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Research Paper

A Corpus-Driven Exploration of Language Use in Religious Discourse

Mohammed Nofal

Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Middle East University, Amman, Jordan; mhmdnofal82@gmail.com

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Abstract

Sociolinguistic research has shown that religion has been in an intertwined relationship with language. However, the interaction between language and religion, especially in less institutional contexts such as prayer sites, has not received much attention. To address this issue, this study explores language use in religious discourse in multilingual settings. The study uses corpus linguistics techniques accompanied by a discourse analysis approach to investigate using Arabic in 182 English Friday sermons delivered at a New Zealand on-campus prayer site. The analysis shows that despite the presence of Arabic words in the corpus, the English equivalents of these words are also found. The analysis also shows that Arabic words are mainly either nouns or used in formulaic phrases. This study suggests that Arabic is used as an emblem of religious identity. This study contributes to the current scholarship by bringing together multilingualism research and corpus linguistics in under-researched contexts.

Keywords: Arabic; Corpus Linguistics; Identity; Language Use; New Zealand; Religious Discourse.

1. Introduction

At the heights of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, during the Bush-Blair Press conference at the Foreign Office, a journalist asked the US president George W. Bush whether Muslims and Christians worship the same God. Bush replied, “I believe we worship the same God”. In contrast, in a different event of the same year, Pat Robertson, a US presidency Republican candidate, claimed during his visit to Jerusalem that “the entire world is being convulsed by a religious struggle. [...] whether Hubal, the Moon God of Mecca, known as Allah, is supreme, or whether the Judeo-Christian Jehovah, God of the Bible, is Supreme.” Drawing upon this statement, Robertson denied the Palestinians’ (with a Muslim majority) right of claiming Jerusalem since allegedly they have no religious links with the Holy Land. Although this statement was echoed in the pro-Robertson discourse, some theologians criticized his statement. For example, (Volf 2012, p. viii) described this claim as ‘ignorant’, stating that “[t]he dispute is not about the divine name, “God” or “Allah”, as some ignorantly claim. Arab Christians have for centuries worshipped God under the name Allah”. Additionally, since the media is intertwined with politics, this issue can be found in some journalistic sites. In 2003, the Washington Post Website, for example, asked its readers “Do you think that Muslims, Christians and Jews all pray to the same God?”. This question was discussed a year later in the New York Times noting that among the commenters on the Washington Post Website there was a woman who wrote “Muslims pray to Allah. Allah is not the God of Abraham” (Kearney, 2004). This question is also an age-old issue that has its ramifications among theologians and religious studies scholars (Volf, 2011).

Regardless of the political, journalistic and theologian discussions over the issue of whether the signifiers Allah and God refer to the same signified, and irrespective of the historical linguistic fact that in Semitic languages such as Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic (Jesus’s mother tongue) the words ‘Allah’, ‘Elohim’, and ‘Allaha’ respectively refer to the same Supreme entity that the English ‘God’, German ‘Gott’, French ‘Dieu’ refer to, this article takes a sociolinguistic stance of not only investigating using the word ‘Allah’, but also delving into using Arabic expressions in Islamic religious discourse from a wider sociolinguistic perspective. This study looks at the emic rather than the etic perspective of language use in multilingual settings, namely, using Arabic in English religious texts by and with people who have limited or no Arabic knowledge. In other words, instead of examining interfaith conversations discourse where religious scholars talk



on behalf of people (e.g. Brink-Danan, 2015), this study explores how language users use Arabic when delivering a religious speech to their non-Arabic speaking audience. Additionally, this study departs from mobilizing reported data to employing corpus linguistic techniques, such as frequency analysis, cluster analysis and concordance lines analysis. The findings of this study are limited to the compiled corpus as well as the context in which the study was conducted. The findings are also restricted to the time during which the data were collected.

In this study, I explore the use of three groups of words (a total of ten words) in a corpus of religious speeches (Friday sermons) delivered at a New Zealand university Muslims' prayer site. This site is frequented by (under)graduate students who have a variety of linguistic, cultural, ethnic and national backgrounds. Linguistically, they speak a wide range of languages including but not limited to English, Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Malay, and Somali. English, which is the *de facto* language of New Zealand (The Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013), is the lingua franca within this group of audience. This study delves into the use of some frequently used Arabic expressions while their English equivalents are also used in the corpus. This study is guided by the following research question:

- Why do Friday sermon presenters use Arabic expressions in the English sermons?

This study contributes to the growing body of research in the fields of sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics (CL). While corpus linguists have often investigated monolingual corpora (Baker & Vessey, 2018; Haider & Hussein, 2019; Shokri et al., 2022), studying a corpus that incorporates different languages is rare (but see Baker et al., 2000; Yurisovna & Alikberova, 2019). This study looks at a unique kind of corpus that embraces two languages (Arabic and English), in which the English texts adopt the Arabic (religious) style and rhetoric. Furthermore, while sociolinguists have often dealt with multilingualism research, in particular language use, drawing upon manually analyzed reported, observed and/or recorded data (e.g. Alsaawi, 2020; Canagarajah, 2011) or using Computer-aided text analysis software tools such as NVivo and MAXQDA (e.g. Gierlinger, 2015; Seals, 2017), this study utilizes CL techniques to analyze a larger collection of texts. Thus, this study bridges the gap between CL and multilingualism research.

The Friday sermon is a religious speech delivered at the noon prayer (aka Dhuhur) by a male student. It ranges between twenty to thirty minutes and is followed by the Friday prayer. Delivering the sermon is voluntary and the presenter is usually one of the postgraduate students. Those volunteer presenters are mainly speakers of languages other than Arabic. Unlike traditional Friday sermons delivered in Arabic, the sermon delivered on campus is in English. However, it is never without the use of Arabic. The Sermon is comprised of three sections. While the first section, the opening, is written and spoken in Standard Arabic, the second, the content, is mainly in English except if Quranic verses are being cited, they will be followed by English exegesis. Finally, the closing section is spoken in Standard Arabic. The first and third parts of the Sermons will not be analyzed as they are written and spoken in Arabic. The second section, which is the core of the sermon and focuses on the main objective of the sermon, is the focus of analysis in this study.

2. Language and Religion

Religion plays a vital role in shaping language use. Spolsky (2009, p. 50) highlighted the link between language and religion as “linguistic cleanliness is next to godliness.” The relationship between language and religion is well illustrated by the influence of religion spread on language spread (Ferguson, 1982; Spolsky, 2003). To Chew (2006, p. 214), language and religion mutually affect and influence each other and they both have a key role in “defin[ing] the characteristics of civilizations”. Such an inextricable relationship also comes to light in current scholarship at both macro and micro levels of analysis. Research has shown that religion is pivotal in language policy and planning (Liddicoat, 2014), language maintenance (Revis, 2017), and language learning and education (Anderson et al., 2015) *inter alia*. However, the interaction between language and religion has been institutionally depicted. That is, researchers tend to study this relationship in contexts where religious or religiously affiliated institutions use language publicly based on religious ideologies, including linguistic landscape (e.g. Alsaif and Starks, 2018) and language use (Chew, 2006). Yet, the interaction between language and religion has not received proper attention in sociolinguistic research (Spolsky, 2003, 2009), especially in less institutional contexts such as mosques (Alsaawi, 2020) and on-campus prayer rooms, which is the focus of the current study.

A related discussion is in the case of linguistic choice whether orthographic as in the case of Muslim countries (e.g. Iran and Pakistan) using Arabic script, lexical choice as when India's language planners resort to Sanskrit as a lexifier for Hindi (Nofal, 2020), or even at language varieties level as in the case of Arabic in religious discourse. Speaking of

Islam and Arabic, using Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic have been typically discussed, drawing upon the concepts of code-switching, code-mixing and diglossia (e.g. Alaiyed, 2018; Albirini and Chakrani, 2017; Bassiouney, 2009). There is a consensus among these researchers that although Standard Arabic is the de facto language in Islamic religious discourse, other Arabic regional varieties are also used. For example, Alaiyed (2018) analysed twelve religious sermons delivered in Saudi Arabia and found that the Imams strategically switched between Standard Arabic and Najdi Arabic (a Saudi regional variety) for a variety of purposes. Alaiyed also found that Standard Arabic was used when “discussing serious, formal and logical issues and when quoting verses of the Qur’ān, speeches of the Prophet or poetry, whereas NA [Najdi Arabic] is more common in simplifying, giving examples, quoting reported speech” (Alaiyed, 2018, p. 320).

The use of Arabic among non-Arabic speaking Muslims is also common, particularly to evoke spiritual values and identity. Welji (2012) and Harmaini (2014) are good examples. Welji (2012) examined Arabic God-phrases among non-Arab Muslims and concluded that “the integration of God’s name that adds authority to the speaker within the context of a dialogic interaction” (p. 64). Harmaini (2014) suggested that non-Arabic speaking Muslims used Arabic to express their religious identity. These findings are not unexpected, rather they mirror the widespread belief within Muslim communities worldwide that (Standard) Arabic has “respective claims to authenticity as the language of the Qu’ran” (Clyne, 2003, p. 56) and is “the language of choice for the inculcation of Islamic religious identity as it is the “authentic” language of the Prophet” (Chew, 2014, p. 55). Furthermore, these connections are translated into Non-Arab Muslim communities in all walks of life. For example, Ahmad et al. (2013) found that Arabic words were used in Business, in Malaysia, as a persuasion strategy and were perceived as an Islamic practice. While these studies mainly have drawn upon interactional data, the current study focuses on language use when ordinary language users deliver religious discourse.

As far as Religious discourse is concerned, a growing body of research has recently focused on linguistic and discursive practices in religious speeches. Baker and Vessey (2018) compared English and French extremist texts, which drew upon the religious discourse, to determine how messages employed similar and distinct discursive themes and linguistic strategies. Baker and Vessey’s study is unique for its use of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis approaches to delve into how religious discourse was implemented in extremist discourse. Baker and Vessey noted that Arabic was used in the English texts to legitimize the text writers’ messages. Another study relevant to this is Alsaawi's (2020) investigation of language use in Friday sermons in the UK. Drawing upon observed and reported data from Asian Pacific participants, Alsaawi indicated that Arabic was used in the sermons for a multitude of purposes, including historical authenticity and religious authority, exposing audiences to Arabic, performing linguistic accommodation, and overcoming the lack of easy equivalents in English. These two studies are highly relevant to the current study which combines corpus linguistics and discourse analysis to examine language use in Friday Sermons in an on-campus prayer site.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Corpus

The corpus used in this study is comprised of a collection of 182 Friday Sermons delivered between July 2016 and December 2019, with a total of over 400 thousand words, as shown in Table 1. The sermons were delivered in English to a diverse group of prayer attendees with a majority of non-Arabic-speakers. While there is no “ideal size for a corpus” (Flowerdew, 2004, p. 18), the compiled corpus suits the purpose of the study due to its representativeness. That is, the corpus includes all sermons delivered during the selected period.

Table 1. *Summary of Corpus Size*

Year	# of Sermons	Word Count	Av. Sermon length
2016	27	60534	2242
2017	49	110250	2250
2018	53	122165	2305
2019	53	121847	2299
Total	182	414796	

Although Sermons are a unidirectional (from presenter to the audience) public speech genre and often prepared beforehand, they can be treated as a spoken language (Weisser, 2016). Thus, the corpus used in this study is a specialized

spoken corpus. It is noteworthy that collecting such publicly disseminated speeches do not require obtaining ethical approval or consent forms from the presenters or the audience.

3.2 Data Preprocessing

The sermon texts were mainly in written form and were collected from the presenters in MS Word and PDF formats. Besides, some sermons were recorded and transcribed by the author. All files were then converted into text files using AntFileConverter software (Anthony, 2017) for easier processing. Since the texts were compiled from different sources, i.e., written by different presenters (some of whom downloaded the sermons from Islamic websites and edited them to suit the audience), there were internal and external differences within the corpus, ranging from size to authors and their linguistic backgrounds. However, the sermons were delivered to a group of people whose majority was not familiar with Arabic, apart from encountering it in the Quran. Thus, spelling normalisation (Weisser, 2016) and data cleaning were necessary. To do so, I went through some texts to check the consistency of the transliteration of the Arabic words. Checking all Arabic transliterated words at once was a daunting task. Thus, I generated an initial wordlist using WordSmith 6 Tool (Scott, 2012) to narrow the scope of my search for these words. This step was repeated every time I came across spelling inconsistency in the documents throughout the data pre-processing stage. To regularise spelling when multiple variants exist (e.g. Rasoul and Rasul, and insha'a Allah and insha Allah), I used the 'Find in files' function in the text editor Notepad++ which allowed for editing words/expressions in multiple documents at once. Additionally, the data were preprocessed and visualized using R programming language. Preprocessing natural language data included transforming all the words to lower case, and stripping extra white spaces to get more accurate results.

3.3 Data Analysis

WordSmith 6 Tool was used for data analysis. Different CL techniques were used in the analysis. To ensure "objective starting points for the study" (Haider, 2018, p. 100), I began with frequency analysis. I used an English stop list to remove function words, which were unnecessary for the analysis, from the frequency list. Additionally, I used a lemma list based on BNC before generating the frequency list to avoid having the same word with different forms (e.g., individual and individual's) and cases (e.g., Prophet and Prophets) in the list. Since Arabic words were not included in the lemma list, it was necessary to edit the lemma list adding the Arabic words to it, e.g., Nabi 'prophet' and Anbiya 'prophets'. As a starting point for analysing the corpus, I decided to explore the presentation of Arabic in the English part of the texts. I generated a word list of all the lexical words in the corpus. I then excluded the English words to have an idea of the volume of Arabic words. This resulted in a list of the Arabic words along with their frequencies. Proper nouns were not counted unless they were used in Arabic while English equivalents were used in the corpus, e.g., Isa 'Jesus', and Ibrahim 'Abraham'.

For data analysis, I first generated a *frequency list* of the most frequent 100 lexical items in the corpus to get the saliency of terms and concepts in the corpus (Baker, 2010). Having examined the list, I chose eight words for further analysis and added two less frequent words from the corpus. This made a total of 10 words selected for analysis (target words henceforth). The criterion for selecting the target words was that they were highly frequent words and their equivalents or (near) synonyms are listed among the most frequent 100 words. *Cluster analysis* is another CL technique that was utilized to investigate the structure wherein the target words were used (McEnery & Hardie, 2011) and how language users cemented meaning across multi-part units (Baker & Vessey, 2018). Clusters of two words to the left and the right of each target word were examined to initially observe how these words were used with their 'co-texts' (Archer et al, 2008). The common clusters within a certain group of the target words were selected for a more detailed concordance analysis. *Concordance analysis* was also used to investigate the salient and common patterns in contexts. The resultant concordance lines for some target words encompassed hundreds of concordance lines (e.g., the cluster *Allah's*, with 298 occurrences). In such cases, I examined all concordance lines as Baker (2010, p. 220) suggested and then selected a sample of concordance lines that represented the observed patterns. Overall, the methodology of this study is corpus-driven wherein the analysis was driven by whatever was frequent or salient in the data (Baker et al., 2013) rather than testing a predetermined hypothesis.

4. Results

Two general findings emerged in the analysis. The first pertains to the presence of the Arabic words and the availability of their English equivalents in the corpus. The Arabic words account for roughly 60 words per thousand (6%). While this number might appear small, previous studies (e.g. Baker & Vessey, 2018; Macalister, 2003) reported fewer counts of codeswitching and borrowing. For example, Macalister (2003) compiled a corpus of around 5.5 million words from different resources intending to study the presence of Māori words in New Zealand English. Macalister found that Maori words represent 26.2 per thousand (around 2.6%) in Maori-interest debates of the sub-corpus of the year 2000. Despite the presence of Arabic words in the corpus, English equivalents of almost all Arabic words are also found in the corpus. For example, instances of words such as *Rasul*, *Jemaah*, and *Alamin* and their English equivalents *Prophet*, *Congregation*, and *(the) Worlds* occur, nonetheless, with varying frequencies. In most cases, Arabic words seem to be highly frequent when compared to their English synonyms.

The second general finding relates to the nature of the Arabic words found in the corpus. The data show that these words are mainly either nouns or formulaic phrases that have pragmatic functions, as will be discussed below. Proper nouns (e.g. Musa ‘Moses’), common nouns (e.g. Mumin ‘believer’), and Arabic honorific phrases like *subhanahu wa ta’alal* (SWT), *sala Allahu Alayihi wa salam* (SAW), *alayhi alsalam* (AS), and *radiya Allahu anhu* (RA) are frequently used in the corpus. While these two findings suggest that Arabic is not used in the sermons to convey the intended message from the sermon topic, these findings raise the question of *why these Arabic words would be used (frequently) if their English equivalents were also used (especially when addressing the non-Arabic speaking audience)*. This question has been previously addressed in other types of discourse. For instance, Baker et al. (2000, p. 427) found a large number of English nouns used in the corpus of spoken Sylheti, ascribing the reason to having some of the broadcast material included in the corpus regarding health promotion. Correspondingly, Macalister (2003, p. 326) suggested that speakers of New Zealand English tend to use Māori words due to a range of reasons, including economy of expression, expression of identity, displaying empathy, making an impact, cultural reference, and clarity of meaning.

To proceed with the analysis of the frequency and salience of terms or concepts in the corpus, which can be investigated by frequency, cluster, collocation analyses (Baker, 2010), Table 2 shows a wordlist of the most frequent 100 lexical words and provides information about their raw frequencies and their dispersion in the corpus. The reason behind choosing the most frequent 100 words was the presence of the Arabic words along with their English equivalents in the list.

Table 2. Top 100 Lexical Words in the Corpus

#	Word	Raw Freq.	Texts	#	Word	Raw Freq.	Texts
1	ALLAH	3326	182	51	INCREASE	198	120
2	PROPHET	706	154	52	GRANT	196	99
3	LIFE	648	147	53	REFLECT	195	94
4	GOOD	563	150	54	MONTH	189	63
5	VERSE	541	160	55	CONTINUE	186	94
6	HADITH	524	158	56	SEEK	182	72
7	JEMAAH	503	94	57	SERMON	176	122
8	BROTHER	496	27	58	FACT	173	98
9	BLESS	493	36	59	FIND	173	86
10	RASUL	490	136	60	TEACH	173	16
11	MAKE	446	123	61	ALAMIN	171	148
12	FAMILY	444	105	62	RABB	171	149
13	HEART	433	74	63	ACTION	170	27
14	MUSLIM	429	139	64	BRING	170	78
15	FRIDAY	422	178	65	ENSURE	165	80
16	TIME	399	123	66	SHARE	165	61
17	GIVE	391	79	67	CHALLENGE	163	20
18	SURAH	359	179	68	MAN	160	52
19	DEED	344	30	69	SERVANT	159	31
20	ISLAM	327	128	70	PEACE	157	54
21	IMAM	320	145	71	PLACE	156	68
22	PEOPLE	314	134	72	WORD	156	30
23	ACT	311	63	73	RELATIONSHIP	155	52
24	LOVE	303	90	74	FULFIL	153	61
25	KNOWLEDGE	302	78	75	PARENT	151	6

26	MERCY	298	102	76	PRACTICE	151	42
27	AMIN	293	177	77	REMIND	149	30
28	MENTION	291	13	78	MATTER	148	59
29	TAQWA	274	156	79	WORK	147	64
30	RELIGIOUS	273	78	80	LIVE	146	43
31	QURAN	263	111	81	PRAYER	140	35
32	CHILD	254	18	82	REWARD	140	45
33	STRIVE	253	118	83	ABSTAIN	139	70
34	BELOVED	252	140	84	FEEL	139	65
35	PERSON	251	107	85	RESPONSIBILITY	139	43
36	REPORT	250	126	86	HOPE	136	56
37	COMMUNITY	247	106	87	MEMBER	136	10
38	EFFORT	226	50	88	UNDERSTANDING	134	66
39	FAITH	226	97	89	GOD	134	59
40	WORLD	225	98	90	CHARACTER	132	66
41	PERFORM	222	61	91	UNDERSTAND	132	63
42	YA	221	154	92	GUIDANCE	131	77
43	COMMAND	215	18	93	LEAVE	131	40
44	WORSHIP	213	78	94	TRAIT	129	37
45	BELIEVER	208	78	95	GUIDE	128	51
46	MUHAMMAD	207	112	96	IMPORTANT	128	84
47	RELIGION	207	88	97	CARE	127	50
48	DAY	206	88	98	IMAN	126	61
49	RAMADAN	200	28	99	NARRATE	126	79
50	FACE	198	50	100	COMPANION	125	29

Not unexpectedly, the wordlist reflects the salience of religion-related words as the corpus contains religious discourse. The Arabic words appearing in the list are related to God and persons (e.g., Allah and Imam), sources of Islamic Law (e.g., Quran and Hadith), and religious values (e.g., *Iman* ‘faith’ and *Taqwa* ‘piety’). The proper noun *Allah* appears in the list with the highest frequency, followed by *Prophet*. The bolded words are selected for further analysis because they present the most frequent Arabic words that co-exist with their English equivalents and (near) synonyms in the wordlist. I categorized the bolded words into three groups according to their meanings. The first group encompasses the words *Allah*, *God*, and *Rabb* ‘god’. The second group includes the words *Prophet* and *Rasul* ‘messenger’, and then I added their less frequent synonyms *Messenger* (98 occurrences in 67 texts) and *Nabi* ‘prophet’ (19 occurrences in 7 texts). The third group includes *Faith*, *Iman*, and *Taqwa* ‘piety’. As mentioned earlier, these ten words will be referred to as *target words*.

Having a closer look at the target words (Figure 1), it can be noticed that the frequency and distribution of some Arabic words are higher than those of their English equivalents. The word *Allah* has the highest frequency and it was used consistently in all texts of the corpus. *Rabb* has 171 occurrences in 149 texts while *God* occurs 134 times in 59 texts. This leads us to ask ‘why do some target words tend to appear more frequently and consistently in the corpus?’

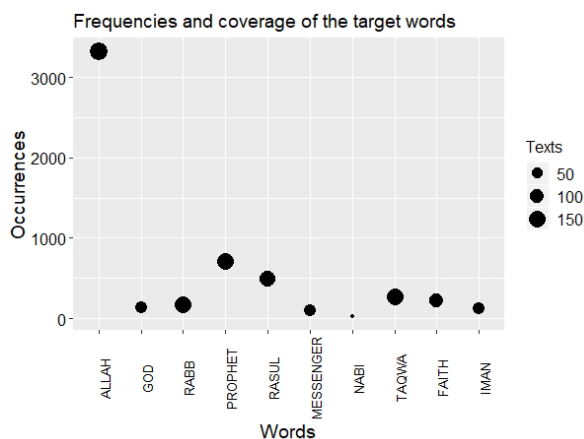


Figure 1. Frequency and Dispersion of the Target Words

While word frequency provides insights into the salience of terms in the corpus (Baker, 2010), words do not often work on their own. They often make sense in multi-word expressions or clusters. Therefore, to address the question

of why certain words have more frequent and consistent use in the corpus in comparison with their equivalents, cluster analysis was carried out to gain some information about the common expression or patterns in which these words are used in the corpus (Haider, 2018). Cluster analysis also served as a point of departure to carry on with a more detailed analysis. For example, if a cluster appears to be common within a certain group of the target words, concordance lines of that cluster will be further analysed. Following is the analysis of the target words as per their grouping.

4.1 Group 1: ‘Allah’, ‘Rabb’, and ‘God’

Cluster analysis of the words *Allah*, *Rabb*, and *God* was carried out to have a look at the common expressions or repeated phraseology in the corpus (Haider, 2016). As shown in Table 3.A, the word *Allah* is mainly used within Arabic Islamic formulaic expressions such as *Alhamdu lillah* ‘Praise be to God’, *Masha Allah* ‘God’s Will’ and *Astaghfiru Allah* ‘I seek forgiveness from God’. These expressions are of high frequency in Islamic discourse and create a sense of rituality to what is being said (Welji, 2012) by emphasising the role of God in life. *Allah* also occurs with(in) Arabic Islamic honorific expressions (Baker & Vessey, 2018) such as *Subhanahu wa Ta’ala (SWT)*¹ ‘Glorified and Exalted Be He’, and *Rasulu Allah* ‘The Messenger of God’. These honorific expressions are used in the sermons when mentioning God and Prophet Mohammed, respectively. It can be argued here that the word *Allah* often co-occurs within Arabic Islamic phrases and expressions as a way to align with the religious ideologies in which explicit (and implicit) reverence of God and the Prophets is a must, which in turn indexes piety. In addition to that, using respectful language, particularly honorific forms, not only reflects displaying respect to others, but also constitutes significant moves in self-representation (Agha, 2007, p. 302). Here, using honorific expressions can be seen as an index of self-representation as a (devoted) Muslim. The genitive cluster *Allah’s* is similar to the cluster *God’s* and thus will be discussed below.

Table 3. Cluster Analysis of the Words *Allah*, *God* and *Rabb* in the Sermons

A. ALLAH	B. GOD	C. RABB
ALLAH’S	GOD’S	AMIN YA RABB AL-ALAMIN
ALLAH SWT	GOD HAS	
ALHAMDU LILLAH	GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS	
RASULU ALLAH	GOD DOES (NOT)	
MAY ALLAH	RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD	
INSHA ALLAH		
SUBHAN ALLAH		
ASTAGHFIRU ALLAH		
ALLAHU AKBAR		
MASHA ALLAH		

Table 3.B shows that the word *God* has fewer patterns. The word *God* occurs within expressions such as *God-Consciousness* (as an equivalent of *Taqwa*) and *relationship with God*. The cluster *God has* also appears in the context of reminding the audience of the blessings that *God has granted* to them and what He *has done* for them to encourage them not to transgress the laws that *God has written*. Similarly, the cluster *God does not* is used mostly when quoting Quranic verses that address banning destruction, corruption and selfishness. Thus, instances such as ‘God does not like corruptors’ and ‘God does not teach us to live only for ourselves’ adds the divine authority to discouraging corruption and selfishness by ascribing the negative attitude towards these qualities to God’s rules.

Table 3.C shows that the word *Rabb* was used only in the Arabic phrase *Amin Ya Rabb Al-Alamin* ‘Amin, the God of the worlds’. Such a phrase acts as a dialogue with God in which addressing God at the end of invocation reflects the speaker’s inferiority and God’s superiority alike. It was not unexpected to find this only cluster of the word *Rabb*. Unlike the word *God*, the *Rabb* does not occur with English co-texts in the corpus and although the word *Rabb* is its Arabic equivalent, *Rabb* (171 occurrences) appears in translated² quotations from the Quran and Hadith ‘the Prophets teachings’, such as ‘O my Rabb’ and ‘the Rabb’. This might be due to the sacred status of the Quran and Hadith as the uncontested sources of Islamic Law (Errihani, 2011) that are not subject to any kind of linguistic modification including alteration, innovation, update (Al-Tarafi, 2016). Therefore, sermon presenters might take the published English translations of Quran verses and Hadith ‘Prophets’ teachings’ without making changes.

Table 3 suggests that the words *Allah* and *God* differ in terms of their co-texts. That is, the word *Allah* seems to mainly co-occur within Arabic sequences, as is the case of honorific expressions while *God* occurs within English

sentences. A more detailed analysis of the common clusters is presented below to check the contexts in which the two words appear.

As mentioned earlier, the genitive ‘s’ was found common in the clusters *Allah’s* and *God’s*. To see how these clusters are used in the corpus, I carried out a concordance lines analysis of these two clusters. Figure 2 shows that the cluster *Allah’s* (298 occurrences) is mainly used with English co-texts when talking about the divine attributes such as mercy (lines 4, 5, 6, 13, 22, 25), love (line 15), care (line 19), and generosity (lines 10, 12, 14, 24). It is also used when referring to the divine power and authority such as will (lines 1,2), commandments (lines 7,8, 16, 17, 20), and creation (lines 9, 18, 32). Notably, the cluster *Allah’s rhamah* ‘mercy’ (line 21) is the only incident of using the genitive ‘s’ in Arabic phrase and that could be due to the context that discusses the month of Ramadan which is known as ‘the Month of Rahmah’ in Islamic discourse. Additionally, line 12 offers a unique pattern where the cluster *Allah’s* is followed by *blessings (nikmat)*, which is the Malay translation of the word *blessings* (originally derived from the Arabic *ni’ma*). Using the words *rahma* and *nikmat* arguably achieves the desire to establish a common identity, i.e., religious identity, through using a universal resource of terms conceived to be similar across the languages that Muslims speak.

N	Concordance
1	not giving up. slowly but surely. insha allah, with allah's will, they will return to the right path. the
2	, let us put due effort to fulfil our daily duties. with allah's will, our hard work will result in a
3	of ramadan. ramadan is a month filled with allah's rahmah, and it is a time whereby allah swt.
4	, a month full of barakah and one that is filled with allah's mercy. rasulu allah saw. said: meaning:
5	one another. may each of our steps be filled with allah's mercy and compassion. o allah! beautify our
6	the blessings and mercy showered upon him. with allah's endless mercy, even those who do not
7	a sense of tawakkal will always be contented with allah's decree and have good assumptions upon
8	to work hard, yet remain calm and pleased with allah's decree. may our community be a community
9	name of exploration. brothers, when interacting with allah's creation, we must do so carefully and
10	the best of our abilities. may our lives be filled with allah's blessings, and may he be pleased with us
11	, there are no shortcuts to allah swt. if there were, allah's messenger saw. would have made clear of
12	ra. defines naseeha or advice as such: (wanting allah's blessings (nikmat) to continue upon ones
13	if they have different opinions from us. we want allah's mercy this ramadan, hence we should
14	relations between friends and families and grant us allah's rewards, mercy and forgiveness. may allah
15	before it is too late. such actions will grant us allah's love and blessings. second: aim to be a
16	. my dearest brothers in islam, let us ponder upon allah's words in surah al-isra', verse 1: which
17	narrated by imam tirmidzi). let us ponder upon allah's words in the surah al-hujurat, verse 10:
18	by al-bukhari.] observing and pondering upon allah's creation was a common practice of the
19	be held accountable for every single being under allah's care. allah swt. says is surah at-takathur,
20	paradise? if you ever feel the urge to transgress allah's prohibitions, then ask yourself: can i be
21	us and cause us to forget ourselves and transgress allah's commands. remember, the nikmat from
22	strength to guide ourselves and our families towards allah's mercy and pleasure. amin ya rabb al-alamin.
23	from being genuinely concerned and caring towards allah's creations. empathy is founded on humility
24	envy in their hearts, and are often jealous towards allah's blessings to his servants. this is because
25	and a pure heart. let us pray for and work towards allah's acceptance of all our good deeds and ibadah.

Figure 2. Sample Concordance Lines Illustrating the Use of the Cluster *Allah’s*

The concordance lines of the cluster *God’s* (Figure 3) show that the cluster is used in the same way that the cluster *Allah’s* is used. That is, *God’s* is used to address the divine attributes such as mercy (lines 1, 9, 10, 11, 14), love (line 14), perfection (line 15), generosity (lines 3, 4, 5, 19). Again, the cluster *God’s* is used to refer to the divine power and authority such as will (lines 2, 12, 23), commandments (lines 16, 18, 21, 22), and creation (lines 6, 7, 8, 20). The clusters *Allah’s* and *God’s* occur within English linguistic contexts in the corpus to describe the same themes.

The concordance lines of the two clusters show that the words *Allah* and *God* are used interchangeably and with the same co-texts. However, having a look at the patterns within the span of five words left to five words right of the word *God* (Figure 4), the patterns show that the word *Allah* is used as the second word to the right of the node word *God*. This co-occurrence suggests a need for examining the instances where the word *Allah* is used as a co-text of the word *God* to make sure that the pattern analysis is not misleading and to check how they are used in the corpus.

N	Concordance
1	and al-baihaqi, a story of which the true measure of god's acceptance, will be described. once, rasulu
2	in fact, his heart will always be at ease with god's arrangements. he is taught by this religion to
3	. that contains his guidance in the effort to achieve god's blessings. in a hadith narrated by imam muslim
4	multiple ways and deeds that one can take to attain god's blessings. however, in todays sermon, let us
5	. my beloved brothers, surely each of us yearns for god's blessings. we perform various acts of worship
6	earth) have a general meaning. it encompasses all of god's creations. in fact, it also includes having
7	in the quran, we find references to the wonders of god's creations. he asks us to watch, observe,
8	and create spaces and opportunities for others to be god's faithful servant, fulfilling his commands with
9	came and left, yet they did not manage to attain god's forgiveness. [hadith reported by imam
10	makes us a forgiving person? we always hope for god's forgiveness and his benevolence, but how do
11	of a person, as long as the person is seeking god's forgiveness before his last breath. the prophet
12	, which is to have tawakkal and placing our hopes in god's judgement. in fact, one of the objectives of
13	rather, he will realise that it is a sign of god's love towards his servant. a believer will never
14	reason is simply because we ourselves are in need of god's mercy, especially when our we are standing in
15	. the trait of as-salam is a virtue that depicts god's perfection in every aspect. everything that
16	. will we use this blessing in alignment with god's prescription or will we misuse this gift? as such
17	reported by imam al-bukhari]. the foundation of god's relationship with his servant is that of love and
18	his intellect, to inspire him to discover the truth in god's religion. and that is also the approach that we
19	the immense rewards. imagine the greatness of god's rewards. allah swt. says in verse three of
20	: (all land is allah's land, and all humankind is god's servant. and wherever you find goodness,
21	therefore given a trust and responsibility. we are god's stewards on earth, entrusted to safekeep this
22	have we fared thus far? what has been our record as god's stewards on earth? in this year alone (2019),
23	saw. gave the container to abu hurairah. with god's will, the container was still full of milk! so

Figure 3. Concordance Lines of the Cluster God's

N	L5	L4	L3	L2	L1	Centre	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
1	TO	THAT	THE	RELATIONSHIP	OF	GOD	AND	THE	THE	IS	OF
2	AND	THE	OF	IS	TO		IS	IS	TO		
3		AND			WITH		HAS	ALLAH	THAT		
4		OF			BY				IN		
5					FROM				IS		

Figure 4. Patterns of the Word God

The concordance lines of the co-occurrences of *God* and *Allah* (Figure 5) show that there are three instances where the words *God* and *Allah* are used in separate sentences (lines 1, 2, 8). The other instances encompassed the two words within the same sentence, expressing the ‘oneness’ of God (lines 3, 4, 5, 6). Notably, the two words co-occur in the first of Islam’s five pillars (There’s no God but Allah) by which Muslims declare their refutation of polytheism or associating with God anyone (or anything). In addition to that, line 7 instantiates using the word *Allah* in the Arabic expression of calling upon God *ya Allah* ‘O God’ followed by the word *God* in an English recount of His blessings during the month of fasting. Praising God in invocations and requests by highlighting His blessings is a common practice in Arabic religious discourse. This suggests that the word *God* is used as a general term while *Allah* is used as indicative of the oneness of God. Using the Arabic word *Allah* is perhaps a way to ritually link the audience with sanctity by using the authentically Islamic word for God. This is comparable to the findings of Macalister (2007) who found that Te Reo Māori words are used in New Zealand English to connect the audience to New Zealand history.

Generally, the analysis reveals that while the pragmatic usage of the given words in this group is similar, they have, to some extent, different linguistically contextual usages in the corpus. That is, the Arabic words *Allah* and *Rabb* appear in fixed expression (e.g. honorific expressions) and requests normally used in Islamic discourse while the English word *God* appears in English linguistic contexts. It could be argued that using Arabic achieves the linguistic and discursive practices local to the Muslim nation, which in turn localizes the text and makes it culturally ‘more’ religious. Being used as a co-text to the word *God*, the word *Allah* seems to linguistically foreground Monotheism, which is the first pillar of Islam; a doctrine that draws the borders of the *Ummah* ‘nation’.

N	Concordance
1	the month by adopting bad character that is despised by god. rasulu allah saw. reminded in a hadith reported by
2	it is a form of nobleness and is granted great rewards by god. rasulu allah saw. said in a hadith: which means:
3	swt by worshipping him alone and accept that there is no god but allah swt. we place our hopes and aspirations to
4	true believers, our most basic belief is that (there is no god, but allah, the one god. there is no god other than
5	is islam. and all of these is because all of us pray to one god and that is allah, the one and only god, lord of the
6	of us pray to one god and that is allah, the one and only god, lord of the universe. this is hence what we truly
7	with good character that you love. ya allah, our god who has gifted us with the pleasure of ramadan,
8	through two ways. first, to improve our relationship with god. rasulu allah saw. said (which means): (be mindful

Figure 5. Concordance Lines of the Co-occurrences of the Words *God* and *Allah*

4.2 Group 2: ‘Prophet’, ‘Rasul’, ‘Nabi’ and ‘Messenger’

As mentioned earlier, this group comprises two frequent words *Prophet* and *Rasul*³ and their less frequent equivalents *Nabi* and *Messenger* respectively. Generally, all words in this group are predominantly accompanied by honorific expressions, e.g. *sala Allahu Alayihi wa salam* (SAW), *alayhi alsalam* (AS). Using honorific expressions when mentioning Prophets is a common practice among Muslims due to their sacred status in Islam. As discussed earlier, these expressions help highlight religious identity, but also keep the audience in a dialogic atmosphere for they are required to say these phrases whenever a prophet’s name is mentioned. The cluster analysis of the word *Prophet* (Table 4.A) shows that it refers to several prophets such as Mohammed, Abraham, Adam, Jacob, Ishmael, and Joseph. It is also used in the plural form to refer to them collectively in the clusters *Prophets SAW* and *Prophets and Messengers*. In contrast, the word *Rasul* has fewer clusters (Table 4.B) and is mainly used to refer to Prophet Mohammed as *Rasulu Allah* (464 occurrences), or accompanied by Arabic words such as *Sunnah* ‘practice’, *Ummah* ‘nation’ and *Sirah* ‘biography’.

Table 4. Cluster Analysis of the Words *Rasul*, *Prophet*, *Nabi* and *Messenger* in the Sermons

A. PROPHET	B. RASUL	C. NABI	D. MESSENGER
PROPHET SAW	RASULU ALLAH SAW*	SURAH AL-ANBIYA	MESSENGER OF ALLAH
PROPHET MUHAMMAD	SUNNAH OF RASULU ALLAH	NABI SAW	MESSENGER SAW
OUR PROPHET	UMMAH OF RASUL	NABI SULAIMAN	BELOVED MESSENGER PROPHET
PROPHET IBRAHIM	SIRAH OF RASUL	NABI MUHAMMAD	PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS
PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS		THE PROPHETS (ANBIYA)	THE LAST MESSENGER
PROPHETS SAW		THE ANBIYA	ALLAH'S MESSENGER
PROPHET AYUB			SUNNAH OF MESSENGER
PROPHET ISMAIL			HIS MESSENGER RASULU ALLAH
PROPHET ADAM			DENIED THE MESSENGERS
PROPHET YUSUF			MESSENGER OF RASULU ALLAH

*The italicized clusters (~ SAW) (*Salla Allahu alayihi Wa Sallam* ‘Peace Be Upon Him’) will not be analyzed as it is common among Muslims to use this honorific expression when mentioning prophets and their names.

Like its English equivalent (i.e., prophet), the clusters within which the word *Nabi* appear (Table 4.C) show that it is used to refer to several prophets, e.g. *Nabi Sulaiman* ‘Solomon’ and *Nabi Muhammad*. Additionally, it is used to refer to them collectively by using the Arabic plural form *Anbiya* ‘prophets’ when quoting from Chapter 21 of the Quran which is called *Suratu Al-Anbiya*. Notably the word *Anbiya* also appears between two brackets as a translation of *Prophets*. While providing the Arabic translation of *prophets* does not add extra information to the message being conveyed, it functions as a lexical repetition that arguably contributes to linguistically rendering the text Quran-like as a way of legitimation and adding the divine nature to it.

Similarly, the cluster analysis of the word *Messenger* (Table 4.D) shows that the word is not used to refer to the prophet Mohammed only. The plural form in clusters such as *Prophets and Messengers*, *denied the Messengers*, as well as the cluster *Messenger of Rasulu Allah*, refer to other prophets and some companions of Prophet Mohammed with whom he sent messages to other tribes and kings at his time. In contrast, the clusters *Messenger SAW*, *His Messenger*

Rasulu Allah, beloved Messenger Prophet, the last Messenger, Allah's Messenger are mainly used to refer to Prophet Mohammed.

It is quite noticeable from the cluster analysis that Arabic is used in almost all clusters in a way or another. That is, the words *prophet* and *messenger* co-occur with Arabic names (e.g. Yusuf instead of Joseph), Islamic terms (e.g. Sunnah 'practice'), and the honorific expression *sala Allahu Alayihi wa salam* (SAW). Furthermore, they are used in clusters following the Arabic style, e.g. *beloved Messenger Prophet* in which lexical repetition of (near) synonyms provides emotional and ritual functions among others (Al-Khafaji, 2005). The cluster analysis of the words in this group has so far revealed a range of linguistic practices in the corpus such as lexical repetition and interweaving the English words with Arabic linguistic chunks or style. Now I turn to analyse the common clusters in this group of words.

N	Concordance
1	there be wastefulness while performing ablution? rasulu allah saw . then replied , which means (yes ,
2	allah swt . mentioned in the quran when addressing rasulu allah saw . in surah taha , verse 114 : which
3	. it was reported that a bedouin had approached rasulu allah saw . and asked him on the best form
4	, this hadith shows that the approach taken by rasulu allah saw . in educating a person who is not
5	is kind and merciful . one of the key lessons from rasulu allah saw . is the principle of brotherhood .
6	of nobleness and is granted great rewards by god . rasulu allah saw . said in a hadith : which means :
7	ways . first , to improve our relationship with god . rasulu allah saw . said (which means) : (be mindful
8	. [hadith reported by al-bukhari] in the hadith , rasulu allah depicted the life of a believer . he
9	fulfil it , he will strive to find those who can help . rasulu allah saw . also strived to educate those
10	hadiths by reminding humankind on the hereafter . rasulu allah saw . mentioned : which means :
11	can ease the affairs of his ummah in the hereafter . rasulu allah mentioned : which means : (he who
12	saw . was answering queries on a certain matter , rasulu allah would give different answers that would
13	advise . he said , (o rasulu allah , advise me . rasulu allah saw . answered , (do not get angry .
14	ra . was narrated to have said : which means : (rasulu allah saw . is the most generous person .
15	for the hereafter , and those who do not . rasulu allah saw . mentions which means : (the wise
16	amongst the ansar stood up and replied , (i will , o rasulu allah . the companion then returned to his
17	asked again , (then , what else is your advice o rasulu allah? rasulu allah saw . repeated his answer ,
18	earlier generations that lived under the guidance of rasulu allah saw . there are countless lessons that
19	for you . subhan allah , such was the approach of rasulu allah saw . , he reminded his family
20	. for the blessing of being part of the ummah of rasulu allah saw . , hence we should strive to
21	to share for us to reflect upon . during the time of rasulu allah saw . , there was a muslim who was
22	not close to . we should learn from the history of rasulu allah saw . , where we find him to be
23	main lessons that we can acquire from the life of rasulu allah saw . , which will help us to manage
24	showered upon his servants . remember a hadith of rasulu allah saw . that was narrated by anas bin
25	them in the hereafter . reflect upon this hadith of rasulu allah saw . regarding a person who is
26	defending the religion of allah and the message of rasulu allah saw . finally allah praised them by
27	strengthen our resolve to emulate the character of rasulu allah saw . allah swt . mentioned in the
28	with amanah towards his religion and the sunnah of rasulu allah saw . may we always embody amanah
29	other types of creations . hence , as the ummah of rasulu allah saw . we should have mercy upon those
30	the opportunity to come to us . as the ummah of rasulu allah saw . we should make the first step .
31	, we should strive to follow in the footsteps of rasulu allah saw . , the prophet took great care of
32	and understand the noble and merciful akhlak of rasulu allah saw . , then our lives will be more
33	multiple setbacks . let us reflect on the life of rasulu allah saw . from the time he was born , his
34	to allah , the one who has guided the messenger of rasulu allah . [hadith reported by imam tirmidhi]
35	came to meet the messenger saw . and said : (oh rasulu allah , i am in a state of poverty . the
36	of god's acceptance , will be described . once , rasulu allah saw . was sitting with his companions ,
37	it is you who is the exalted in might , the wise . rasulu allah saw . then raised his hands and prayed :
38	family . prophet muhammad saw . was asked : (ya rasulu allah , who is the person who is given the
39	rasulu allah saw . and said : (i am the owner , ya rasulu allah . the prophet saw . then said : (do you
40	loves gentleness in every matter . and i said ; (ya rasulu allah! did you not hear what they just said?

Figure 6. Sample Concordance Lines Illustrating the Use of the Cluster *Rasulu Allah*

The cluster *Rasulu Allah* (Figure 6) is used to refer to Prophet Mohammed and is predominantly followed by the honorific expression *SAW* (431 occurrences). It is used when recounting narratives of some events at the Prophet's time (lines 1, 2, 3, 9) and reporting the Prophet's teachings (lines 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 15, 24, 25). Additionally, it is used when quoting interaction between the prophet and his companions and seems not to be followed by the honorific expression *SAW* when the Prophet is being addressed by his companions (16, 17, 34, 38, 39, 40) as it is not common to use honorific expressions when communicating vis-à-vis (with the prophet in this case).

The cluster *messenger of Allah* was selected for further analysis as it is the English equivalent of the cluster *Rasulu Allah*. As shown in the concordance lines (Figure 7), the cluster *Messenger of Allah*, like its Arabic counterpart, is used when narrating events of the Prophet's life and practice (lines 9, 19, 20, 23, 26, 27), when reporting the prophet's teachings (lines 3, 5, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21, 25) and when quoting Quranic verses and Prophet's companions (lines 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 22, 24, 28, 29). It is also followed by the honorific expression *SAW*, except in Quranic verses and when quoting the prophet's companions addressing the prophet.

N	Concordance
1	al-ahzab , verse 21: which means: verily, in the messenger of allah you have a good role model,
2	once asked the prophet muhammad saw .: (o messenger of allah , who is the best of
3	belong to the same ummah . this is because the messenger of allah was sent to us as our prophet
4	of the prophet called zaid bin arqam ra . said: the messenger of allah used to supplicate: which
5	to his wives , who had nothing to give as well . the messenger of allah then beseeched the masses ,
6	man came to meet rasulu allah saw . and asked , (o messenger of allah , the injunctions of islam are
7	complain when we are tested . my brothers , the messenger of allah swt . has taught us that it is
8	by imam muslim : meaning : (whenever the messenger of allah swt . finished his salat (prayer) ,
9	and i have never kissed any one of them ." the messenger of allah saw . cast a glance upon him
10	: which means : (from aisyah ra . narrated that the messenger of allah saw . had said : truly allah the
11	that anas ra . has said : which means : (when the messenger of allah saw . visited the ansar
12	told , this calling originates from the sunnah of the messenger of allah saw . it was recorded that jabir
13	to understand and practise in our daily lives . the messenger of allah saw . had said which means :
14	narrated by ibn umar r . a . : which means : (the messenger of allah saw . took hold of my shoulder
15	be among those of taqwa towards allah swt . the messenger of allah saw . said : which means :
16	saw . is to fulfill the rights of our neighbours . the messenger of allah saw . mentioned : (often , jibril
17	: (oh rasulu allah , i am in a state of poverty . the messenger of allah saw . then sent the person to
18	is as such : meaning : from abu hurairah , the messenger of allah said , verily , allah , the exalted
19	will judge according to what is in the sunnah of the messenger of allah . rasulu allah saw . asked him
20	it all , and is something i can hold onto . the messenger of allah , peace and blessings be upon
21	, hardships and setbacks . yet , our beloved messenger of allah never once exploited his
22	. asked him again : (if it is not in the sunnah of messenger of allah? mu'adz replied : i shall do my
23	before prophet muhammad saw . was made a messenger of allah . it was reported in the book
24	8 : which means : (and know that among you is the messenger of allah . if he were to obey you in
25	held by prophet muhammad saw . as the messenger of allah . he was tasked to spread the
26	how it was being treated . one day our beloved messenger of allah entered a farm that belonged
27	the prophet saw . himself . even though he was a messenger of allah , and received guidance and
28	: meaning : (there has certainly been for you in the messenger of allah an excellent pattern for anyone
29	: meaning : (there has certainly been for you in the messenger of allah an excellent pattern for anyone

Figure 7. Concordance Lines of the Cluster *Messenger of Allah*

The concordance lines of the cluster *Sunnah of* (Figure 8) show that the cluster is used with the words *rasul*, *prophet* and *messenger*. The cluster co-occurs with *messenger of Allah* when referring to *Sunnah* as a practice in quotations of the prophet and his companions' sayings (lines 2, 14) without being followed by the honorific expression *SAW*. The cluster *Sunnah of the Prophet* is also used with *Quran* as its co-text to refer *Sunnah* as the second authoritative source of the Islamic Law (lines 4, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20) and the Prophet's practice (lines 5, 14, 15, 16). Interestingly, *Sunnah* co-occurs with *Rasulu Allah* to give the general meaning of 'teachings' to the word *Sunnah*.

The analyses concerning the words in this group show that although the words are used interchangeably, the speakers' tendency to choose a word over another lies in their habitual reference of that word. For example, the words *Prophet* and *Nabi* may refer to Moses, Abraham, and Mohammed, among others, while *Rasul* and *Messenger* mainly refer to Prophet Mohammed. This emerging meaning of *Rasul* is ascribed to the strong connection between Arabic and Islam. Additionally, the analyses show how lexical repetition, e.g. The *Prophets (Anbiya)*, *Messenger Prophet* and *blessings (Nikmat)* provides emotional and ritual functions and makes the text linguistically and culturally Islamic.

N	Concordance
1	that a muslim should have in mind when practising the sunnah of advising one another . be conscious of the
2	. rasulu allah saw . asked him again : (if it is not in the sunnah of messenger of allah? mu'adz replied : i shall do
3	. appreciating her efforts and contributions is part of the sunnah of our beloved prophet saw . . , and as such , he
4	must be grounded on two main sources; the quran and the sunnah of prophet muhammad saw . this is then followed
5	in faith , amin . my brothers , when we study the life and sunnah of prophet muhammad saw . . , we will realize that
6	and support . may we be successful in emulating this noble sunnah of rasulu allah saw . . , and be rewarded by allah
7	accusing one another as deviating from islam or the sunnah of rasulu allah saw . let us appreciate diversity and
8	should embrace it spiritually and physically . guided by the sunnah of rasulu allah saw . that was shared earlier , and
9	. empower us with amanah towards his religion and the sunnah of rasulu allah saw . may we always embody
10	been given a certain task to complete . by observing the sunnah of rasulu allah saw . in every aspect of our lives ,
11	is in no way based on the teaching and the spirit of the sunnah of rasulu allah saw . we cannot choose to
12	62] there are repeated reminders in the quran and the sunnah of the prophet saw . on the value of time and age
13	of the religion which is based on the quran and the sunnah of the prophet saw . obtaining a proper
14	by saying : (i will judge according to what is in the sunnah of the messenger of allah . rasulu allah saw .
15	and gentle , as shown by rasulu allah saw . this is in fact a sunnah of the prophet saw . second : we must be calm
16	, our spouse . jemaah , marriage is a highly-encouraged sunnah of the prophet saw . with the goal of establishing
17	, the quran must first be referred to , followed by the sunnah of the prophet saw . . , and then finally the
18	. yet truth to be told , this calling originates from the sunnah of the messenger of allah saw . it was recorded
19	thus , my brothers , let us make the quran and the sunnah of the prophet saw . a part of our lives . let us
20	that the value of al-khair is to follow the quran and the sunnah of the prophet saw . . , both of which are our
21	me to share several guidelines that we can gather from the sunnah of the prophet saw . to incorporate in our working

Figure 8. Concordance Lines of the Common Cluster *Sunnah of*

4.3 Group 3: ‘Faith’, ‘Iman’ and ‘Taqwa’

The third group encompasses the word *Faith*, its Arabic equivalence *Iman*, and *Taqwa* ‘piety’. The word *faith* occurs in contexts wherein the sermon presenters request God and encourage the audience to have *strong, full, resilient, and deep* faith in God in all walks of life (Table 5.A), which is a common practice in the Friday sermons. It is sometimes followed by its Arabic translation *Iman* or the word *Taqwa*. Again, the provision of the Arabic equivalent adds no extra information to the message but legitimising the speech by making it linguistically more Islamic. Another interpretation of this linguistically-redundant translation might be resorting to Islam’s linguistic resource (i.e., Arabic) to establish a practice that approximates the religious practice of Muslim communities elsewhere.

Table 5. Cluster Analysis of the Words *Faith, Iman, and Taqwa* in the Sermons

A. FAITH	B. IMAN	C. TQWA
FAITH (IMAN)	INCREASE OUR IMAN	TAQWA ALLAH
STRONG FAITH	FAITH (IMAN)	TAQWA AND IMAN
RESILIENT FAITH	STRONG IMAN	FIRM TAQWA
FULL FAITH	TAQWA AND IMAN	INCREASE OUR TAQWA
DEEP FAITH	THE IMAN	IMAN AND TAQWA
FAITH AND TAQWA	FAITH OR IMAN	LEVEL OF TQWA
FAITH OR IMAN	IMAN AND TAQWA	SENSE OF TAQWA
	IMAN AND ISLAM	PATH OF TAQWA
		FAITH AND TAQWA

The word *Iman* is used within similar clusters ‘*increase our Iman*’ and ‘*strong Iman*’ (Table 5.B). It is also paired with the words *Taqwa* and *Islam*. It is noteworthy that *Iman* and *Islam* co-occur in Islamic discourse as two levels of commitment. This highlights the distinction between being Muslim and fully committed Muslim. As shown in Table 5.C, the word *Taqwa* appears in contexts similar to those of *Faith* and *Iman*. There are instances of encouraging the audience to *increase our Taqwa*, achieve *Taqwa Allah* ‘fear of God’ and have *firm Taqwa*. It also appears as having a *level, path* and *sense* which extend its meaning as a practical way to fulfil a strong faith. The clusters in Table 5 suggest that the word *Taqwa* is used in the corpus as a near-synonym of the words *Faith* and *Iman*.

As can be noted in Table 5, the clusters ‘*Strong~*’ and ‘*~ and Taqwa*’ are common clusters. Concordance analysis of these two clusters was carried out to check how the words *Faith* and *Iman* are used in the contexts of these clusters. Concordance analysis also helps capture any subtleties between the two words in the corpus, if any.

Figure 9 shows the concordance lines of the common cluster ‘*strong~*’ (10 occurrences) within which the words *Faith* and *Iman* are used. The cluster occurs in the contexts of requesting God to grant the speaker, audience and their families’ strong faith, and encouraging the audience to build a strong faith. The words *Faith* and *Iman* almost have the same occurrences in the cluster. *Faith* appears when requesting God to grant the prayer attendees strong faith (lines 9,

10), and when encouraging the audience to have/build a strong faith (lines 7, 8). Likewise, the word *Iman* appears in supplications (lines 1, 3, 5) and when encouraging the audience to have/build a strong faith (lines 2, 4, 6).

N	Concordance
1	. may allah swt . grant our entire family a strong iman and firm taqwa , insha allah , amin .
2	jamaah , there are many other benefits of a strong iman that we can reap . however , even
3	of allah will definitely be bestowed with a strong iman in their hearts to face any sort of
4	conditions to allah's assistance . these include a strong iman , being diligent in our efforts , and
5	, and open our hearts , and bless us with a strong iman .
6	ali an-nadwi , a scholar from india once said : (a strong iman will protect a person from betraying
7	who are among the believers . this is because strong faith provides strength to the soul of a
8	muslims , it is vital that we strive hard to build a strong faith . in order to attain such a feat , we
9	will never depreciate . may allah swt grant us strong faith in finding contentment for all of his
10	, justice and equality . may allah swt . grant us strong faith and make our solat an important

Figure 9. Concordance Lines of the Common Cluster *Strong* ~

All in all, the concordance lines show that the two words seem to be used interchangeably. Thus, it can be argued that the speakers' tendency to use the Arabic word seems to be ascribed to the desire to get Arabic involved in the sermon (as the linguistic source of Islamic teachings) to make the text linguistically more authentic as a way of adding authority to it. Furthermore, using Arabic enables the speaker to build rapport with the audience based on their shared religious heritage by using their 'religious heritage language' (Husen, 2011).

Figure 10 shows the concordance lines of the common cluster '~ and Taqwa' (29 occurrences). It is noticeable that *Faith* and *Iman* are used in the same contexts, namely when requesting God for granting them faith (lines 2, 13, 15, 17, 18, 25, 27, 28), when encouraging the sermon attendees to strengthen their faith (lines 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 24), and when commenting on the qualities that a Muslim should have (lines 5, 20, 22, 26).

N	Concordance
1	friday congregation , let us increase our faith and taqwa of allah swt . by abstaining from his
2	. may allah swt . grant us strength in faith and taqwa insha allah . amin . my blessed
3	blessed friday jamaah , let us increase our faith and taqwa in allah swt . by obeying his
4	, let us strengthen and increase our faith and taqwa in allah swt . one can only attain
5	with these two important qualities : faith and taqwa . beloved brothers , the qualities of
6	blessed congregation , let us renew our gratitude and taqwa in allah swt . we are currently in the
7	members . spirituality will cleanse ones heart , and taqwa will be able to blossom and grow in a
8	knowledge . it is true that matters of the heart and taqwa are secrets between allah swt . and
9	this day , let us strengthen and increase our iman and taqwa towards allah swt . our iman and
10	upon ourselves and strive to strengthen our iman and taqwa to allah swt . may allah swt . accept
11	we ask allah to preserve and strengthen our iman and taqwa through our good deeds and grant us
12	that when a believer attains a high level of iman and taqwa , she is able to feel the difficulties
13	to grant us and our families resilience in our iman and taqwa . my brothers , last week's khutbah
14	, let us strive diligently to increase our iman and taqwa . let us strengthen our resolution to
15	. grant us and our families strength in our iman and taqwa , insha allah . my beloved brothers ,
16	have a positive effect in strengthening our iman and taqwa , insha allah . may the spirit that we
17	. bless us and strengthen our families with iman and taqwa insha allah , amin . my blessed
18	swt . grant our families steadfastness in iman and taqwa insha allah , amin . respected brothers
19	, let us strive together to increase our iman and taqwa in allah swt . to the highest level of
20	in the hands of allah swt . a person who has iman and taqwa in his heart will be calm and grateful
21	, and continuously strive to strengthen our iman and taqwa by obeying all of his commands and
22	taqwa . beloved brothers , the qualities of iman and taqwa are not invariable , they change from
23	. is a reminder that the true strength of our iman and taqwa are only revealed when we are away
24	our iman and taqwa towards allah swt . our iman and taqwa are our main motivators to achieve
25	and ask allah swt . to strengthen our iman and taqwa , and grant us thorough understanding
26	our spiritual self , one that is rich in iman and taqwa , and one that has allowed us to find
27	us with good health and a life filled with iman and taqwa . amin ya rabb al-alamin .
28	may he adorn our hearts with gratitude , iman and taqwa . amin ya rabb al-alamin .
29	him that he grant us noble hearts , pure minds , and taqwa in ourselves that will drive us to

Figure 10. Concordance Lines of the Common Cluster *and Taqwa*

The concordance lines suggest that the words *Faith* and *Iman* occur in the same contexts and have the same usage. Thus, embracing the Arabic word *Iman* in the text does not provide the audience with any additional linguistic information nor are there any subtleties in meaning. Seemingly, using the 'sacred language' (Karan, 2011), Arabic, words

heightens the utterance and makes it more powerful. This way, the text would appear unmarked and incontestable due to its closeness to the religious discourse the audience is familiar with.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This study responds to an international call for paying more attention to the interplay between language and religion (Alsaawi, 2020; Spolsky, 2003). By analyzing actual language use in tandem with combining corpus linguistics techniques and discourse analysis, this study contributes to understanding the complex interaction between language and religion in multilingual settings. This study explores the use of Arabic language in religious speeches of which neither the producer (the sermon presenters) nor the receiver (the audience) knows Arabic in a New Zealand on-campus prayer site.

The Analysis shows that Arabic words are used extensively, counting roughly 60 words per thousand. While it is a common practice among non-Arabic-speaking Muslims to use limited Arabic Islamic expressions (Nolte et al., 2018), other usages of Arabic lexical items are captured in the corpus. The use of the Arabic ‘honorific repertoire’ (Agha, 2007) contributes to the salience of Arabic words in the corpus and serves symbolic rather than linguistic functions. The analysis also shows the salience of religion-related Arabic words even though the sermon presenters and audience are speakers of languages that are genealogically not related to Arabic such as Urdu, Malay, and Bengali and their exposure to Arabic is restricted to the Quran. Drawing upon the analysis carried out in this study, there are no differences in the usages of the target words. The English words and their Arabic equivalents are used interchangeably to discuss the same topics and refer to the same entities. However, in response to the question of why Arabic is used in the corpus, the emerging motivations are mainly symbolic. These motivations are categorized under two main themes. While the first theme relates to the presenters and audience, the second touches upon their interaction with the text, as discussed below.

5.1 Arabic as an Identity Marker

Arabic is viewed as the sacred language of Islam (Green & Searle-Chatterjee 2008) and a core value in Muslim communities (Abed Elkhaliq, 2018). Thus, it seems that the majority of sermon presenters in this study (who have limited knowledge of Arabic) often resort to ‘crossing’ (Rampton, 1995) and use Arabic, a language they do not speak, to index the Muslim identity. The frequency analysis of the target words (Figure 1) shows that Arabic words are more salient than their English equivalents in the sermons, with the word *Prophet* as an exception. The lexical choice accompanied by using certain words indicate an interest in the Islamic history and culture through referring to, for example, names of places and prophets (e.g. Makka ‘Mecca’ and Musa ‘Moses’) and group-building terms (e.g. Ummah ‘nation’ and Jama’a ‘congregation’). In so doing, as suggested by Jaspal and Coyle (2010), language choice in certain contexts stimulates feelings of similarity, Arabic, as the Islamic lingua franca (Al Shlowiy, 2019) and the religious heritage language (Husen, 2011), serves as a universal linguistic resource that establishes an outer face of a common identity among the sermon presenters and the audience. Seemingly, the frequent use of words like *Jama’a* signals unity and solidarity under the umbrella of religious identity. While using Arabic in Islamic discourse is found to be a strategy of ‘othering’ non-Muslims (ElShiekh & Saleh, 2011), it offers ‘in-group’ depictions by establishing the text as linguistically and culturally non-Western (Baker & Vessey, 2018, p.263). By anchoring the linguistically activated common identity (i.e., religious identity), and by making the text as culturally ‘more’ Islamic, the texts become a common ground that enables the speaker(s) to build rapport with the audience based on their religious affiliation. This echoes Ferguson's (1982) suggestion that religious discourse connects the speakers’ and their audience’s sense of belonging to certain groups.

This common identity is further highlighted by providing linguistically unnecessary translations of some English words that do not add to the meaning but using authentic religious discourse. Additionally, Arabic words distance the texts from English conventions and partially bridge the linguistic differences between the foreign language, English, and the liturgical language, Arabic. This way, lexical choice and translation serve as strategies to use distinctively Islamic terms for Islamic values, to perform an ‘act of identity’ (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985) that foregrounds religious (Muslim) identity. The Muslim identity is constructed at different levels in the corpus. As discussed earlier, Arabic is used to build rapport with the audience based on religious identity. The religious identity then contributes to establishing in-group presentation of the superdiverse group of audience in a way that reconfigures boundaries of group membership to be based on religion rather than ethnicity, nationality or first language. In turn, Arabic connects this immediate Muslim community with the wider ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991) of Muslims through aligning with the language

ideologies towards Arabic as well as the extensive use of honorific expressions. This makes Arabic, more or less, as a tool to move towards a superordinate level of common in-group identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) to eliminate cultural differences and prioritize their membership in a wider group, i.e., *Ummah* of 1.7 billion Muslims in this case, (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010) rather than fractured subgroups.

5.2 Arabic as a Legitimation Tool

The Friday sermon is considered an educational and ritual speech, often addressing contemporary social and political issues in society (Errihani, 2011). Due to its nature and rhetoric, Friday sermons are viewed by worshippers as a powerful source of knowledge. The use of liturgical languages adds authority to discourse (Baker & Vessey, 2018; Chew, 2014). Arabic seems to be used to legitimize the sermon message. *First*, Arabic lexical choice appears in the sermons as a way to make the English text sound, to some extent, similar to the Arabic sermons, which are viewed by Muslims as authentic religious discourse. In this regard, Baker and Vessey (2018) note that the authors of Islamist extremists texts use Arabic in English texts to prime the readers to view the texts as authentically religious. Authentication, in this case, is a persuasion strategy by which the speaker stimulates the audience's emotions and catches their full attention to what occurs to them as God's words through using the prophet's language (Chew, 2014). The practice of using Arabic to empower the text by localizing the text linguistically and culturally is the provision of Arabic Islamic terms immediately after the English term, e.g., faith (Iman) and prophets (Anbiya). These findings resonate with Cummings's (2001) discussion of the pivotal role of Arabic in the reception and structure of Islam in Indonesia and how rulers strategically use Arabic to support their authority. *Second*, the corpus includes instances where Arabic is used to localise the text. Localizing the text supplements the common in-group identity among worshippers, by using a language that is considered 'the official language of global Islamic culture' (Halim, 2018). Arabic lexical choice (e.g. the word *Allah*) offers a solid background for the immediate group of worshippers to connect to and claim a place in the wider communities of Muslims either locally or globally. That is, using the religious discourse and the ways this discourse is implemented connects worshippers to their fellows in the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) who share a common (religious) culture with them.

Overall, the analysis shows although the target words are used interchangeably, Arabic lexical choice is more indexical than denotational. By choosing a set of words (i.e., the target words) for linguistic analyses, I hope to have shown the complex and dynamic relationship between language and religion. The synergy of English (as a lingua franca) and Arabic (as the religious lingua franca) does show the complementary (rather than problematic) relationship between the two languages. While English functions as a means of conveying the intended message, Arabic extends the message indexically to link the speaker with the audience emotionally and culturally, enabling them to foreground their Muslim identity, and simultaneously legitimizes the speech.

Although the current study has some limitations concerning the collected data, context and time, such limitations open up doors for future research of language use in religious discourse in other context, whether Arabic in non-Arabic speaking Muslim countries (e.g. Turkey, Iran, and Malaysia) or other religious languages in contexts where these languages are not habitually used (e.g. Mandaic in Iraq, and Church Latin in the European context).

Notes

¹There was an extensive use of the honorific expressions *Salla Allahu Alayhi Wa Sallam* 'Blessings of God and Peace Be Upon Him', *Alayhi Alsallam* 'Peace Be Upon Him', and *Radiya Allahu Anh* 'May God be pleased with him' when mentioning persons such as prophets/messengers, angles, and prophet's companions. These phrases were mostly written as acronyms (SAW, AS, RA respectively) but pronounced in full during the sermons. That is why they are not included in the clusters.

²For Muslims, the Quran is God's words that are neither translatable nor subject to alteration, innovation or update (Al-Tarafi, 2016). Thus, Muslims treat the non-Arabic versions of the Quran as exegesis rather than translations.

³I use the terms 'prophet' and 'messenger' as (near) synonyms while acknowledging the terminological distinction between the two terms in Islamic studies.

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Information on Informed Consent or any Data Privacy Statements

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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