

Constructing “Financial Piety”: A Feminist CDA of Gendered Economic Obligations in *Rumiyah* Magazine

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Abstract—This study examines how extremist propaganda constructs gendered economic obligations through the strategic linguistic deployment of Islamic religious texts. Employing feminist critical discourse analysis and van Leeuwen’s legitimization framework, the research systematically analyses a three-page women’s section from Issue 1 of the *Rumiyah* magazine, which explicitly addresses female audiences regarding “jihad with wealth” through 19 religious citations and five historical exemplars. Systematic linguistic analysis reveals three interconnected discursive mechanisms creating what this study terms “financial piety”, positioning women’s economic contributions as simultaneously an organisational necessity and a means of spiritual salvation. First, commercial metaphorical framing transforms spiritual devotion into measurable transactions through the Quranic concept of *tijarah* (deal), establishing spiritual obligation as a commercial transaction as the foundational conceptual metaphor. Second, gendered linguistic economy constructs women as inherently sinful through evaluative asymmetry and modal obligation structures, requiring financial atonement for alleged gender-specific moral failings. Third, exemplary narrative structures featuring Islam’s most revered women model extreme financial sacrifice through consistent linguistic patterns. These mechanisms operate through van Leeuwen’s legitimization strategies: authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation and mythopoesis. The analysis reveals “constrained agency”: women are positioned as capable economic actors through agentive grammatical structures, while modal obligation and imperative constructions channel agency exclusively towards organisational needs. Lexical-semantic analysis points to systematic metaphorical framing through commercial vocabulary, while syntactic analysis exposes how modal structures and evaluative lexis naturalise obligatory giving. The findings contribute theoretically by introducing linguistically grounded concepts explaining gendered exploitation, methodologically by systematically demonstrating the analytical capacity of critical discourse analysis and empirically by revealing precise language-based manipulation tactics across lexical, syntactic and discourse levels.

Index Terms—feminist CDA, conceptual metaphor, legitimization strategies, gendered discourse

I. INTRODUCTION

In December 2016, the extremist organisation behind *Rumiyah* magazine published Issue 1, replacing its previous publication, *Dabiq*, following territorial losses (Khafaga, 2017). The women’s section (pages 18–20) explicitly addressed female audiences regarding “jihad with wealth”, deploying 19 religious citations from Islam’s most authoritative sources to construct women’s economic contributions as religiously obligatory and spiritually redemptive. This paper examines how *Rumiyah* constructs what this study terms “financial piety”, an ideological framework positioning women’s economic contributions as simultaneously an organisational necessity and a means of individual spiritual salvation, through specific linguistic and discursive strategies.

The central research question is as follows: How does extremist propaganda linguistically construct gendered “financial piety” through citation practices, lexical-semantic choices and legitimization strategies that frame women’s financial contributions as atonement for gender-specific sins and obligatory jihad? The existing scholarship has addressed extremist propaganda strategies (Ingram, 2017; Ingram et al., 2020; Khafaga, 2017; Milton, 2018) and religious legitimization in extremist discourse (Baker et al., 2013; Brookes & McEnery, 2020), but the specific linguistic mechanisms that construct gendered economic obligations remain understudied. This gap has theoretical significance for feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA) and methodological importance for applied linguistics because understanding precise linguistic strategies enables the identification of manipulation tactics across contexts (Henaku, 2024; Lazar, 2005, 2007).

This study addresses these gaps through systematic linguistic analysis of propaganda texts. Although researchers have observed that extremist organisations target women for financial mobilisation (Ingram, 2017; Milton, 2018; Thakkar & Speckhard, 2024), the precise linguistic mechanisms constructing economic obligations through religious discourse are still unknown.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature largely overlooks how discourse constructs economic obligations for women through the linguistic manipulation of religious authority. Pearson and Winterbotham (2017) and Pearson et al. (2020) note that diaspora women often control household finances (potentially mobilisable resources), yet they do not examine the linguistic and rhetorical strategies through which propaganda transforms these resources into religious obligations. The present study addresses this gap by analysing specific discursive strategies, namely, citation selection practices, commercial lexical framing, gendered evaluative language and exemplar narrative construction, through which *Rumiyah* linguistically constructs women's financial contributions as religiously mandatory.

A. Religious Discourse and Legitimation: A Linguistic Perspective

Scholarship on religious discourse in extremist propaganda has examined how sacred texts are strategically appropriated through linguistic practices. Baker et al.'s (2013) corpus analysis demonstrates that religious texts function as particularly effective legitimisation resources because they are widely regarded as containing the ultimate truth, which is not easily challenged. Their corpus linguistic approach reveals that extremist discourse operates via highly selective citation practices that decontextualise religious texts from traditional scholarly interpretation. Brookes and McEnery's (2020) corpus-based critical analysis of violent jihadist discourse reveals systematic patterns in lexical choices, collocation and cohesion, whereby ideological positions are constructed through language. Relatedly, Bhatt et al. (2025) propose a sociolinguistics of Islam that examines how language and society intersect, where the Islamic faith shapes linguistic practices. They distinguish between *ummatic* discourse (highly standardised, transnational and rooted in canonical texts demonstrating specific linguistic features) and *'urfic* discourse (localised, customary expressions with regional variations). In doing so, they shed light on how extremist propaganda appropriates *ummatic* linguistic authority, including specific Arabic terminology, orthodox citation formats and authoritative discourse markers, while recontextualising interpretations through strategic linguistic choices.

Van Leeuwen's (2007, 2008) work on legitimisation strategies provides analytical tools for examining how discourse justifies practices through language. His framework identifies four linguistic strategies: authorisation (i.e. appeals to authority through citation and attribution), moral evaluation (i.e. references to value systems through evaluative vocabulary), rationalisation (i.e. references to goals through causal connectives and logical markers) and mythopoesis (i.e. legitimisation through narrative structures). However, existing scholarship has insufficiently examined how these linguistic strategies are deployed to construct gender-specific obligations.

B. Gender and Religious Discourse: Feminist Linguistic Analysis

Feminist scholarship on religious discourse has investigated how language and linguistic structures perpetuate gender inequality. Lazar's (2005, 2007) feminist CDA provides analytical tools for examining how gendered assumptions are linguistically encoded through lexical choices, syntactic structures and discursive patterns. Lazar (2007) argues that hegemonic gender ideology functions through language to present certain understandings of gender differences as natural and justified. Accordingly, systematic linguistic analysis of how discourse advantages men while disadvantaging women is necessary. Recent developments in feminist CDA emphasise intersectional approaches and attention to diverse linguistic contexts (Chen & Gong, 2024; Henaku, 2024; Peng et al., 2024). Feminist CDA has revealed some linguistic strategies through which religious discourse naturalises gender hierarchies: selective scriptural citation practices emphasising particular textual fragments while silencing others; interpretive discursive traditions employing specific linguistic markers privileging male authority; and the construction of exemplary narratives through narrative structures modelling female subordination as spiritual virtue (Glapka, 2018; Lazar, 2005). However, feminist linguistic analyses have primarily focused on hierarchies of authority and leadership. The linguistic construction of economic obligations, that is, how evaluative language, modal structures and metaphorical framing are deployed to extract financial resources specifically from women, remains unexamined linguistically.

C. Research Gaps and the Applied Linguistic Contribution

The literature reveals significant gaps requiring systematic linguistic analysis at the intersection of extremist propaganda studies, religious legitimisation analysis and feminist CDA. Despite growing concerns about women's roles in extremist movements (Alexander, 2019; Margolin, 2020; Ulas, 2025), a systematic linguistic understanding of how discourse constructs economic obligations for female audiences is lacking, that is, what specific lexical-semantic choices, syntactic patterns, citation practices and discursive strategies transform voluntary charitable giving into obligatory financial contributions, how religious authority is linguistically marked and appropriated and through what precise linguistic mechanisms women's agency is simultaneously constructed and constrained.

Applied linguists possess analytical tools uniquely suited to addressing this gap through systematic linguistic analysis. CDA enables the examination of how power relations are linguistically enacted (Lin & Luke, 2014; van Dijk, 1993, 2015), and feminist CDA provides frameworks for analysing gendered language patterns (Henaku, 2024; Lazar, 2005, 2007). Meanwhile, the sociolinguistics of Islam offers conceptual resources for understanding religious linguistic authority in multilingual contexts (Bhatt et al., 2025), and conceptual metaphor theory reveals how abstract concepts are linguistically constructed (Kövecses, 2020; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Recent applied linguistics research demonstrates how these linguistic tools uncover ideological manipulation through language analysis (Chen & Due, 2025; Gillings & Dayrell,

2024; Nervino et al., 2024; Ye et al., 2025), indicating that applied linguistics can contribute meaningfully to understanding extremist recruitment strategies and developing counter-narrative interventions by rigorously analysing actual propaganda texts that reveal language-based manipulation tactics.

This research responds to an imperative in applied linguistics: deploying disciplinary expertise to understand linguistic manipulation. As a woman and an applied linguist, I recognise my scholarly obligation and ethical commitment to examine how religious discourse, particularly discourse appropriating texts from my own tradition, is linguistically weaponised to exploit women economically through language choices while disguising exploitation as a spiritual obligation. This positioning provides methodological rigour through systematic linguistic analysis focusing on lexis, syntax and discourse structure alongside interpretive sensitivity regarding how religious linguistic authority functions within Muslim communities and how women experience gendered religious discourse.

By revealing how extremist publications strategically deploy linguistic resources to create “financial piety”, this research provides crucial insights into linguistic manipulation and advances applied linguistics scholarship on discourse, ideology and power. The knowledge it contributes applies to diverse contexts where linguistic manipulation serves institutional interests.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs feminist CDA to examine how *Rumiyah* magazine’s women’s section linguistically constructs gendered economic obligations by strategically deploying Islamic religious texts. The analytical framework integrates three complementary theoretical approaches that enable a multilayered systematic linguistic analysis.

A. Theoretical Framework and Analytical Design

The study synthesises Lazar’s (2005, 2007) feminist CDA with van Leeuwen’s (2007, 2008) legitimation strategies and Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) conceptual metaphor theory, updated by Kövecses (2020). This theoretical integration addresses specific dimensions of the discourse: feminist CDA examines gendered power relations, legitimation analysis reveals justification strategies, and conceptual metaphor theory uncovers cognitive framings. Together, these frameworks provide comprehensive analytical tools for investigating gendered religious manipulation through language. This analysis combines methodological rigour with interpretive sensitivity, drawing on expertise in both applied linguistics and Islamic discourse traditions. This dual perspective, balancing scholarly distance with cultural proximity, enables the recognition of subtle linguistic manipulations while maintaining respect for authentic Islamic traditions.

Lazar’s feminist CDA framework guides the examination of how *Rumiyah* linguistically constructs gender-specific economic obligations. The analysis investigates “constrained agency”, a phenomenon where women are potentially empowered through agentive linguistic structures (e.g. active voice, transitive verbs) yet simultaneously constrained through modal obligation and imperative constructions. Following Lazar (2007), the framework enables the identification of linguistic patterns that naturalise gender hierarchies through a systematic examination of lexical choices, syntactic structures and discursive patterns. Particular attention is paid to how evaluative language, modal structures and grammatical voice interact to position female readers.

Van Leeuwen’s framework, applied within Bhatt et al.’s (2025) sociolinguistic perspective, allows for an analysis of how *Rumiyah* appropriates *ummatic* discourse, that is, the transnational, standardised Islamic linguistic register rooted in canonical texts. The analysis operationalises van Leeuwen’s four strategies through specific linguistic markers: authorisation through citation patterns and attribution verbs, moral evaluation through axiological vocabulary, rationalisation through causal connectives and conditional structures and mythopoesis through narrative patterns. This systematic approach identifies precise mechanisms of appropriation of religious authority.

Kövecses’s (2020) extended theory provides analytical tools for examining how abstract religious concepts are reframed through commercial language. The analysis maps systematic correspondence between source domains (commerce/business) and target domains (spirituality/obligation), documenting how vocabulary choices and collocational patterns may transform voluntary charity into a transactional obligation. Special attention is paid to preserved Arabic commercial terminology and its English contextualisation.

B. Data and Analytical Framework

The corpus comprises the women’s section (Article 4) of Issue 1 of *Rumiyah* (December 2016), an English-language propaganda magazine published by ISIS and targeting female audiences (Figure 1).

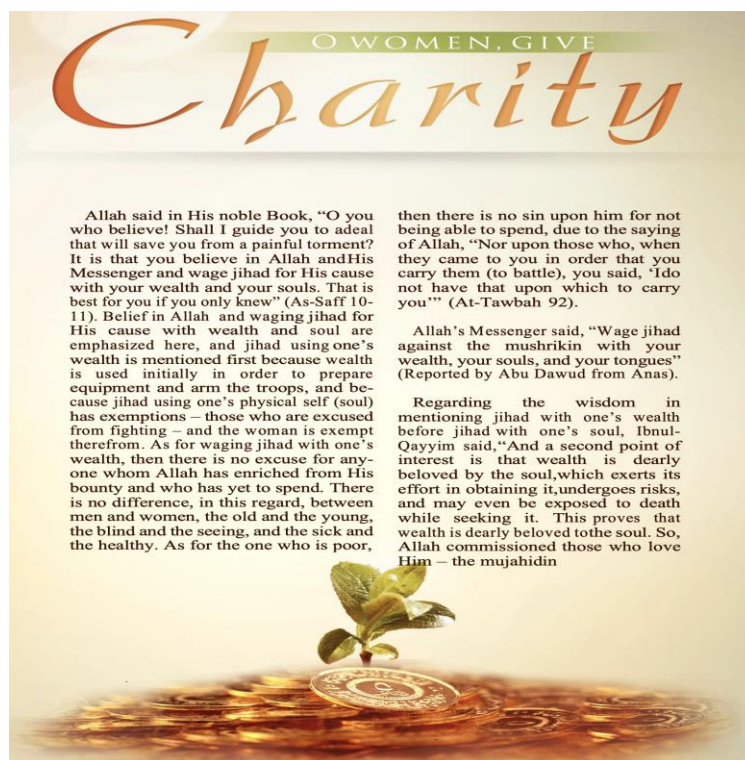


Figure 1. First Page of the *Rumiya* Magazine's Women's Section

The section was selected via purposive sampling based on three methodological criteria:

- (a) *Discursive completeness*: The three-page section (pages 18–20, approximately 2,000 words) constitutes a complete rhetorical unit, enabling the analysis of how linguistic strategies develop across a full argumentative sequence.
- (b) *Explicit gender targeting*: The direct female address (“O women”) provides unambiguous data for examining gendered linguistic positioning.
- (c) *Dense intertextuality*: The concentration of religious citations (19 references) and historical exemplars (five narratives) offers rich data for analysing authority appropriation patterns.

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the corpus:

TABLE 1
CORPUS DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Feature	Description
Publication	<i>Rumiya</i> Issue 1
Article number	Article 4 (Women's Section)
Article title	“O Women, Give Charity”
Publication date	December 2016
Page range	18–20 (three pages)
Approximate word count	2,207 words
Primary audience	Female readers/potential supporters
Language	English with Arabic transliterations
Quranic verses, Hadith narrations, scholarly opinions	7, 8, 4
Total religious citations:	= 19
Historical exemplars	Five main figures (three female, two male)

The decision to focus on a single, complete text rather than a broader corpus follows established feminist CDA methodology (Lazar, 2005), which prioritises deep, multilayered analyses of strategic texts over surface-level examinations of larger datasets. This approach enables a detailed investigation of how multiple linguistic mechanisms operate interdependently within a unified discourse.

C. Three-Stage Analytical Process

The analytical process proceeds systematically from microlinguistic features to macrodiscursive patterns in three integrated stages (Figure 2). Each stage builds cumulatively, creating analytical depth through a layered examination.

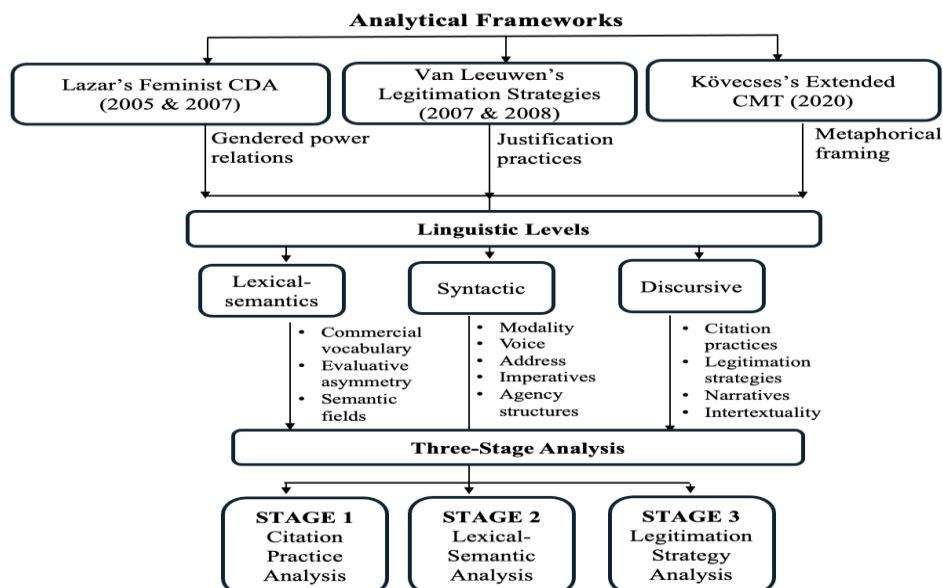


Figure 2. Analytical Framework and Process

(a) *Stage 1: Citation Practice Analysis – Linguistic Authority Construction*

The first stage involves the systematic identification and categorisation of the 19 religious citations through three-dimensional coding:

1. *Authority markers*: The analysis focuses on linguistic features establishing credibility, namely, quotation formats (direct/indirect), attribution verbs (said, commanded, stated), source identification patterns and Arabic terminology preservation. These features reveal strategies for invoking religious authority.

2. *Gender targeting*: Citations are examined for female-specific addresses through vocatives, gendered pronouns, gender-marked Arabic terms and explicit female interpellation. This distinguishes between inherently gendered texts and universal guidance recontextualised for women.

3. *Argumentative function*: Each citation is categorised by its discursive roles: establishing obligation, characterising the female nature, prescribing behaviour or promising rewards. This functional mapping reveals strategic deployment patterns.

Coding decisions are documented in analytical memos, ensuring transparency and enabling replication.

(b) *Stage 2: Lexical-Semantic Analysis – Ideological Vocabulary Patterns*

Following Fairclough's (2003) principle that vocabulary constitutes ideological work, this stage examines three lexical domains:

1. *Commercial semantic field*: All economic/commercial vocabulary is identified and mapped to reveal conceptual metaphor structures (Kövecses, 2020; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Collocational analysis examines how commercial terms co-occur with religious vocabulary, distinguishing between traditional Islamic economic terminology (e.g. *zakat*, *sadaqah*) and imposed commercial framing (e.g. *deal*, *transaction*).

2. *Gendered evaluative language*: Comprehensive inventories document evaluative terms applied to women versus men, categorised by word class, semantic prosody and evaluation type. This systematic comparison reveals potential asymmetries in gender representation. This linguistic analysis, informed by recent work on metaphor in discourse (Cameron & Maslen, 2010; Peng, 2025), reveals a systematic asymmetry in gendered linguistic representation.

3. *Modal and imperative structures*: Modal verbs, imperatives and necessity markers are categorised by deontic force and scope, examining how different modal choices construct varying levels of obligation for female readers.

(c) *Stage 3: Legitimation Strategy Analysis – Discursive Integration*

This synthesising stage applies van Leeuwen's (2007) framework to examine how legitimation operates throughout the text. The analysis identifies specific linguistic features implementing each strategy:

1. *Authorisation*: Citation markers, attribution verbs (e.g. *Allah said*, *the Prophet guided*), source identification and Arabic terminology invoking authority.

2. *Moral evaluation*: Evaluative adjectives, axiological vocabulary, virtue/vice binaries realised through antonyms.

3. *Rationalisation*: Logical patterns, including causal relationships, conditional arguments and means–goal constructions, are analysed for how they present financial contribution as a rational necessity.

4. *Mythopoesis*: Narrative structures are examined for consistent patterns (e.g. situation framing, action sequences and resolution formats) that model desired behaviour (Carthy et al., 2020; Nisa et al., 2020).

The findings of all three stages are then synthesised to identify overarching discursive mechanisms.

D. *Analytical Rigour and Linguistic Ethics*

All citations were systematically coded using qualitative data analysis methods, with Arabic source terminology cross-referenced against authentic Islamic textual sources to identify patterns of linguistic recontextualisation. The analysis was guided by an understanding of Islamic linguistic traditions and Arabic-English translational practices, which helped distinguish between extremist linguistic manipulation and mainstream interpretations. The research upholds an ethical commitment to differentiate between critiquing extremist linguistic tactics and respecting Islamic linguistic traditions. Following Bhatt et al.'s (2025) emphasis on linguistic sensitivity, rather than challenging Islamic linguistic traditions, the study investigates how specific actors manipulate religious discourse linguistically. When the discourse diverges from traditional scholarship, for instance, employing commercial metaphors for spiritual devotion, framing charity through obligation modalities or using selective citation practices, these linguistic divergences are clearly identified and contextualised within mainstream Islamic discourse, highlighting voluntary, compassionate language and family-oriented communication. The materials were accessed through reputable academic databases, and the linguistic analysis concentrates on language patterns rather than content promotion.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The systematic linguistic analysis of the women's section (pages 18–20) of *Rumiyah's* Issue 1 reveals three interconnected discursive mechanisms through which extremist propaganda linguistically constructs "financial piety", positioning women's economic contributions as simultaneously an organisational necessity and a means of spiritual salvation. These mechanisms operate at the lexical, syntactic and discursive levels, creating constrained agency through specific language choices.

A. Mechanism 1: Commercial Metaphorical Framing – The Linguistic Construction of Transactional Spirituality

The discourse systematically employs commercial vocabulary to metaphorically reframe spiritual devotion, linguistically transforming voluntary charitable discourse into calculable financial obligation discourse. The opening Quranic citation strategically preserves Arabic commercial terminology while providing English gloss: "O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a deal 'tjarah' that will save you from a painful torment?" In terms of lexical-semantic analysis, the Arabic term *tjarah* (commerce/transaction) establishes the foundational conceptual metaphor through which subsequent discourse operates. Table 2 below presents a systematic lexical analysis of the commercial semantic field.

TABLE 2
COMMERCIAL LEXICAL FIELD ANALYSIS

Lexical Item	Frequency	Collocates	Metaphorical Function
deal/ <i>tjarah</i>	3	<i>save, guide, Lord, never end poorly</i>	Frames spiritual engagement as a negotiated business transaction
business	2	<i>conducted, with Allah, reward was Paradise</i>	Constructs worship as a commercial enterprise with a divine partner
spend/spending	11	<i>wealth, extravagantly, transient worldly things, for Allah's cause</i>	Frames resource allocation as a binary economic choice
wealth	8	<i>wage jihad, dearly beloved, surplus</i>	Positions material resources as a jihad instrument/commodity
reward	6	<i>Paradise, without measure, multiplies</i>	Constructs divine return as measurable profit
give/charity	15	<i>O women, majority of hellfire, do not hoard</i>	Frames obligation through transactional giving (euphemism for mandatory contribution)

This lexical analysis reveals the systematic deployment of commercial vocabulary, constructing a metaphor of spiritual obligation as a commercial transaction (Kövecses, 2020; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The metaphor operates through consistent mapping:

(a) *Source domain (commerce)*: deal, business, spend, wealth, reward, investment, return.

(b) *Temporal target domain (spirituality)*: spiritual obligation, worship, charitable giving, divine favour, Paradise.

The discourse linguistically reinforces transactional framing through the metaphor of multiplication, which draws a parallel between investment return discourse and quantifiable spiritual profit: "Allah accepts charity, takes it by His right hand and raises it... until a morsel becomes like the size of Uhud". The Ibnul-Qayyim citation extends commercial logic through economic reasoning: "Wealth is dearly beloved by the soul, which exerts its effort in obtaining it, undergoes risks, and may even be exposed to death whilst seeking it. So, Allah commissioned those who love Him—the *mujahidin* for His cause—to spend what is dear and beloved to them in seeking His pleasure". This constructs value calculation: greater commodity sacrifice equals greater transaction worth.

In terms of syntactic analysis, the text employs specific modal structures constructing obligation:

(a) *Strong obligation modals*: "It is an obligation" (copula + obligation noun), establishing a categorical requirement.

(b) *Necessity negation*: "there is no excuse" (negated possibility), eliminating exemption.

(c) *Conditional obligation*: "If Allah has enriched... [then] spend", a conditional structure implying consequent duty.

These linguistic constructions create "calculable piety" through language choices. As Fairclough (2003) argues, vocabulary choices constitute ideological work: the systematic shift from voluntary/compassionate lexis (*sadaqah, mercy, compassion*) to commercial/transactional vocabulary (*deal, business, spend, reward*) linguistically naturalises financial extraction as a religious requirement. Recent work on metaphor in discourse (Cameron & Maslen, 2010; Peng, 2025)

demonstrates how conceptual metaphors linguistically shape the understanding of abstract domains. Here, commercial framing linguistically constructs spirituality as an economic transaction, enabling discourse that measures piety in terms of monetary contribution.

This linguistic pattern diverges fundamentally from traditional Islamic discourse practices. Classical *sadaqah* discourse emphasises voluntary action through particular Arabic verb forms indicating recommended rather than obligatory action (*mustahabb* not *wajib*); it also employs compassionate/merciful vocabulary fields (*rahma*, *ihsan*, *birr*) and frames giving through relational, not transactional, metaphors. The Prophet Muhammad’s statement, “even half a date”, linguistically signals that the amount matters less than the intention (*niyyah*), prioritising the internal spiritual state over quantifiable contribution. *Rumiyah* discourse linguistically inverts these patterns through strategic English vocabulary choices coupled with selective Arabic terminology preservation.

Throughout the three-page section, funds are consistently directed towards generic “*mujahidin*” (11 occurrences) through nonspecific references, never explicit organisational naming. This linguistic deletion strategy (van Leeuwen, 2008) obscures the fact that contributions support specific actors, while maintaining religious legitimacy through generic Islamic fighter terminology. The discourse strategically employs plural generic nouns (*mujahidin*, *fighters*) with definite articles (*the mujahidin*), suggesting known entities while avoiding specific identification. This strategy of linguistic ambiguity enables multiple interpretations, with the organisational context guiding the preferred reading.

Rhetorical questions linguistically intensify commercial framing through presupposition, for instance: “How, then, about the charity given to help prepare the *mujahidin* for Allah’s cause? Does anyone establish the religion and protect the lands of Islam other than the *mujahidin*? Does anyone defend honour and spite the *kuffar* other than the *mujahidin*?”. These interrogative structures presuppose affirmative answers, linguistically positioning military funding as superlative through comparative structures (*other than*) and exclusive agency attribution. The triple repetition of “*mujahidin*” within sequential questions creates linguistic intensification while maintaining generic reference in a sophisticated rhetorical strategy that serves organisational financial extraction, masked as a religious duty.

B. Mechanism 2: Gendered Linguistic Economy – Constructing Atonement Through Evaluative Language

The discourse systematically deploys gendered evaluative language, constructing women as uniquely requiring financial atonement for alleged gender-specific sins. Explicit negative evaluation appears through lexical choices on page 18: “It is known that women—other than those whom Allah protects, and they are *very few*—often engage in *nonsense*, showing *ingratitude* towards their husbands, *backbiting*, and other *grave sins*”. The phrase “it is known” presents this as an established fact rather than a contested claim, naturalising a negative representation. The qualifier “very few” universalises female sinfulness through linguistic exception: protected women are rare, which implies that the vast majority are morally deficient.

As concerns the lexis, Table 3 presents a systematic analysis of evaluative vocabulary characterising women versus men:

TABLE 3
GENDERED EVALUATIVE LEXIS

Target	Negative Evaluation	Positive Evaluation	Linguistic Pattern
Women	<i>nonsense</i> (noun), <i>ingratitude</i> (abstract noun), <i>backbiting</i> (gerund), <i>miserly</i> (adj), <i>stingy</i> (adj), <i>ungrateful</i> (adj), <i>cursing</i> (gerund), <i>majority of hellfire</i> (superlative quantifier)	[none in text]	Exclusively negative axiological markers; abstract nouns of moral failings; present participles suggesting habitual action
Men	[none in text]	[implicit through <i>mujahidin</i> :] <i>establish</i> (verb), <i>protect</i> (verb), <i>defend</i> (verb), <i>spite</i> (verb); <i>Amirul-Muminin</i> (title)	Exclusively positive; agentive action verbs; honorific titles
Contemporary women	<i>spending extravagantly</i> (adverb + present participle), <i>transient worldly things</i> (adj + adj + noun – materialistic characterisation), <i>miserly and stingy</i> (coordinated adjectives)	[none in text]	Intensified through coordination; materialistic characterisation

This systematic linguistic analysis reveals complete asymmetry in evaluative lexis. Women receive exclusively negative moral characterisation through the following:

- Abstract nouns of vice: nonsense, ingratitude*, highlighting character flaws.
- Gerunds/participles: backbiting, cursing, spending*, grammatically suggesting habitual/ongoing action.
- Negative adjectives: miserly, stingy, ungrateful*, characterising disposition.

In contrast, men are only characterised positively through the following:

- Agentive action verbs: establish, protect, defend*, attributing constructive agency.
- Honorific terminology: Amirul-Muminin* (Commander of the Faithful), elevating status.

Beyond lexical evaluation, syntactic positioning reinforces gendered obligation through multiple structures. The text employs specific syntactic strategies positioning female readers:

(a) *Direct vocative address*: “O women, give charity” (vocative + imperative verb), a direct gendered interpellation positioning women as obligated addressees.

(b) *Generalising quantifiers*: “women ... often engage”, “you make up the *majority*”, linguistic strategies universalising

negative characterisation.

(c) *Exception structures*: “other than those whom Allah protects, and they are *very few*”, linguistic framing making virtue exceptional and vice normative.

(d) *Strong obligation modals*: “It is an obligation for women to wage jihad with their wealth” (copula + obligation noun + infinitive), the strongest modal construction establishing a categorical requirement.

(e) *Prohibition modals*: “The Muslim woman *must not* think” (strong prohibition modal), a negative deontic modality controlling cognition.

This syntactic architecture creates multiple simultaneous positioning effects, linguistically constructing women as addressees requiring remedial action through interpellation and modal obligation.

The discourse further constructs gendered obligation through a semantic field of atonement, employing vocabulary that frames financial contribution as a remedial action:

(a) “*Atoned*”: “through which they could *atone* for some of what they have committed”—presupposes wrongdoing requiring a financial remedy.

(b) “*Commit/committed*”: lexical choices imply inherent wrongdoing requiring correction.

(c) “*Guided them to*”: constructs prophetic instruction as a solution to the inherent problem rather than voluntary spiritual enhancement.

This linguistic pattern creates a “moral economy of gendered atonement” through language choices. As Lazar (2005) argues, discourse systematically disadvantages women via linguistic encoding: here, exclusively negative evaluative vocabulary paints women as morally deficient, while an exclusively positive linguistic characterisation elevates men. The linguistic pattern produces constrained agency through grammatical structures, distinguishing between when women appear in active or passive/stative constructions.

Women receive agentive constructions exclusively in the following:

(a) *Giving contexts*: *give, spend, make preparations*, with the active voice linguistically constructing capacity for financial contribution.

(b) *Negative action contexts*: *spending extravagantly*, where the active voice attributes agency for condemned behaviour.

Conversely, passive and stative constructions appear in the following:

(a) *Moral characterisation*: “*are shown*”, “*were guided*”, reduced agency positioning women as recipients rather than actors in spiritual instruction.

(b) *Obligation contexts*: “*it is an obligation*”, impersonal constructions obscuring agency and presenting requirements as preexisting conditions rather than imposed demands.

Recent feminist discourse analysis (Glapka, 2018; Henaku, 2024) demonstrates how evaluative asymmetry maintains gendered power through language. *Rumiyah*’s discourse exemplifies this through complete lexical asymmetry while grammatically constructing women as capable economic agents, a linguistic double-bind that enables exploitation. Women must be linguistically constructed as possessing economic agency to ensure that they can provide financial resources. However, that same agency must be linguistically channelled exclusively towards organisational needs through an obligation modality and a negative evaluation of alternative expenditures. This is what Lazar (2005) terms “double-binding”: women are constructed as morally deficient (creating guilt-based obligation) yet simultaneously economically capable (ensuring resource provision).

Classical traditional Islamic scholarship contextualises the “women in hellfire” Hadith within broader discussions of human moral failings, which call for continuous self-improvement for all believers, not gender-specific collective condemnation requiring financial atonement. Classical commentators such as Ibn Hajar emphasise that this Hadith addresses specific behaviours (*cursing* and *ingratitude*) that both men and women should avoid, not inherent female moral deficiencies. Classical Hadith commentary employs the following linguistic strategies:

(a) *Contextualising discourse markers*: interpretive framing situating texts within scholarly traditions.

(b) *Interpretive hedging*: “this means...”, “some scholars say ...”, acknowledging multiple interpretations.

(c) *Generic pronouns*: addressing universal human characteristics instead of a gendered direct address.

Rumiyah’s discourse diverges from this through the following:

(a) *Deletion of interpretive framing*: presenting texts without scholarly contextualisation.

(b) *Assertive modality without hedging*: employing categorical statements that eliminate interpretive flexibility.

(c) *Direct vocative address*: constructing a gender-specific obligation through “O women”, a linguistic strategy that serves organisational purposes.

Classical Islamic jurisprudence does not construct charity as gender-specific atonement, nor does it mandate financial contribution as a compensatory obligation for exemption from physical jihad. Mainstream scholars emphasise that women’s economic autonomy is protected in Islamic law, that charitable giving should be voluntary and from surplus and that family welfare obligations (*nafaqah*) take precedence over voluntary charity (*sadaqah*). *Rumiyah*’s discourse linguistically decontextualises these religious texts through selective citation, serving organisational extraction rather than reflecting comprehensive Islamic ethical teachings.

C. Mechanism 3: Exemplar Narrative Structures – Linguistic Modelling of Extreme Sacrifice

Across pages 18–20, the discourse employs five historical exemplar narratives through linguistic structures that model

extreme financial sacrifice. Three female figures, Asma Bint Abi Bakr, Sawdah and Aishah, are among the most revered women in Islamic history (Prophet Muhammad’s wives and companions), and their narratives are strategically selected and framed to normalise total financial self-denial through consistent linguistic patterns. Table 4 presents a linguistic analysis of these narrative patterns:

TABLE 4
EXEMPLAR NARRATIVE LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES

Exemplar	Situation (linguistic framing)	Sacrifice (verb choices)	Reward (outcome construction)
Asma	“despite her <i>poverty</i> and <i>need</i> ” (concessive structure); “ <i>did not own any gold</i> ” (negated possession)	“ <i>would ask</i> ” (habitual modal); “ <i>should I give?</i> ” (interrogative seeking permission); “ <i>give</i> ” (imperative in response)	“lest Allah <i>keep</i> things from you” (negative conditional consequence)
Sawdah	“Which of us will be <i>quickest</i> ?” (superlative competition)	“had the <i>longest</i> arm” (superlative characterisation); “ <i>would extend</i> it most” (modal + superlative adverb)	“ <i>quickest</i> to join him” (superlative temporal priority); “ <i>loved</i> giving” (stative verb + gerund)
Aishah	“ <i>wore patched-up</i> garments” (past continuous – habitual state)	“ <i>gave</i> 70,000... 100,000” (active voice + quantified object); “the sun <i>did not set</i> ” (temporal framing total immediacy)	[no material reward]; ““Why <i>didn’t</i> you say so?”” (interrogative deflecting household need)
Uthman	“prepare... <i>an entire</i> army” (quantifier intensifying scope)	“ <i>came</i> with 1,000 dinars”; “ <i>dropped</i> them in the Prophet’s lap” (physical action verbs)	““Whatever ’Uthman <i>does</i> ... <i>will not harm</i> him”” (universal quantifier + negative consequence = absolute guarantee)

All narratives follow the pattern [Adversity Frame] → [Extreme Action] → [Divine/Prophetic Validation] realised via:

(a) *Concessive/adversative structures*: *despite, though*, establishing challenging circumstances that maximise the significance of sacrifice.

(b) *Intensive quantification*: *entire, all, 70,000, 100,000, longest, quickest*, emphasising an extreme degree through superlatives and large numbers.

(c) *Temporal immediacy*: *quickest, the sun did not set*, linguistically constructing urgency and totality.

(d) *Validation through direct speech*: Prophetic utterances in quotation marks establish divine approval through an authoritative voice.

Female exemplars consistently receive the active voice in giving contexts (*Asma gave, Sawdah extended, Aishah gave*), stative verbs naturalising disposition (*loved giving, wore patched garments*) and negated possession emphasising deprivation (*did not own, nothing except*). Meanwhile, male exemplars receive active agentive verbs with organisational objects (*conducted business, prepared army, dropped money*), transactive structures with concrete measurable contributions (*army, 1,000 dinars*) and authority validation through prophetic speech acts conferring absolute status. Following exemplar narratives, the discourse employs specific linguistic positioning: “If this was the condition of the Mothers of the Believers and the women of the Companions regarding charity and spending for Allah’s cause—and they are *who they are*—then is it *not* more appropriate for those Muslim women who are *less than them*, those whom Allah has given of His bounty, to make preparations for the everlasting life *whilst* they are able and living?”.

A linguistic analysis reveals the following:

(a) *Conditional logic*: *if... then*, whereby a premise entails an obligation.

(b) *Identity tautology*: “they are who they are”, linguistically constructing an unquestionable elevated status.

(c) *Comparative hierarchy*: *more appropriate, less than them*, positioning contemporary women as inferior and requiring compensation through greater effort.

(d) *Rhetorical negative*: interrogative *is it not* presupposing an affirmative answer.

(e) *Temporal urgency*: *whilst they are able*, creating immediacy.

These narratives function as van Leeuwen’s (2007) mythopoesis through distinct linguistic structures. The consistent pattern documented in Table 4 creates linguistic templates presented as authentic Islamic practice. As Lazar (2007) argues, such narratives function as “naturalised models” through linguistic representation, that is, behavioural patterns that appear as genuine Islamic practice rather than constructions serving organisational needs. The female exemplars demonstrate giving despite poverty (Asma: concessive structures), consistent total generosity (Sawdah: superlatives and stative verbs) and radical sacrifice to the point of ignoring family needs (Aishah: temporal immediacy and household need deflection). In parallel, the male exemplar ’Uthman models organisational-scale military funding, receiving the ultimate reward (guaranteed Paradise), establishing military funding as a superlative charitable form and positioning organisational financial support as superseding traditional Islamic charitable priorities.

D. Linguistic Integration – Constructing “Financial Piety” Through Discourse

The three linguistic mechanisms identified through systematic three-stage analysis (citation practice analysis, lexical-semantic analysis and legitimation strategy analysis) operate interdependently across the three-page women’s section to construct “financial piety” through language. The commercial lexical field (Mechanism 1) establishes transactional framing through consistent metaphorical vocabulary mapping commerce onto spirituality. The gendered evaluative asymmetry (Mechanism 2) creates guilt through systematic negative characterisation, while modal structures linguistically construct obligation. The exemplar narratives (Mechanism 3) model extreme behaviour via consistent linguistic patterns featuring the most respected female figures in Islamic history. Together, they create what can be called

“rhetorical overdetermination” through language, that is, multiple simultaneous linguistic justifications operating through lexis, syntax and discourse structure, which make resistance psychologically difficult without appearing to reject Islamic faith. A woman encountering this three-page discourse faces comprehensive linguistic positioning operating through van Leeuwen’s (2007) legitimization strategies realised linguistically. Figure 3 illustrates how four legitimization strategies operate simultaneously across the lexical, syntactic and discursive levels, creating layered positioning effects.

Women Layered Linguistic Positioning in *Rumiyah* Magazine

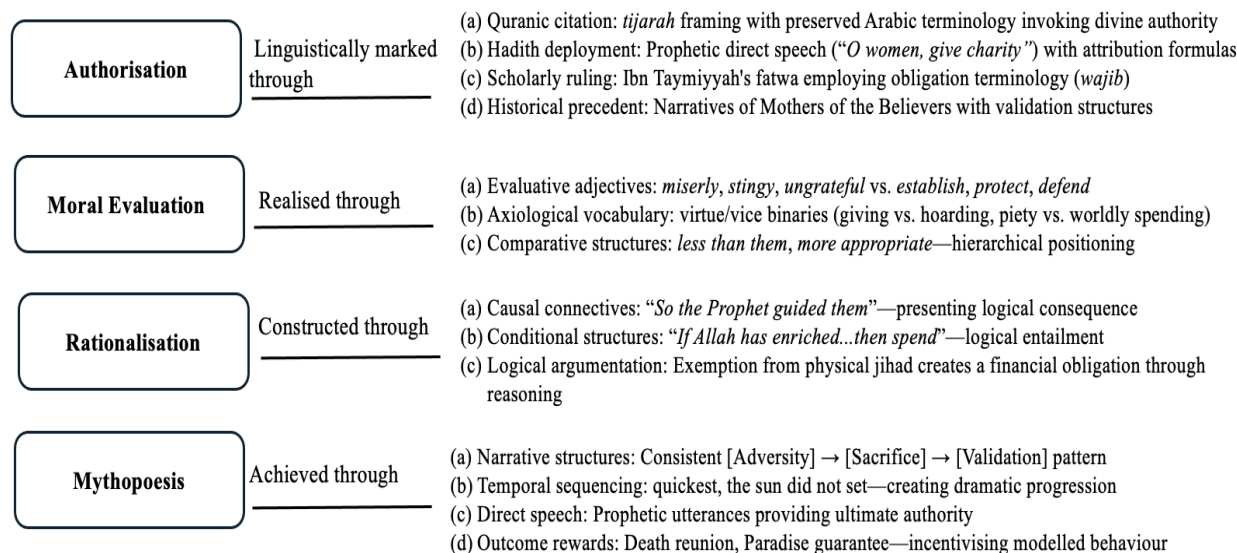


Figure 3. Comprehensive Linguistic Positioning Through Four Legitimation Strategies

As Figure 3 demonstrates, the four legitimization strategies operate simultaneously; each is realised through distinct linguistic features, yet they all work interdependently to construct obligation. Authorisation invokes religious authority through Quranic citations (preserving Arabic *tijarah* terminology), Hadith deployment (prophetic direct speech “O women, give charity”), scholarly ruling (Ibn Taymiyyah’s *wajib*) and a historical precedent (Mothers of the Believers narratives). Moral evaluation creates virtue/vice binaries through evaluative adjectives (systematic negative lexis for women versus positive for men), axiological vocabulary (giving/hoarding opposition) and comparative hierarchies (*less than them*). Rationalisation presents logical consequences through causal connectives, conditional structures establishing entailment and logical argumentation linking physical exemption to financial obligation. Mythopoesis models desired behaviour through consistent narrative patterns, as documented in Table 4. Temporal sequencing creates urgency, prophetic direct speech validation and outcome rewards that incentivise sacrifice. The comprehensive positioning creates constrained agency realised through specific grammatical patterns. Significantly, “financial piety” is gendered here using linguistic means. While men are encouraged to support *mujahidin* through positive characterisation, women’s unique linguistic positioning is marked by guilt construction through “majority of hellfire” requiring atonement, special jurisprudential obligations (Ibn Taymiyyah’s ruling addressing women specifically), gender-specific exemplars modelling self-denial and a direct vocative address (“O women”) unavailable to male readers.

Women receive active voice and transitive verb structures in economic contexts (linguistic empowerment: *give, spend, make preparations*), while modal obligation (*it is an obligation*), negative evaluation (*miserly, stingy*) and imperative structures (*give, do not hoard*) linguistically channel this agency exclusively towards organisational needs (linguistic constraint). This grammatical pattern creates a double-bind: women must be constructed as economically capable (to provide resources), but this capability must be directed solely towards *mujahidin* through obligation and evaluation. This gendered differentiation exploits the fact that diaspora women often control household finances, receive inheritances or earn independent income, all resources that are mobilisable through religious guilt that men’s participation in physical jihad does not generate (Margolin, 2020; Pearson & Winterbotham, 2017; Pearson et al., 2020; Thakkar & Speckhard, 2024). As Bhatt et al. (2025) argue, extremist discourse appropriates *ummatic* linguistic authority, canonical texts, orthodox citation practices and authoritative discourse markers while strategically deploying English vocabulary and syntactic patterns to advance specific interpretations. The three-page section follows the orthodox Islamic epistemological hierarchy (Quran → Hadith → Scholarly opinion → Historical precedent) documented in Figure 3’s authorisation strategy, lending legitimacy to the discourse through surface linguistic features while serving organisational financial extraction masked as religious obligation through vocabulary choices, modal constructions and narrative framings.

The systematic absence of organisational identification throughout (generic *mujahidin* terminology with nonspecific references appearing 11 times, with no explicit naming) represents a sophisticated linguistic deletion strategy (van

Leeuwen, 2008), which maintains legitimacy through vague references while the organisational context guides interpretation. This linguistic pattern, analysed using applied linguistics methodologies (Brookes & McEnery, 2020; Lin & Luke, 2014), reveals how discourse naturalises organisational extraction as a religious duty through strategic language choices operating simultaneously across the lexical, syntactic and discourse levels.

V. CONCLUSION

This systematic linguistic analysis revealed how extremist propaganda constructs financial piety for women through three interconnected mechanisms operating at the lexical, syntactic and discourse levels. Commercial metaphorical framing systematically deploys economic vocabulary, constructing spiritual obligation as a commercial transaction as a foundational conceptual metaphor, which was documented through comprehensive semantic field analysis. Gendered linguistic economy employs evaluative asymmetry, namely, exclusively negative lexis for women and positive for men, coupled with modal obligation structures and a direct vocative address positioning women as in need of financial atonement. Exemplar narrative structures follow consistent [Adversity] → [Sacrifice] → [Validation] patterns, linguistically modelling extreme sacrifice as a normative female behaviour through Islam's most revered women. These mechanisms create constrained agency through grammatical means: the active voice empowers women as economic actors, while modal obligation and imperative structures channel this agency exclusively towards organisational needs. The discourse appropriates *ummatic* linguistic authority through orthodox citation practices, and English vocabulary, syntactic patterns and selective narrative framing advance interpretations that diverge from traditional Islamic scholarship.

This research makes theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions to linguistics scholarship. It introduces two linguistically grounded concepts: financial piety, which explains how voluntary action lexicon transforms into obligatory vocabulary through semantic shift, modal reconstruction and metaphorical reframing, and constrained agency, which reveals how grammar simultaneously empowers through agentive structures and constrains through obligation modality. Methodologically, it demonstrates a systematic feminist CDA integrating citation practice analysis, lexical-semantic examination and legitimation strategy identification across linguistic levels (vocabulary, syntax and discourse structure), providing a replicable analytical framework. Empirically, the study offers a detailed analysis using comprehensive tables that document commercial semantic fields, gendered evaluative asymmetry and narrative patterns, thus advancing discourse analysis and demonstrating the capacity of CDA to reveal multilayered ideological manipulation. The systematic deletion of organisational identity, with generic *mujahidin* terminology appearing 11 times without explicit naming, represents a sophisticated linguistic strategy (van Leeuwen, 2008) that deserves attention in discourse analysis examining how vague reference enables multiple interpretations and guides preferred readings.

Several limitations of the study suggest directions for future research. First, the analysis focused on a single issue of *Rumiyah*, and a comparative analysis across multiple issues and other extremist publications would strengthen the understanding of these linguistic patterns. Second, examining translations and multilingual versions could reveal how these mechanisms operate across linguistic contexts. Third, future research might also investigate reader reception and resistance strategies, particularly among the targeted female audiences.

Understanding these linguistic mechanisms will inform counter-extremism efforts, which require targeted responses. These may include challenging commercial metaphorical framing through traditional Islamic compassionate vocabulary, recontextualising decontextualised citations via interpretive hedging, providing comprehensive exemplar contextualisation emphasising family welfare priorities, exposing organisational identity deletion and emphasising women's economic autonomy in traditional teachings. Notably, protective education should foster CDA skills for recognising manipulation through commercial metaphors, decontextualised citations, obscured organisational identity and selectively framed narratives.

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