegiance to it, and take part in fighting its enemies in Iraq, Syria and beyond. Then, ISIS started to further the concepts of "hijrah" and "jihad" and present them as obligatory deeds that all Muslims must carry out to defend their lands against all parties or powers that threaten Sunni Islam and fight God by opposing the Islamic State. Therefore, ISIS constructed and promoted an in-group identity for all Muslims who join the Islamic State, unite under its banner, remain committed to its cause, and strive to attain its goals, and an out-group identity for those who do not.

## **6. Conclusion**

The present study has examined how ISIS constructs a collective identity in two sections of its online magazine *Rumiyah*, namely the series of articles entitled "Establishing the Islamic State" and the interviews carried out with ISIS' leaders. By employing Koller's (2014) model for analyzing collective identity and van Dijk's (2000) ideological square, it has attempted to answer four research questions, the first two of which are concerned with the micro-level of texts. The first research question pertains to the collective identities constructed in the data. The analysis shows that ISIS' perception of the world as being divided into Muslims and non-Muslims is reflected in four main collective identities it constructs for itself and for its enemies. First, ISIS constructs its identity as the guardian of Sunni Islam and Sunni Muslims who, in ISIS' view, are persecuted at the hands of ISIS' enemies who are also considered God's enemies. Second, ISIS constructs a collective identity of itself as an organization that opposes apostasy and advocates full and strict implementation of Sharia or Islamic law rather than what is considered secular laws adopted by different governments worldwide. Third, ISIS constructs a collective identity as being an ideal destination for true Muslims. All righteous Muslims are strictly urged to perform hijrah or migrate to the caliphate where they are governed according to Islamic law. According to ISIS, Muslims who do not respond to this call and reject migration to ISIS-held territory are considered apostates and thus belong to the out-group. Fourth, by infusing a radical islamist narrative in its discourse, ISIS constructs a collective identity of its members and supporters as jihadists. By subordinating their national identities to Islamic identities, ISIS' members are urged to perform jihad to defend real Islam and righteous Muslims who, in ISIS' view, are threatened by God's enemies, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The second research question is concerned with the discourse features and linguistic devices used to construct the above-mentioned collective identities. Social actor representation, process types, evaluation, modality, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity are the discourse features employed at the micro-level to represent

the in-group, i.e. ISIS and its members, positively and the out-group, i.e. enemies of ISIS, negatively. The Us vs. Them dichotomy is highlighted via the use of different linguistic devices to represent these discourse features. In social actor representation, the two groups in question, namely ISIS' members and enemies, are represented by using the first person plural pronoun, the second person pronoun, and naming. These devices are used to create a sense of solidarity and belonging to the in-group, show the role played by the different bodies of the Islamic State to ensure that justice prevails in the caliphate, encourage ISIS' members to endure the hardships they face to attain the goal of establishing the caliphate, and praise them for following the straight path. When used to address non-members of ISIS, the aforementioned linguistic devices serve to condemn attempts made by the Rafidah to establish the Islamic State, criticize enemies and opponents of ISIS, threaten them because they follow what ISIS considers the wrong path, and inform them that they can still repent by joining the Islamic State.

In terms of process types, relational and actional verbs, both mental and physical transactive and non-transactive processes, are used to underscore positive presentation of the Self and negative presentation of the Other. When used to refer to the actions of ISIS' members, these verbs are used to show that ISIS is a powerful organization whose members are united by the goal of fighting the out-group and establishing the caliphate, and will thus be victorious. They are also used to attract new followers by showing that justice and equality prevail among members of the Islamic State. When relational and actional verbs are used to refer to the deeds of ISIS' enemies, they serve to attack them and show that they are evil and too weak to defeat ISIS.

As for evaluation, the data shows that different evaluative phrases are used to reflect ISIS' bipolar view of the world. Positive evaluation of the in-group is used to exalt the Islamic State by showing that it is an organization that cannot be defeated because God supports it since it follows His path. Negative evaluation of the out-group is used to criticize enemies and opponents of ISIS because they fight true believers, oppose true Islam, and defy Islamic law.

With respect to modality, it has been shown that three main modals are used in the data. These are: "should", "must" and "will" in addition to unmodalized categorical assertions. "Should" is used deontically when addressing ISIS' members to encourage them to cause financial harm to their enemies after defeating them, and to tell them to resort to the offices responsible for restoring rights if they think they have been wronged. This modal is used epistemically to address non-members of ISIS so as to criticize them for adopting wrong methods for establishing the Islamic State rather than what ISIS views as the straight path which entails waging wars against disbelievers. "Must" is used deontically when addressing ISIS' members to inform them of the behavior they must show towards each other and towards their enemies, and to stress the importance of removing injustice that might be experienced in the Islamic State. The modal in question is used epistemically to criticize the Rafidah because of the qualities which the person chosen as an "imam" must have. The modal "will" is used deontically when addressing members of ISIS to positively present the

Islamic State and its members to attract more followers by showing that it is an organization whose mission is to guide and enlighten people, and that its members are loyal to it as they are treated equally. ISIS' members are addressed using epistemic "will" to show that the ideologies held by their opponents will lead to their end as they deviated from what is deemed the straight path. Epistemic "will" is used to address enemies of ISIS to criticize their beliefs and threaten them. Unmodalized categorical assertions are used in the data to express ISIS' underlying philosophy and hard-line views.

Intertextuality is employed in the data to give credibility to what is said by referring to verses of the Quran, the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, and the words of religious figures. The Quran and the words of Prophet Muhammad are incorporated in the speech of ISIS' speakers for three common reasons. These are: to show that harming people who ISIS views as disbelievers is a must, indicate the necessity of obeying those in authority, and state that God prohibited injustice and misconduct and commanded people to be fair. Verses from the Quran are cited to praise the Islamic State by showing that it is established according to prophetic methodology, assure ISIS' members that they are victorious, and underline the importance of targeting churches. The sayings of Prophet Muhammad are quoted to legitimize taking the wealth of ISIS' enemies, and show that the Islamic State will defeat its enemies and capture more territory. Moreover, religious figures are quoted to tell ISIS' members that they are feared because they are true believers, criticize the Rafidah, and disprove the Rafidis' argument that Ali bin abi Talib should have been the legitimate successor of Prophet Muhammad and the first caliph of Islam.

With respect to interdiscursivity, it has been shown that interdiscursive links are established between ISIS' religious discourse and the discourse of advertising from which three linguistic features have been found in the data. These are: the second person pronoun, imperatives, and metaphorical language. The second person pronoun and imperatives are used to praise members of ISIS, urge them to stick to the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's sayings, be certain that they are the winning group, and put up with the difficulties faced while trying to establish the caliphate. Imperatives are also used to encourage prospective recruits to join the Islamic State, tell them how to deal with ISIS' enemies, and inform them of the necessity of fighting enemies, avoiding detention, and being patient and certain that they are victorious. The metaphors employed in the data are derived from the semantic fields of family and motion. Family metaphors are used to enhance a sense of belonging to the Islamic State and encourage recruits and sympathizers to join it by showing that equality, love, and brotherhood prevail among its members. Motion metaphors underscore the difference between the straight path, which ISIS believes it is treading and so should all Muslims deemed to be true believers, and the path of misguidance and deviance which is believed to be the one chosen by enemies and opponents of ISIS

As for the third research question, which is concerned with the meso-level of discourse practice, the data shows that the above-mentioned discourse features and linguistic devices fulfill discourse goals. These are: informing audiences worldwide of the goal of establishing the caliphate, urging all Muslims to migrate to the Islamic

State and fight ISIS' enemies, spreading ISIS' radical religious ideologies, and underscoring ISIS' vision of the world as being divided into two camps: Us and Them. The discourse features and linguistic devices are also interpreted with reference to text production, distribution and reception since producers of *Rumiyah* have unrestricted access to the magazine which, by being freely accessible online, has unlimited distribution and a wide readership. The magazine is also produced for three target groups: followers and members of ISIS, prospective recruits, and enemies.

The fourth research question, pertaining to why ISIS constructs the above-mentioned collective identities, is answered in reference to the macro-level of social context by highlighting the socio-political context that nurtured ISIS. Sectarianism coupled with severe social and political conditions and the subsequent turmoil in Iraq and Syria following the ouster of Saddam Hussein and the Syrian all-out war fuelled the rise of ISIS, which presented itself as a solution to the hardships faced by Sunni Muslims in these two countries. It also presented an alternative through the establishment of the caliphate which is a goal that ISIS believes can be attained only by consolidating and expanding its territory in Iraq and Syria as well as through waging a global war against its enemies.

The study shows that acts of terrorism carried out by terrorist organizations like ISIS are attributed to ideological and identity differences between these groups and their perceived enemies who are branded as "disbelievers", "apostates", and "crusaders" because, unlike those regarded as true Muslims, they refuse to adopt ISIS' ideology. Moreover, ISIS seeks to attract followers by constructing a number of collective identities that stem from a religious identity, and set the boundaries between Us, i.e. the in-group, and Them, i.e. the out-group. Therefore, ISIS uses various linguistic tools to construct different identities, recruit members, legitimize its theological state, present its worldviews as indisputable, associate with similar ideological groups, and dissociate from those who hold different ideologies. To attain these goals, ISIS justifies its actions by contextualizing them in a radical interpretation of the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad to manipulate the minds of its audiences and persuade them that ISIS' members obey God's commands and act in accordance with the Quran and the words and deeds of the Prophet.

The study also shows that technology has facilitated ISIS' ability to be present all over the globe and spread its ideology online. This helped the organization to usher in an era of an on online war and cyber terrorism due to its adept use of the Internet for identity construction, communication purposes, and the radicalization process. Moreover, ISIS' robust online presence and manipulation of language explain its success in recruiting members from both Muslim and non-Muslim countries more than other terrorist organizations. ISIS requires people worldwide, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, to embrace its extremist ideology or die. Because the radical worldview of this organization is widely rejected, its brutal violence and despicable acts of terrorism have claimed many innocent lives and created Islamophobia and fears of instability due to the infiltration of foreign terrorist fighters in the continuous flow of refugees from areas of conflict into the Middle East as well as different countries in Europe, Asia, and the U.S. Thus, ISIS and other terrorist organizations



pose a threat to the security and stability not only of the Middle East but also of the whole world. Because no country is safe from extremism and acts of violence, international efforts are a must to counter all forms of terrorism worldwide as it knows no religion, nationality, or border. In the age of the Internet, combating terrorism and the atrocities of ISIS and other terrorist organizations entails understanding the identity and ideologies of these terrorist groups, and fighting them with moderate ideologies in addition to the use of armed force since it is an ideological war as much as it is a physical war.

ISIS' use of the Internet can help researchers carry out further studies on the propaganda techniques and communication strategies it adopts to realize its goals. Future research can be conducted on the material ISIS publishes on different forums and social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to examine how the written, audio and visual content is employed to construct identity, recruit adherents, and threaten enemies. It can also investigate the online propaganda material published in ISIS' *Rumiyah* and Al-Qaeda's online magazine *Inspire* so as to compare the language used by different terrorist organizations to realize their goals. Although ISIS is losing most of its territory, it still uses the Internet to spread its propaganda and radicalize people. Therefore, future research can compare the language used in the online material published by ISIS after a string of military defeats faced in Iraq and Syria to the one used in the other material it published before the loss of territory to examine the effect of the loss on the linguistic tools employed to express the ideology and worldviews of the organization.

### **Transcription Convention**

... omitted speech

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