

A MULTIMODAL STUDY OF THE LEGITIMIZATION OF
VIOLENCE IN *RUMIYAH*

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**A MULTIMODAL STUDY OF THE LEGITIMIZATION
OF VIOLENCE IN *RUMIYAH***

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**A MULTIMODAL STUDY OF THE LEGITIMIZATION OF VIOLENCE IN
*RUMIYAH***

ABSTRACT

This study explored the process of legitimization of violence in *Rumiyah* magazine produced by al-Hayat Media Center (ISIS). It employs a multimodal approach consists of van Leeuwen (2008) legitimization strategies and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) visual social semiotics to analyse texts and semiotic resources found in the selected articles. The qualitative method used is an inductive thematic analysis which reveals several thematic categorizations, i.e., (1) the impersonalisation of ‘others’, (2) the legitimization of *jihād* value, and (3) the (de)legitimization of *fasiq* scholars. The analysis conducted highlights the recurring use of legitimation strategies and visual social semiotic metafunctions to justify violence in the *Rumiyah* magazine. The overall analysis indicates a complex interaction between the discursive and semiotics aspects of the study that are governed by ISIS’s ideological goals.

Keywords: ISIS, discursive legitimization, social semiotics, terrorism, *RUMIYAH*.

**SATU KAJIAN MULTIMODAL MENGENAI LEGITIMASI KEGANASAN
DALAM RUMIYAH**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti proses legitimasi keganasan didalam majalah *Rumiyah* terbitan Pusat Media al-Hayat (ISIS). Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah multimodal yang terdiri daripada strategi legitimasi oleh Van Leeuwen (2008) dan kerangka '*visual social semiotics*' oleh Kress dan van Leeuwen (2006) bagi menganalisa teks dan sumber semiotik yang terdapat di dalam artikel-artikel pilihan. Penggunaan kaedah kualitatif ini berasaskan analisis tema induktif yang menunjukkan beberapa pengkategorian tema i.e. (1) penyahperibadian yang 'lain', (2) legitimasi nilai *jihad*, (3) nyahlegitimasi cendekiawan '*fasiq*'. Penganalisan yang dijalankan menonjolkan pengulangan strategi legitimasi dan semiotik untuk menjustifikasikan keganasan di dalam majalah *Rumiyah*. Keseluruhan analisis menunjukkan hubungkait kompleks diantara praktik diskursif dan semiotik didalam kajian ini yang didorong oleh matlamat ideologi ISIS.

Keywords: ISIS, legitimasi diskursif, semiotik, keganasan, *RUMIYAH*.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iii
Abstrak	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	xii
List of Tables.....	xiii
List of Symbols and Abbreviations.....	xiv
List of Appendices	xv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the study	1
1.3 Research problem	2
1.4 Research aims	5
1.5 Research questions.....	5
1.6 Significance of the study	6
1.7 Thesis organization.....	7
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)	8
2.3 Multimodality and Legitimization.....	11
2.3.1 Multimodality.....	12
2.3.2 Social Semiotics	15
2.3.3 Discursive legitimization.....	20

2.4	ISIS, terrorism and violence	24
2.4.1	Previous studies of ISIS and terrorism	26
2.5	Magazine.....	28
2.6	Summary.....	29
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY		31
3.1	Introduction.....	31
3.2	Design of the study	31
3.3	Van Leeuwen (2008) and Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) frameworks	32
3.3.1	Legitimation Strategies (2008).....	33
3.3.1.1	Authorization.....	34
3.3.1.2	Moral evaluation	35
3.3.1.3	Rationalization	36
3.3.1.4	Mythopoesis	37
3.3.2	Kress & van Leeuwen (2006).....	38
3.3.2.1	Representational metafunction.....	41
3.3.2.2	Interactive metafunction.....	43
3.3.2.3	Compositional metafunction	44
3.4	Approach of the study.....	45
3.5	Data description.....	46
3.5.1	Data types	46
3.5.2	Data collection and codification.....	48
3.6	Data analytical procedure	49
3.6.1	Textual analysis	50
3.6.2	Visual analysis.....	52
3.7	Validity and reliability.....	54
3.8	Ethical consideration	54

3.9	Limitation and scope.....	54
3.10	Summary.....	54
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION		56
4.1	Introduction.....	56
4.2	Textual and visual analysis.....	56
4.2.1	Social practice analysis	57
4.2.2	Legitimation strategies	58
4.2.3	Visual social semiotics framework.....	59
4.3	Result	60
4.3.1	Impersonalisation of 'others'.....	60
4.3.1.1	Discursive.....	61
(a)	Authorization.....	62
(b)	Rationalization	69
(c)	Mythopoesis	72
4.3.1.1	Visual	75
(a)	AR3: Brutality and Severity towards the <i>Kuffar</i>	79
(b)	AR2: The <i>Kafir's</i> Blood is Halal, So Shed it.....	82
(c)	EX4: Collateral Carnage	85
4.3.2	Legitimization of <i>jihad</i> value	87
4.3.2.1	Discursive.....	87
(a)	Authorization.....	88
(b)	Rationalization	90
(c)	Moral evaluation	94
(d)	Mythopoesis	95
4.3.2.2	Visual	96
(a)	EX1: The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack	99

(b)	FW1: Stand and Die Upon That for Which Your Brothers Died..	102
(c)	AR7: And Fight the <i>Muhsrikin</i> Collectively	105
4.3.3	(De)legitimization of ' <i>fasiq</i> ' scholars.....	107
4.3.3.1	Discursive.....	107
(a)	Authorization.....	108
(b)	Rationalization	111
(c)	Mythopoesis	111
4.3.3.2	Visual	113
(a)	AR1: The Wicked Scholars are Cursed.....	115
4.4	Discussion of findings	117
4.4.1	How does the 'impersonalisation of <i>other</i> ' theme legitimize violence? .	117
4.4.2	How does the 'legitimization of <i>jihad</i> value' theme legitimize violence?	121
4.4.3	How does the '(de)legitimization of the ' <i>fasiq</i> ' scholars legitimize violence?	124
4.5	Summary.....	127
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....		128
5.1	Introduction.....	128
5.2	Summary of findings	128
5.2.1	Main findings	129
(a)	Impersonalisation of <i>others</i>	129
(b)	Legitimization of <i>jihad</i> value	129
(c)	(De)legitimization of ' <i>fasiq</i> ' scholars	130
5.3	Limitations of the study	130
5.4	Recommendation for future studies.....	132

5.5 Summary.....	134
References.....	135
Appendices.....	144

University of Malaya

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Authority legitimation	34
Figure 3.2: Moral evaluation legitimation	35
Figure 3.3: Rationalization legitimation	36
Figure 3.4: Mythopoesis legitimation	37
Figure 3.5: Representational metafunction	39
Figure 3.6: Interactive metafunction	39
Figure 3.7: Compositional metafunction	40
Figure 4.1: Brutality and Severity towards the <i>Kuffar</i>	77
Figure 4.2: Brutality and Severity towards the <i>Kuffar</i> (2).....	78
Figure 4.3: Kafir’s Blood is Halal for You, so Shed it	81
Figure 4.4: Collateral Carnage	84
Figure 4.5: The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack	98
Figure 4.6: Stand and Die Upon That for Which Your Brother Died.....	101
Figure 4.7: And Fight the Mushrikin Collectively.....	104
Figure 4.8: The Wicked Scholars are Cursed.....	114

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Research questions and data with the respective frameworks	6
Table 3.1: Selected <i>Rumiyah</i> articles	47
Table 3.2: Social practice analysis	51
Table 3.3: Hasan (n.d.) analytical tool	53
Table 4.1: Categorization of violent practices	57

University of Malaya

LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Commonly used abbreviations:

- SWT : *subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*
- SAW : *sallallahu alayhi wa salaam*
- r.a. : *Radeyallāhu 'Anhu*
- a.s. : *Alayhis Salaam*

University of Malaya

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Data collection and analysis process	144
Appendix B: Selected <i>Rumiyah</i> articles	145
Appendix C: Glossary of Arabic Terms	150
Appendix D: Van Leeuwen (2008) legitimation strategies	151
Appendix E: Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) visual social semiotics	155
Appendix F: Harrison's (2003) guided questions	159
Appendix G: Visual sample	160

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the entire dissertation. Section 1.2 presents the background of the study, while section 1.3 problematizes the research problem. The chapter continues to state the research aim and questions in section 1.4 and section 1.5, respectively. Section 1.6 describes the significance of this study, while the final section (Section 1.7) provides an overview of the structure of the dissertation.

1.2 Background of the study

ISIS stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, which is a movement that originated in 2003 after the U.S. military invasion in Iraq (Juergensmeyer, 2018). It is also known by other names, e.g., the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Daesh, which means ‘bullies.’ The name connotes a derogatory meaning in the Arabic language, which was rejected by the group. A recent rebranding was given by Dar al-Iftaa Al-Missriyyah (2016) as Al-Qaeda Separatist in Iraq and Syria (QSI) to separate this group from being associated with Muslim. In this study, however, this group will be referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The uprising trend of violent extremism relating to ISIS has increasingly expanded its global influence. Up until now, ISIS has associated itself with various terrorist attacks targeting countries such as the United States, France, Turkey, and organisations viewed as the enemy of Islam. The past decade has seen the emergence of ISIS’s related incidents that had impacted the global citizens in various ways, either physically or psychologically. Such incidents have further strengthened the already deep-rooted Islamophobia, especially among Western society. This research investigates the emerging violence threats by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) group, specifically, on the way violence is being justified to appeal to their audience.

Various studies have taken account to understand the nature of ISIS group and their impactful ways on the worldwide scale in various mode of address (Torres-Soriano, 2016 (Twitter); Wignell, Tan & mcky, 2016 (magazine); Winkler et al., 2016; Wignell et al., 2017; Wilbur, 2017 (magazine); Mcnair & Frank, 2017 (video); Rawi, 2018 (video game)). In this study, however, *Rumiyah* magazine had been chosen as its focal sample to understand the process of legitimization constructed in the magazine, which favours ISIS's actions. Thus, this data-driven study engages a multimodal approach consisting of van Leeuwen's legitimation strategies and Kress and van Leeuwen's visual social semiotic framework to unveil the potential ramification on the masses.

The narratives brought by ISIS in their diverse platforms are heavily weighed on the violence theme. Much of the narratives revolve around ISIS's fundamental values and world views (Wignell, Tan & O'Halloran, 2016) and how the world should abide by such values and views. Apart from that, various form of narratives is constructed, especially in the written medium (magazine), to expand the rift between the groups that align with ISIS's values and those who are opposed to it. Fairclough (2003) noted on the causal effects a text would have on society. Prolonged exposure to ideological imbued narratives would contribute to the changes in beliefs, attitudes, identities, and values of the affected societies (Fairclough, 2003). Consequently, such exposure to violence influenced discourses led to a series of incidents that are destructive and harmful to societies.

1.3 Research Problem

A vast literature in terrorism studies have highlighted the effect of ISIS's propaganda on its audiences (O'Halloran et al., 2016; Fishman, 2016; Wignell, Tan & O'Halloran, 2016; Ingram, 2016; Wilbur, 2017; Westphal, 2018; Feyyaz, 2019; VanderBerg, 2019). Engel, as cited in Wilbur (2017), noted the aggressiveness brought by ISIL had an endless cycle of violence that resonates with their audiences. In today's century, the process of

reaching global audiences require only access to the Internet. The emergence of twenty-first technology entangled with the reinvention of seventh-century theology (Wignell, Tan & O'Halloran, 2017) has led to the rise of high-end production of materials by violent extremist groups which ease and speed up the dissemination. *Dabiq*, *Inspire*, and *Rayat al-Tawheed* are examples of high-end materials use as platforms for the ISIS group to attract and recruit supporters.

To problematize this issue, the danger of false and misleading narratives can lead to detrimental consequences – especially on a worldwide scale. Dar al-Iftaa Al-Missriyyah (2016) highlighted that *Inspire* magazine had included instruction for making a bomb and method to carry out a suicidal attack. JJTM (2016), on the other hand, reported on the killing in Bangladesh committed by the ISIS's suicide bomber, which boldly advertised in another ISIS's publication, *Dabiq*. The extensive manifestation of violence propagated by the self-declared Islamic State (IS) has sparked individual movements carried out across the globe. Several incidents concerning actions associated with the ISIS group encompassed suicidal bombing, kidnappings, murder (Al-Jazeera, 2017; nbcnews.com, 2019; nytimes.com, 2019). The United Nation Security Council in 2015 had estimated that between 20 000 and 30 000 foreign fighters flew to Syria and Iraq over the year of 1980 to 2010 (Hegghammer, as cited in Ingram, 2016). All the stated incidents exemplify the consequences of ISIS's ideology on targeted audiences' decision-making processes.

While many researchers had employed a qualitative approach to investigate ISIS's propaganda and influences, the research in the legitimization of perpetuated violent acts, however, is still scarce. The studies of legitimization are often being invested in political speeches (Reyes, 2011; Al-Tahmazi, 2017; Oddo, 2018), organizational studies (Vaara, Tienari & Laurila, 2006; Vaara, 2014), and refugees (Rojo & van Dijk, 1997; van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999). Much so, the lack of studies on the legitimization of social

practices, especially in terrorism studies, indicates a notable gap that can be explored further. Vaara et al., (2006) further argued that there is a lack of knowledge when it comes to the reconstruction of the sense of legitimacy or illegitimacy in terms of discursive processes, practices, and strategies used. This notion validates the gap, as mentioned earlier, and highlights its significance for this research. Additionally, the lack of attention given to visual legitimacy and its fundamental role in legitimizing social actions is also one of the factors that steer the focus of this study.

On that note, there are a few scholars who catered their research to understand the concept of visual legitimacy. Wignell et al., (2016, 2017) exemplified the use of social semiotics model to investigate the interaction between language and images of ISIS materials and how it works to recruit supporters and militant fighters in their study. The findings led to the discovery of the use of bonding icons, intertextuality references of Quranic scriptures, and the recontextualization process (Wignell et al., 2016). Such findings indicate a possibility for a further investigation into the underlying potential of ISIS's practices and its legitimacy. However, models on legitimacy are somewhat limited in its capability to derive a form of legitimization in terms of semiotic resources, although legitimization can be realized visually (van Leeuwen, 2005). McKay's (2015) framework on multimodal legitimation is an example of a model that tackles the issue of legitimacy from both visual and textual angles. However, many studies utilized this methodology (McKay, 2015; Chaidas, 2018) mainly focus on the political advertisements to find a correlation between legitimation and discourses (Chaidas, 2018) within the CDS paradigm. These studies emphasized on political videos that heavily weighed on sequences of shots and scenes rather than static images and texts, thus, rendered its compatibility to the current set of data. Therefore, this study integrates the legitimation strategies (van Leeuwen, 2005; 2008) and visual social semiotic framework (Kress and

van Leeuwen, 2006) to examine the construction of legitimization in the *Rumiyah* magazine.

1.4 Research Aims

This research investigates the emerging violence threats by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) group, specifically, on the way violence is being justified to appeal to their audience. This study focuses on understanding the legitimization process of violence in the *Rumiyah* magazine and unravels its realization discursively and visually. The objective is also extended to investigate the recontextualization of the intertextuality elements and their contribution to the construction of legitimacy.

1.5 Research Questions

Thus, to further understand the designated objectives, this study will address two questions:

1. How are ISIS violent practices legitimized discursively?
2. How are ISIS violent practices legitimized visually?

Each of the research questions carries an essential key point to this study. The first question looks at the textual part of the data in order to textually analyse the process of legitimization using van Leeuwen's legitimization strategies framework. The analytical procedure goes through the social practice analysis to extract the recurring practices committed by the ISIS group in the selected articles. Then, manual close reading is then employed on the sample to identify the legitimization strategies. The second research question, on the other hand, utilizes Kress and van Leeuwen's visual social semiotics framework to identify the semiotic resources in the sample and interpret its meaning potential concerning visual legitimacy.

Table 1.1: Research Questions and Data with the Respective Frameworks

Research question	Data analysed	Analytical framework
Research Question 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How ISIS's violent practices legitimized discursively? 	The analysed data is a corpus of 26444 words as the textual data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventorize the social practice elements (van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; van Leeuwen, 2005; van Leeuwen, 2008) • Manual close reading (van Leeuwen, 2005, 2008)
Research Question 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How ISIS's violent practices legitimized visually? 	The visual data analysed are the semiotic resources found in the 14 pages of semiotic resources with 20 photographic images analysed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual analysis using VSS framework by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006)

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study intends to shed new light on the fields of legitimation, social semiotics, and critical discourse studies (CDS). Much of the studies in legitimation is often lacking from the semiotics perspectives. Somewhat less is known when it comes to visual legitimacy, especially on how visual functions as a legitimation to justify certain aspects of constructions, ideologies, and practices. Therefore, the results of this study may serve as a contribution to the current literature on legitimation (textual and visual), semiotics, and CDS. VanderBerg (2019) stated that the field of terrorism still lack comprehensive frameworks in analysing and classifying reasons of an extremist movement. Thus, this research may also serve as a contribution in conceptualizing the notion of terrorism acts and understanding of the potential impact of legitimizing and normalising violence amongst the general Muslim population. Besides, the findings are also expected to add to the literature of legitimation strategies pertaining to terrorism studies and how such discourse(s) are being used as vehicles to legitimize and promote violence and gain supporters.

1.7 Thesis Organization

The overall dissertation is structured into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study by introducing the relevant information pertaining to the research context, problematization, aims, research questions, and the significance of the study. In Chapter 2, the fundamental notions are conceptualized in order to establish a deeper understanding of the study. In addition, the relevant literature on the chosen frameworks is reviewed to provide the study with a comprehensive understanding of the methodology used and identifying the research gap. Chapter 3 discusses the design of the study and its chosen frameworks in detail. A detailed description of the data both for the textual and visual is described together with the process involves in data collection and analytical procedure. The overall findings and its discussions of the legitimization of violence are highlighted in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 summarizes the study by highlighting the significant findings and discusses the implications of the study and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section outlines the framework and defines the notion that will be used in this study, namely, critical discourse analysis, multimodal and legitimization, multimodality, social semiotics, discursive legitimization, and a brief explanation of the frameworks used. The focus of this section is to highlight the previous studies that had dealt with the notion of legitimation, social semiotics, and ISIS associated studies. Studies pertaining to these topics are reviewed to identify and understand the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in these studies in order to provide a foundation for the current study. Section 2.2 briefly describes the notion of critical discourse analysis used and its tenets. In section 2.3, the notion of multimodality and legitimization is conceptualized and discussed in terms of multimodality, social semiotics, and discursive legitimization. The chapter continues with section 2.4, which describes the notion of ISIS, terrorism, and violence. Last but not least, Section 2.5 describes the mode of address chosen in the study i.e., an online magazine. The final section, section 2.6, sums up the overall idea of this chapter.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA) is a problem-oriented, interdisciplinary approach that studies complex social phenomena, ideological, and political dimensions (Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Cameron & Panović, 2014). CDA or, termed by Van Dijk, critical discourse studies (CDS) is a normative critique of discourse, leading to the explanatory critique of relations between discourse and other social elements of the existing social reality, as a basis for action to change reality for the better (Fairclough, 2001). CDA critical tenets consist of power, ideology, and critique. The roots of CDA, despite its different approaches, share similar dimensions, i.e., study ‘naturally occurring

languages,' focus beyond the linguistic units of analysis such as texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts et cetera., expedite beyond the grammatical domain towards the study of actions and interaction. Furthermore, CDA is interested in demystifying hidden ideologies and unravel the power-play in a variety of discourses through a systematic, multi-methodical approach.

As aforementioned, the central concepts in CDA commonly consist of discourse, power, ideology, and critique. These notions, being the focalized tenets in various CDA-oriented studies, often being specified and operationalized according to the referred domain of discourses. Thus, this section will briefly highlight the definitions of discourse and ideology, which is used in this study, drawn from prominent scholars to illuminate a clearer understanding of the chosen approach.

Discourse, based on Fairclough and Wodak's understanding, is defined as;

'CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. [...] Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways they represent things and position people' (cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2009)

Discourse is viewed as a social practice (Fairclough, 2001) in which there is an inherent link between 'discourse' and 'social practice' (van Leeuwen, 2005). This link indicates that discourse derives from social practice in which it, then, constructs certain social practices within a different domain. In relation to this study, the social practices (violent practice) are mediated through discourse (magazine discourse), which end up constructing the said social practices outside of the practices' domain. In this study, however, the notion of 'discourse' is drawn from Foucault's definition which viewed it

as ‘ways of constituting knowledge, together with social practice, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere such knowledge and relations between them’ (cited in Weedon, 1987).

The notion of ideology, based on van Dijk (1995), typically expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs and movies. In addition, ideologies are also enacted in other forms of action and interaction, and their production is often embedded in an organizational and institutional context. Thus, ISIS’s ideologies may be expressed and reproduced through terrorist discourse embedded in a religious discourse which serves as a vehicle in disseminating the ideology. Van Dijk (cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2009) views ideologies as the ‘worldviews’ that constitute of ‘social cognition’ that is schematically organized complexes and attitudes with regard to certain aspects of the social world.

The emerging awareness of the multimodal phenomenon in discourse has shifted the focus of analysis onto ‘semiotics devices rather than linguistics devices’ (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) in media discourse, specifically. Prominent scholars in semiotics, i.e. Van Leeuwen, forward their models and frameworks to investigate the semiotic resources in multimodal discourses. In this study, a multimodal approach consists of van Leeuwen (2008) legitimation strategies and Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) visual social semiotics metafunctions are utilized to understand the process legitimization of violence in *Rumiyah*. The chosen approach is considered due to the systematic metafunctions of the framework and strategies that enable explicit and detailed analysis of the resources identified in the multimodal discourse.

2.3 Multimodality and Legitimization

The study in the field of multimodality and legitimization has been rarely explored. Although these notions had been studied separately by many researchers in different field of discourses, the integration of legitimization in multimodality is still scarce. Various sub-disciplines of multimodality emerge throughout the years, for instance, multimodal discourse analysis (O'Halloran, 2008, 2011), multimodal interaction analysis (Norris, 2004) and multimodal social semiotic (Wignell, Tan & O'Halloran, 2017; O'Halloran et al., 2016). Multimodal legitimation, however, still requires immediate attention as the rising of various discourses are overwhelmed with multimodal materials.

Despite being a relatively new sub-discipline, multimodal legitimation had been studied by different scholars focusing on various discourses (Mckay, 2013, 2015; Pagani, 2014; Chaidas, 2018). However, as until now, this notion is somewhat still underdeveloped (Pagani, 2014). Machin (2013) renegotiated the notion of multimodal legitimation by discussing the ideas pertain to the complexity of multimodality in discourses, the lack of critical works in the discourse of legitimacy beyond the linguistic level and harnessing the CDS ideologies through non-linguistics means. It is further noted that all levels of communicative activities are infused and shaped by power relations and ideologies (Machin, 2013). To put merely, semiotic resources are bound to be ideological. Machin further explained this by providing an analogy of visual representation of 'Muslimness' through an image of a woman in Burhka (veil). The implied meaning of the image indicates that images are polysemic, thus, making it susceptible to viewers' interpretations and reinforcing their ideological beliefs.

Hence, drawing on this gap, this research aims to explore the relation between multimodality and legitimization in order to understand how legitimacy is conceptualized and realized from the combination of semiotic resources and linguistics. In order to

provide clarity, the term multimodality and legitimization is operationally defined, and studies pertaining to these two aspects are discussed in relation to the aim of this research.

2.3.1 Multimodality

Multimodality, in van Leeuwen's (2011) definition, is defined as a field of a study investigating the common properties of different modes in the multimodal mix and the way they integrate and interact in multimodal texts and communicative events. Machin (2016) shared a similar notion of multimodality as an approach that systematically describes the range of semiotics choices available and how they are used in a social context. Following Kress and Van Leeuwen's notion of multimodality, as cited in Machin (2016), they described it as a grammar visual that is used to analyse the rules and principles to enable viewers to understand the meaning potential of the semiotic modes. Kress (2010) notion of multimodality looks at how different modes are used to communicate meaning. Thus, the operationalized meaning of the term multimodality indicates that in the process of communication, language is not the only mode that is being communicated, but it is also simultaneously accompanied by other modes; e.g. visual, sound and language (Kress & Van Leeuwen as cited in Machin, 2007) to negotiate the meaning potential of multimodal text.

In the recent decade, the idea of discourses communicated through modes other than linguistics had been extensively studied. Many branches of multimodality had emerged, as mentioned earlier, such as multimodal discourse analysis, multimodal interactional analysis, multimodal social semiotics that investigate a different type of discourses in variety mode of address. Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) is one of the branches of multimodality that study language in combination with other resources such as images, scientific symbols, gestures, action, music and sound (O'Halloran, 2011). Language and other resources such as print materials, videos, websites, three-dimensional objects are

identified as ‘multimodal phenomena’ and the examples mentioned are called by various names, e.g. ‘semiotic resources’, ‘modes’, and ‘modalities’. Halliday (cited in O’Halloran, 2011) referred to semiotic resources as systems of meaning that constitute the reality of the culture.

Several reasons are responsible for the shift from the study of language to the integration of language and semiotic resources. Discourse analysts have found the importance of studying the meaning that arises from multiple semiotic resources found in various media. Furthermore, the technologies to develop new methodological approaches have become available and affordable. Van Leeuwen (2004) highlights the importance of visual communication in linguistics studies. The emerging multimodal materials through various modes of address, i.e. the Internet, film, television, magazine, and et cetera, called for a holistic approach that extends its coverage into the semiotics and nonverbal categories. To sum, the fundamental key point discussed by van Leeuwen referred to the reformation of speech act into a communicative act in which the multimodal elements or signs are integrated into a single communicative act. In the multimodal discourse, directives and interactions co-occur with nonverbal signs, i.e. voice, gestures, facial expressions to create meaning. By accounting its nonverbal aspects, linguists can holistically study the intended meaning of communication acts. This way, the integration of visual communication and linguistics is necessary in order to unravel discovery in the field of critical discourse studies.

O’Halloran and Smith (2012) highlighted the challenges, strategies, and application of multimodal text analysis in achieving the communicative functions of a text. The increasing use of multimodal materials in modern discourse indicated the need of a complex framework that can analyse the meaning potential of different semiotic resources and its affordances (O’Halloran & Smith, 2012). Another constraint of multimodal

analysis is seen in the studies of speech and modalities. The lack of resources in accessing and annotating dynamic audio-visual media (O'Halloran & Smith, 2012) added the struggle in the multimodal analysis. Thus, the lack of empirical researches of the particular field brew unsatisfactory results which limit the extent of the field. Such limitation urges the need for a systematic approach in analysing multimodal texts. Van Leeuwen (2012) expressed similar notion by making a clear distinction between multimodality and critical discourse analysis and how the merger of the two necessitates the need for a legitimate field of study in analysing the evolving multimodal discourse. The range of scholarly works were highlighted to conceptualize the notion, i.e. O'Toole, Kress & Hodge, Machin, and, his collaboration, Kress & van Leeuwen. Van Leeuwen (2012) demonstrated and discussed the use of critical analysis of multimodal discourse on two examples by drawing Machin's study of photographs and van Leeuwen's representation of social actors. In the article, van Leeuwen raised concern of the need for a critical aspect and attention towards multimodal discourses as the nature of the discourse itself is becoming highly multimodal.

Machin (2016b) highlighted the gap in multimodality conceptualization by noting its inconsistency in defining the terminology. The unclear definition of the notion rendered it 'fragmented' and insufficient when analysing ideological discourses in all forms of communication. Forceville, as Machin referred, suggested integrating complex media with nonverbal elements, i.e. gestures in developing systematic tools that are sufficient to analyse multimodal discourse. Further discussion on multimodality centred around the pioneer works in multimodality. Kress and van Leeuwen's *Reading Images* and O'Toole's *The Language of Displayed Art* are discussed in Machin's article in terms of its contribution and development. In this current study, Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) framework is used as one of the analytical frameworks to analyse the semiotic resources

of the sample. Another issue raised in this article is that the approach of analysis partakes in multimodality is rather descriptive.

Moreover, interdisciplinary research has become common as scientists aim to solve similar problems. Hence, there are several approaches to multimodal discourse analysis that had been demonstrated by several other researchers. The foundations for multimodal research were established by Kress, Van Leeuwen, and O'Toole, which they drew from Halliday's social semiotic approach to language. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) further expand it to a (top-down) contextual approach with an emphasis on ideology illustrated through text analysis. O'Toole (as cited in Van Leeuwen, 2012) on the other hand, developed a grammatical approach by working closely with a specific text. Other subsequent researchers based their researches on these foundations and extended it to various new domains. For instance, Cameron & Panović (2014) discussed the emerging field of multimodal discourse analysis. Drawing from Van Leeuwen's notion of 'multimodal' as understanding the communicative functions of discourses through the integration of modes, Cameron & Panović further discussed the gap concerning the methodology highlighting the lack of suitable frameworks to take account the nonverbal signals seen in the multimodal discourse. Such gap concerned with the possible communicative meaning established through the nonverbal signs identified in spoken and written discourses.

2.3.2 Social Semiotics

Semiotics, according to Harrison (2003), is the 'study of signs'. The terminology is derived from a Greek word, *sēmeion*, which translated as 'sign' (Nöth, 2011). The field of semiotics is based on the foundation established by Ferdinand de Saussure whom traditional semiotics revolved around the dyadic notion of 'signified' and 'signifier'. Another prominent scholar in which semiotics is based on is Charles. S. Peirce, who

introduced the triadic concepts, i.e. icon, index and symbol, which often adapted by semioticians in their studies. Saussure believed that signs are arbitrary in which the ‘signifier’ has no inherent correlation with the ‘signified’. Van Leeuwen (2005), rejected the notion and extenuated that signs are motivated. Peirce’s concept of ‘icon’ and ‘index’ supports van Leeuwen’s argument as ‘icon’ is a sign that had a partial resemblance of the thing that is being signified, while for an ‘index’ sign, the meaning of the signifier has a causal relation to the signified. This claim is further supported by Kress (cited in Van Leeuwen, 2005) where it is stated that ‘signs are always motivated by the producer’s “interest”, and by characteristics of the object’. The fundamental idea that signs are not arbitrary but instead motivated implied the reason that semiotic resources are chosen and designed in a discourse, i.e. the multimodal text is carefully constructed by the producer(s) to influence the audiences and disseminate hidden ideologies.

Hjelmslev (cited in Machin, 2016), distinguished the idea of semiotics into two categories; substance and form. The idea of ‘signified’ and ‘signifier’ shifts from identifying the symbolism in a multimodal context to the semiotic production; where meanings are interpreted. Barthes (cited in Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) idea of semiotics focuses on the layer of meaning. It revolved around the question on the matter of ‘representation’ and ‘hidden values’ of the depicted images. In his terms, it is called denotation and connotation. In short, denotation works with ‘who/what is represented in the image?’ (Machin, 2016). It is the first layer that identifies the literal content of an image. Connotation, on the other hand, deals with the ‘values’ and ‘ideas’ that can be derived from the image. It brings together the notion of cultural association (cited in Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) and historical.

The notion of ideology in signs is highly influenced by Barthes ideological layer of signification (Aiello, 2006). Ideology, as cited in Aiello (2006), is ‘a set of socially

constructed meanings or norms that become embedded and naturalized in the cultural fabric, to the extent that they become invisible or common sense'. In that sense, conventional cultural belief systems are prone to be ideological and heavily influencing social practices. On top of that, the myth in semiotics domain indicates a cultural belief in which it is widely accepted within a culture regardless of its accuracy. Being the highest order of signification, in Barthesian cultural studies, myth is somewhat associated with hidden values that relate to historical, political, sociological and religious issues. It carries the hidden ideology that imbued at the connotative level. At one point, Barthes argued that mythical signification tends to pass certain ideologies as being natural or appear 'that's how the way things are' situation (Chandler, 2007). Thus, the ideological meaning of signs, which is context-dependent, is activated at the connotative level through audiences' interpretations of the semiotic resources.

The field of semiotics indicates a shift of focus as the majority of recent studies leans towards social semiotics as compared to structural semiotics. Recent studies indicated an interest in analyzing the pragmatic of the speakers, producers, or participants rather than investigating the system of codes per se. Structural semioticians concerned with the way signs described people, instead of investigating the motives of portrayed semiotic resources (Vannini, 2007). In social semiotics, which is the approach adopted in this study, Harrison (2003) drawn the notion from Lemke which stated that '...it is a synthesis of several modern approaches to the study of social meaning and social action...'. The approach taken by social semioticians weighs more in understanding beyond the structure relationship (Aiello, 2006) of codes; instead, it explores systematically on the strategies used in discourse to deliver meaning to wider audiences.

Due to that notion, social semiotics adopted different conventions in describing the discourses. For starter, the term '*semiotic resources*' is introduced to replace the

terminology 'codes' or 'signs' which main concerns are to unravel the denotative and connotative meaning of a sign. 'Semiotic resources', in van Leeuwen (2005), are the actions, materials and artefacts we use for communicative purposes, whether produced physiologically or technologically together with the ways in which these resources can be organized. In addition, 'resources' have meaning potential, which divided into two, namely 'theoretical semiotic potential' and 'actual semiotic potential' (van Leeuwen, 2005). The former is consisting of all its past uses and potential uses, while the latter, consists of uses that are known by specific users with specific needs (Vannini, 2007). The semiotic potentials of the *resources* in multimodal discourse are the aspect that is given attention as the meaning derived is not only as a means of communicative exchange but rather the production of cultural histories (Aiello, 2006). Other terminologies account for are *semiotic change* which indicates the meaning of resource can transform over time. *Semiotic rules* are divided into two categories; *lexicon rules* that concern with the relation between the 'signified' and the 'signifier', and *grammar rules* which concern with the visual syntax of an image (Vannini, 2007).

Semiotic resources are meant as a tool for critical analysis (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001). In order to understand its application, several studies utilizing visual social semiotics approach are reviewed. Hasan (n.d.) demonstrated the use of visual social semiotics to investigate the way meaning is created and exchanged by the journalists concerning the climate change crisis. The study examined two online newspapers from two different countries, i.e. *The Star* (Malaysia) and *Spiegel* (Germany). The analysis accounts for the images of climate change, headlines, and captions of the visual. Following Harrison (2003), Hasan conceptualized the coding system based on Kress and van Leeuwen's framework to analyse the sample. The result indicates that meaning-making of the climate crisis is associative in nature. The findings indicate that the representation of the crisis is

constructed as a 'choice' that either benefit the economy or the environment, a danger and threat, and as a metaphor to fuel political empowerment.

In another study, Ahmadgoli and Yazdanjoo (2019) employ a semiotics approach to analyse the distinction of registers used and enacted in a film entitled, *A Separation* (2011). The study focuses on the visual representation of the film utilizing one of Kress and van Leeuwen's metafunctions; representational meaning. The analysis of the film exhibits the overarching theme of tension between the traditional and modernity notion of separation in the current context of Iranian society which realized through the narrative processes. The symbolic notion of the film is identified from the characterisation of the main protagonists that denotes patriarchal tradition and feminine disobedience (Ahmadgoli & Yazdanjoo, 2019). Unlike Hasan's (n.d.) study which focuses on static images, headlines and captions, this study looks at multimodal materials which consist of moving images, sounds, plotline, and et cetera that are complex in nature.

Gellen and Lowe (2020) exemplified a critical stance in analysing ideological discourses in visual adverts of British charity foundation. Semiotics notion of this study is drawn from the Barthesian school of thoughts. The study employs multimodal critical discourse analysis in evaluating and investigating the power-discourse, ideologies and intergroup relations constructed in charity foundation. The outcome of the discursive and visual analysis indicates a 'paradoxical ideological narrative' (Gellen & Lowe, 2020) interactions in the British charity's visual adverts. The distinctive notions of egalitarianism and cultural domination, loaded emotional emancipation, colonial and post-colonial empowerment make up the ideologies identified in the visual discourse. This study exemplified the crucial roles of images in 'building, naturalizing, and reinforcing ideological messages of discourses' (Ahmadgoli & Yazdanjoo, 2019). The aforementioned studies demonstrated the extent of visual social semiotics in terms of its

application and phenomena it involves in. However, this current study employs multimodal discourse analysis which integrates visual social semiotics and legitimation strategies to understand the process of legitimization both in text and semiotics domains.

2.3.3 Discursive Legitimization

Van Dijk defined legitimation as a discourse that explains and justifies social activity and typically involves ‘good reasons, grounds or acceptable motivations for past or present actions’ (as cited in Oddo, 2011). In this study, the notion of legitimation follows Berger and Luckmann’s definition which stated that;

Legitimation provides the ‘explanation’ and ‘justifications’ of the salient elements of the institutional tradition. (It) ‘explains’ the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings and (...) justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives. (as cited in van Leeuwen, 2007)

Legitimization, in that sense, connotes the idea that social practices, being good or bad, are legitimized through reasons and justifications designed by an institutional tradition to enable their practices. The field of legitimization is often studied in critical discourse analysis. In fact, a number of literature on legitimation studies had been extensively investigated in various fields of critical discourse studies. These fields include political discourse (Rojo & van Dijk, 1997), immigrant discourse (van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Reyes, 2011), war legitimation discourse (Oddo, 2011), police violence discourse (Hirschfield & Simon, 2010), organizational studies (Vaara, Tienari & Laurila, 2006; Vaara, 2014) and et cetera. Much of the extension of legitimation studies is owed to van Leeuwen’s legitimation framework that had conceptualised the study of legitimization. Van Leeuwen’s (2006, 2007, 2008) framework had been utilized and extended by researchers to accommodate their research focus and objectives. While the basic strategies proposed by van Leeuwen consists of (1) authorization, (2) rationalization, (3)

moral evaluation, and (4) mythopoesis, many other researchers continued to extend the legitimation framework.

Vaara, Tienari & Laurila (2006) identified the lack of explicit analysis of legitimation in organizational studies involving the analysis of discursive processes, practices, and strategies in identifying legitimacy. The inadequacy of a complex, meaning-making process led to the conceptualization of ground model that accounts for the micro-level discursive strategies through the study of discursive legitimation in media. Vaara et al. (2006) focus on the micro-level textual practices and strategies in order to investigate the (re)construction sense of legitimacy and illegitimacy. Legitimacy, in this study, is conceptualized as 'discursively created a sense of acceptance in specific discourses or orders of discourses' which drawn from Fairclough's understanding of socio-cultural change in discourse. The earlier work on legitimacy referred to in Vaara's study is van Leeuwen's 'grammar of legitimation' that identifies legitimation strategies from the practices. However, it was noted that such a framework is unsuitable in a discursive context such as the media.

Vaara et al., (2006) highlighted the generality of the framework and its lack of suitability in media discourse, specifically relating to the intertextual elements. Hence, an empirically grounded model is established in this study, which consists of strategies, e.g. (1) normalization, (2) authorization, (3) rationalization, (4) moralization, and (5) narrativization. Another extended legitimation framework is proposed by Reyes (2011) in the study of political discourse. In which, he argues that context and power interplay as to allow certain practices being viewed as the truth and legitimized by the political actors. The categories proposed are (1) legitimization through emotions, (2) legitimization through hypothetical future, (3) legitimization through rationality, (4)

voices of expertise, and (5) altruism. In this research, however, much of the analysis utilized van Leeuwen's framework as the primary unit of analysis for textual data.

Aside from Vaara et al., and Reyes's studies, a large and growing body of literature had also investigated the notion of legitimation from the CDS perspective. Earlier studies, Rojo & van Dijk (1997), for instance, analysed Mayor Oreja's speech pertaining to the forced expulsion of 'illegal' migrants to several parts of Africa. Utilizing van Leeuwen's 'grammar of legitimation' this study discovered various properties of discursive legitimation from the pragmatic, semantic, and socio-political perspectives used in the parliamentary speech. The overall findings indicated extensive use of 'negative-other and positive-self' representation of the migrants to legitimize the expulsion. Van Leeuwen & Wodak (1999), on the other hand, triangulate the discourse-historical approach with systemic-functionally oriented methodology to textually analysed Austrian government's official letters on rejecting immigrant family reunion applications. The findings showed that the discursive practice of 'rejecting' the applications were legitimized by delineating the values hold by the immigrants and the natives. It was presented as a sense of morality, which termed as a *moral abstraction*. This strategy is the most occurring form of legitimation strategies in the official letters.

Looking at recent studies on legitimization, Oddo (2011) studied the political speeches that call for the need for war. This study exhibits fascinating perspectives in the study of legitimation that explores the Us/Them polarization as the key indicator of legitimacy. Drawing on Thibault's critical intertextual analysis, Oddo, analyses four political speeches by two prominent American presidents, i.e., Franklin D. Roosevelt and George W. Bush. Based on the analysis, three types of legitimation strategies stem from the polarization of Us/Them, namely, (1) legitimation by moral evaluation, (2) legitimation by temporality, and (3) legitimation by the demarcation of groups. Much of the findings

identified in this study pose certain similarities in the current study. More of the findings are discussed in chapter 4.

Vaara (2014) exemplified the work of van Leeuwen's by analysing the discourse(s) pertaining to the Eurozone crisis. The focal point of this study is to explain the discursive legitimation of the crisis by analysing the legitimation strategies and its usage in legitimation, delegitimation, and relegitimation. The outcome of the study noted on the construction of legitimacy through various discursive strategies, i.e., position-based authorization, knowledge-based authorization, rationalization, moral evaluation, alternative future projections through mythopoesis, and legitimization through cosmological argumentation in which hypothetical future of the crisis is constructed as an inevitability as the 'only choice' option.

In Chaidas (2018), the study focuses on the legitimating discourse of a political party, New Democracy (ND), in their electoral campaign advertisements during the Greece financial crisis in 2008. The study adapted Mackay's multimodal legitimation framework and incorporated narratology as a part of the framework in order to provide rigorous analyses of the discourse. Basing on Genette's notion of narratology, Chaidas analyses the role of narratives, emphasizing on perspective, in the construction of legitimation both in textual and semiotics forms. The overall analysis of the electoral advertisements campaign indicates the use of the discourse of fear, i.e., scaremongering and warning as a form of legitimacy. This strategy is realized through the portrayal of social actors' verbal and nonverbal cues, i.e., dialogue, news, facial expression, music, that exhibits the notion. The aforementioned studies clarify the concept of discursive legitimation and its usage in different field of discourses, thus, provide a sense of foundation to the current study to understand the legitimation process of violent practices in the *Rumiyah* magazine.

2.4 ISIS, Terrorism, and Violence

Fishman (2016) stated that the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) group is founded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The emergence of ISIS group is noted as the resurrection of another terrorist group, prior to ISIS, Al-Qaeda. Hove (2018) conceptualized ISIS as 'a transnational terrorist group' who responsible for the chaos in the Middle East, i.e., Syria and Iraq. The question of ISIS as a terrorist group has been explored since it is known to the world. The evolution of ISIS is greatly affected by the U.S. 2003 invasion of Iraq, which heavily influenced the power shift of the group (Westphal, 2018).

Terrorism definition, according to Feyyaz (2019), has been contested since its first exploration. Various scholars had argued over the definitive conceptualization of the notion of whether it is sufficiently important to define the meaning of terrorism. The conceptualization of terrorism is rather problematic and difficult to achieve its consensus (Feyyaz, 2019; Ferguson & McAuley, 2019; VanderBerg, 2019). Due to that, Feyyaz conceptualized the notion using Revised Academic Consensus Definition (RACD) by Schmid by contextualizing it as performative violence. Feyyaz (2019) defined terrorism as 'an extreme form of lethal violence committed against targets of hues ... motivated by political objectives'. However, the definition is rather Pakistani-oriented as the context where the notion derived was taken from discourses, i.e., propaganda magazines, public statements, and et cetera, in Pakistan context. The indefinite notion of terrorism warrants a review on its own, which is required in order to explain the emerging patterns in the current set of data.

Johnston and Bose (n.d.) discussed the moral logic of terrorism by contesting the moral horizons of the state in question. Noting on the deficiency of power and legitimacy in terrorism, Johnston & Bose explored the constitutive logic used by terrorists to trigger the

internal moral compass of the public. Amongst the discussed notions are the act of terrorism as a form of revenge, which was contested with a view that describes the violence enacted by terrorists as a constructed rational means of moral discourse. The discussion of moral logic in Johnston & Bose aids in explaining the moralized violent practices identified in the current study.

VanderBerg (2019) stated the need for an analytical framework to analyse compelling, persuasive narratives used to radicalize people in endorsing or participating in terrorism acts. Hence, a framework to assist in analyzing narratives frame that legitimizes political violence was introduced. In the framework, VanderBerg outlined different types of framing used to analyse the narratives frame, i.e., defensive framing, moralistic framing, legalistic framing, imperialistic framing, and apocalyptic framing. This framework aids the discussion of the strategic narratives found in *Rumiyah*.

Braddock (2015) explored the role of radicalization in the context of terrorism. Due to the different conceptualization of the notion, Braddock termed it as a process that influences an individual with a particular set of beliefs and attitudes. The thematic analysis conducted on the narrative data collected from Animal Liberation Front's website indicates that radicalization is promoted through various themes, i.e., identification of character in a story, emotional responses, and delineation of in-group and out-group. The overall findings of this study exemplified and supplemented the current findings as it presents similarities in terms of narratives and us/them representation.

In retrospect, the aforementioned studies exemplified the different objectives in analyzing terrorism in various contexts. Despite the reviewed studies, the definitions of terrorism and violence are still vague and ambiguous. Thus, in order to have clear

parameters that govern the sample selection and analytical process, this study adopts the definition of terrorism by Grant Wardlaw;

“...the use of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group...” (cited in Tugwell, 1986)

Similarly, the notion of violence is conceptualized by referring to Collins (2003) and Fishman & Marvin (2003). Violence, in this study, is operationalized as a form of an attempt by an individual or group to inflict physical or psychological damages and injuries on others through verbal, nonverbal, or physical means. Violence, in a visual sense, is realized through three forms, i.e., explicit violence (violent images with immediate intentional application of physical force or its effects), latent violence (violent images with latent application of physical and psychological effects) and dramatic violence (violent images that serve as an amusement or diversion).

2.4.1 Previous studies on ISIS and Terrorism

The study of terrorism focusing on ISIS group had been conducted in various aspects consisting of its influence, propaganda, ideologies, and et cetera. Various studies have exemplified the relationship between the ISIS group and terrorism in terms of its association with the fundamentals that attribute ISIS to a terrorist group. Despite the variety of studies on terrorism and ISIS, this section reviewed relevant studies used in tandem to the discussion of findings in this study.

Wignell, Tan, and O'Halloran (2016) explored the meaning condensed through the integration of text and image in the multimodal text, *Dabiq*, produced by the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS). This study adopted a Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) approach focusing on iconisation to examine the construction of values and world views according to ISIS. The overall findings indicated that ISIS's

vision and values are exemplified through the use of bonding icons, i.e., hero, relic, and scripture. ISIS's values, namely *tawhid*, *hijrah*, *manhaj*, *jama'ah*, and *jihad* are imbued and realised in the multimodal text and reinforced ISIS world view. The prominent use of bonding icons can be identified from the ISIS flag, which is incorporated with several values, i.e., *jihad*, *tawhid*, and *jama'ah*. Wignell et al., (2016) concluded that ISIS portrayed their world view by delineating sides of which the believers and the *kufir* are in constant war with each other. Such values are accompanied by the elements that construct the bonding icons and having different roles to present ISIS's world view in *Dabiq* magazine.

O'Halloran et al., (2016) showcased a mixed-methods approach, which consists of multimodal discourse analysis, data mining, and information visualisation to investigate the perpetuation and re-contextualisation of violence in multimodal texts, *Dabiq*. The methodology employs in this research consists of social semiotics analyses of *Dabiq*, which later quantified using the multimodal annotation software. The data mining algorithm is then developed by integrating it with multimodal discourse approach to analyze the big data of the multimodal text. However, the linguistic nature of the sample called for the need for contextual information which was referred from Wikipedia.

The study provides an insight on handling big data using an integrated methodology that relies on qualitative and quantitative approaches. The methodology is used to provide another approach that can be utilized to deal with textual and visual data; however, due to the size of the current data, this study opted for a manual approach. In addition, the findings on the re-contextualisation of violence are relevant to the current study as the findings indicate a series of re-contextualisation process of the Quranic verses and hadith narrations.

Westphal (2018) investigated the ideological interpretation of the ISIS group and the way it justifies violence. The study employs social movement theory emphasizing on discursive framing processes to analyse multimodal texts, i.e., audio speeches and magazine (*Dabiq* and *Dar al-Islam*). Westphal further discussed Salafi-jihadism's fundamental concepts, i.e., *tawhid*, *al-wala' wa'l-brara'*, *takfir* influences on violence which serve as the foundation of ISIS's ideologies. The findings indicated the several categorizations that fuelled the ISIS movement and legitimized their actions, namely, othering rhetoric, collective identity, and justifying violence. The methodology and findings of this study serve as a reference to the current study as it explores the notion of legitimization in a similar context and setting, i.e., *Rumiyah*.

2.5 Magazine

The production of magazines has been through a series of phases throughout the last few decades. Carter (2001) noted on the shareable quality magazines of all publications possessed – *seriality*. Regardless of the length of time frame, the periodicity of the magazine occurs in all types of magazines, i.e., printed and online. The emerging of multimodal elements in text transformed the magazine market into becoming highly multimodal. In addition, the global expansion of the World Wide Web increased the coverage audiences reached through the Internet platform. Von Behr (cited in Wignell et al., 2017) stated that the Internet contributes to the radicalization process of individuals, groups, and societies. The online magazine, being distributed online, possesses the power to influence and shape the audiences' understandings of discursive practices and ideologies. In this study, the chosen mode of address for analysis is a series of online magazines, i.e., *Rumiyah*, a production by al-Hayat Media centre, which was published in September 2016 until September 2017 with 13 issues being the total amount of publication. Bunker and Bunker (2018) noted that there are eight languages used for the

publication, namely, English, French, German, Indonesian, Pashto, Russian, Turkish, and Uyghur. Additional languages were added in the later issues, i.e., Bosnian, Kurdish, and Urdu.

Magazine is ideologically loaded discourses (Conradie, 2011). The extent of a magazine in the public sphere is rather ideological. The dissemination of ideology through magazines has been researched to a certain extent in which through ‘repeated exposure to stereotypical portrayals’ (Taylor & Bang, 1997) will eventually reconfigure the society’s cognitive processes and consumption. Various studies in the magazine have associated its focal objective with advertising, gender roles, lifestyle, and et cetera. Many of the interests are on the representation of femininity, masculinity, racial stereotype, construction of gender roles, and et cetera. The recent emergence of radical and terrorism discourses through the Internet shows a variety of modes of address, i.e., audio-visual, video, online magazine, and video games et cetera, that were being used by a variety of institutional groups, specifically the ISIS, in disseminating propaganda and news pertaining to their activities. Recent studies in terrorism indicate burgeoning interest in terrorist discourses. Much of the studies focus on a variety of online magazines, i.e., *Inspire* and *Dabiq* (O’Halloran et al., 2016; Winkler et al., 2016; Ingram, 2016, 2017; Wignell, Tan & O’Halloran, 2016, 2017), however, despite the ample amount of studies conducted, the studies in the analysis of legitimization pertaining to violence in *Rumiyah* discourse remain scarce. To sum, this study focalized its objective in understanding the process of legitimization of violence in *Rumiyah* magazine.

2.6 Summary

In essence, I have conceptualized the relevant notions and literature used in this study. In addition, the reviewed studies pertaining to this research highlights a notable gap in the study of multimodality and legitimization on the limited focus of legitimization of

violence in terrorism discourses. The rise of terrorist attacks and incidents indicates the need for a more apparent distinction of the definitive notion in order to establish a better understanding of this social phenomena.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In what follows in this chapter is the description of the qualitative design in Section 3.2. Then, a brief description of the frameworks used in this study in Section 3.3 and the approach to the study in Section 3.4. Further descriptions of the data and procedures involved in the selection process are described in Section 3.5. Section 3.6 describes the methods of analysing the textual and visual data which follow the van Leeuwen's framework for legitimization strategies and Kress and van Leeuwen's framework of visual social semiotics. This section describes the process of analysing both textual and visual data using the chosen analytical frameworks. In this qualitative design, this study aims to find how legitimacy can be drawn from the combination of language and image in relation to violent practices.

Further discussion on the reliability and validity of the analysis is illustrated in Section 3.7. The ethical considerations and limitation are described in Section 3.8 and Section 3.9, respectively. Section 3.10 concludes the chapter.

3.2 Design of the Study

The study adopts a qualitative inductive approach with an emphasis on thematic analysis centres on investigating the prevalent issue pertaining to violence, terrorism, and its legitimization. It seeks to examine the legitimization of violent practices in *Rumiyah* magazine and how the legitimization of these practices is being realized discursively and visually. In order to investigate such circumstances, a single objective and two research questions are constructed to guide the study.

The main objective of this study is to investigate the legitimization process of violent practices in *Rumiyah* magazine articles and how multimodal resources are utilized to

contribute to its legitimacy. Thus, two research questions are formulated to analyse the textual and visual data from *Rumiyah* selected articles as the main source of data. Below are the following questions:

1. How are ISIS violent practices legitimized discursively?
2. How are ISIS violent practices legitimized visually?

The rationale of these research questions (henceforth, RQs) is to examine the underlying relationship between language and visual that exists in the selected articles. The first research question looks at how the violent social practices in *Rumiyah* are linguistically realized and how the justification of such practices is structured to explain and legitimized ISIS's actions. The second research question, on the other hand, explores the semiotics aspect of the sample to understand the 'meaning potential' of the semiotic elements and how it foregrounds legitimacy in relation to violent practices. Such questions are examined using their respective tool of analysis, which is further explained in the latter section.

3.3 Van Leeuwen (2008) and Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) frameworks

As pointed out, this study adopts the legitimization framework by van Leeuwen (2008) and Kress & van Leeuwen (2006). The legitimization framework by van Leeuwen consists of authorization, rationalization, moral evaluation, and mythopoesis. Such parameters are lacking when it comes to analysing *Rumiyah* articles, which imbued with different types of linguistic and semiotic elements. This is further noted by Vaara et al., (2006) on the lack of coverage van Leeuwen's framework has on linguistic features when the language use and intertextuality are the key focus of the analysis. Hence, to address this drawback, Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) visual social semiotics is adopted to analyse

the semiotic resources. Below are the descriptions and diagrams of the legitimization strategies and visual social semiotic frameworks.

3.3.1 Legitimation Strategies (2008)

Van Leeuwen's model in analysing legitimization strategies stems from the Berger and Luckmann (cited in van Leeuwen, 2008) states that all of the languages is legitimation. In which he ascribed to their notion of legitimation as 'explanations and justifications to institutional orders in which it cognitively validates objectivated meanings and normalizes certain social practices.' To such, van Leeuwen proposed a framework to analyse the 'residual' elements of social practices namely evaluation, purpose and legitimation which are the additional elements that makeup ideas, belief, and attitudes (van Leeuwen, 2005). As mentioned, the strategies proposed to consist of authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, and mythopoesis – in which each strategy has its sub-types legitimation. The strategies are briefly described in the following section. Detailed descriptions can be seen in appendix D.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS



3.3.1.1 Authorization

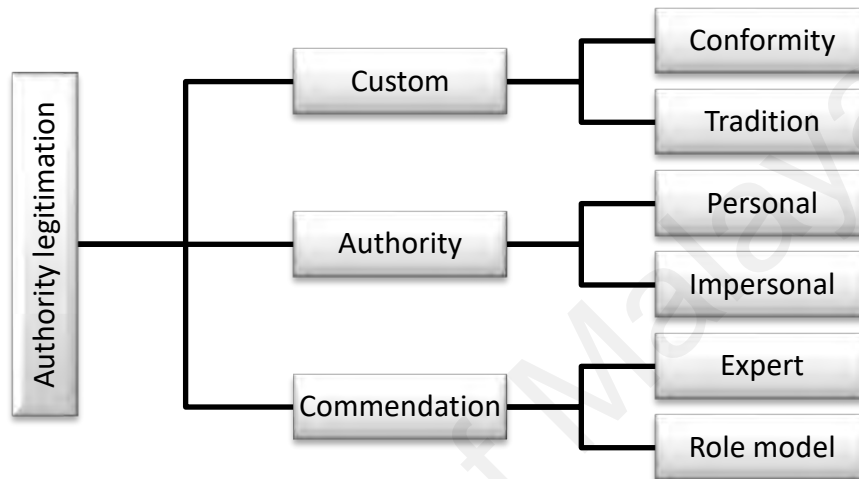


Figure 3.1: Authority legitimation

Authorization is a type of strategy that legitimizes practices by referencing social action to the authority of tradition, custom, law, and a person who had been vested by institutional authority. It brings out the question of ‘why certain things are being done in certain ways?’ The sub-categories consist of personal authority, expert authority, role model authority, impersonal authority, the authority of tradition, and the authority of conformity.

3.3.1.2

Moral evaluation

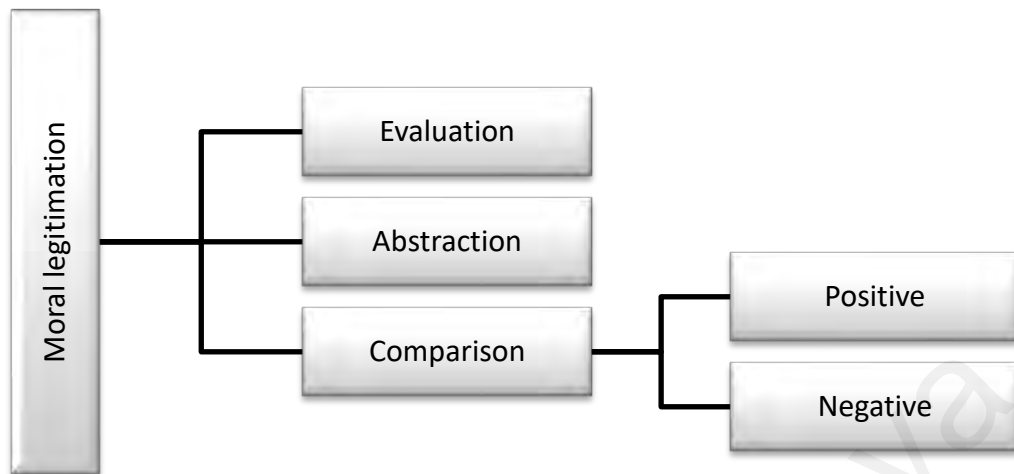


Figure 3.2: Moral legitimation

Moral evaluation legitimizes practices by reference the act to the value system rather than imposed by some kind of authority without further justification. The sub-categories are evaluation, abstraction, and analogy.

3.3.1.3

Rationalization

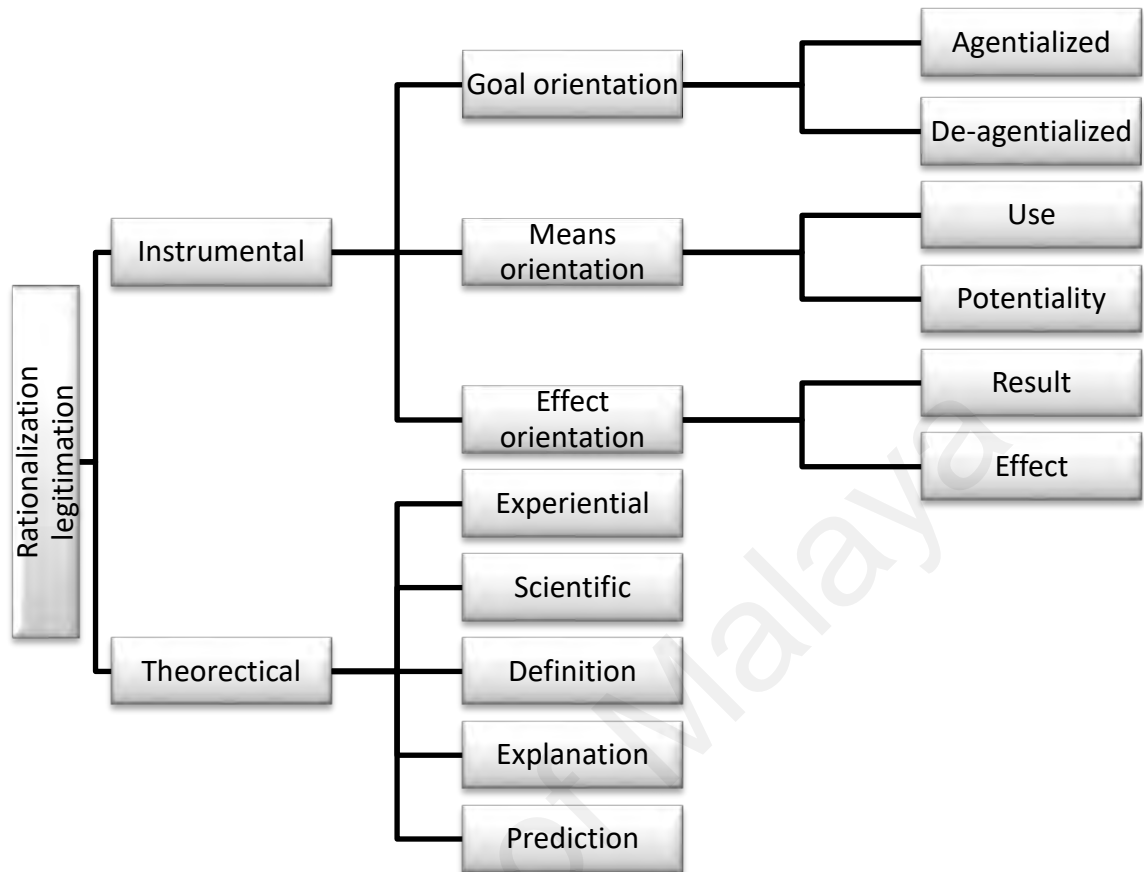


Figure 3.3: Rationalization legitimation

Rationalization is a type of legitimation strategy by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action and to the knowledge that society has constructed to endow them with cognitive validity. It comprises of instrumentational rationalization and theoretical rationalization.

3.3.1.4 Mythopoesis

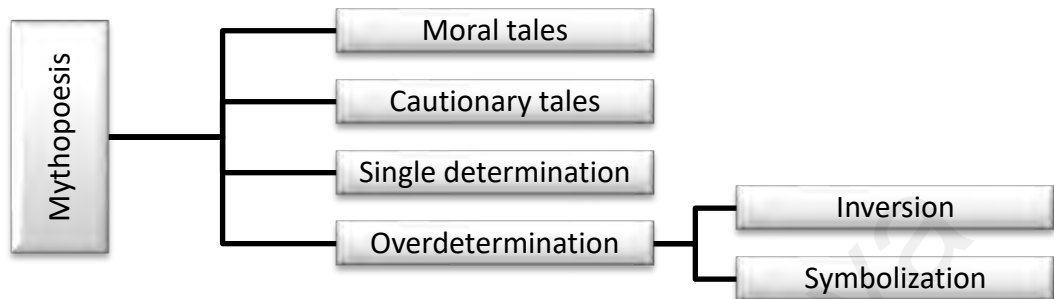


Figure 3.4: Mythopoesis legitimation

Mythopoesis is a legitimation that conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish nonlegitimate actions. It is a form of storytelling that allows legitimization to take place. Narratives that legitimize social practices are realized through moral tales, cautionary tales, single determination and overdetermination, inversion, and symbolic.

3.3.2 Kress & van Leeuwen (2006)

Vannini (2007) noted the difference in structural semiotics and social semiotics and its importance in the current field. Semiotic resources consist of theoretical semiotic potential, which indicates that a resource has all its past uses and potential future uses, and actual semiotic potential; the uses that are known by specific users with specific needs in specific contexts. In light of the study of social semiotics, the tenet of this analysis focuses on the latent meaning the resources possess and the extent of its potential relates to the legitimization of violent practices. In order to unveil the potential meaning, Harrison's (2003) guided questions (refer appendix F) are used alongside Kress & van Leeuwen's framework as a helping tool to comprehensively interpret the semiotic resources.

The following diagrams illustrated the metafunctions and its sub-categories of the VSS framework. The key dimensions are described below.

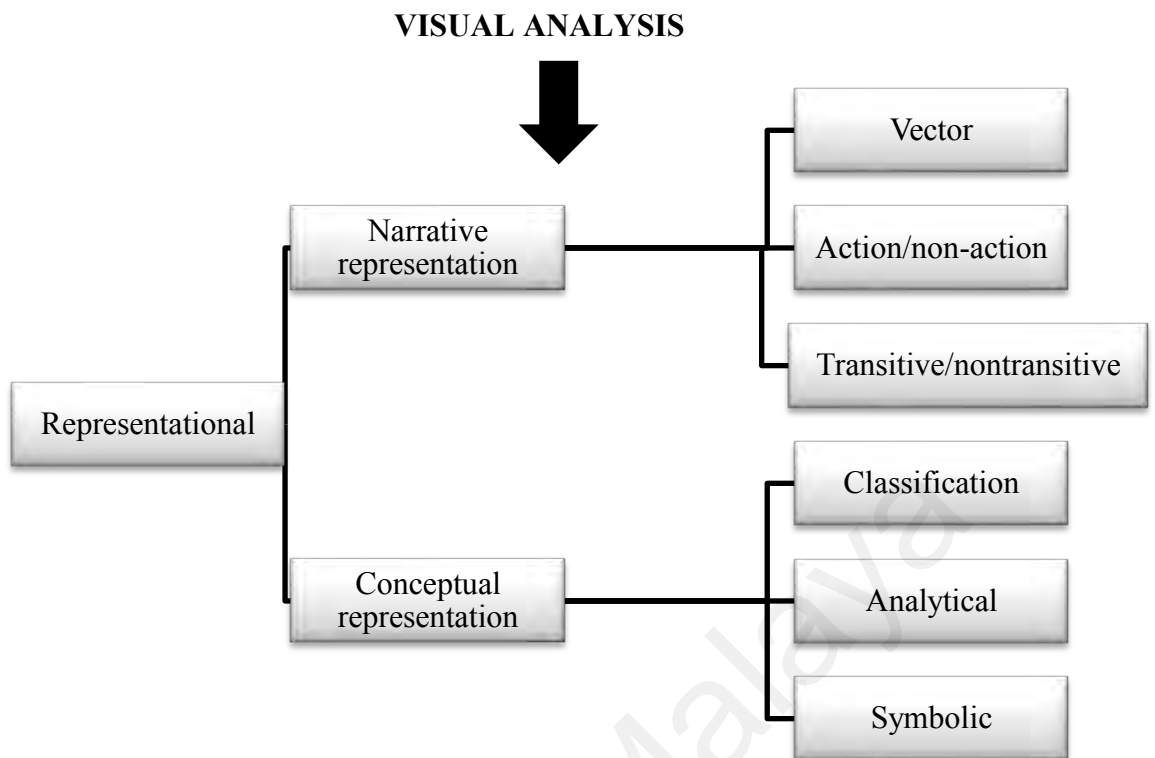


Figure 3.5: Representational metafunction
(Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)

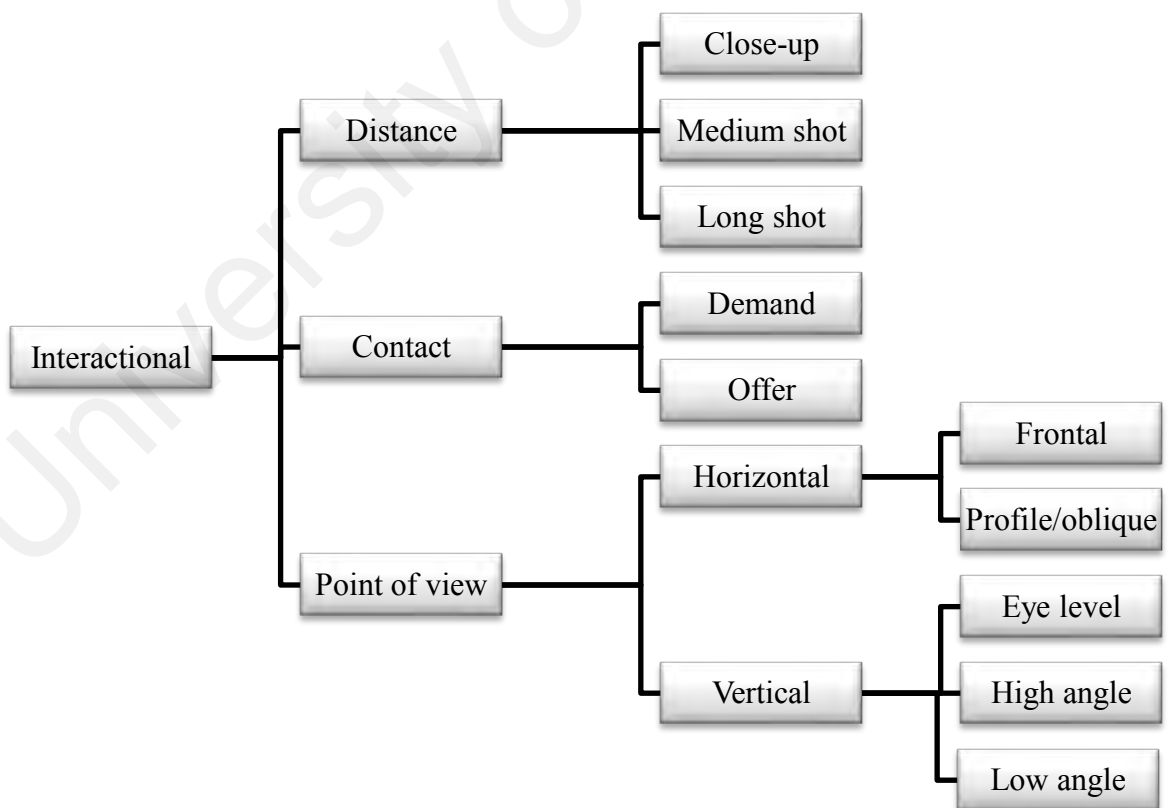


Figure 3.5: Interactive metafunction
(Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)

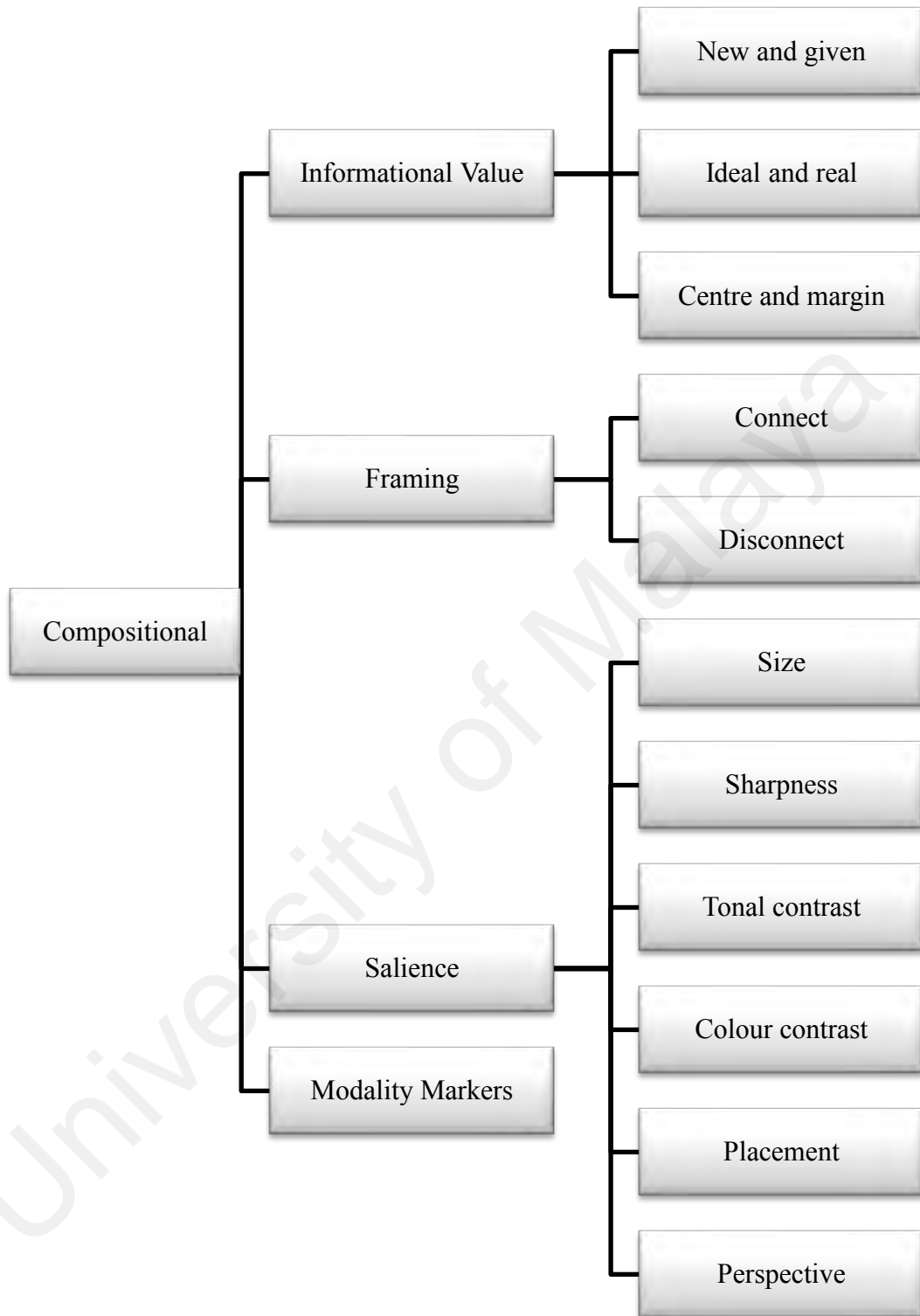


Figure 3.7: Compositional metafunction
 (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)

3.3.2.1 Representational metafunction

Representational metafunction concerns with the patterns of representation in which the experience is encoded visually. Visual encoding goes through either narrative and/or conceptual structures. In narrative structures, it highlights the unfolding actions and events, processes of change, and transitory spatial arrangements. Such arrangements are visualized through the use of vector – an oblique line that indicates directionality. There are several kinds of the vectorial pattern formed by the depicted elements that dynamically express them as ‘doing’ or ‘happening. The processes are:

- (1) Action processes where a vector formed by a depicted element or an arrow, departing from a participant (actor); two types of actions that are non-transactional (actor only) and transactional (actor and goal; a participant towards the vector is directed). Transactional is bidirectional; the role of actor and goal is interchangeably (interactors).
- (2) Reactional processes in which a vector formed by the direction of the glance of one or more participants (reacters); these structures can be non-transactional (glance directed → outside frame) and transactional (glance directed → another participant = phenomenon).
- (3) Speech processes present a dialogue balloon in order to link speakers (Sayer) to their speech (Utterance).
- (4) Mental processes are similar to speech processes where it presents thought balloon which links thinkers (Sensors) and thought (phenomenon).
- (5) Finally, a conversion process indicates a chain of transactional processes, where a third participant called Relay is viewed as a Goal for one participant and Actor for another.

Aside from vector, narrative structures are also presented by a second participant, circumstances in which they are connected to the main participants in other ways than the vector. Circumstances are visually expressed through three types; locative, which relates the participants to the setting, means present the tool used in action processes, and accompaniment, which show two participants who are not linked by the vector. Conceptual structures, on the other hand, represent participants in terms of their class, structure, or meaning. They are divided into classificational, analytical, and symbolical. The classificational process is a process that relates participants to each other (subordinate → superordinate). An analytical process is a process that connects participants in terms of part-whole structures; the parts (possessive attribute) belong to the whole (carrier). These processes consist of several types:

- (1) unstructured; no carrier,
- (2) temporal; realizes by timelines,
- (3) exhaustive; possessive attributes presented exhaustively,
- (4) inclusive; much of the carrier unaccounted,
- (5) topographical; physical spatial relations,
- (6) topological; logical relations between participants,
- (7) spatial-temporal; applied to the chart.

While the symbolic process is a process that depicts what a participant is or means either in attributive or symbolic. An attributive case is a case where two participants are involved with a carrier (meaning/identity is established in the relation) and a symbolic attribute (represents meaning/identity itself). Symbolic case there is only a carrier (meaning & identity is not being conferred, but is coming from its qualities)

3.3.2.2 Interactive metafunction

Interactive metafunction is represented by patterns of interaction by participants (depicted and real). There are three dimensions of interactive images; image act (contact), social distance, and point of view.

- i. Image act or contact concerns with the direction of the gaze shown by represented participants, and the directions are either in demand (directed at the viewer) or offer (viewer is not addressed). Demand is an imaginary relation established by the subject and the viewer through facial expressions or gestures. Offer is where the relations between the subject and viewer is not established or addressed indirectly. The represented participants are shown impersonally as items of information or objects for contemplation.
- ii. Social distance is related to the different relations between the represented (subject) and the viewer (reader). This relationship is influenced by different sizes of frame; close-up, medium and long shot which indicate the degree of relationship (formal/informal, intimate/friend)
- iii. Point of view deals with the involvement of participants and audiences, which is negotiated through various angles that indicates different kinds of relationships. E.g., horizontal angle and vertical angle. Two types of images; subjective (present everything from a particular perspective, control by the image-producer), objective (show information about the subject).

3.3.2.3 Compositional metafunction

Compositional metafunction refers to the spatial relation and coherency of elements and how they create meaningful text. Meaning is realized by three interrelated systems; informational value, salience, and framing.

- i. Informational value concerns with three areas of visual (1) left & right; the composition is structured along the horizontal axis. Where left being the familiar/given information where it is the departed point of the message, and right is the new/unknown information that requires special attention. (2) top & bottom; the information is structured along a vertical axis. Information at the top is presented as important or ideal, while the bottom indicates the practical information. The placement of information (text & visual) influences the meaning of the composition. (3) centre & margin; The main information or nucleus of the article is always centralised, while margin information is subservient to the centre.
- ii. Salience deals with elements that stand out or garners more attention from the viewer. Some information is presented as more important than the others. This metafunction is achieved through several visual cues, e.g., size, the sharpness of focus, tonal and colour contrast, placement in the visual field, perspective, and specific cultural factors.
- iii. Framing is a system that connects the representational meaning to the interactive metafunction. It deals with units that are represented as separate or related and connected or disconnected through frame lines. The connection can be emphasized by using colour schemes, forms, and vectors connecting the elements.

3.4 Approach of the Study

The course of actions taken in this study revolves around qualitative design. Van Leeuwen (2008) legitimation strategies and Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) visual social semiotics framework are used hand in hand to answer the research questions which centre on the discursive and visual legitimization of violent practices and its realization in the discourse. These frameworks are utilized to examine the specific linguistic resources and visual cues to identify the different types of legitimation expressed (van Leeuwen, 2007) in the selected samples.

On the textual level of this study examined the scenarios of the social practices – specifically violent practices in each of the article to identify the thematic pattern of legitimization. The scenarios of the violent practices are tabulated and then analysed from its sentences, clauses, and phrases to identify different types of legitimization strategies used to normalize ISIS's violent practices. Following that, the recontextualization of the intertextual elements is also analysed to examine its contribution to constructing legitimacy. Visual level, on the other hand, draws on Kress & van Leeuwen's visual social semiotics (VSS) as its analytical tool to analyse the semiotic resources; image, colours, typography et cetera. on its visual legitimacy (van Leeuwen, 2005). To answer the second research question, three metafunctions; representational, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning are taken as the method of analysis to analyse the semiotic elements.

Subsequently, the findings derived from the analysis of the textual and visual data are interpreted and discussed in relation to the construction of legitimization pertaining to violent practices. The identified legitimization strategies and metafunctions are explained in terms of its purpose and realization in the discourse.

3.5 Data Description

The following section consists of the description of the samples, which is illustrated in Section 3.5.1, and the collection procedure and its codification are described in Section 3.5.2. The finalised textual and visual samples of this study are illustrated in the following tables. In addition, the coding categorization of the sample is also described together with the justification of the sample.

3.5.1 Data Types

In this study, the primary source of data taken for analysis is selected articles from the *Rumiyah* magazine. *Rumiyah* magazine was first published online on 5th September 2016 by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Levant). Released by al-Hayat Media Centre, this magazine functions as a replacement of a former, theologically-based magazine, *Dabiq* as according to Clarion project (2017). At the time of writing, the magazine had reached its thirteenth issue on 9th September 2017 and approximately ended on that date. The *Rumiyah* magazine comes in 9 different languages, namely French, German, Russian, Indonesian, and Ughyur. However, in this study, the samples are specifically taken from the version designed for the English-speaking audience.

The high-end magazine is rich with textual and visual data. Textual data varies from forewords, articles, news, and interviews while the visual data encompasses photos, infographics, diagrams, typography, and other multimodal features. The content of the magazine caters not only to the male demographic but also to the female audience. In which the magazine offers a section specifically for the female readers entitled *Sister* where articles such as 'O Women, Give Charity', 'I Will Outnumber the Other Nations through You' (Issue 5), 'Wala and Bara, O Women' (Issue 6), 'Be a Supporter not a Demoralizer' (Issue 10), and 'Our Journey to Allah' (Issue 11) act as a rallying call and a guideline on how women should participate in the jihadist cause.

The nature of the sample consists of textual and visual data, with a total of thirteen articles selected. From these thirteen articles, a corpus of 26444 words is created and 14 pages of semiotic resources are identified and tabulated. Out of the tabulated pages, semiotic resources, 20 photographic images (see Appendix G) were analysed. The list of samples is tabulated and compiled for analysis. Below are the details of the selected articles (see Appendix B for further details).

Table 3.1: Selected *Rumiyah* articles

No	Issue	Date	Coding	Title
1	Issue 1 (pp. 2)	5 th September 2016	FW1	Stand Up and Die for Which Your Brother Die
2	Issue 1 (pp. 28)		AR1	The Wicked Scholars are Cursed
3	Issue 1 (pp. 34)		AR2	The Kafir's Blood is Halal for You, so Shed It
4	Issue 2 (pp. 8)	4 th October 2016	EX1	The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack
5	Issue 2 (pp. 12)		EX2	Just Terror Tactics: Part 1
6	Issue 2 (pp. 22)		AR3	Brutality and Severity towards the Kuffar
7	Issue 3 (pp. 10)	11 th November 2016	EX3	Just Terror Tactics: Part 2
8	Issue 3 (pp. 28)		AR4	The Obligation of Exposing Wicked Scholars
9	Issue 5 (pp. 6)	6 th January 2017	EX4	Collateral Carnage
10	Issue 5 (pp. 8)		EX5	Just Terror Tactics: Part 3
11	Issue 5 (pp. 16)		AR5	The Flames of Justice
12	Issue 5 (pp. 26)		AR6	Traits of the Evil Scholars
13	Issue 8 (pp. 38)	4 th April 2017	AR7	And Fight the Mushrikin Collectively
14	Issue 13 (pp. 26)	9 th September 2017	AR8	The Characteristic of Munafiqin

3.5.2 Data Collection and Codification

As aforementioned, there are 13th issues that had been released online throughout approximately a year (5th September 2016 – 9th September 2017). The magazines were retrieved from several online sources, including Telegram, on terrorism studies (jihadology.net). A total of thirteen (13) issues had been collected. The magazines are then subjected to a process of article screening. In this stage, several articles across the thirteen (13) issues are selected as samples. The selection of the articles follows two parameters; (1) the articles contain textual and visual data, and (2) emphasis is given for articles with violence as its central theme.

In order to maintain the validity and reliability of the findings, the selection of the sample is governed by the conceptualization of the notion of violence by Collins (2003) and Fishman & Marvin (2003). Violence, from Collins definitive perspective, entails a form of an attempt by individuals or groups to impose on others through verbal, nonverbal, or physical means that cause psychological and physical injury. Fishman & Marvin (2003), on the other hand, extend the notion of violence into three different aspects; explicit violence; (violent images with immediate intentional application of physical force or its effects), latent violence (violent images with latent application of physical force) and dramatic violence (violent image for diversion and amusement). Following these definitions, the aspects of violence carry significant meaning and representation that influence the selection of the article. Hence, the selection of the articles is based on the content (textual and semiotics) published, which are relevant to the type of violence mentioned. With that in mind, any articles that do not adhere to such parameters were not taken into consideration. In addition to the sample selection, another researcher within a similar field is referred to verify the selection. This choice is implemented to avoid any sense of bias and ensure the selection has fulfilled its parameters.

The next step is to perform the coding categorization and analysis for the textual and visual data according to their respective unit of analysis (van Leeuwen, 2008; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2007). The coding categorization of the selected samples is in a specific order which started with the section of the article and followed by the number of the article in the same section. For instance, 'Foreword section + article 1 = FW1' for an article derives from the 'foreword section' in textual data. Visual data coding categorization, on the other hand, is simply added with the letter 'v' (stands for 'visual') + the number of semiotic elements in the sample after the initial coding for textual, e.g., 'FW1v1' is a code for a visual element for article FW1. There are various sections in *Rumiyah* magazine, namely foreword, feature, exclusive, interview, articles, sister, news, and *shuhada*. However, due to the nature of the sample selection, not all sections are present in the sample compilation.

Prior to this study, numerous works of literature on ISIS's influence on various platforms had been studied. (e.g. Ingram, 2016, 2017; Kinzel, 2016; O'Halloran et al., 2016; Wignell, Tan & O'Halloran, 2016; Awan, 2017; Wignell, Tan, & O'Halloran; 2017, Wilbur, 2017) To this very date, the study on *Rumiyah* magazine has been limited since it was first published on 5th September 2016. Hence, the magazine was taken into consideration to discover new findings that may shed new light onto the current body of literature. As to date, a total of thirteenth articles across thirteenth issues had been selected for the textual and visual analysis.

3.6 Data Analytical Procedure

In order to find the relationship between textual and visual data, this study employed a textual analysis and visual analysis. The process of analysis encompasses data familiarization, textual analysis, visual analysis, and thematic categorization. Both types

of data are analysed using their respective analytical tools. The findings from the analysis are interpreted and explained based on their research questions.

3.6.1 Textual Analysis

As for the textual analysis, the discursive legitimization of violent practices in the articles are critically analysed to answer the first RQ: “How are ISIS violent practices legitimized discursively?”. In order to achieve that, the data undergoes two layers of analysis. The first part of the analysis examines the textual data using the social practice analytical framework (refer table 3.2) by examining the sentences, clauses, and phrases to identify the violent social practices that are constructed in the textual data. This process is being carried out by identifying the scenarios that are related to the violent practices through compartmentalization of the chronology of events using the social practice elements. Discourse practices are analysed, as according to Reyes (2011), to make sense of the “relationship between language and ideology, language and power, language and gender.”

Separating the social practice elements helps to foreground the ‘residual’ elements (van Leeuwen, 2005), i.e., reactions, purposes, and legitimations, which in turn ease the legitimation identification process. The use of the aforementioned elements is entirely up to the data at hand since not all elements are entirely present in a discourse. At this point, the scenarios of the social practices are listed and tabulated accordingly, where the elements of social practices are categorized based on their elements. Once tabulated, the recurring violent practices are identified with its legitimization strategies to form a thematic categorization

Further noted by Reyes (2011) in which stated that legitimization is an argument that seeks to fulfil certain goals – either to obtain power, to be socially accepted or to be

famous et cetera. Thus, a manual close reading focussing on the linguistic features i.e. clauses, phrases, and sentences of the ‘residual’ elements are employed to identify the form of legitimation strategies used by the author(s) in the articles. However, the emphasis is given on purpose and legitimation as these two ideas are relevant to the objective of the study. The table shows the elements of social practices used to identify the social action of violent practices.

Table 3.2: Social practice analysis (van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; van Leeuwen, 2005; van Leeuwen, 2008)

Elements of social practice	Description	Example
Actions/Activities	A set of activities performed in order or sequence committed by the social actors. Presented with the symbol (↓) for chronological order and (insert the symbol) for non-chronological order.	Van Leeuwen (2008) ‘preparing children for the first day’ Mother teaches child to put on clothes ↓ Mother teaches child to tie shoelaces ↓ Mother teaches child to cross the road
Actors/Participants	Social actors either people or animals that involve in the practice and assume certain roles; instigator, affected, agent or beneficiary (van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999) Participants are realized explicitly in the text or through their actions.	A lecture minimally requires a lecturer and students (van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999)
Presentation style/Dress & grooming	Dress code and body grooming requirements to indicate certain social practices	Student’s dress code consists of uniform (van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999)
Eligibility conditions (participant)	Qualifications or conditions needed for participants to play a particular role in a particular social practice	Van Leeuwen (2008) ‘...teacher-turned-author Valerie Martin spoke to when writing From Home to School a book dealing with the first day at school’


		Conditions: expert author – ‘teacher-turned-author’
Times	Social practices and specific parts of them take place at more or less definite times – time may explicitly or implicitly describe in discourse.	
Locations/Places	Social practices are related to a specific place	Lecture takes place in lecture room (van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999)
Eligibility conditions (locations)	Locations must fulfil certain conditions to qualify as a certain place.	Classroom must have teacher’s desk, students’ tables and chairs, blackboard et cetera. (van Leeuwen, 2008)
Resources/Tools & Materials	Tools, props or materials needed to perform a practice or some part of it.	Van Leeuwen (2008) ‘preparing children for the first day’ Resources: ‘shoe laces’, ‘bags’
Eligibility conditions (resources)	Conditions ascribe to tools, props and materials to be considered relevant to the social practices.	Van Leeuwen (2008) ‘first day at school’ Bag: school bag not briefcase

3.6.2 Visual Analysis

The visual data, on the other hand, are examined using Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) visual social semiotic approach to answer the second RQ: “How are ISIS legitimized violent practices visually?”. The question aims to find the ‘meaning potential’ of the images and how it functions to create legitimacy in violence. The unit of analysis for visual data replicates Hasan’s (n.d.) analytical framework, which was based on Kress & van Leeuwen’s (cited in Hasan, n.d.). Some modifications had been included in the unit of analysis to cater for the current sample. The semiotics sample is extracted, codified and analysed accordingly.

The semiotic resources are analysed based on the three metafunctions (refer appendix E); representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning. The analysis is carried out in relation to the visual legitimacy of the violent practices – precisely the way semiotic resources operates to contribute to the construction of legitimacy. Harrison’s (2003) guideline (refer appendix F) on visual social semiotics is referred. This guideline consists of several questions that are designed to bring out a systematic interpretation of the resources. Subsequently, the interpretation and its explanation of the findings are later discussed in the following chapter (Chapter 4). In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the findings, several articles highlighting the trend of the findings are presented and discussed in details in Chapter 4.

Table 3.3: Visual data analytical tool

Visual & Code	Representational meta-function	Meaning making of legitimation
<p>EX2: Just Terror Tactics: Part 1</p>  <p>Ex2v1</p>	Narrative processes	
	Conceptual processes	
	Interactive meaning meta-function	Meaning making of legitimization
	Distance	
	Contact	
	Point of view	
	Compositional meaning meta-function	Meaning making of legitimization
Informational value		
Saliency		
Framing		

Adapted from Hasan (n.d.)

3.7 Validity and Reliability

In order to elicit non-bias result, the analytical process is validated by another interrater in which the verification consists of the theme categorization, analysis and findings. The interrater reliability follows Holsti's formula with a rate of >0.8 percentage. This methodology is taken into consideration to avoid a sense of biases of the researcher's interpretation. The researcher's theme categorization and codification are compared with the interrater analysis to identify any differences and similarities. The percentage of agreement for this study is 80%.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

This research is a part of a larger Fundamental Research Grant Schemes (FRGS) study, which has ethical clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Bukit Aman Police Department. Such clearance enables the research to take place without being subjected to any unwanted issues.

3.9 Limitation and Scope

This research, however, is limited in terms of its generalization of data. As aforementioned *Rumiyah* comes in many different languages. Due to the nature of the selection process, the scope of limitation is halted, as the analysis of the selected *Rumiyah* magazine is carried out on the English-version magazine instead of all the other languages. Further explanation of the limitation is discussed in Chapter 5.

3.10 Summary

This chapter describes the fundamental aspects of the methodology involves in the process of understanding the concept of legitimization in textual and visual data. The frameworks described in the previous sections serve to address the constructed questions

to fulfil the research objective. Hence, in this study, close attention is given to understand the interconnectedness between textual and visual elements in constructing legitimacy and how such construction is realized in the sample.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines and discusses the overall findings obtained from the analysis of the *Rumiyah* selected articles. The focal point of this chapter examines the textual and visual findings and discuss it in relation to the main objective; to understand the legitimization process of violent practices and its realization in *Rumiyah* selected articles. The analysis focuses on the legitimation strategies used by the author(s) to discursively legitimize violent practices committed by the ISIS group and investigating the semiotic potential of the resources in relation to violence. In Section 4.1, the descriptions of the focus of analysis of all the selected frameworks are highlighted, i.e., legitimation strategies and visual social semiotics framework. Section 4.2 highlights the result of the findings in the thematic categorization.

4.2 Textual and Visual Analysis

The following section exhibits the textual and visual findings of this research. In the textual analysis, several stages of analysis had taken places. Each stage aims to comprehensively identify the legitimation strategies and unravel the reasoning behind violent practices. The overall data are submitted to social practice analysis to sift out the overbearing nature of the textual data. Social practices are identified and tabulated in order to give a clear understanding of the practices committed by the ISIS and their justifications for such actions and to acquaint with the types of violent practices preached in the *Rumiyah* articles. The next step of the textual analysis is by identifying the type of legitimation strategies used in the articles. This is done by manually extracting the maxims and analysing them using van Leeuwen legitimation strategies. Additionally, the overall textual data exhibits a recurring use of Qur'an verses and hadith, thus, the recontextualization of the intertextual elements is worth to be analysed to see its

significance in the process of legitimization. The visual analysis goes through the analysis of semiotic resources identified in the sample. The analysis is carried out in relation to the visual legitimacy of the violent practices – specifically the way semiotic resources operates to contribute to the construction of legitimacy. Section 4.1.1, Section 4.1.2. and 4.1.3 briefly highlight the overall findings for the analysis.

4.2.1 Social Practice Analysis

The analysis of social practice suggested by van Leeuwen stressed on the importance of ‘residual’ elements to make a sense of purpose and legitimization of the data. In his words, analysing discourse as a discourse of legitimization will further add dimension in which it could link the social practices with the discourse of values. In other words, the context of which the discourse being woven into could be interpreted contextually and relate with certain types of values, i.e., Islamic values, jihadist values et cetera. to further strengthen its justification. To add, van Leeuwen believes that the sense of legitimacy is constructed in relation to the discourse of morality rather authority. The analysis of social practice involves the identification of the social practice elements to understand how the social practices are being regulated in the sample. In this context, the practices are being regulated in the English – oriented magazine as a way to connect and influence the intended readers. With that in mind, the recurring types of violent practices are identified across the textual sample is presented in the table below.

Table 4.1: Categorization of violent practices

No.	Violent practice	Article
1	Terror attacks as a form of retaliation	EX1
2	Lone wolf attacks to strike fear	EX2
3	Vehicle attacks as a way to maximize death	EX3
4	Enabling the killing of the prohibited	EX4
5	Incendiary attacks as a sense of devotion	EX5
6	Acquiring hostages as military strategy	EX2
7	Death and harsh punishments upon enemies of Islam	AR3, AR7

Table 4.1: continued

8	Death by fire as a retribution	AR5
9	Exposing and boycotting wicked scholars	AR1, AR4, AR6

4.2.2 Legitimation Strategies

Legitimation is one of the added elements in van Leeuwen's idea of social practice analysis. It concerns the 'why' aspect of the discourse. Utilizing Foucault's notion of discourse as social cognition, van Leeuwen uses it as resources to identify the social practices in the text and discourses. This research, too, acknowledged Foucault's idea of discourse and intended to uncover the legitimation process of ISIS's violent practices. In this section, the phrases and clauses are manually analysed thoroughly to identify the type of legitimation strategies used by the author to advance their justification of violent practices.

Van Leeuwen (2008) stated that legitimation is not inherent in action but rather constructed discursively. This statement implies that the producers of text and discourse hold the power to create a sense of legitimacy of the practices they wish to propagate. Practices are often controlled and implemented by a group of people in power or authority. Which in this case, the ISIS group grasps the authority to disseminate their ideal Islamic practices towards the global Muslim audience.

This trend is evident in the overall findings in which the most occurring type of strategy is within the authorization paradigm, i.e., impersonal authority, the authority of tradition, role model authority and expert authority. Regardless, in order for the discourse to be considered as a legitimization, it must ascribe to a purpose that is intended by an institution. Thus, from the overall analysis, several thematic categorizations can be identified. As such, (1) impersonalisation of 'others', (2) legitimization of *jihad* value, (3) (de)legitimization of *fasiq* scholars. This thematization exhibits a notion of purpose in

each of the legitimation strategies. This notion is further elaborated and discussed in Section 4.2.

4.2.3 Visual Social Semiotics Framework

Van Leeuwen (2005) steers away from venturing into the meaning and definitive aspect of semiotics. Instead, he focuses on the 'why' and 'how' semiotics activity has taken place in discourse. This research abides the principles aligned by van Leeuwen in which the analysis of visuals focuses on the semiotic potential rather its denotation and connotation alone. In this section, the visual data are analysed using the Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) metafunctions to answer the second research question: how are ISIS violent practices legitimized visually? This section explains the systematic analysis of the visual data using the key dimensions in the Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) visual social semiotic framework; *representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning*.

The semiotic resources found in the articles exhibit various degree of meaning used to advance the author(s)' legitimization of violent practices. The potential meaning-making stated by van Leeuwen (2005) points to the fact that meaning can be interpreted depending on 'who's doing what, where and when, and other aspects that accompany the resources' (van Leeuwen, 2005). In other words, the meaning of the same discourse can be interpreted differently depending on the lenses used and the time of interpretation. This research follows van Leeuwen's (2005) idea of analysing semiotic resources by; (1) inventorizing semiotic resources and, (2) describing its use in a specific context, in this case, the *Rumiyah* magazine, to unravel its legitimization potential.

In this research, the semiotics resources are identified from the selected articles. The components in the semiotics inventories are graphics, images, photographs, colours, composition, typography, effects et cetera. For an in-depth analysis, a total of 7 articles

are analysed and presented in this study to give a comprehensive understanding of the aforementioned thematic categorization. The next section highlights the instances and shreds of evidence found in the sample in its thematic categorization.

4.3 Result

An overall finding indicates the use of various legitimation strategies and metafunctions by the author/producer to communicate with the audience. Textually, the result shows that at least one of specific legitimation strategy is constantly used by the author(s) in an article to justify ISIS's actions. However, the occurrences are not limited to one strategy but rather occur in combination. The visual, on the other hand, indicates an interesting compositional pattern and the extensive use of explicit and latent violent images to foreground violence. The analysis of the legitimization of violent practices discursively and visually yields several different themes that indicate different types of strategies and metafunctions used to justify ISIS's violent practices. The themes are (1) impersonalisation of 'Others', (2) legitimation of *jihad* values and (3) (de)legitimation of 'wicked' scholars. The findings below exhibit the instances found in the sample and its realization of violent practices discursively and visually.

4.3.1 Impersonalisation of 'others'

'Impersonalisation of *others*' is a notion of 'us' versus 'others' theme that refers to the construction of sides between the Muslims and non-Muslims. The difference of sides does not only cater to non-Muslims, but it is also extended to the Muslims who are against ISIS's fundamental values and world views. Generally, this theme derives from the recurring narratives used by the author(s) to delineate sides. The *Rumiyah* author(s) constructs the content of the magazine by integrating various multimodal elements to disseminate the notion. Most of the elements or resources possess the meaning potential

of inciting and implicating violence. In this theme, various legitimation strategies and metafunctions were identified in the data. Textually, the most occurring strategy is a combination of authorization and mythopoesis strategies. Most of the instances found are accompanied either by one or two strategies to advocate severe violence towards the Other-group. The visual, on the other hand, exhibits the lack of involvement between the RP and the audience. The notion of this theme can be identified in articles EX2, EX3, EX4, EX5, AR2, AR3, AR5, and AR8.

4.3.1.1 Discursive

The notion of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ is seen from the narratives used throughout the AR3 article. Most of the narratives describe the characteristics of the ‘other-group’ and the manner of punishments committed by the figure of Islam, such as the Prophet SAW, the *sahabah* r.a., and other notable Islamic figures. The key legitimization of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ is noted in Oddo's (2011) study on the polarization of ‘Us/Them’ which analysed the discourse of political speech. Part of the analysis discovered the use of negative nouns to associate the out-group with detrimental traits that deconstruct their values.

In addition, there is also the construction of the ‘other-group’ identities highlighted by the author(s) that further distinguishes the ‘out-group’ by labelling them with derogative Arabic terms, i.e., *kuffar*, *munafiq*, *mushrikin*, *murtaddin* and et cetera. The delineation constructed in the discourse also exhibits a trend in which Macnair and Frank (2007) termed is ‘crimes of the enemies’. Fundamentally, the narratives are centred on the notion that reflects the ‘out-group’ in the manner that highlights their crimes towards the Muslims. This trend is mostly realized through the mythopoesis strategy with the emphasis on the cautionary tale. Most of the identified examples of this theme show a sense of moralization embedded in the legitimization strategies. Hence, in order to avoid repetition, the analysis of the extracts is described together with the moral evaluation

strategy. The analysis of the articles indicates several legitimization strategies used to validate violent practices. The instances of strategies are exemplified below.

(a) **Authorization**

Many instances identified in the sample show various authorization strategies being employed. The most common strategy is the role model authorization, which can be seen together with the mythopoesis strategy. Authorization strategy seems to be used in the sample to provide a form of endorsement, which is realized through role model authority. In Islam, the highest regard role model is the Prophet SAW, followed by the *sahabah* r.a. or the Companion. Besides that, the sample indicated the use of scholars' expertise and opinions concerning the interpretation of the Qur'an verses and hadith. In the following examples, various strategies can be seen embedded and interchangeably works to foreground and legitimized the act of violence.

Extract 4.1: Ar2C1

In his famous mu'allaqah poem, the Jahili poet 'Amr Ibn Kulthum said, "And we had many glorious and long days, we defied the king therein, lest we obey." The word he used for "we obey" is "nadin," from the well-known but often misunderstood root word "din." (1) Usually translated as "religion," and indeed it is that, one of the basic meanings of din is obedience, and is especially used – as in the above verse of poetry – in reference to the authority and rule of a king. (2) Allah SWT said in the story of Yusuf r.a., "Thus We plotted for Yusuf. He would not take his brother by the din of the king" (Yusuf 76), meaning, "by the rule and authority of the king," or as at-Tabari commented, "Yusuf would not take his brother by the rule, judgment, or obedience of the king of Egypt." (3) He then mentioned the various statements of the Salaf suggesting that "din" in this ayah means sultan (authority), qada (judgment), and hukm (rule), ending his commentary by saying, "And the basis of din is obedience." (4) As for our King – the King of mankind, the King of the Day of Recompense, the True King SWT – then we have entered into His din and must obey His rule wholeheartedly, and He SWT said, "And fight them until there is no fitnah and the din is for Allah. But if they cease, then there is no aggression except against the tyrants" (Al-Baqarah 193). (5) So the command of Allah – to which obedience is due as a religious duty – is to fight until there is no fitnah, i.e. evident shirk in the obedience of Allah, and until no manifest authority is given to any rule except to that of the True King.

Source: 'The Kafir's Blood is Halal for You, so Shed It' Rumiyyah (Issue 1), 5th September 2016.

The excerpt exhibits multiple strategies, which are rationalization, authorization and moral evaluation. The first strategy identified is theoretical rationalization realized by the definition of 'din', which is seen in sentence (1). The excerpt conceptualized the meaning of 'din' as 'obedience' to establish a foundation that moralized ISIS's actions as a form of righteousness and reference it to the notion of 'obedience to the king/authority'. Expert authority is also being used to reinforce the statement by referencing the meaning of 'din' from at-Tabari's perspective, and this is realized from the sentence (2) and (3). The purpose of establishing the meaning of 'din' is to moralize the violent practices. The main goal of conceptualization is to justify ISIS's violence further and to abstract the concept into a moral value. The moralized actions are implied from the foundation established in which all acts are committed as a form of obedience. This is another form of strategy which is known as moral abstraction. The final identified legitimation is the instrumental rationalization, which is seen in the sentence (5) from the phrase '...to fight until there is no fitnah...' which indicates a goal-oriented purpose constructed to carry out the violence acts under the notion of *jihad*.

Extract 4.2: Ex2C4

(1) The knife was a weapon with which the Sahabah r.a. were well acquainted. (2) 'Abdur-Razzaq as-San'ani reported in his *musannaf* that a dagger, a type of knife, was the weapon used by Muhammad Ibn Maslamah in the assassination of the Jewish taghut Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf, whom Allah's Messenger SAW ordered be killed. One might ask why knives are a good option for an attack. (3) Knives, though certainly not the only weapon for inflicting harm upon the kuffar, are widely available in every land and thus readily accessible. They are extremely easy to conceal and highly lethal, especially in the hands of someone who knows how to use them effectively. Also, due to their accessibility, were a person to conduct a campaign of knife attacks, he could dispose of his weapon after each use, finding no difficulty in acquiring another one

Source: 'Just Terror Tactics: Part 1' Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

Another form of endorsement can be seen from this particular example. The role model authority identified in the sentence (1) indicates the use of a knife as the preferred weapon

by the *sahabah*. In addition, sentence (2) also exemplified the functions of the knife by narrating the event involving an assassination through a brief mythopoetic legitimation. The author(s) further solidified the endorsement of violence using knives by stating the phrase ‘...whom Allah’s Messenger SAW ordered be killed’ which implied the Prophet’s SAW acknowledgement of the method. The connection between the knife and the Prophet SAW, and *sahabah* r.a. was made to foreground the act of violence involving knives and its legitimacy by associating the aforementioned violence with the highest regard Islamic figures and role models, i.e., the Prophet SAW and *sahabah* r.a.

Extract 4.3: Ex3C2

Allah SWT said, “Through the, disperse those behind them, that they might take heed” (Al-Anfal 57). (1) **Ibn Kathir said, explaining this verse, “It means, punish them severely and massacre them violently so that other enemies from the Arabs and non-Arabs are terrified and those punished and massacred become a lesson for the other enemies ‘that they might take heed.’”**

Source: ‘Just Terror Tactics: Part 2’ Rumiayah (Issue 3), 11th November 2016.

In this example, the use of the scholar’s expertise is identified in the sentence (1). The legitimization strategy used in the example is a form of authorization strategy, specifically the expert authority. This strategy indicates that the expertise of a scholar is utilized to legitimize a particular social practice. In extract Ex2C2, the expertise of Ibn Kathir is used to explain the interpretation of Al-Anfal (57). The strategy is realized through the phrase ‘Ibn Kathir said, explaining this verse...’ which referring to Al-Anfal (57) as seen in the sentence (1). The interpretation of the verse further endorsed the violent practices and impersonalised the ‘out-group’ by dehumanizing the group as beings that deserve violence.

Extract 4.4: Ex5C1

(1) The heroic sacrifices of the brothers Abul-Bara at-Tunisi (Anis al-‘Amri), who flattened the cross worshipers in the Christmas market of Berlin, and ‘Abdur-Razzaq ‘Ali Artan, who terrorized the American pagans at Ohio State University, demonstrated what the bond of faith and the loyalty of brotherhood can achieve. (2) May Allah accept the two brothers. (3) With their blood, they actualized the verses of Allah, “Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands and He will disgrace them, give you victory over them, satisfy the breasts of a believing people, and remove the fury from the believers’ hearts” (At-Tawbah 14-15)

Source: ‘Just Terror Tactics: Part 3’ Rumiya (Issue 5), 6th January 2017

Extract Ex5C1 shows an example of the role model authority strategy to legitimize the terrorization of the ‘heroic sacrifices’ made by the *mujahiddin*. This practice is realized by Abul-Bara at-Tunisi and Abdur-Razzaq ‘Ali Artan, moralized actions which are seen from the phrase ‘...demonstrated what the bond of faith and the loyalty of brotherhood can achieve’ in the sentence (1). The practice of destroying the cross is imbued with a moral evaluation, which is seen from sentence (1). The ‘heroic’ act of the *mujahiddin* is further emphasized through the Qur’an verse (At-Tawbah 9:14-15) in the sentence (2), which had been recontextualised to fit the intended purpose.

Extract 4.5: Ex4C1

(1) Allah SWT revealed the Shari’ah to the Prophet SAW, giving people a complete way to live their lives. (2) Unlike man-made systems, the law of the *Shari’ah* is divine and flawless. There is no doubt in its authority and no suspicion of its perfection. Allah SWT said, “We have not neglected anything in the Book” (Al-An’am 38). (3) Likewise, He said, “Do that which is good” (Al-Hajj 77), showing that anything Allah commands is good and its outcome should not be regretted.

Source: ‘Collateral Carnage’ Rumiya (Issue 5), 6th January 2017.

The example exhibits an impersonal authorization. The comparative description of the *Shari’ah* laws highlights the hierarchy of the laws in Islam, as seen in the sentence (2). The description of the law serves to establish the importance of the law and to further legitimize the violent practices under the notion of *Shari’ah* law. The author(s) established the importance of *Shari’ah* laws in order to legitimize the past and future

actions that may not conform to current norms. Any form of violent practice, thus, is then subjected or classified as a form of punishments under the *Shari'ah* laws.

Extract 4.6: Ex4C2

(1) Allah SWT has ordered the killing of all *mushrikin* – whether military or civilian – in His saying, “Then kill the *mushrikin* wherever you find them” (At-Tawbah 5), which was reiterated by the (2) Prophet SAW, who said, “I have been ordered to fight mankind until they testify that nothing is worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah...” (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Ibn ‘Umar).

Source: ‘Collateral Carnage’ Rumiya (Issue 5), 6th January 2017.

In the above example, the author(s) of *Rumiya* employs impersonal authorization, which realized from the recontextualised version of the Qur’an verse (At-Tawbah 9:5) to legitimize the killing of *mushrikin*. This strategy is seen from the phrase ‘Allah SWT has ordered...’. The order is then emphasized in the sentence (2) through the Prophet’s SAW verbal process, ‘I have been ordered to fight mankind...’ which is narrated by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim. The practice of killing the *mushrikin*, in this example, is imbued with the value of *tawhid*, which is implied in the sentence (2) as the order to fight the *mushrikin* is extended ‘until they testify that nothing is worthy of worship except Allah’.

Extract 4.7: Ex4C3

(1) Like many other rulings in the *Shari'ah*, this general obligation to kill the *mushrikin* has its specific exceptions, among which is women and children. In one of the Prophet’s raids, a woman was found killed, upon which he SAW denounced and forbade the killing of women and children (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Ibn ‘Umar), thereby setting the principle of prohibition in this issue. Commenting on this principle, (2) ash-Shafi’i said, “Our opinion regarding this – and Allah knows best – is that the restriction exists so that they can become slaves, which is more beneficial than killing them” (Al-Umm). (3) This is supported by the statement of the Prophet SAW, “Allah dislikes that you do three things: gossiping, excessive questioning, and wasting wealth” (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from al-Mughirah Ibn Shu’bah), and women and children of the uncovenanted kuffar are wealth – and wasted if killed. However, this principle also has its exceptions. (4) There is no disagreement amongst Muslims that women are eligible to be killed for crimes like murder and adultery. Likewise, both women and children

who participate in fighting against Muslims are exempted from this prohibition. (5) That is, killing those women and children who participate in the war against Muslims is not forbidden – but rather even necessary.

Source: 'Collateral Carnage' Rumiya (Issue 5), 6th January 2017

The above example highlights the practice of enslaving women and children. In sentence (1), the author(s) referred to a narration from Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim describing the event that leads to the prohibition of killing the women and children. Such prohibition is then recontextualised and interpreted through expert authorization, which concludes the reasoning of such prohibition as a way to enslave the captives. This practice, however, is further legitimized through the statement of the Prophet SAW, which is seen in the sentence (3). The indication of 'wasting wealth' was interpreted by the scholars to legitimize the enslavement of the women and children

Extract 4.8: Ex4C5

(1) Ibn Battal said, "The majority agreed that women and children who fight are to be killed, and such is the opinion of Malik, al-Layth, Abu Hanifah, ath-Thawri, al-Awza'i, ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad, Ishaq, and Abu Thawr" (Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari).

(2) This was demonstrated in the *Sirah* of the Prophet SAW, who killed female participants in the war against Islam. Bunanah, the Jewish wife of al-Hakam al-Quradhi, killed the companion Khallad Ibn Suwayd on the Day of Bani Quraydhah. The Prophet SAW called for her and then had her neck struck in retaliation for the blood of Khallad (Tarikh at-Tabari).

Source: 'Collateral Carnage' Rumiya (Issue 5), 6th January 2017.

Another example exemplified the legitimization of killing women and children who participated in the war against Islam State. In the above example, the expert authority is shown in the sentence (1). from the word of Ibn Battal, who referred to the other scholars who had agreed to the aforementioned principle pertaining to the death punishment on women and children involved in a war. This legitimization is further reinforced through a *Sirah* in the sentence (2), which foretells the actions taken by the Prophet SAW in

handling a situation involving the punishment towards women who committed the crime of war.

Extract 4.9: Ex4C8

(1) Such was the conduct of the *Sahabah* even during the life of the Prophet SAW. As-Sa'b Ibn Jaththamah said, "The Prophet SAW passed by me at Abwa or Waddan. He was asked about the people of an area who were raided at night, with their women and children being killed and wounded. (2) He said, 'They are from them'" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Source: 'Collateral Carnage' Rumiya (Issue 5), 6th January 2017.

The extract Ex4C8 described the answer given by the *sahabah* r.a., when they were inquired the reason pertaining to the killing of women and children during the raids against the enemy of Islam. The role model authorization is seen in the sentence (2) when the reply from the *sahabah* r.a. enable the practice of killing women and children under the reason that 'they are from them' which means that the act of killing is permissible when the victims are within the targeted group.

Extract 4.10: Ex4C9

(1) Al-Khattabi said, "His saying, 'they are from them,' means in regards to their hukm in the religion. So the son of a kafir is ruled as being a kafir as well. He did not mean by this statement that the children's blood is lawful to spill deliberately...(2) But if they are killed or wounded due to them being intermingled with the men, then there is nothing wrong with killing them. Allah's Messenger SAW had prohibited the killing of women and children, if doing so was done deliberately and they were isolated from the adult males" (A'lam al-Hadith)

Source: 'Collateral Carnage' Rumiya (Issue 5), 6th January 2017.

Extract 4.11: Ex4C10

(1) At-Tahawi said, "Since Allah's Messenger SAW did not forbid them from making raids, even though they were killing and wounding women and children whom it was forbidden to kill deliberately, it proves that what is allowed based upon this report has a different meaning than that which the first report forbids. (2) That is, the first report prohibits deliberately seeking to kill women and children, while it is allowed to deliberately seek killing the *mushrik* men, even if that means killing others whom it has been forbidden to deliberately kill" (Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar).

Source: 'Collateral Carnage' Rumiya (Issue 5), 6th January 2017.

Extracts ExC9 and Ex4C10 exemplified the use of expert authorization that highlights the impersonalisation of ‘other’. The practice in question is the killing of the prohibited group, i.e., children and women as collateral death. Both examples work to justify the killing of the prohibited group by recontextualising the interpretation of Muslim scholars. For instance, in Ex4C9, Al-Khattabi’s expertise in interpreting the ‘hukm’ or laws concerning the killing of the prohibited is seen in the sentence (2) where the injuries and death of such groups are justified if they are ‘...intermingled with the men...’. This predicament is also highlighted in the latter example where At-Tahawi had also resort to a similar justification, as seen in the sentence (2) of Ex4C10. The examples are given to render the humanistic value of the *kafir* women and children by referring to them as ‘collateral’ associating them with lifeless items or accidental events. The sins of the *kafir* men outweigh the value of the women and children and, thus, making them susceptible to violent acts.

(b) ***Rationalization***

Rationalization strategy can be seen in almost all of the articles either as the main strategy or embedded in another strategy. In this particular theme, the typical type of rationalization is the instrumental rationalization, which frequently identified in articles EX2 and EX3. Both of the samples are from the same series of articles entitled ‘Just Terror Tactics’. As the name implies, these articles centre around the idea of terror tactics and techniques suggested by the *Rumiyah* author(s) to successfully eradicate the out-group, i.e., *kuffar*, *mushrikin* et cetera. The content of the articles provides the ‘how-to’ steps in either making weapons or carrying out presumably ‘*jihad*’ tactics. Despite having various types of legitimization strategies employed in the sample, this section highlights the most recurring strategy to showcase how purposes are constructed in the

Rumiyah articles. Below are several extracts or excerpts that exhibit the realization of the strategy.

Extract 4.12: Ex2C5

(1) When carrying out a knife operation, it is not advised to target very large gatherings or overly crowded areas, as this presents a disadvantage and only increases the likelihood of being prevented from achieving kills. (2) Therefore, it is advised that when conducting an operation by oneself, the target should be a smaller crowd, particularly for the one strong in build or skillful in using a knife, as such attacks are proven to inflict terror

Source: 'Just Terror Tactics: Part 1' Rumiyah (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

This extract is taken from article EX2 entitled 'Just Terror Tactics: Part 1'. In this article, the author(s) provide a suggestion to carry out an attack on out-group, specifically the *kuffar*. Discursively, the construction of legitimacy is seen from the purpose that accompanied the practice. In sentence (1), the author(s) emphasized on the individual approach in carrying a knife operation to achieve its intended goal. The legitimization realized in this extract is instrumental rationalization with emphasis on effect-oriented. The knife operation aims to cause harm and spread fear among the out-group as realized in the phrase '...as such attacks are proven to inflict terror' identified in the sentence (2). The notion of 'inflicting fear' is a recurring aspect that is realized through instrumental rationalization. Another example of this trend can be seen in the next example.

Extract 4.13: Ex2C6

Alternatively, (1) for one pursuing a prolonged campaign of terror, he may target lone victims. (2) For example, the target could be a drunken kafir on a quiet road returning home from a night out, or the average kafir working his night shift, or someone walking alone in a public park or rural forested area, or someone by himself in an alley close to a night club or another place of debauchery, or even someone out for a walk in a quiet neighbourhood

Source: 'Just Terror Tactics: Part 1' Rumiyah (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

Similar to the previous example, sentence (1) indicates the construction of ‘fear inflicting’ purpose used by the author(s) to legitimize violent practices. The realization of the instrumental strategy is seen from the phrase ‘...for one pursuing a prolonged campaign of terror, he may target line victims’. Another form of rationalization strategy is seen in the sentence (2) where experiential rationalization, i.e., common-sense knowledge, is used to explain further the way to carry out the campaign.

Extract 4.14: Ex2C10

Additionally, (1) it should be stressed that the objective of a knife attack is to attain a reasonable kill count, while equally – if not more importantly – to inflict terror on the Crusader citizens of the land in which the operation is carried out. On this basis, (2) the more gruesome the attack, the closer one comes to achieving the desired objective.

Source: ‘Just Terror Tactics: Part 1’ Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

Extract Ex2c10 fulfils the two types of instrumentality, which are the goal and effect orientation. The purpose of the knife attack is given in the form of goal; ‘to attain a reasonable count’, and effect; ‘to inflict terror on the Crusader citizens’. All of these examples exhibit the way purpose is used to legitimize violent practices. In addition, in the sentence (2), the intensity of violence is seen associated with achieving the ‘desired objective,’ which is the ‘kill count’. These violent actions are part of a more significant objective than achieving death tolls and terrorizing the citizens. It is minor goals anchored to the main objective of ISIS establishment – which is to revive the Caliph era.

Another form of rationalization can also be identified in the sample, for instance, theoretical rationalization. The theoretical rationalization is a reference to the natural order of things which is based on a certain kind of truth (Van Leeuwen, 2008). This strategy legitimizes social actions by providing an explicit representation of ‘the way things are’. Hence, this type of strategy can be realized through definition, explanation

and prediction of the ‘natural’ practices or actions. It is also realized through ‘experiential’ and ‘scientific’ rationalization strategies that justify actions from the scientific lenses and explanatory schemes.

Extract 4.15: Ex2C12

(1) The psyche of most living creatures, when they perceive a threat, is explained in the concept of “fight or flight.” This practically means that once the assault is initiated, though the target may be injured, he may still attempt to resist. (2) A swift slice across the face should quickly subdue them, as very few people will continue to fight once the smell, feel, and sight of blood becomes apparent

Source: ‘Just Terror Tactics: Part 1’ Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

In this particular example, extract Ex2C12 falls under the theoretical rationalization, specifically the scientific rationalization. In sentence (1), the author explains the basic humans psychology when it comes to dealing with threats. The concept of ‘fight or flight’ is explained to elaborate on the nature of human psychology, which allows the author(s) to manipulate the information and further suggested a method to subdue victims on the occasion of resistance. Another form of theoretical rationalization is also present in the sentence (2). The phrase ‘a swift slice across the face...’ indicates an experiential rationalization legitimation in which the author offers a solution to counter resisting victims that serves as the common-sense knowledge.

(c) ***Mythopoesis***

There are instances where narratives, specifically the cautionary tale, are used to refer to the Prophet SAW and *sahabah* r.a. actions when dealing with the ‘out-group’. The structure of the narratives often accompanied by a description of the ‘out-group’ negative behaviours or traits to legitimize the following punishments. The pieces of evidence can be seen in the extracts below:

Extract 4.16: Ar3C1

Allah SWT sent His Messenger, Muhammad SAW, as a mercy to the creation, and so (1) he openly called the people to the path of truth and guidance. (2) Whoever accepted was encompassed with this mercy, and whoever opposed it and resisted was fought and dealt with using severe brutality until this enemy submitted to the command of Allah. The Prophet's *Sirah* contains the best evidence of this. (3) Following the Prophet's return from Badr, he ordered that the prisoner 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'it be killed in captivity, and this was because (4) 'Uqbah had been among the harshest of the people in harming Islam and the Muslims. (5) Adh-Dhahabi said in the *sirah* he authored, "The Prophet SAW killed 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'it in [the valley of] 'Irq adh-Dhubyah. When the Prophet SAW ordered that he be killed, 'Uqbah said, 'Who will look after my sons, O Muhammad?' He said, 'Hellfire.' 'Asim Ibn Thabit Ibn Abil-Aqlah then killed him, and it was said that 'Ali r.a. killed him."

Source: 'Brutality and Severity towards the Kuffar', Rumiayah (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

The excerpt shows a combination of a strategy used by the author to legitimize the practice of killing. The Prophet's actions, which serve as the role model authority, are highlighted in the *Sirah* that foretells the consequence of opposing the command of Allah. The *Sirah* serves as the cautionary tale. The practice is legitimized through the actions of a figure that is considered as a role model by all Muslims, thus, the ISIS group as well. In this case, the Prophet's actions are taken as guidance in executing punishments to the individuals who are deemed as dangerous to Islam. The authority is realized from the verbal process 'he ordered' in the sentence (3) and the phrase '...the Prophet SAW ordered him to be killed...' in the sentence (5) as giving orders indicate the sense of power and authority one should have in an organisation or society. The cautionary tale is realized from the *Sirah* written by a hadith scholar, Adh-Dhababi, in the sentence (5). He is the leading scholar in hadith and also a historian. His expertise is acknowledged by many other Muslim scholars. The use of an expert is also one sub-types of the authorization strategies – an expert authority that indicates the expertise or specialization of an expert is used to reinforce a claim (van Leeuwen, 2008).

However, in this instance, the primary strategy that legitimized the practice of killing is the combination of the cautionary tale and role model authority. The *Sirah* quoted in the extract highlights the repercussion one would face for deceiving and going against the Muslims. The story of ‘*Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu’it*’ serves as an example. The negative trait that legitimized the practice is realized from the sentence (4) “*Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu’it* be killed in captivity, and this was because ‘*Uqbah* had been among the harshest of the people in harming Islam”. Here, the example shows ‘*Uqbah*’s trait is implied from the phrase ‘...had been among the harshest of people in harming Islam’. Aside from the aforementioned strategies, a rationalization strategy can also be identified in the earlier part of the extract. The construction of purpose is realized from the phrase ‘...whoever opposed it and resisted was fought and dealt with using severe brutality until this enemy submitted to the command of Allah’ seen in the sentence (2). This instrumentational rationalization is a goal-oriented purpose in which the end goal of submission to Allah is made as a reason to punish the one that opposed it violently.

Extract 4.17: Ar3C2

In the Battle of Uhud, (1) Allah’s Messenger SAW ordered that the prisoner Abu ‘Azzah al-Jumahi be killed, and he was a man who had daughters. (2) Ibn Kathir said, “No mushrik was taken prisoner except Abu ‘Azzah al-Jumahi, who was also among the prisoners on the day of Badr. The Prophet SAW freed him without ransom [after Badr], and placed a condition on him that he not return to fighting him SAW. (3) When he was taken prisoner on the day of Uhud, Abu ‘Azzah said, ‘O Muhammad, free me for the sake of my daughters and I promise not to fight you.’ So Allah’s Messenger SAW said to him, ‘I will not let you walk around in Makkah saying, ‘I deceived Muhammad twice.’” (4) He then gave the order and his neck was struck. Some scholars have mentioned that Allah’s Messenger SAW said that day, ‘The believer is not stung from the same hole twice!’” (Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah).

Source: ‘Brutality and Severity towards the Kuffar’, Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

Similar to the previous example, this excerpt highlights the consequences of deceiving and harming the Muslims after being given a chance of freedom. The story of Abu ‘Azzah

al-Jumahi is also one of the indicators of ‘us’ versus ‘others’ theme. The author(s) established the characteristic of Abu ‘Azzah al-Jumahi by labelling him as a *mushrik* which is realized from the phrase ‘No *mushrik* was taken prisoner except Abu ‘Azzah al-Jumahi...’ in the sentence (2). On top of that, the cautionary tale is used to describe him as being deceitful and cunning by highlighting his actions towards the Prophet. This is implied from the phrase ‘So Allah’s Messenger SAW said to him, ‘I will not let you walk around in Makkah saying, ‘I deceived Muhammad twice’ in the sentence (3). Role model authorization is realized in the sentence (4) from the phrase “he ordered that the prisoner Abu ‘Azzah al-Jumahi be killed” and “he then gave the order and his neck was struck”.

4.3.1.2 Visual

The overall observation of the visual aspect indicates that the realization of ‘us’ versus ‘other’ notion is seen from the portrayal of the social actors and the manner they were being portrayed. Most of the sample consists of one or more human participants that include the in-group and the out-group. The manner of representation seen from the portrayal of these human participants indicates the difference of power between the groups. Most of the in-group, i.e. *shuhada*, soldiers of ISIS and ISIS’s supporters are shown in the manner that empowered their identity and existence. This representation is seen from the involvements identified the angle used, and their interactions with the audience. The trend is notable in the FW1v1, Ar7v1 and Ex1v1 sample. The out-group, i.e. *kuffar*, *mushrikin*, *murtaddin*, *munafiq*, on the other hand, experiencing the disempowerment that mitigated and rendered their identities and values by generalizing them as the enemy of Islam.

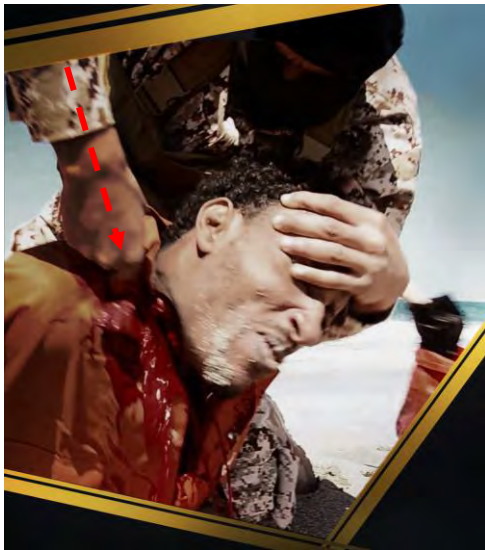
In Ar3v1, the sense of empowerment is shown from the acts committed by the Actor towards the Goal. The visual in figure 4.1 shows the in-group Actor is actively engaged in an act to subdue the Goal or ‘them’. This slaughtering act further empowers the Actor

as the one with authority. However, the Goal, which is the out-group, is shown passively receiving the action which resembles the slaughter of a cattle. This similarity further degrades the value of the out-group by associating its value to the likes of an animal. The visual in figure 4.2 exemplified the representation as the victims were laid in line similar to slaughtered cattle.

This passivation of the RP indicates the disempowerment and this trend can be seen in the sample Ar8v1. Aside from the representational and interactive perspectives, the compositional meaning also contributes to the realization of legitimacy. The realization is seen from the emerging salience, which is actualized through the colour schemes, e.g. high and low saturated colour that intensify the meaning potential. Detailed analysis is shown below.

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Unidirectional transactional action



Visual offer
Far personal distance
Horizontal oblique



Ideal/real system

Figure 4.1: Brutality and Severity towards the *Kuffar*



Conceptual process –
covert taxonomy

One example of the Islamic State's brutality towards the mushrikin

‘One example of the Islamic State’s
brutality towards the mushrikin’



One example of the Islamic State's brutality towards the mushrikin

by tongue, until they firmly established the religion, upheld the foundations of Islam, and raised the banner of tawhid. The foremost of them was Abu Bakr as-Siddiq ؓ, through whose steadfastness Allah fortified Islam when he remained determined to fight the murtaddin who resisted a single, clear-cut law of Islam – the obligation of paying zakah. He did not distinguish between them and those who returned to worshipping idols or those who followed false prophets. Instead, he organized brigades and dispatched squadrons, amongst these brigades being one led by the Unsheathed Sword of Allah, Khalid Ibn al-Walid ؓ. During the first assault against the murtaddin, Khalid ؓ managed to break the army of Tulayyah Ibn Khunwaylid al-Azadi and those who joined him from the Arab tribes. Khalid dispersed them and shattered their strength. As-Siddiq then sent a message to Khalid, telling him to make examples of them and to be severe in doing so. Ibn Kathir said, "Abu Bakr as-Siddiq wrote to Khalid Ibn al-Walid after it reached him that he had defeated Tulayyah and those with him, saying, 'May Allah increase His blessings upon you. Fear Allah, for verily Allah is with those who fear Him and those who are righteous. Be stern in this matter and do not soften. Do not spare any of the mushrikin who have killed Muslims, rather make an example of them. Whoever you capture who has opposed Allah, thinking that he has done well, then kill him!' (Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah). Indeed, the Unsheathed Sword of Allah executed the order. He went out, seeking any of those murtaddin from the dispersed, defeated army, and made examples of them, exacting vengeance on them. Ibn Kathir said, "So he spent one month, seeking revenge for the Muslims who were lying amongst these tribes when the tribes apostatized. Some of them he burned with fire others he smashed with stones others he threw from atop the highest mountains. He did this so that any Arab murtadd who learned of their out- come might take heed." These deeds terrorized those who remained of the murtaddin, as they began to hear of the news, such that some of them were quick to repent and abide by the Shariah, while others were stubborn and insisted upon war. And when a delegation from Buzaklah (a place in Bahrain, at that time home to the tribes of Asad, Chazalan, and Tayy) came and requested peace with Abu Bakr as-Siddiq ؓ promising to abide by all laws of Islam, he gave them the choice between a devastating war and a humiliating peace. Ibn Kathir said, "They then said, 'O Khalifah of Allah's Messenger, as for the devastating war, then we are well aware of it. But what is the humiliating peace?' He said, 'That all weapons and riding animals be taken from you, leaving you as people who follow the tails of camels, until Allah shows the Khalifah of His Prophet and the Believers a reason to pardon you; and that you will return what you took from us, and we will not return what we took from you; and that you bear witness that those who were killed from us are in Jannah, while those who were killed from you are in the Fire.'" This action of as-Siddiq ؓ was to humiliate those who waged war against Allah and His Messenger, making it clear to them the evil of their deeds and the enormity of their perpetrations. It also kept the Muslim Jami'ah safe from the apostates' danger, by taking their weapons away from them after their repentance. His stipulating of these conditions was a manifestation of the honor of Islam and the Muslims, despite the war with the murtaddin not yet being over. There was another stance taken by as-Siddiq ؓ, this time regarding al-Fujaah as-Sulami, a murtadd who deceived the Muslims and warred with them, whose punishment was to be burned by fire. Ibn Kathir said, "Indeed, as-Siddiq burned al-Fujaah at Baq' in Madinah. The reason for that was that he came to him, claiming to be a Muslim,

Visual offer
Far public distance
High oblique angle

Ideal/real system

Figure 4.2: Brutality and Severity towards the *Kuffar* (2)

(a) **AR3: Brutality and Severity Towards the Kuffar**

In this sample, various visual elements are harmoniously combined to construct the notion of 'us' versus 'others'. In critical discourse analysis, the idea of 'us' versus 'others' is commonly investigated from many different lenses; historical analysis, textual analysis et cetera in which many focus on the various social phenomenon, e.g. racial studies. In this particular study, however, the notion can be identified from the combination of textual and visual aspects in terrorism studies. The sample above (Ar3v1 & Ar3v2) indicates the visual elements used by the producer to foreground the idea and connects it with the audience. Traditionally, textual is often the preferable choices chosen by the producer(s) to convey certain ideologies to the audience. However, a recent trend indicates the emerging use of visuals and various semiotic elements to assist the process of dissemination. In this study, the choice of images and colours simultaneously contribute to the construction of positive and negative values of 'us' group and 'others'.

Representational meaning: Narrative process is identified in Ar3v1 from the image shown on the upper left corner of the sample. The first vector begins from the corner of the photograph connects to the subject in the middle. The meeting point of the knife and the subject creates an additional action element which gives a dynamic view of the visual. The semiotic choices of this sample tell a story of the consequences the *kuffar* would suffer due to their retaliation towards ISIS's group. Ar3v2, on the other hand, exhibits a conceptual value in which the RPs are structured in the classificatory process, specifically the covert taxonomy. The RPs were aligned diagonally occupying half of the visual. The use of such visual serves as a warning to the *kuffar* of the treatments the ISIS's group would give to them.

Interactive meaning: The overall semiotic choices highlight the producer(s) pragmatic of choices which further distance the ‘us’ group from the audience. Such effects are seen from the chosen semiotic resources in each sample. Ar3v1 effectively exhibits four aspects of interactive meaning; visual offer, close personal distance, oblique angle, and medium horizontal angle. In terms of contact, the subject’s face is covered with the actor’s hand creating a visual *offer* which shows less engagement between the subject and the viewer. The close personal distance seen in Ar3v1 does not indicate a close intimacy between the RP and the viewer. However, it intended to incite fear among the reader. The oblique angle of the RP further distance the viewer with the participant as such choices create greater detachment.

Compositional meaning: Harrison (2003) equates compositional metafunction as visual syntax in which it is defined as “a set of rules that enable the signs of language (visual) to be arranged grammatically” in order to make sense to the reader. In Ar3v1, the overall compositional structure of the sample effectively integrates the first two metafunctions. The elements of informational value are seen from the placement of the photograph – occupying the top left corner of the page, creating a given/ideal system while the title is position on the top right corner. The black background foregrounds the image and the title which gives its saliency and the framing are seen from the bold yellow lines distinguishing the edges of the photograph. Ar3v2, however, shows a different compositional structure where the photograph is occupying the top of the page. Its salience is seen from the size of the photograph on top occupying the white background while the framing is distinguished from the photograph lines.

Non-transactional
reactional process

Visual demand/offer
Social distance
Horizontal angle



'THE KAFIR'S BLOOD
FOR YOU, SO SHED IT'

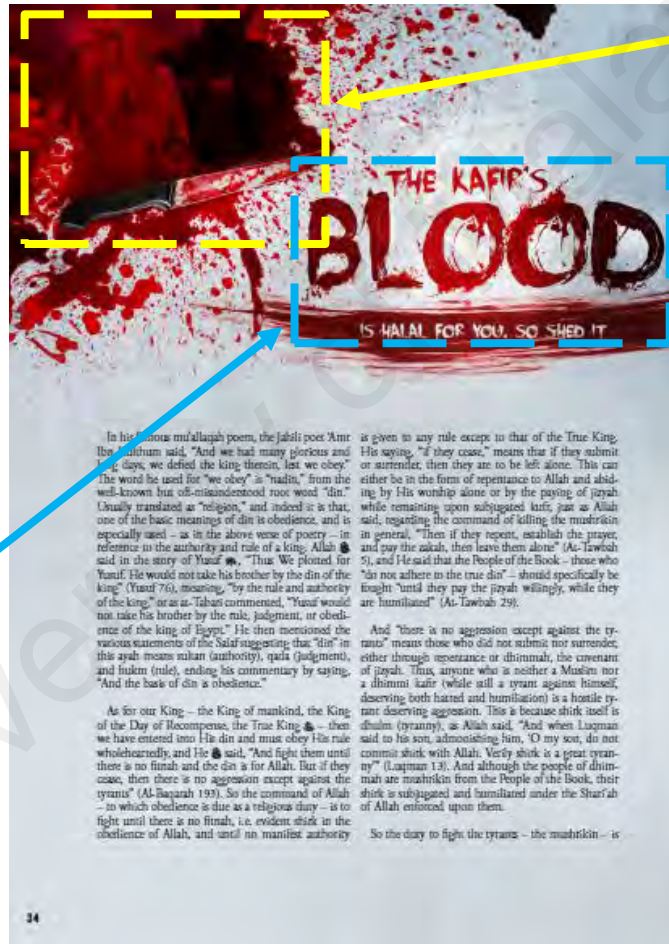


Figure 4.3: Kafir's Blood is Halal for You, so Shed it

Ideal/real system
Colour schemes

(b) *AR2: The Kafir's Blood is Halal, so Shed it*

The sample consists of several semiotic resources. An image consists of a pool of blood makes up a part of Ar2v1 sample. Other resources seen together are the title made out of red font which style mimic the blood stroke and the text which make more than half of the page. The participants in this sample are the two social actors in the image. In the identified image, the primary participant is the man who was being escorted by the policeman, while the second participant is the policeman himself. The identified metafunctions are analysed below.

Representational meaning: There are two human participants in the sample. The represented participants are seen engaged in an action which can be observed as a man being escorted by a policeman. Both the primary and secondary participants exhibit a vector line departing from their eyes towards something (audience and outside of the frame). This process is known as a non-transactional reactional process due to the absence of the phenomenon in the frame. Another non-human participant is also present in the sample, which is a knife. The knife also exhibits a vectorial pattern which realized by the diagonal angle of the subject.

Interactive meaning: Each RP established various interaction with the viewers. The first RP (civilian) engaged directly with the viewer through his eye contact. The contact 'demand' sympathy and help from the viewers as it is accompanied by a sad facial expression. The second RP's contact is directed outside of the frame, which indicates an 'offer' contact. In terms of social distance, both RPs are portrayed in medium-shot from waist up. The type of shot indicates a social relationship between the participants and the viewers. The photograph is shown in a horizontal frontal angle that heightens the involvement between the participants and the audience.

Compositional meaning: The compositional structure of Ar2v1 foregrounds the elements of violence through the placement of the semiotic resources. Such placement interacts within the sample to create a cohesive meaning of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ through the syntagm relationship. The informational value indicates the ideal/real system where most of the semiotic elements are placed at the top of the page, and the text occupies the lower part. Much of the space is given to the text rather than the semiotic elements. However, the salient aspect of the sample is seen from the semiotic resources, i.e., the pool of blood, knife and typography of the title, which serves to capture the viewers’ attention. A sense of connectedness is seen from the colour schemes of the title with the pool of blood. The repetition of the red colour stresses on the connection between the visual and the intended message. The framing can also be seen from the thick stroke under the word ‘blood’. In the stroke lies the phrase ‘...is halal for you, so shed it’ which directly implies the notion of ‘us’ versus ‘them’.

Symbolic suggestive process



Ex4v2



Ex4v1



Visual offer
Public distance
Horizontal wide

Ideal/real system
Colour contrast
Outline of the blood

Figure 4.4: Collateral Carnage

(c) **EX4: Collateral Carnage**

The semiotic resources identified in Ex4v1 shows a few elements, i.e., a pavement filled with pedestrians, the pool of blood, title and text. Further analysis shows that there are several people seen with briefcases in the image identified which is an indicator of working civilians. The participants identified in this visual are the pedestrians walking by on a busy pavement either on their way to work or coming back from it. The meaning of each of the resources is analysed below.

Representational meaning: The absence of any form of vectors in the sample indicate the represented participants portrayed conceptually. The process involves a symbolic suggestive process where the participants are represented in their generic form showing only their outlines rather in details. This representational choice indicates the meaning of the pedestrian as collateral damage. The generalization of the participants renders their individualistic meaning and values which dehumanize the participants.

Interactive meaning: The participants' interactions with the viewers are absence as there is no direct contact between them. The participants are constructed in 'offer' manner in which they are represented as an item of information. The social distance of the participants is realized through extreme long-shot, which indicate the public distance interaction. The angle used by the producer(s) is a wide horizontal angle. The choice of angle erased the individualistic meaning of the participants as they are shown in outlines, and this impersonalized the participants into the 'them' categorization. The overall interactive meaning of the sample shows the lack of interaction and involvement between the viewers and the RP as the producer(s) intend to impersonalize the 'them' values.

Compositional meaning: The spatial composition of Ex4v1 is similar to Ar2v1, where the placement of the semiotic resources indicates an ideal/real system. The slight difference is seen from the position of the pool of blood which is situated at the middle, top of the page. The pool of blood makes up more than half of the entire page. The overall visual indicates a sense of connectedness between the participants and other semiotic elements as they are framed together within the pool of blood. The superimposed pool of blood on the top of the escorted civilian is indexical of the severity of violence preached by the ISIS group. A clear framing can be seen from the outline created by the pool of blood that encapsulates the image of the pedestrian. Another framing is seen from the dripping line formed by a drop of blood in between the two columns.

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4.3.2 Legitimization of *jihad* value

The legitimization of *jihad* value is another theme identified in the sample. The findings of this analysis indicate that the value of *jihad* is foreground discursively and visually. Such value is used as the vehicle to allow violent practices to be carried and masked as a form of *jihad* practices. *Jihad* is an Arabic term whose root meaning is ‘to struggle’, ‘to strive’ or ‘to exert’ (Oxford Islamic Studies Online, 2019). In the contextual sense, the notion of *jihad* often being used to indicate ‘holy war’ (Islamic Supreme Council of America, 2016) between the Muslims and non-Muslims. The meaning of the word *jihad* can be interpreted in several ways, depending on an institution’s interests. In this study, this notion is seen from the analysis of the text and visual. The ISIS group manipulated and twists the scriptural texts to favour and legitimized their violent practices under the notion of *jihad*. The recurring of instances and metafunctions across the sample shows the value of *jihad* is being used to legitimize ISIS’s violent practices. In this theme, the value of *jihad* can be seen across the sample textually, and most of the notion can be identified in several articles, e.g., EX1, AR7 and FW1. These articles exemplified the value through the construction of *jihadist* identities textually and visually.

4.3.2.1 Discursive

The textual analysis of the sample indicates various legitimization strategies used to justify ISIS’s violent practices. The most occurring strategy is moral evaluation and mythopoesis legitimation. The structure of the legitimization strategies occurs in combination where the moral evaluation strategy is embedded in the mythopoesis. The moral evaluation is also reflected from the authorization strategy, specifically, the role models’ actions. The construction of purpose also plays a role in legitimizing violent practices. A number of instances found in the sample show the use of the instrumentational rationalization strategy to construct the purpose of the practices. The

most used purpose is the goal-oriented, where ISIS justify their actions by making the attacks and practices as a means of ‘unified front’ against the enemy of Islam. Below are the instances identified and its explanation of the strategy.

(a) **Authorization**

As aforementioned, various part of the sample indicates the use of role model authorization as a way to endorse the act of violence. Below are the extracts that illustrate the recurring use of authorization strategy.

Extract 4.18: Ar7C2

(1) This small group of *mujahidin* – who spent ten days training for the operation – then (2) attacked the soldiers in the base with their knives and seized their weapons. They then clashed with them for several hours, killing at least six of them and injuring three others. (3) Six of the *mujahidin* attained *shahadah* during the course of the operation, and the remaining two returned safely back to their locations.

Source: ‘And Fight the Mushrikin Collectively’, Rumiya (Issue 8), 4th April 2017.

The value of *jihad* is seen from the actions taken by ‘the small group of *mujahidin*’ seen in the sentence (1). The time spent on their training and preparing for the planned attack on the *kuffar* is made as an example and moralized as the ways of *jihad*. The role model authorization is exemplified from the outcome of their attacks – which led them to attain *shahadah* or martyrdom, as seen in the sentence (3). Their actions hold power to legitimize any form of violent practices due to the premise of attaining *shahadah*, which allows the martyr to be rewarded.

Extract 4.19: Ex2C3

In compliance with this and other verses on *jihad*, (1) generations upon generations of *mujahidin* rose for the sake of Allah SWT and struck the necks of the *kuffar* with their swords, severing limbs and piercing the fleshy meat of those who opposed Islam. (2) “So when you meet those who disbelieve, strike their necks, until, when you have overwhelmed them with killing ...” (Muhammad 4).

Source: 'Just Terror Tactics: Part 1' Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

In this excerpt, the value of *jihad* is manipulated to justify the act of beheading the *kuffar* which being seen in the sentence (1) from the phrase 'struck the necks of *kuffar* with their swords'. The practice is legitimized through the authority of tradition which is realized through the phrase 'generation upon generation' seen in the sentence (1) which implied the act had been practised by generations of *mujahidin* across time. The Qur'an verse in (2) further reinforces the legitimization of violent practices. The verse (Muhammad 47:4) is seen to be recontextualised in the example to reinforce the act of killing by omitting part of the translation of the verse. The current translation of the verse implied the meaning of striking the disbelievers at any given point time without valid reasoning, which influenced the readers' decision-making process who already subscribed to the notion of violence.

Extract 4.20: Ex1C10

(1) Abu Rahiq, leader of the five *inghimasiyyin* sent to terrorize the Crusaders in the Holey Artisan Bakery, was a close friend of Abu Jandal al-Bengali³ r.a. (2) Despite being raised in a secular *murtadd* family linked to the ruling *taghut* government of the Awami League, he was among the first *muwahhidin* in Bengal who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State as soon as the Khilafah was declared, *walhamdulillah*. Although he was a relatively young brother, (3) Abu Rahiq had all the qualities of a military commander within him, by the grace of Allah. He was nicknamed by his military commander as "one-man army" because of his bravery and his uncompromising *baraah* towards the *kuffar*. (4) As soon as he was given the good news that he was selected for an *inghimasi* operation against the Crusaders, he immediately shouted "Allahu akbar" and fell into prostration out of happiness, thanking Allah for the great blessing and asking for acceptance

Source: 'The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack', Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2017.

The example above indicates the use of role model authorization strategy. In sentence (1) Abu Rahiq was introduced to the readers as a friend of Abu Jandal al-Bengali (whose was previously mentioned in *Dabiq* magazine), this is to establish his identity as one of the *shuhada* by associating him with another known *shuhada*. His family background was

further described in the sentence (2) by labelling them as ‘secular *murtadd* family’ to allow the readers with a similar background to relate with him which in turn create an interpersonal relationship between the represented participant and the readers. Abu Rahiq military personalities were made salience in the excerpt in the sentence (3) to validate his role as one of the *shuhada*. The overall description of Abu Rahiq’s background, personalities and position in the ISIS military indicates his credibility as a *shuhada* which indirectly inspired the readers through the established interpersonal relationship constructed by the author(s).

(b) ***Rationalization***

The sample indicates various purposes constructed by the author(s) to carry out attacks on the *kuffar*. The recurring strategy is instrumentational rationalization with the purpose of waging *jihad* on the ‘out-group’ as a form of *tawhid*. The following extracts exhibit the construction of purpose that foregrounds this theme.

Extract 4.21: Ex1C1

(1) As the aircrafts and drones of the Crusader coalition continue to bomb and terrorize the Muslims of Iraq, Sham, Libya, and other wilayat of the Khilafah, their Muslim brothers and sisters all over the world read the news with aching pain as (2) the Prophet SAW said, “The believers, in their love, mercy, and sympathy, are like one single body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with insomnia and fever” (Reported by al Bukhari and Muslim from an-Nu’man Ibn Bashir

Source: ‘The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack’, Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2017.

The example above indicates an instrumentational rationalization strategy. The legitimization is constructed by building up the ‘crimes of the enemies’ narrative that constructs the purpose of the ISIS’s attacks. The following narrative constructs the value of oneness or togetherness among the Muslims as indicated from the phrase “...their Muslim brothers and sisters all over the world read the news with aching pain...” in the

sentence (1). The comradeship and brotherhood values exhibit in the example coaxed the viewers into subscribing to their idealized version of the values. This narrative is further strengthened with an intertextual element taken from a hadith which foreground the value of togetherness found in the sentence (2). Thus, any inflicted damages on the Islamic State are made as an attack to all the community of Islam around the world.

Extract 4.22: Ex1C2

(1) These Muslims realize that the Crusader leaders who give the orders to brutally bomb the Muslims don't come from an abstract vacuum; rather, they come into power via the blessings of the constituency of their citizenry, those who partake in their democratic system or accept its results. (2) These Muslims also realize that the huge costs associated with bombs dropped by these aircrafts and drones are largely financed through the tax money generated from the so-called "innocent civilians" of these democratic nations, those "civilians" who recognize the legitimacy of policies derived by their democracies, policies including the government spending of tax money on wars waged against Islam and the Muslims. (3) Thus, there remains no doubt in the hearts of these Muslims that the destruction of lives and property in the wilayat of the Khilafah by Crusader jets and drones is to be directly blamed on the purported "power of the people," i.e. the power of the so called "innocent civilians" of the Crusader nations.

Source: 'The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack', Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2017.

The author(s) further build up the 'crimes of the enemies' narratives to legitimize their subsequent attacks and at the same time deconstructs the citizen identity by criminalising their actions and blaming it for the attacks made by their leaders. The citizens' value and roles are rendered to be associated with the attacks as supporters or enablers as seen from the phrase "[...] they come into power via the blessings of the constituency of their citizenry [...]" in the sentence (1) and "[...] huge costs associated with bombs dropped by these aircraft and drones are largely financed through the tax money [...]" in the sentence (2). Such associations bring forth the justification for the ISIS group to launch a counter-attack which legitimized the death of the innocents. The concluding remark in the sentence (3) delivers the final justification of the practice by shifting the blame of the

Crusaders' attacks onto the citizens, and this is realized through the phrase '[...]' to be directly blamed on the purported "power of the people" [...] in the sentence (3). Thus, this legitimization is a form of goal orientation instrumental in which the purpose is to build up through narratives to deconstruct the value of the 'innocent citizens' and constructing them as a part of the crusaders who were responsible for the prior attacks.

Extract 4.23: Ex1C7

(1) Thus, let the Crusader nations know that as long as they fight the Islamic State, their citizens will not be able to enjoy any peace and safety in any part of Bengal, *bi idhnillah*, including the supposedly most "secured" zone therein. They will not be safe as long as a drop of blood remains in the bodies of the Soldiers of the Khilafah here, *in shaallah*

Source: 'The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack', Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2017.

This extract is another example of instrumental rationalization in which the purpose constructed is goal-oriented. The motive of such attacks is further emphasized through the phrase "... let the Crusader nations know that as long as they fight the Islamic State, their citizens will not be able to enjoy any peace and safety in any part of Bengal..." in the sentence (1). The extract creates a sense of purpose to cause disturbance as a form of a counter-attack from the Crusaders who launched prior attacks towards the Islamic State. It also serves as a warning to the Crusaders of the counter-attacks the Islamic State will proceed if the war against the Islamic State persists. The 'counter-attack' narrative employed by ISIS is one of the ways that legitimized the killing of the 'far' enemy as it constructs such violence as the defence mechanism to protect the Islamic State.

In another article, rationalization strategy is seen to legitimize violent practices through the construction of fear as the main objective. Instilling fear into the hearts of the *kuffar* was made as to the main objective that drives the *mujahidin*'s actions. The examples below illustrate the construction of fear as the purpose of the violent practices.

Extract 4.24: Ar7C1

(1) The *mujahidin* were being mobilized to unite upon *tawhid* and to form a unified front against every *mushrik* in every corner of the earth, just as Allah SWT had commanded them, “And fight the *mushrikin* collectively just as they fight you collectively” (At-Tawbah 36). (2) The war against *kufir* soon intensified as the *mushrikin* rallied in an attempt to stop the Islamic State’s expansion and bring an end to the threat it posed. But one after another the *mujahid* factions continued to unite under the Khilafah’s banner

Source: ‘And Fight the Muhsrikin Collectively’, Rumiayah (Issue 8), 6th January 2017.

Rationalization of ‘fighting the *mushrik*’ is seen through the constructed purpose, which is to fight those that are against the Islamic State’s expansion. This goal-oriented purpose legitimizes the act of fighting the *mushrikin* as a way to expand the state of Islam. The *jihad* value is implied from the phrase ‘a unified front against every *mushrik*’ the *mujahidin* are taking to fight the *mushrikin*. The purpose of the violent practices in this example is moralized with the value of *jihad* and *tawhid* to mask the practices as one of the obligations required in to uphold the value of Islam.

Extract 4.25: Ex2C14

(1) The overall objective of any just terror operation is to bring horror and misery to the enemies of Allah SWT, and to remind them that their efforts to wage war against Islam and the Muslims will only lead to more and more *mujahidin* appearing in their very midst, ready to strike them mercilessly on their own soil. (2) So, “Let them find harshness in you” (At-Tawbah 123). (3) And remember that Allah’s Messenger SAW said, “Never shall the kafir and his killer be united in the Fire” (Reported by Muslim from Abu Hurayrah).

Source: ‘Just Terror Tactics: Part 1’, Rumiayah (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

In this example, the instrumentational rationalization is highlighted in the sentence (1) through the phrase ‘The overall objective of any just terror operation is to bring horror and misery to the enemies of Allah SWT...’ where the fear is constructed to ‘bring horror’ and ‘misery’ to the out-group as they continue to wage war against the Muslims. The

Qur'an verse and hadith narration by Imam Muslim in the sentence (2) and (3) further acts as a reinforcement that legitimizes the act. The notion of *jihad* is implied from the hypothetical actions that lead to the rising of *mujahidin* in relation to the war waged by the Crusaders.

(c) ***Moral evaluation***

Often the acts of violence performed by the ISIS group are being constructed as to carry a positive connotation. The *jihad* value is mainly seen used by the *Rumiyah* author(s) to legitimize violent practices and justify the actions. The construction of *jihad* value can be seen in the examples below.

Extract 4.26: Ex1C4

Thus, on the night of the 27th of Ramadan 1437, the Soldiers of the Khilafah in Bengal decided to send an *inghimasi* team of five shahadah knights to the Holey Artisan Bakery restaurant in Gulshan, Dhaka, in order to give the Crusaders a taste of their own medicine. (1) With tawfiq from Allah, the *inghimasi* brothers were able to kill all the kuffar in the restaurant, kill and wound many of the murtadd Bengali soldiers, and hold the Crusader-owned restaurant under siege for almost 12 hours against hundreds of murtadd Bengali soldiers before achieving shahadah, walhamdulillah. (2) We ask Allah to accept them as shuhada and inspire many more muwahhidin in Bengal and in other parts of the world through their deeds. Amin.

Source: 'The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack', Rumiyah (Issue 2), 4th October 2017.

The excerpt above indicates an instance where the *jihad* operation is carried out by the Soldiers of Khilafah to eradicate and kill the *kuffar*. In sentence (1), the practice of killing the *kuffar* is moralized by associating it with the value of *jihad*. The phrase '...with tawfiq from Allah...' precedes the sentence that describes the killing of the *kuffar* and *murtadd* of Bengali soldiers and moralized the practices as the meaning of '*tawfiq*' conceptualized as 'blessing' or 'guidance' (American Muslim Diversity Association, 2015) from Allah. The idea of '*tawfiq*' connotes that the operation and practices are acknowledged and approved by the Creator as interpreted by the author. In addition, the practice of killing,

wounding and taking hostages are seen as a way to attain *shahadah* and doing good deeds. This practice is realized from the phrase ‘we ask Allah to accept them as *shuhada*’ in the sentence (2).

Extract 4.27: Ex2C2

(1) Many people are often squeamish of the thought of plunging a sharp object into another person’s flesh. It is a discomfort caused by the untamed, inherent dislike for pain and death, especially after “modernization” distanced males from partaking in the slaughtering of livestock for food and the striking of the enemy in war. (2) However, any such squirms and discomforts are never an excuse for abandoning *jihad*, as the All-Knowing and Most Wise said, “Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it contains that which you dislike. But perhaps you dislike a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not” (Al-Baqarah 216)

Source: ‘Just Terror Tactics: Part 1’, Rumiya (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

Another example shows how the practice of killing through stabbing is moralized through the value of *jihad*. The example begins by generalizing and criticising the ‘modern’ males as being weak and ‘distance’ from practices such as waging war. Sentence (1) serves to construct the role of men, as according to ISIS’s interpretation, in Islam. The practice of waging war and sacrificial acts are then moralized in the sentence (2) from the phrase ‘...never an excuse for abandoning *jihad*’. The notion of *jihad* is manipulated to appeal to the viewers’ sense of faith to which was further reinforced with a Qur’an verse, i.e., Al-Baqarah (216). The verse stated that there are practices that may not be favourable to commit but holds higher value in Islam. This verse is recontextualised to advocate the act of killing the out-group in the name of *jihad*.

(d) ***Mythopoesis***

The use of *sirah* can be seen across the sample, in this theme mythopoesis strategy is used to exemplify the actions taken by the role model of Islam, e.g., the Prophet, the *sahabah*, scholars et cetera. Many of the discourses analysed in the sample indicate the

recurring use of *sirah* to legitimize violent practices through the act of *jihad*. The *Rumiyah* author(s) recontextualized the *sirah* to justify their choices as moralized actions needed for the sake of achieving their theocratic goals.

Extract 4.28: Ar3C12

After the war against the *murtaddin*, as-Siddiq r.a. aimed at starting the conquests of Iraq and Sham, as the *murtaddin* were nothing but (1) a major obstacle in the path of *jihad* for Allah's cause and in the path of spreading Islam unto the world. They are an obstacle necessary to remove, so that it becomes easier for the Ummah of Islam to call those nations who oppose it and to fight them over the religion of Allah. (2) Later, in the Battle of Ullays (a village of Anbar) with the Magian Persians, the Unsheathed Sword of Allah SWT swore that the river would run with their blood. (3) Ibn Kathir said, "Khalid said, 'O Allah! You have my pledge that, if You grant me victory over them, I will not leave any of them alive until I make their river run with their blood.' Thereafter, Allah SWT granted the Muslims victory over them.

Source: 'Brutality and Severity Towards Kuffars', Rumiyah (Issue 2), 4th October 2016.

The extract above indicates mythopoetic legitimation through the use of *sirah* of the *sahabah*, i.e., as-Siddiq r.a. and Khalid. The *sirah* highlighted in this example shows the manner of *sirah* being used by the author(s) to foreground violence. The practice of waging war as seen from the phrase '...as-Siddiq r.a. aimed at starting the conquest of Iraq and Sham...' is legitimized through the role model authorization embedded in the *sirah* which is realized by the decision made by Khalid who vowed to eradicate all the *murtaddin* in the Battle of Ullays.

4.3.2.2 Visual

The value of *jihad* is not only seen from the discursive aspect alone but also materialized visually. There are various semiotic resources identified in the sample that connotes the meaning of *jihad*. The most recurring element is the ISIS flag. The ISIS flag plays a significant part in some of the samples, i.e., EX1, AR7 and FW1. Each of this article showcases the use of the flag together with one or more social actors. Often, the

accompanied actors are from the in-group portrayed in an empowering manner. Wignell, Tan and O'Halloran (2016) discovered the use of the ISIS flag in their study of *Dabiq* magazine. The flag seems to connote the meaning of *tawhid* and *jihad* that serves as a symbolic icon for the group.

Furthermore, the social semiotic findings show that most of the participants are represented as to mean something. Although the narrative process is seen in the sample, the participants are structured conceptually as to give the article meaning. Below are several articles that highlight the trend found in the sample that conceptualizes the *jihad* value.

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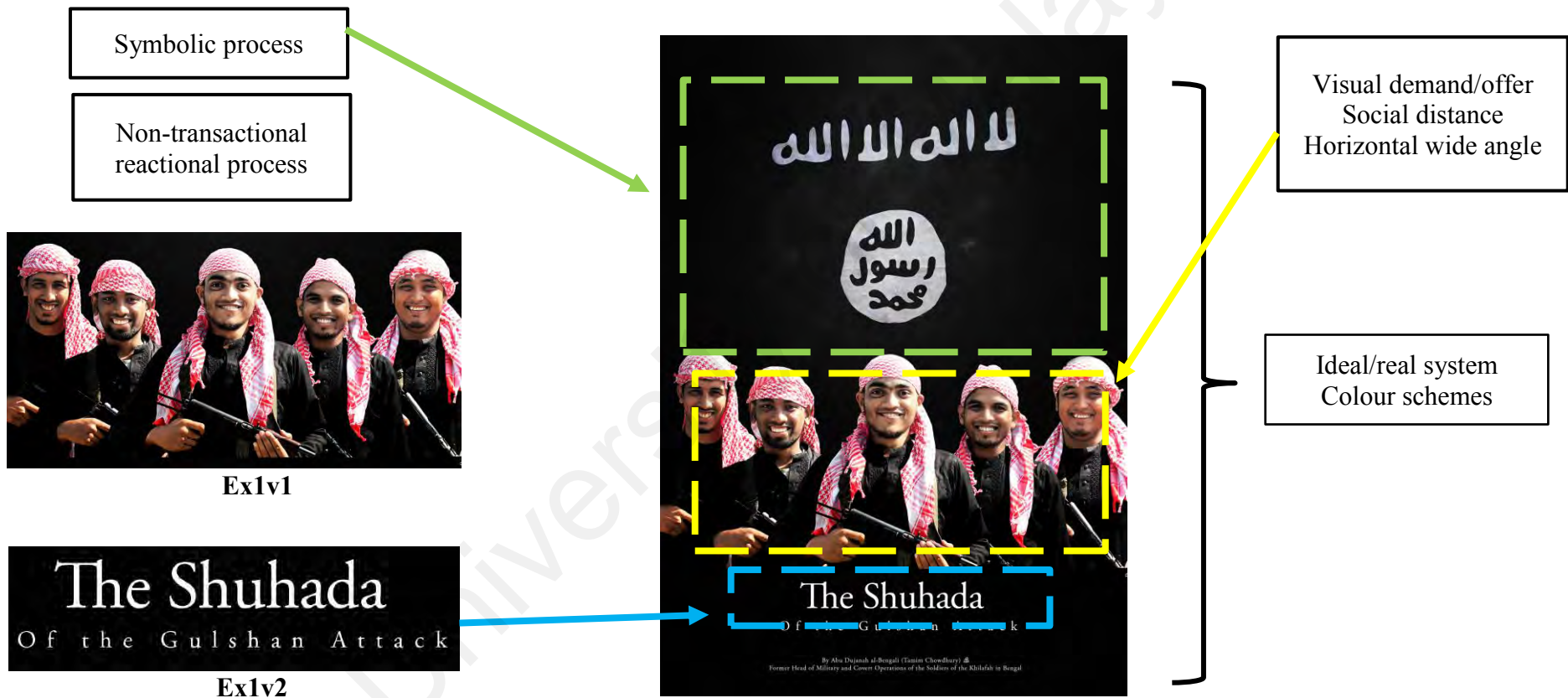


Figure 4.5: The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack

(a) ***EX1: The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack***

Jihad value is seen across the article, albeit not explicitly, the essence of the value is implied from the actions and purposes of the conducted practices. Nevertheless, such value is not only viewable through text but also visuals. The next sample is taken from issue 2 under the exclusive section. This article contains 4 pages which heavily weighed with textual information and a single page filled with various semiotic resources. This sample is labelled as Ex1v1. The visual accompanied the article (EX1) entitled *The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attack*, encompass a group of young men who are represented as the main subject of the visual. Aligned in a horizontal position, these men are accompanied by several visual elements, i.e., clothing, weapon, the flag that constructs their identities as the *shuhada* or martyr of Islam. Further analysis of this visual exhibits several processes involves together in creating the value of *jihad*.

Representation meaning: On the narrative plane, the represented participants are portrayed in a non-transactional reactional process where the vectorial pattern can be seen from the RPs eye lines making contact with the viewer but are not linked to one another. In addition, the weapons held by the RPs are another form of a vector that emanates the meaning of standby or a welcoming stance. The conceptual aspect, on the other hand, exhibits several processes. From the classificatory angle, the represented participants are portrayed as a group – it embodies a covert taxonomy representation of *mujahiddin* or martyrs in tandem with the content of the text. This is seen from the number of the *mujahiddin* symmetrically aligned at the lower half of the page that constitutes them as a part of an organisation. Aside from that, the symbolic process is realized by the overall appearance of the RP, which serve as a symbolization to their identity as the *shuhada* and as a representation of the Muslims community. The process is realized in several ways; the actors are foregrounded against a black background, the weapons held by the actors, the *kalimah* or writing above the actors – all of these cues serve to provide meaning and

construct the value of *jihad*. Analytically, parts of the whole are excessively portrayed along with the RPs in order to build their identity as the *shuhada* (carrier). Such possessive attributes are the headscarves, guns, the black clothing et cetera. These attributes are significantly associated with the *mujahiddin* as these are what commonly seen from ISIS's militant fighters.

Interactive meaning: In this article, the RPs interact with the viewers and suggest the kind of welcoming attitude. Contact wise, the RPs are seen engaged in direct contact with the audience through their gaze. Such contact creates an imaginary relationship between the participants and the viewers. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) noted that the type of gaze as "demand" in which the represented participants symbolically demand something from the viewer. In this particular visual, the represented is seemingly demand attention from the viewer through their direct gaze and facial expressions. The smiling expression of each participant adds to the 'welcoming' value interpreted earlier to attract the viewer. In terms of social distance, the producer presents the subject in a medium-shot distance that indicates a social relationship between the participants and the viewer. The frontal angle used in the visual established a form of engagement between the represented and interactive participants. Such choices heightened the involvement between the participants, which in turn lure the viewer into investing a bit of their time to examine the content.

Compositional meaning: Ex1v1 indicates a cohesive compositional structure. The placement of the represented participants is structured vertically, where the subject occupies the centre part of the visual. Such placement provides the importance of the RP, making them the centre of the attention.

Analytical and symbolic process



Fw1v1

Stand and Die
Upon That for Which Your Brothers Died

Fw1v2



Visual offer
Far personal distance
Vertical low angle

Non-transactional
reactional process

Ideal/real system
Colour schemes
Framing is absence

Figure 4.6: Stand and Die Upon That for Which Your Brother Died

(b) ***FW1: Stand and Die Upon That for Which Your Brothers Died***

The next sample that is imbued with the value of *jihad* is an article entitled ‘Stand and Die Upon That for Which Your Brothers Died’. This sample (Fw1v1) is taken from the first issue of *Rumiyah* in the foreword section, which introduces the audience to the late Shaykh Abu Muhammad al- ‘Adnani. The content revolves around the fallen martyrs and their cause in upholding the truth. Various semiotic elements are seen in the Fw1v1 foreground the commemorative meaning of the fallen martyrs to alleviate the spirits of the ISIS soldiers.

Representational meaning: The sample shows both the narrative and conceptual processes involves highlighting the notion of *jihad*. Shaykh Abu Muhammad al- ‘Adnani is the only represented participant in the sample. From the narrative perspective, the RP is portrayed in a non-transactional reactional process which is realized by the eye line vector directed outside of the frame. The gaze constructs the RP as an essential figure to the ISIS group. Conceptually, the sample also shows the symbolic and analytical processes. These processes are realized by the flag and the RP’s attire, respectively. The symbolic meaning of the flag connotes the meaning of a fallen hero or *shuhada*. The RP’s overall attire, e.g., clothing, gears indicate him as a part of the *shuhada*.

Interactive meaning: The actor is constructed in the visual offer manner where eye contacts are not established between the interactive participants. The choice of the image enables the producer to create a sense of tribute to the represented participant. This meaning is further emphasized by the contemplating facial expression and body posture of the RP. The far personal distance creates a social relationship between the RP and the viewers, which then invoke a sense of familiarity with viewers that resonate with the RP.

The low vertical angle of the photograph creates a sense of power that suits the meaning to commemorate the death of the represented participant.

Compositional meaning: Fwlv1 compositional structure shows an ideal/real system where the image of Muhammad Al- ‘Adnani makes the top of the page and the text occupies the lower half. In the overall aspect, Al – ‘Adnani is the most salient and eye-catching in the compositional structure. Being the only human participant in the sample, Al – ‘Adnani’s photograph receives a right amount of lighting and contrast with the background. The absence of precise framing in the sample indicates the connectedness of the elements and the sense of belongingness. The use of such devices highlights the importance of Al – ‘Adnani in the article.

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Symbolic suggestive



Ar7v1



Ar7v2



Figure 4.7: And Fight the Muhsrikin Collectively

Visual demand
Far personal distance
Frontal vertical angle

Ideal/real system
Colour framing
Centre margin

Symbolic suggestive
process

(c) **AR7: And Fight the Mushrikin Collectively**

The next sample, Ar7v1, appeared in *Rumiyah* issue 8 in the article section. The article focuses on the attacks carried out by the *mujahidin* manifesting their belief in upholding and spreading the truth. From the semiotic perspective, the elements identified foreground the notion of *jihad* through the choice of social actors, social distance and the integration of the semiotics resources. The overall observation indicates three photographs were used by the producer(s) occupying the top, centre and bottom part of the page. Other semiotic elements identified are the typography, colours, framing et cetera. Further analysis is illustrated below.

Representational meaning: Narrative wise, there are three represented participants shown on the page. The first RP is located at the top of the page, looking at the viewer and pointing his finger up. This RP is portrayed in a non-transactional reactional process. The vector is realized by the eye line and the pointing finger. A similar process is seen in the second RP located at the lower left of the page. Vector departed from the RP on the left and realized through the knife. The third RP is located at the centre of the page on the right side. The image shows a deserted street, and a closer look indicated several soldiers fully armed seemingly patrolling the area. Conceptually, the symbolic meaning can be identified through the flag. The flag serves as symbolic suggestive of faith and *tawhid*.

Interactive meaning: Direct gazes can be identified from both the RP from the in-group. The contact 'demand' the viewers their attention and attract them to the RP. The out-group, on the other hand, do not show any form of gaze. They are entirely rendered into the landscape. Distance-wise, the in-group is shown in 'medium shot' showing them from their waistline. Such shot indicates a far personal distance relationship between the participants. The out-group, on the other hand, is shown in an extreme long shot which indicates a public distance relationship—the choices of distance influence the degree of

involvement between the RP and the viewers. The in-group RP is shown in a frontal, horizontal angle, which creates maximum involvement between the participants.

Compositional meaning: The compositional structure of Ar7v1 shows a cohesive placement and syntagm of the elements. The informational value shows the participants occupies all of the zones. The first RP is placed at the top of the page occupying the whole space, while the second RP is situated at the lower left of the page. The out-group is placed in the centre of the page together with the title making it the main subject of the article. The most salient element of this sample is the title which realized by the contrast of the colour with the sepia colour background. The absence of frame lines between the visual for the first and second RPs indicate the sense of belongingness between the two of them. However, the frame indicates by the colour red that encapsulates the word *mushrikin* and the out-group image distinguish between the in-group and the out-group. The visual, in a sense, does portrays not only the value of *jihad* but also an indicator of the notion of 'us' versus 'them'.

4.3.3 (De)legitimization of *'fasiq'* scholars

Another part of the sample shows a recurring trend that (de)legitimized a group of Muslim scholars who do not hold the same understanding and principle as the ISIS group. These scholars are deemed as wicked or the common Arabic word, *'fasiq'* which the root meaning is 'he disobeyed' (Understanding Islam, 2002). In this theme, the textual instances and semiotic resources complement each other to foreground the (de)legitimization of *'fasiq'* scholars. The pattern seen from the findings shows the construction of responsibility of a Muslim to identify and expose the *'fasiq'* scholars. In addition, the notion of knowledge is also discussed to give a comprehensive and detailed explanation of the characteristics that shows the identity of a true Muslim scholar. Most of the cues are seen in articles AR1, AR4 and AR6, which the theme centres around *'fasiq'* scholars.

4.3.3.1 Discursive

Textually, the (de)legitimization of *'fasiq'* scholars go through a process that begins from the (1) conceptualization of knowledge – established the definition of 'knowledge' from the *Shari'ah* perspective, (2) identifying the characteristics of *'fasiq'* scholars, and (3) establishing a sense of obligation on the Muslims to expose the *'fasiq'* scholars. This pattern can be seen from articles AR1, AR4 and AR6. The frequent occurring strategy is the authorization strategy with an emphasis on role model authority. The actions made by the notable Islamic figures, i.e., Shaykh Abu Mus'ab az-Zarqawi, Shaykh Abu Anas ash-Shami, et cetera. to pursue knowledge together with *jihad*, are made as a model behaviour of a true Muslim scholar. Most of the strategies occur in combinations with one strategy embedded in another to establish the meaning of a true scholar and its differences when compared to the *'fasiq'* scholars. In addition, derogative terms are also frequently used to

describe the *'fasiq'* scholars to discredit their capability and deconstruct their identities. Further analysis and findings are presented below.

(a) **Authorization**

In this theme, the use of authorization strategy is mostly on conceptualizing the meaning of 'knowledge' from the *Shari'ah* perspective and differentiating between Muslim scholars and the *'fasiq'* ones. Various experts' interpretations were used to reinforce the (de)legitimization of *'fasiq'* scholars. The (de)legitimization can be seen realized through the expert authority strategy, the authority of tradition and role model authority.

Extract 4.29: Ar1C1

(1) Al-Qurtubi said, "If anyone was more honored than the scholars, Allah would have mentioned them along with His name and that of the angels, just as He mentioned the scholars" (Al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Quran).

Source: 'The Wicked Scholars are Cursed', Rumiya (Issue 1), 5th September 2016.

In this example, Al-Qurtubi's expertise is used to conceptualise the role of scholars in Islam. The conceptualisation is made by referring to the Qur'an verse (Az-Zumar, 39:9) to establish the importance of scholars' roles in society which in turn gives a bigger idea of the dire consequences a society would face if the scholars are genuinely a *'fasiq'*.

Extract 4.30: Ar1C3

(1) Ash-Shatibi said, "Knowledge, as it is understood in the Shari'ah – I mean the knowledge whose people Allah and His Messenger absolutely praised – (2) is knowledge that instigates action" (Al-Muwafaqat).

Source: 'The Wicked Scholars are Cursed', Rumiya (Issue 1), 5th September 2016.

Ash-Shatibi is one of the scholars whose expertise was in the study of Qira'at, Usool, Fiqh et cetera. The scholar who originated from the Maliki madhab defined the meaning

of ‘knowledge’ from the *Shari’ah* perspective. This instance is an example of combination strategies which are the expert authority which can be seen in the sentence (1) and theoretical rationalization in the sentence (2). By defining the meaning of knowledge, it sets a parameter that defines a person of knowledge. In this example, the meaning of knowledge is not only applied to the theoretical aspect alone but is accompanied by the practical aspect as well. Hence, the definition by proxy discredits the ‘*fasiq*’ scholars who voices favour an approach that does not involve violence.

Extract 4.31: Ar1C8

(1) Throughout the ages, (2) scholars from the people of hadith were found upholding the duty of *jihad* and declaring the truth, like Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, who openly declared the truth and waged *jihad*, fighting against the Tatars, and (3) Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab, who fought the *mushrikin* inside the Arabian Peninsula and waged *jihad* against them with weapons and words.

Source: ‘The Wicked Scholars are Cursed’, Rumiya (Issue 1), 5th September 2016.

The excerpt above indicates the foundation build by the author(s) to establish the importance of having scholars in society – specifically in the Muslim community. In this particular example, the author(s) established the legitimization of a scholar’s importance through the authority of tradition, which was realized through the sentence (1). The value of *jihad* is reflected from the actions of Shakyul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab who had upheld the practice of *jihad* by fighting against the enemy of Islam. The shreds of evidence are seen from the phrases ‘...openly declared the truth and waged *jihad*, fighting against the Tatars...’ and ‘...waged *jihad* against them with weapons and words’ both in the sentence (2) and (3) respectively.

In addition, role models are also used to establish the type of preferred scholars in Islam as seen in the sentence (2) ‘scholars from people of hadith were found upholding the duty of *jihad* and declaring truth like Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah’, and sentence

(3) ‘Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab, who fought the *mushrikin* inside the Arabian Peninsula’. Both clauses indicate the actions committed by the figures of Islam. The value of *jihad* is imbued in the construction of Muslim scholars through the recurring use of the phrase ‘waged *jihad*’. Interestingly, the activities associated with *jihad* in the above example are about war and attacks on the enemy of Islam, even so, the term ‘waged *jihad*’ has a fundamental similarity in terms of connotation as waging war.

Extract 4.32: Ar1C9

(1) They were those who joined knowledge with *jihad*, like Shaykh Abu Mus’ab az-Zarqawi, Shaykh Abu Anas ash-Shami, Shaykh ‘Abdullah ar-Rashud, Shaykh Abul- Hasan al-Filistini, and Shaykh Maysarah al-Gharib. (2) Likewise, those who know but do not act upon their knowledge are dispraised according to the *Shari’ah*. They are not considered “those with knowledge” and are not called “scholars” with the meaning intended by the *Shari’ah*.

Source: ‘The Wicked Scholars are Cursed’, Rumiya (Issue 1), 5th September 2016.

In this particular example, the role model authorization is used to distinguish between the Muslim scholars and the *fasiq* scholars. The author(s) uses the established definition of knowledge, e.g., ‘joined knowledge with *jihad*’ as the foundation of traits that defined a true scholar. Sentence (1) illustrates the examples of the Muslim scholars, e.g., Shaykh Abu Mus’ab az-Zarqawi, Shaykh Abu Anas Ash-Shami that fulfil the defined requirement. In the latter part, sentence (2) indicates the use of impersonal authorization by drawing the (de) legitimization by referring to the law of *Shari’ah*. The phrase ‘...do not act upon their knowledge...’ is referring to waging *jihad* on the enemy of Islam. This strategy further (de)legitimizes the scholars that seek approach other than waging *jihad*.

(b) ***Rationalization***

Most of the rationalization strategies are imbued, embedded or anchored to another legitimation strategy, i.e., authorization as most of the examples are purposeful. Thus, to avoid repetition, examples in this section is rather limited. However, the overall findings pertaining to rationalization legitimization indicate the construction of purpose in each of the actions which all of it are in service of achieving ISIS main goal.

Extract 4.33: Ar1C13

(1) **Harim Ibn Hayyan said**, “Beware of the *‘fasiq’* (openly sinful) scholar.” This reached ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab r.a., so he wrote to him, asking him what he meant by “the *‘fasiq’* scholar.” So Harim wrote to ‘Umar, saying, (2) “He is an imam who speaks with knowledge, but acts with *fisq* (open sin), thus the people become confused and misguided” (Reported by ad-Darimi).

Source: ‘The Wicked Scholars are Cursed’, Rumiya (Issue 1), 5th September 2016.

Textually, the excerpt indicates the use of authorization and rationalization strategies. It is a combination of both strategies to conceptualise the meaning of *‘fasiq’*. The role model authority is realized through the word of Harim Ibn Hayyan, in the sentence (1) who was the successor of Umar Ibn al-Khattab, thus making him as a notable Islamic figure. The theoretical rationalization strategy is realized from the definition given by Harim Ibn Hayyan in the sentence (2) on the meaning of *‘fasiq’* scholar which further explain the traits of a *‘fasiq’* scholar.

(c) ***Mythopoesis***

Mythopoetic legitimation in this theme justifies the deconstruction of *‘fasiq’* scholars through the narratives mentioned in the Qur’an and hadith. Such narratives described the punishments that may incur on the ‘scholars’ who withholding information pertaining to certain practices that had been interpreted and studied during their scholarly years. Below are the examples of such narrations.

Extract 4.34: Ar1C10

How could such persons be called “scholars” while they are hated by Allah and have earned His wrath?! (1) Indeed, Allah got angry with the Jews and called them “*al-maghdub ‘alayhim*” (those who have conjured His anger) due to their not acting upon their knowledge. And Allah SWT also said, “Greatly hated, according to Allah, is that you say what you do not do” (As-Saff 3). This verse contains evidence of Allah’s great hatred for those who know but do not act.

Source: ‘The Wicked Scholars are Cursed’, Rumiya (Issue 1), 5th September 2016.

In this example, the consequences of ‘not acting upon their knowledge’ are considered as a sin. The narration foretells the consequences of withholding information, and the Jews are made as an example of people who received the wrath of Allah because they have concealed the truth. The narration is further strengthened Qur’an verse As-Saff (61:3) followed by the author’s interpretation of the verse. The mythopoesis strategy employed in the example is a cautionary tale strategy. In essence, the consequences of withholding information are exemplified through the past action that had taken place, i.e., the Jews.

Extract 4.35: Ar1C12

(1) The Prophet SAW spoke about the first of people who would be dealt with on the Day of Resurrection, and he mentioned among them, “a man who learned knowledge – and taught it – and recited the Quran. So he will be brought and will be reminded of the blessings he received, which he will recognize. (2) Allah will say, ‘What did you do with it?’ He will say, ‘I learned and taught, and I recited the Quran for You.’ Allah will say, ‘You lie! Rather, you learned so that it would be said, ‘He is a scholar,’ and you recited the Quran so that it would be said, ‘He is a reciter.’ And indeed it was said.’ Then he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire” (Reported by Muslim from Abu Hurayrah).

Source: ‘The Wicked Scholars are Cursed’, Rumiya (Issue 1), 5th September 2016.

An example is a form of hadith narrated by Imam Muslim who was one of the reliable narrators of hadith. Imam Muslim’s works have been noted for its *saheeh* or reliability. The narration serves as a cautionary tale that indirectly highlights the

characteristics of *fasiq* scholars. In addition, the narration also describes the consequences for those who seek knowledge for the sake of the worldly rewards by referring to the narration and invoking a sense of legitimacy.

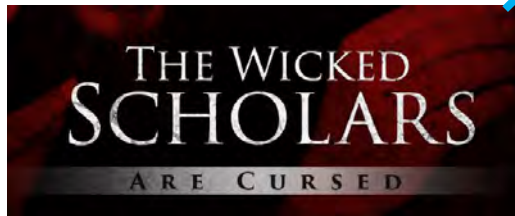
4.3.3.2 Visual

The visual analysis exhibits the negative portrayal of the *fasiq* scholars through the colour schemes (van Leeuwen, 2002). The choice of colours as according to van Leeuwen (2002) plays an integral part in determining the meaning potential of a resource. In this theme, the identified samples demonstrate complex semiosis interactions to foreground the 'wicked-like' identity imprint on the *fasiq* scholars. This interaction is accompanied by other semiotic factors that reinforce the notion. It is to be noted, although the *fasiq* scholars can be categorized under the 'us' versus 'them' theme, it is, however, have a slight difference in the manner of representation and focus of analysis which allow it to be analysed separately.

Non-transactional
reactional process



Ar1v1



Ar1v2



Allah has honored knowledge and its people, raising their worth and elevating their status. Allah ﷻ said, "Allah testifies that there is nothing worthy of worship except Him, as do the angels and those with knowledge" (Al-Imran 18). Al-Qurtubi said, "If anyone was more honored than the scholars, Allah would have mentioned them along with His name and that of the angels, just as He mentioned the scholars." (Al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Quran). Likewise, Allah negated any equality between the scholars and others. He ﷻ said, "Say, Am those who know and those who do not know equal? Only those with deep understanding will remember" (Al-Zumar 9).

And Allah ordered to refer to them, as He ﷻ said, "Then ask the people of remembrance if you do not know" (An-Nahl 63). But it is knowledge simply memorizing texts, studying long books, reviewing manuscripts, being acquainted with the various opinions, and composing commercial works? Certainly not!

The scholars whom Allah ﷻ praised and called "those with knowledge" are those who act upon their knowledge and convey it to others. Ash-Sha'bi said, "Knowledge, as it is understood in the Shar'ah - I mean the knowledge whose people Allah and His Messenger absolutely praised - is a knowledge that incites action" (Al-Mawala'iq). Once a correlation is made between knowledge and action, it follows that there is no action without knowledge and no knowledge without action.

As for knowledge accompanied by good deeds, there is it who yields fear of Allah, bearing a person to publicly declare the truth lest he earn Allah's anger and punishment. Allah ﷻ said, "Only those who fear Allah, of His slaves, are the knowledgeable ones" (Fatir 28), and Ibn Abbas said,

"Those who are knowledgeable of Allah are those who fear Him" (Ab-Zaid - Abu Dawud). And Ibn Mas'ud said, "Knowledge is not an abundance of reports, but knowledge is fear of Allah!" (Hilyat al-Awliya).

Likewise, one of the deeds directly correlated to knowledge is jihad for Allah's cause, for jihad is the companion of knowledge, as found in the hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ said, "For whomever Allah wants well, He gives him high (comprehension) of the religion, and there will not cease to be a group of Muslims fighting upon the truth, detesting whoever opposes them, until the Day of Resurrection" (Reported by Muslim from Mu'awiyah).

The mentioning of both knowledge and jihad in this hadith indicates the correlation between the two, and that the people thereof are the victorious group (at-Tairat al-Mansurah) so upholding the religion and manifesting the truth cannot come about except through knowledge and jihad.

This was the situation of the Sahabah, those who were the most knowledgeable of the Ummah, as they joined knowledge with jihad. Whoever looks into the biographies of the Sahabah, whether from the Muhajirin or the Ansar, will find that many of them were killed on the fronts of jihad, fully achieving knowledge and action. On the Day of Yamamah, for example, the memorizers of Allah's Book began to be killed, as when the banner fell, Salim Mawla Abu Hudhayfah took hold of it. The Muslims said to him, "O Salim! We fear that we will be overtaken from your direction." So he said, "What a wicked bearer of the Quran I would be if you were overtaken from my direction!" So he went forth and fought until he was killed (Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra).

Symbolic attributive
process

Visual offer
Close personal distance
Horizontal oblique angle

Ideal/real system

High saturated red colour

Shadow – frame line

Figure 4.8: The Wicked Scholars are Cursed

(a) *AR1: The Wicked Scholars are Cursed*

This article appeared on the first issue of *Rumiyah* magazine on 5th September 2016. This 3-page article contains two visuals which are relevant to this analysis. The title of the article “*The Wicked Scholars are Cursed*” foregrounds the essence of the theme. Although being in a text form, a title of a visual is regarded as a part of the semiotic resources as it is a form of typography (Kress, 2002). The identified visuals for this article are labelled as Ar1v1 and Ar1v2. Other information aside from these two visuals is regarded as irrelevant to the analysis. Hence, it is not considered as the main focus of this analysis.

Representational meaning: From the representational perspective, both visuals indicate the presence of narrative and conceptual processes. In Ar1v1, there are two participants portrayed engaging in a conversation. Several narrative processes can be identified by both participants. The main vector can be seen from the eye line starting from the participant on the left directed to the outside of the frame. This participant is shown in a non-transactional reactional process. The second vector involves a transactional reactional process which created from the participant on the right (Reactor). The Reactor is shown engaged in a listening action. The vector formed from the eye line of the Reactor connects to the second participant (phenomenon). In Ar1v2, there are several RPs shown in the visual. However, the main RP, which from the clothing alone can be identified as a Muslim scholar, is foregrounded through the blurring of other participants at the back.

Conceptually, the RPs are symbolically represented as the ‘wicked’ Muslim scholars which in tandem with the main idea of this article. The symbolic attributes can be seen from the way the carrier is being foregrounded through the encircling shadow around him

in Ar1v1 while in Ar1v2, the salience is noted on the way the background participants being blurred to highlight the main actor of the visual.

Interactive meaning: The interactive plane indicates the lack of interaction with the audience for both visuals. There is no contact established between the depicted participants and the audience in Ar1v1 and Ar1v2. However, in Ar1v1, the relation between the participants is seen between the participants instead of the viewer. The lack of an imaginary relationship between the RP and the viewers puts the subject in contemplation position rather than actively engaging with the audience.

In terms of social distance, the RP in Ar1v1 is shown in a close-up shot while the RP in Ar1v2 in medium-shot. The close-up shot invokes that sense of familiarity of the RP to the audience that allows them to see the expression and demeanour of the RP while the medium-shot creates an impersonal relationship between the RP and the viewer. The close-up shot used in Ar1v1 does not necessarily imply a sense of attachment between the RP and viewer. Instead, the close-up view of the facial expression may invoke negative perceptions among the readers through their personal interpretation which constructed through the text and other semiotic features, i.e., facial expressions.

Compositional meaning: From the compositional aspect, the placement for both visuals are position at the top covering a quarter of the page and leaving the rest of the space for textual information which indicates an ideal/real system. This structure provides the importance of the visual, and it is ideally connected to the content of the article. Aside from the placement, salience is seen from the use of high-saturated colour, encircling shadow and blurring of the background to foreground the intended social actors. This usage brings forth the idea that the RPs are individuals that cannot be trusted. The frame line is seen in Ar1v1 as the shadow encircling the RP is used to set aside the RP from the rest of the participants in the visual.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

In section 4.3, I illustrated the type of legitimation strategies and metafunctions identified from the sample. Based on the analysis, the similarities found in the textual and visual findings are highlighted and categorized in themes. In this section, the recurring strategies and metafunctions from the emerging themes are discussed in accordance with the legitimization of violence in *Rumiyah* magazine. The discussion entails the ways legitimacy are realized in the sample, and the process involves in relation to the themes. In addition, this section will also discuss how the construction of ‘others’ identity, ‘*jihad*’ value and (de)construction of ‘*fasiq*’ scholars contribute to the justification of violence.

4.4.1 How does the ‘impersonalisation of *others*’ theme legitimize violence?

The first theme identified is the ‘impersonalisation of *others*’ which entails the deconstruction of the ‘out-group’ identity and values. Based on the sample, the conceptualization of the ‘out-group’ can be divided into three categories namely (1) the Crusaders which is a group of non-Muslims that is directly at war with the ISIS group, (2) the civilians which are a group of non-Muslims who are affiliated with the Crusaders, i.e., the elderly, children and women, and (3) the apostles which is a group of Muslims that are deemed as sinners according to ISIS group, i.e., *mushrikin*, *munafiq*, *murtaddin*. The varying degree of violence differs for each group in which can be seen from the manner of representation and compositional patterns. The delineation of sides is one of the Salafi-Jihadism’s fundamental concepts, i.e., *takfir* which was explained by Westphal (2018) as ‘...charge of belief that divides the world into *dar al-imam* (believers) and *dar al-kufr* (disbelievers).

While most identified in articles EX4, EX5, AR2, AR3, AR5, and AR8, this theme indicates the use of explicit and latent violent images that are highly stylized engineered to capture the audiences’ attention. The displays of violence either in textual or visual,

are common in the aforementioned articles. The violent practices identified recurring in the samples are (1) death and harsh punishments upon the enemies of Islam, (2) terror attacks as a form of retaliation, and (3) enabling the killing of the prohibited. These practices are accompanied with various strategies, narratives, semiotic resources and selective verses that are engineered to justify the act of violence and legitimized ISIS's actions.

Many of the explicit violence seen in AR2, EX4, and AR5 discursively and visually. The accompanied semiotic resources show a discernible pattern in terms of violence representation both for the Crusaders and the civilians. In the aforementioned articles, the representation of violence for the Crusaders group indicates the use of explicit violent images and harsher violent practices as compared to the civilians' representations. The type of violence portrayed in the sample that exhibits the presumable *kuffar* actors was discursively and visually salient and explicit. For instance, article AR3 entitled '*Brutality and Severity towards the Kuffars*' focuses on the content that preaches extreme violent punishments towards the non-Muslims (the *kuffars*) who had imposed war on the Muslims. This article illustrates the use of explicit violent images, i.e., beheaded bodies which are seen in Ar3v1 and Ar3v2.

On the contrary, the article such as EX4 entitled '*Collateral Carnage*' also exhibits a certain degree of violence towards the non-Muslims. However, the type of violence illustrated is rather mild and latent as compared to the previous example. The connotative meaning violence seen in EX4 is indexical of violence realized by the pool of blood superimposed on top of the image of pedestrians.

The legitimization of violence through the 'impersonalisation of *others*' is realized in many ways. Discursively, the sample indicates various narratives that advocate violence towards the 'out-group' used by the author(s). This notion can clearly be seen from the

title of the articles, for instance, the title for AR3 is *'Brutality and Severity towards the Kuffar'* and AR2 *'The Kafir's Blood is Halal for You, so Shed it'*. In van Leeuwen's legitimation strategy, this pattern of justification is known as the mythopoesis legitimation. It is a strategy that conveys legitimation through the narratives that either reward the legitimate actions or punish nonlegitimate actions.

Furthermore, the recurring findings indicate that most of the violent practices identified are legitimized through the use of 'revenge narratives' or in McNair and Frank's (2017) study termed as 'crimes of the enemies'. Similar to their study, this research discovered the displays of violence that highlight the atrocities of the enemy forces (Macnair and Frank (2017) in the *Rumiyah* articles. In AR5, the 'crimes of the enemies' are seen in the first paragraph of the article;

"After the brutal fires of the murtaddin – launched from their planes, tanks, and cannons – had devoured the skin, flesh, and bodies of the Muslims – men, women, and children alike – Allah healed the breasts of the people of wala and bara with what He decreed to occur at their hands in the burning of the imprisoned soldiers of the tawaghit..."

Source: 'The Flames of Justice' Rumiyah (Issue 5), 6th January 2017

The phrase '...had devoured the skin, flesh, and bodies of the Muslims – men, women, and children...' is one of the narrativization (Vaara et al., 2007) strategy that legitimized the violent response of ISIS group. A similar example can be identified in article EX1 as seen in the extract below;

"As the aircrafts and drones of the Crusader coalition continue to bomb and terrorize the Muslims of Iraq, Sham, Libya, and other wilayat of the Khilafah, their Muslim brothers and sisters all over the world read the news with aching pain as the Prophet SAW said, "The believers, in their love, mercy, and sympathy, are like one single body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with insomnia and fever" (Reported by al Bukhari and Muslim from an-Nu'man Ibn Bashir)."

Source: 'The Shuhada of the Ghulshan Attacks' Rumiyah (Issue 2), 4th October 2016

Both of these examples highlight the events caused by the Crusaders and the *murtaddin* towards the Islamic State. The implications seen in the examples enable the author(s) to justify further the counter-attacks made by the *mujahiddin*.

The visual aspect of this theme displays the use of violence associated resources, i.e., knife, blood, fire and et cetera, together with the 'out-group' represented participants. The overall visual analysis of the articles indicates that the producer(s) had structured the integration of the composition to devaluate the 'out-group' values and identity. The devaluation of identity is seen from the chosen metafunctions and its composition, which is structured to impersonalised the 'out-group'. For instance, the articles AR2, AR3 and AR5 exhibit similar compositional structure which utilized the ideal/real system. In visual composition, if information is placed at the top of the page, the structure is labelled as 'ideal' whereas the 'real' structure indicates the information being placed at the bottom of the page. Ideal/real system can also be identified in a single image, diagram, painting and magazine et cetera. In this context, the placement is analysed in a single page. The system, in Kress and van Leeuwen's book, holds an ideological stand and this is stated below;

“...if the roles are reversed, so that one or more pictures occupy the top section, then the Ideal, the ideologically foregrounded part of the message, is communicated visually, and the text serves to elaborate it” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 187)

In other words, the idea/real system identified in the sample carries the ideological meaning of violence desensitization designed to impersonalised the 'out-group' represented participants. To elaborate further, the visuals identified in the sample are ideologically imbued with ISIS's ideology in actualizing their theocratic goal through the legitimization of violence seen in *Rumiyah*, and the text serves to elaborate the goal in details.

In retrospect, the legitimization of violence through the impersonalisation of *others* is highly ideological. To begin, the portrayal of the represented participants, discursively and visually, indicates a positive and negative polarization. The represented ‘us’ participants are often portrayed in a positive light, calming and serene atmosphere that invokes the sense of legitimacy, while, the represented ‘them’ participants are shown in a deranged and insulting manner which (de)legitimizes their sense of values. Such polarization works to legitimize and (de)legitimize the violence as the positive portrayal of ‘us’ group that moralized their actions as an obligation imposed on the readers which identified themselves with such group. This construction of a ‘true’ Muslim in *Rumiyah* serves as a benchmark that resonates with the readers within the targeted demographic, as intended by the author/producer, to act in a certain way that fit the mould of a ‘true’ Muslim.

In addition to that, the moralized values emit from the narratives describing social actors’ actions enable the violence committed by them to be seen as ‘defensive acts’, thus, legitimizing their actions. On another note, the negative polarization of the representation of ‘them’ group eventually lessens the humanistic values of the represented participants as they were displayed in a demeaning manner. Ingram (2016) explains the constructions of identities of Others often attributed with derogative and socio-culturally ‘loaded’ terminologies such as *kufir*, *kuffar* or *kafir* to describe the disbelievers. This, in turn, creates a sense of desensitization of violence towards the ‘out-group’ and rendered them susceptible to violent practices.

4.4.2 How does the ‘legitimization of *jihad* value’ theme legitimize violence?

The value of *jihad* is one of the most recurring values in the sample. The representation of *jihad* is always portrayed through the portrayal of social actors which is highlighted

through the discursive and visual medium. For instance, the actions of the *mujahidin* seen in the article such as EX1 are constructed through the narration of their experiences and actions in order to appeal to their audience. The appeal highlights their ‘friendship and comradery’ (Macnair & Frank, 2017) to entice the audience psychological needs of belongings. The value is also seen from the semiotic aspect of the sample as the visual of the *shuhada* that symbolizes the value is made as the main subject of the article.

Discursively, the value of *jihad* legitimizes the violence in *Rumiyah* articles through the mythopoetic strategy. Narratives of the Prophet SAW and *sahabah* r.a. journey in spreading the Islamic teachings often highlighted in the articles through the use of *sirah*. *Sirah*, being one type of mythopoetic legitimations, foregrounds the actions made by the Prophet SAW and the *sahabah* r.a. in deciding the type of punishments and actions taken for the enemies of Islam. The author(s) of *Rumiyah* employs various strategies to foreground violence through the manipulation of the *jihad* value. The terrorist incidents claimed by the ISIS group which carried out by the *mujahiddin* often accompanied by the moralized justifications of seeking justice and upholding *tawhid*. Johnston and Bose (n.d.) described this phenomenon as ‘moral logic of terrorism’. In essence, moral logic is a shift of audiences’ moral horizons away from state-oriented moral compass which turns them against the legitimate authority and in support of an illegitimate movement, i.e., ISIS. Such premises are achieved through the ‘crimes of the enemies’ narratives chimed across the selected articles which, in turn, triggering negative emotive responses through emotive resonance (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) from the viewers.

As highlighted in the last section, narrativization is the legitimation strategy often used by the author(s) to convey the ideological messages of violence. The recurring narratives of the sample indicate that ISIS’s main purpose of attacks and counter-attacks is to revive the reign of ‘Khilafah’ or Caliphate as seen in the phrase ‘...he was among the first

muwahhidin in Bengal who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State as soon as the Khilafah was declared...’ taken from extract Ex1C10. The revival of the Caliphate has been the recurring notion since its declaration seen in the first issue of *Dabiq*. This notion, although subtle, is implied from the selective narratives and Qur’an verses used in the articles that demonstrated the actions taken by the role model of Islam.

Visually, the value of *jihad* is also seen from the recurring semiotic elements identified within the sample. Such elements consist of the represented participants, i.e., the *shuhada* and the flag. Wignell, Tan and O’Halloran (2016) identified the use of the ISIS flag in their research of *Dabiq*’s first issue. In their study, the ISIS flag serves as a bonding icon that integrates the fundamental Islamic values, i.e., *tawhid*, *manhaj*, *hijrah*, *jama’ah* and *jihad*. The nature of the flag reflects the value of *tawhid* and *jihad* as it symbolizes the sense of unity and oneness. In addition, the flag also serves to introduce their identity as the Islamic State as the flag is made of scriptures that contain the *shahada* or declaration of faith that symbolizes the conversion of an individual’s faith into Islam. This flag, in turn, serves as the identity markers of the ISIS group.

It has been noted that the actions, attacks, and decisions made by the ISIS group are not without any purpose. The main purpose, as mentioned earlier, is theocratic and political in nature. The revival of the Caliphate era has been the guiding path that fuels the *mujahiddin* to risk their lives and act beyond the human comprehensions. On top of that, the recontextualization of the interpretation of *jihad* has played its part in radicalizing the readers into committing various atrocities. The article series such as *Just Terror Tactics* is one of the examples that showcased the process of radicalization through moralization of practices. The saga covers a variety of topics pertaining to attacks, i.e., knife attacks, vehicle attacks, and incendiary attacks that can be made or commit by the believers in attaining rewards and goals. Ferguson and McAuley (2019) list out the

antecedent factors that lead to the radicalization by extremist in their study. Out of the factors, various articles in the magazine exhibit content that preys on the readers' psychological vulnerability (Islamophobic events), and group biases. Although, across the sample, 'afterlife' rewards were one of the factors that is highlighted through the conceptualization of *shuhada*.

4.4.3 How does the '(de)legitimization of the 'fasiq' scholars legitimize violence?

The (de)legitimization of *fasiq* scholars showcased an interesting result from the sample. The author(s) of *Rumiyah* had specifically invested in the deconstruction of the *fasiq* scholars as seen from the articles chosen in the magazine. These articles are *The Wicked Scholars are Cursed* (AR1), *The Obligation of Exposing the Wicked Scholars*, (AR4), and *Traits of Evil Scholars* (AR6). These articles specifically designed as a series that deconstructs the identity and credibility of nonaligned Muslim scholars, however, a variety of shreds of evidence in (de)legitimization strategies can also be identified in other articles. It has been noted earlier that this theme mainly derives its evidence from a series of articles that are specifically catered to describe and deconstruct the identity of Muslim scholars.

In chapter 4, the findings indicate a chronological pattern of representation shown from the series of articles. In article AR1, for instance, the nuclei topic of the article is mainly on defining the meaning and traits of scholars according to the *Shar'iah* interpretation. Many verses on responsibilities of a scholar were referred as to establish its legitimacy. Various experts across the fields, i.e., *fiqh*, *usul*, and et cetera were referred to as a reinforcement to the author's interpretation of the definition. Article AR4 extended the prior discussion by establishing the needs and responsibilities of every Muslim to expose the identity of *fasiq* scholars, while, article AR6 discussed the fundamental traits that defined evil scholars based on the definition established in article AR1. The devices and

strategies used in these articles conceptualized, in details, the Muslims responsibilities and obligations that are needed in order to fulfil their roles as a true Muslim.

The integration of text and visual in the sample foregrounds the notion that (de)legitimized the *'fasiq'* scholars. The repercussion of such (de)legitimization affects not only the way Islam being portrayed but also encourages the false interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith to favour ISIS theocratic ideology. Discursively, various legitimization strategies are identified in the sample. *Rumiyah* author(s) is seen to rely heavily on the authorization strategy by drawing from the expertise of prominent scholars i.e. Ash-Shatibi (Usul Al-Shar'iah), Al-Qurtubi (*fiqh*), et cetera. The intertextual references to the prominent scholars of Islam further reinforced the author(s) interpretation and belief, which in turn may convince the readers to act in certain ways. The recontextualization of scholars' interpretations of Qur'an verses and hadith narrations frames in the way of triggering readers' bias schemata and perception on the issues. Furthermore, the semiotic resources, specifically, the titles have also served to (de)legitimize the credibility of *'fasiq'* scholars.

Hijjo, Kaur and Kadim (2019) discussed the paratextual framing, drawn from Baker's narrative-informed analysis, used in their study. Paratextual framing generally functions to frame articles or texts in according to the author's perspective. The title, being the prominent one, serves to introduce the content to the readers and simultaneously direct and shape the readers' understanding and outtake of the articles. VanderBerg (2019) relates the framed narratives as being one of the strategies that radicalized people to endorse or participate in the act of terrorism. This notion of framing coincided with the findings of this study as the recontextualization of the scholars' interpretations can radicalize *Rumiyah* readers' decision-making processes. Thus, by eliminating other scholars' interpretations of Qur'an and hadith, the ISIS's group are free from any

scholarly criticisms that invalidate their actions. The extent of highlighting the characteristics of a *'fasiq'* and labelling them in such derogative terms would increase violent practices and normalize it under the pretence of *jihad*.

The deconstruction of the credibility of nonaligned Muslim scholars holds a chain reaction towards ISIS's actions and the Muslim community in general. Take the meaning of *jihad*, for instance, various interpretations of *jihad* had been exemplified by Muslim scholars. The notion holds an ideological value that is highly influential in influencing the Muslim population if it were to be manipulated. Thus, through recontextualization and framing, even the noble value, such as *jihad*, can be framed and manipulated into radicalizing the Muslim population. To illustrate, the act of *jihad*, according to Yusuf Qardawi, can be realized in three forms (cited in Erwinsyahbanna & Hakim, 2018), (1) *jihad* against visible enemy, (2) *jihad* against Satan's temptation, and (3) *jihad* against worldly lust. The concept of *jihad* is vast encompassing every aspect of Muslim life. Its purpose does not only revolve around 'waging war' but also in disciplining oneself for the betterment of *ummah*. However, most of the examples identified in the *Rumiyah* magazine indicate the interpretations favoured by ISIS lean towards the aggressive *jihad*. The selective scholars' interpretations are highlighted in the magazine and framed as the only solution offered by the Qur'an. This pattern of representation shows the way Qur'an and hadith interpretations are being framed to suit ISIS political and ideological goals.

Although this finding is not explicitly related to violent acts, the generalisation, however, insinuates and perpetuates the act of violence towards the scholars. By deconstructing the credibility of the scholars, the ISIS group enable themselves to commit such despicable acts without regards of other Muslim scholars' opinions. It is to be understood that the teaching of Islam is sourced from the Holy Qur'an and hadith, nevertheless, such teachings are often being misinterpreted according to ones' thinking.

Hence, Muslim scholars exist to clarify and explain the meaning behind the verses and hadith. However, this role will lose its credibility once the scholars are deemed to be unfit, misguided and unreliable.

4.5 Summary

The analysis conducted highlights the recurring use of legitimation strategies and visual social semiotic metafunctions to justify violence in the *Rumiyah* magazine. The overall analysis indicates a complex interaction between the discursive and semiotics aspect of the study. The emerging themes (1) impersonalisation of 'others', (2) legitimization of *jihad* value and (3) (de)legitimization of '*fasiq*' scholars play a vital part in legitimizing all form of violence perpetrated in the *Rumiyah* magazine. Discursively, the sample indicated the use of combination strategies to justify violent practices. These justifications are mostly realized through the mythopoetic and authorization combinations in which narratives, e.g., *sirah* are embedded with the actions exemplified by the notable Islamic figures, i.e., the Prophet SAW, *sahabah* r.a., the scholars' et cetera. Visually, various intersemiosis interactions are identified, contributing to the construction of legitimacy. Most identified semiotic resource is the use of colour and its integration in the sample.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the concluding remarks that sum all of the findings are highlighted. The chapter will be divided according to the summary of the main findings (Section 5.2), limitation of the study (Section 5.3), the suggestions for future research (Section 5.4) and summary of the chapter (Section 5.5).

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study examines the realization of legitimation strategies in terrorist discourses, i.e., ISIS by adopting a multimodal approach consisting of Theo van Leeuwen's legitimation strategies and Kress & van Leeuwen visual social semiotics framework. The objective of this study is to investigate the emerging violence threats by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), specifically, on the way violence is being justified to appeal to their audience. The analysis focused on the legitimization process, both on textual and visual aspects, of the violent practices identified in *Rumiyah* magazine. In order to achieve such objective, this research address two research questions that focus on the legitimization of violent practices.

1. How are ISIS violent practices legitimized discursively?
2. How are ISIS violent practices legitimized visually?

The first research question deals with the discursive aspect of the study by manually analyzing the linguistic features, i.e., phrases, clauses and sentences of the textual data and identified the recurring legitimization strategies. The data analysed are a corpus of the selected *Rumiyah* articles that had gone through the selection process. The second research question focuses on the visual aspect of the study. In this stage, the semiotic resources of the sample are collected and categorized. The visual analysis consists of

identifying the metafunctions and interpreting the ‘meaning potential’ of the resources in accordance with its thematic categorization.

5.2.1 Main Findings

Chapter 4 illustrates the overall result of the study. The analysis from the analytical frameworks, which consist of van Leeuwen’s legitimation strategies and Kress & van Leeuwen’s visual social semiotics, shows recurring thematic categorization for both textual and visual findings. The similarities of the emerging themes are then identified and categorized in its thematic category. The overall findings show that there are three themes identified, namely (1) impersonalisation of ‘Others’, (2) legitimization of *jihad* value, and (3) (de)legitimization of *fasiq* scholars.

(a) *Impersonalisation of ‘others’*

The first theme indicates the recurring of authorization and mythopoesis strategies interrelates with the three metafunctions to create the notion of ‘us’ versus ‘others’. The negative construction of ‘Others’ is seen in many parts of the articles both in text and visual components. This notion is mostly found in articles EX4, EX5, AR2, AR3, AR5, and AR8. Various strategies, metafunctions and descriptive narrative used by the author(s) to deconstruct ‘others’ identities and values. The notion does not only apply to the non-Muslims, but also to the Muslims who are against ISIS’s actions and practices.

(b) *Legitimization of jihad value*

The second theme derives from the analysis is the legitimation of *jihad* value. The findings of this analysis indicate that the value of *jihad* is foregrounded discursively and visually. Such value is used as a vehicle to allow violent practices to be carried out and masked as a form of *jihad* practices. Most often, the strategies and metafunctions are used

to appeal to the audience patriotic value and faith in Islam. The most occurring strategy is the moral evaluation with the inclination of moral analogy where the values are seen from the *sirah* and stories regarding the Prophet SAW, *sahabah* r.a., and other Islamic figures.

(c) ***(De)legitimization of 'fasiq' scholars***

The author(s) of *Rumiyah* magazine extenuating their actions through various strategies. One of them is through the deconstruction of Muslim scholars' identities who do not align with ISIS's core values. The third theme analyses discourses that are constructed to discredit the '*fasiq*' scholars whom interpretations negate the violence approach opted by the ISIS group. The notion of '*fasiq*' scholars can be seen mostly in several articles, e.g., AR1, AR4 and AR6. Much of these articles described the reasons, traits and obligations to expose the façade put by the aforementioned *fasiq* scholars. The repercussion of such labelling does not only incite hate towards the 'wicked' scholars but also delegitimize their opinions that condemn ISIS code of conduct. So, how the (de)legitimization of '*fasiq*' or wicked scholars connected to the legitimization of violent practices? The deconstruction of the '*fasiq*' scholars' credibility would enable the ISIS's group to justify their actions by advancing their sole interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

This study has shown a multimodal approach in examining the construction of legitimization consisting an integration of legitimation strategies (Van Leeuwen, 2008) and visual social semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) framework. Although, the overall analytical procedure and framework reveal interesting patterns in the findings, however, the procedural employed is not without any limitations. This study is limited in

several terms. Due to the nature of this methodological procedure, the analysis of the data is subjected to the researcher's bias. Time and resources constraints are several factors that influenced the choice of such an analytical procedure. In addition to the manual close reading needed, it is a laborious and tedious task which requires an ample amount of energy and focus. Hence, the task may incur an inclination towards errors in terms of the interpretation of its findings. Although such lacking is amended by an interrater approach, it is, however, may have a slight repercussion on the reliability and validity to a certain extent.

Another form of limitation is seen from the type of sampling used in this study. The focal objective of this study is on the legitimization of violence. Hence, the sample taken for the analysis is governed by specific parameters that fit its intended objective and questions. Such sampling is purposive in nature. This type of sampling and data render the findings of this study from being generalized to a more significant population which in turn made it difficult to draw a comprehensive understanding of violence in different contexts and settings.

In terms of the analytical framework, this study utilized the integration of legitimation strategies and visual social semiotics. The discursive aspect of this study relied on a single legitimation framework. As aforementioned, Van Leeuwen's legitimation framework, although comprehensive, was limited in terms of its generality (Vaara, 2014) in identifying legitimation strategies in intertextual discourses. Thus, this study needs to conceptualize the legitimation framework, drawing from recent studies, in order to achieve comprehensive findings. In addition, the scope of analysis can be further extended its focus on the state of legitimacy instead of analyzing the process alone. The current discursive findings exhibit a superficial analysis of the legitimization process, and it is, however, did not explore the notion of legitimization in depth.

The visual aspect, on the other hand, is limited in terms of its analytical procedure. The manual annotation of the semiotic resources progresses at a plodding pace as it is required to identify salient resources related to the objectives carefully. Furthermore, explanatory of the analysis is rather descriptive and limits the affordances of the semiotic resources, hence, similar to the discursive sample, a deeper understanding of the meaning potential could not be explored further.

The limitation of this study is also extended to the findings section. Aside from the current thematic categorization, i.e., the impersonalisation of ‘others’, the legitimization of *jihad* value, and the (de)legitimization of ‘*fasiq*’ scholars, the data set show various other emerging themes that were not able to be explored due to researcher’s limited time, energy and capacity. The rich findings of this study have also shown other patterns of representation and themes. Themes such as legitimization of victimhood, recontextualization and framing of Qur’an and hadith verses, radicalization through narratives, which anchored to the main themes, are all deserved its thematic categorization. Thus, the aforementioned limitations lead to several suggestions for future studies.

5.4 Recommendation for Future Studies

Based on the previously discussed limitations, future studies within the same field of interest can be extended into several new field of discourses, and genres. It has been noted that the field of legitimization had been extensively explored discursively in different discourses. This study, however, explored a very limited visual corpus to reach a comprehensive conclusion. Thus, future studies could employ an ethnographic study on visual communication focusing on the conceptualization of visual legitimacy. Such studies can include more visual data from a variety of sources, i.e., video, news, online newspapers, social media, et cetera. In addition, corpus assisted discourse analysis

(CADS) can also be utilized to cover larger corpora. The analysis using CADS would reduce the reliability and validity issue as the quantitative methodology helps to mitigate the researcher's biasness.

Studies on the role of women in upholding *jihad*, constructed by ISIS, is also one of the interesting topics to be explored. This current study mainly focuses on the realization of legitimization in terms of violent practices constructed in *Rumiyah*. The magazine consists of a varied set of data that catered both to men and women, one of it is articles on women's role in achieving *jihad*. Future studies could explore the way ISIS architects construct the role of women in the context of *jihad*. Other topics can be extended to the representation of women from the perspective of ISIS.

Throughout the analysis, some of the findings indicate a recurring use of Qur'an verses and hadith in describing the role of Muslims and policing their behaviours. An interesting path that can be taken to explore this pattern further is through recontextualization and framing analysis. Future works could employ a study focusing on the process and effects of the aforementioned two aspects in terms of Qur'an verses and hadith narrations. The study can focus on the textual data through discursive framing processes and recontextualisation analysis to see how the verses and narrations are being constructed in ISIS multimodal medium. In addition, the analysis looks at the recurring Qur'an verse and hadith in the sample. The identified Qur'an verse and hadith are analysed in relation to its intertextual properties and its recontextualization in the discourses. For this part, van Leeuwen (2008) recontextualization transformation can be used as a reference. Such findings are then linked to the legitimization of violent practices.

5.5 Summary

This chapter described the significant thematic findings of this study, i.e., the impersonalisation of ‘others’, the legitimization of *jihad* value, and the (de)legitimization of ‘*fasiq*’ scholars. Each of the themes had been discussed its relation to the legitimization of violence, specifically, the violent practices. Such discussion unravels the ideological means employed by the author of *Rumiyah* to disseminate their hidden agenda in relation to their theocratic goals. The discursive and visual analysis, too, revealed pertinent information on the strategic logic employed in *Rumiyah* articles to advance their political propaganda in justifying their actions and legitimizing their movement as a legitimate organization. In essence, the overall study shows the legitimization method employed by the ISIS group using Islamic fundamental values and belief systems to manipulate, recruit and radicalize the targeted masses in supporting their cause.

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