

A Socio-Cognitive Analysis of Radicalisation and Hate Speech in ISIS Online Propaganda: Rumiyah Magazine

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Abstract:

Online extremist propaganda poses a significant threat to global peace. Employing van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, this study investigates the linguistic and discursive strategies employed by ISIS in its online magazine, Rumiyah. Through analyses of text-image relationships and patterns of lexical choice (such as the use of metaphor), the study examines how Rumiyah incites hatred and radicalises Western audiences, focusing on the construction of a "Us vs. Them" dichotomy and the use of decontextualised religious interpretations to justify violence. The present research proposes that these strategies influence readers' cognitive processes by fostering social polarisation and normalising violent behaviour. The findings have implications for deconstructing online extremism and crafting effective counter-messaging strategies.

Keywords: *Hate speech; Radicalisation; ISIS; Propaganda; Rumiyah; Socio-cognitive analysis.*

ملخص:

تُشكل الدعاية المتطرفة عبر الإنترنت، لا سيما تلك التي تنشرها داعش، تهديدًا كبيرًا للسلم العالمي. باستخدام المنهج الاجتماعي المعرفي لفان دايك، تُحقّق هذه الدراسة في الإستراتيجيات اللغوية والخطابية التي تستخدمها داعش في مجلة الدعاية الخاصة بها على الإنترنت، "رومية". من خلال تحليل العلاقات بين النص والصورة وأنماط الاختيار المعجمي (مثل استخدام الاستعارة)، تبحث الدراسة في كيفية تحريض "رومية" على الكراهية وتطرف الجماهير الغربية. يكشف التحليل عن بناء ثنائية "نحن مقابل هم" واستخدام التفسيرات الدينية المقطعة من سياقها النصي لتبرير العنف. يقترح هذا البحث أنّ هذه الإستراتيجيات تؤثر على العمليات المعرفية للقراء من خلال تعزيز الإستقطاب الاجتماعي وتطبيع السلوك العنيف. نتائج الدراسة لها آثار على تفكيك التطرف عبر الإنترنت، وصياغة إستراتيجيات فعالة لمكافحة الرسائل، وتسلط الضوء على نقاط الضعف لدى جمهور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، مما يساهم في السلم والأمن العالميين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: خطاب الكراهية؛ التطرف؛ داعش؛ الدعاية الإعلامية؛ مجلة رومية؛ تحليل اجتماعي معرفي.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly globalised society, hate speech and propaganda threaten global peace, security, and social cohesion, fuelling violence, discrimination, and exclusion around the world (Gaikwad et al., 2021; Awan, 2017; and Huey, 2015). Extremist organisations and movements often exploit social media platforms to promote their extremist beliefs and ideologies, exploiting this to spread their extremist propaganda and recruit new members, especially among young people (Gaikwad et al., 2021). Among the many actors using these tools of division, ISIS stands out as a notorious example, employing an array of media platforms to disseminate extremist ideologies and incite violence against perceived adversaries. A primary weapon in its propaganda arsenal is Rumiyah magazine, an insidious platform that serves as an instrument of indoctrination, radicalising susceptible individuals, and promoting the group's violent objectives (Ingram, 2018; Welch, 2018; Lakomy, 2019; Fanani et al., 2020; Stempieñ, 2021; Hai, 2022).

Language plays a crucial role in understanding social practices and power dynamics, with critical discourse studies elucidating how language constructs and maintains relations, ideologies, and norms (Fairclough, 2010); he argues that the interdisciplinary significance of language is evidenced by its centrality in fields ranging from politics to sociolinguistics that aim to analyse social struggles for justice using these tools. Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) considers the context of language use to be vital to meaning and views language as "social practice" (Wodak & Weiss, 2003, p. 13). CDA seeks to uncover and critique how those in power use language to constitute knowledge, organise institutions, and maintain delusions that obscure social agents' demands and interests (Wodak & Weiss, 2003).an Dijk's socio-cognitive model, provides a potent lens for interrogating such hate speech and propaganda mediums. This framework allows for a nuanced and context-specific examination of language, rhetoric, and imagery and elucidates the underlying ideologies and power dynamics that shape these discourses .

While existing scholarship has explored the strategic use of social media and religious symbolism by extremist groups, we still need in-depth investigations into the specific linguistic devices and discursive strategies used in ISIS propaganda to normalise violence and radicalise target audiences in the West. This urgent research imperative has motivated the present critical discourse analysis. This research explores the linguistic tools and discursive strategies employed by Rumiyah to influence and radicalise its audience. Drawing on van Dijk's (2015) socio-cognitive analytical framework, this research investigates the following question by examining selected extracts from Rumiyah magazine: How does the ISIS propaganda magazine, Rumiyah, employ linguistic tools and discursive strategies to incite hatred and radicalisation? Findings will enrich theoretical models of online radicalisation and support anti-messaging policies and programmes seeking to curb the influence of extremist propaganda .

This research is situated within a larger research project that seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of the role of ISIS ideology in online discourse radicalisation. We limit the scope of the research to the analysis of ISIS' online propaganda, specifically focussing on the use of hate speech and decontextualised religious justifications in Rumiyah magazine. We shall conduct qualitative research on the linguistic tools and discursive strategies of the magazine, using van Dijk's discourse analysis model to identify the socio-cognitive factors driving hate speech and radicalisation in propaganda.

1. Theoretical Framework:

As online radicalisation by groups like ISIS continues, academic inquiry into extremist propaganda, recruitment mechanisms and the weaponisation of digital media is crucial for national security. A growing body of literature provides valuable, if incomplete, insights into ISIS messaging and narratives.

1.1. Religious Symbolism and Messaging:

Several studies reveal the tactical ways extremist groups leverage religious language and symbolism to legitimise violence and construct a compelling call to action for target audiences. Holbrook (2010) and (Frissen et al., 2018) thoroughly analysed references to Quranic verses within ISIS's official propaganda, finding the group strategically invoked selective texts to provide theological justification for its atrocities and political agenda. These interpretations often deviate from mainstream scholarly readings, with ISIS moulding religious scripture to fit its aims rather than deriving theology from doctrine (Holbrook, 2010). Such propaganda frames spiritual duty in terms of violent jihad against

supposed enemies of Islam.

1.2. Use of Social Media and Magazines for Propaganda:

Awan (2017) and Ingram (2016a) provide valuable insights into using social media and English-language magazines by ISIS to spread propaganda and recruit new members. Awan (2017) explores how ISIS utilises social media platforms to reach and influence a global audience. The group presents a glamorised image of its fighters, positioning them as "rock stars" of global cyber jihad. A typology of seven characteristics was established for individuals engaging in online ISIS propaganda. Ingram (2016b) investigates the use of English-language magazines by ISIS as part of their propaganda strategy, focusing on how ISIS targets Muslims living in the West through these publications. The study identifies four trends in ISIS's propaganda strategy, including rational and identity-choice appeals, thematic 'hedging,' and instructional material. The findings emphasise the need for effective countermeasures against ISIS propaganda. One of these steps is to use the KISMI principle in strategic communication campaigns to combat extremism and terrorism to dismantle the strategic logic of the terrorist organisation's attacks.

1.3. Messaging Strategies and Narratives:

Further study highlights the strategic design of ISIS messaging and publications aimed at appealing to Muslims in Western countries. Ingram (2018) identified recurring narrative elements in the English-language magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, including the depiction of ISIS as ordered by God and the amalgamation of political issues with apocalyptic religious themes. Welch (2018) carried out a thorough qualitative analysis of the magazines, classifying articles based on their content and themes. The publications function as a means of identity construction, outlining the core principles and beliefs of the Caliphate. Wozniak et al. (2020) looked at the visual components of the magazines, with a focus on strategic shifts in the photographic framework that is in line with the changing military force of ISIS and its regional losses.

Various methodologies used and complex narratives created suggest a sophisticated propagandic media arm. It is imperative for researchers and governments seeking to counter the harmful effects of radical organisations to give priority to grasp these methods and developing feasible, effective countermeasures. The reviewed literature emphasises the importance of radical propaganda, with a special focus on the recruitment strategies employed by jihadist groups such as ISIS and al Qaeda targeting the Muslims.

1.4. Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Model of Analysis:

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary framework directed towards the problem, which interrogates the reproduction of power, ideology and social inequality through discourse (Wodak, Meyer, 2001; Van Dick, 2001). Critical discourse analysis arose from critical linguistics, as it merges systemic functional and social-cognitive methodologies to analyse how language works as both a reflective and instrument of hegemonic structures (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dick, 2015). CDA revolves around its focus on implicit ideologies - those embedded in textual and semiotic features - instead of explicit statements, enabling researchers to decipher opaque power relations (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 2001).

Fairclough's three-dimensional model bridges textual analysis (e.g., lexical choices, metaphors) to discursive practices (production/interpretation) and social structures, emphasising the multimodal nature of discourse (Fairclough, 1995). In contrast, van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework introduces cognitive mediation, arguing that societal power structures influence discourse through individuals' mental models, which are shaped by ideological contexts (van Dijk, 2006, 2016). This model prioritises context models—subjective, participant-defined frameworks that mediate the relationship between discourse and society (van Dijk, 2001).

Both approaches converge in their commitment to historicity and reflexivity, recognising discourse as both socially constituted and constitutive, while advocating for researchers to explicitly position themselves to avoid ideological complicity (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, cited in Wodak, 2001; van Dijk, 2015). However, methodological divergences persist: Fairclough's emphasis on semiotics risks overlooking cognitive agency, while van Dijk's socio-cognitive lens may underplay non-verbal ideological cues.

Critical discourse analysis, as Fairclough emphasised in 2010, is an indispensable tool for illuminating the complex interplay between language, power, and societal transformation, allowing for

scrutiny of power dynamics, ideological constructions, and the perpetuation of inequality within texts and discourses across diverse academic fields, from sociolinguistics to politics. Van Dijk's (1998, 2008, 2009) socio-cognitive approach provides a valuable framework for analysing the linguistic, rhetorical, and psychological techniques used to incite hatred and extremism through key texts such as Rumiyah. This approach examines the relationship between cognition and discourse in society and posits that people represent and mentally process social situations and structures through a socio-cognitive interface. The ideological square is a key concept in this approach, identifying the discursive strategies used in texts and conversations to depict social groups and their interrelations (Van Dijk, 1995). This concept is marked by a Positive self-presentation and a simultaneous Negative other presentation (Richardson, 2007). This research employs van Dijk's analysis model to examine how Rumiyah's discourse seeks to polarise targeted readers and influence them towards adopting ISIS' extremist ideology. Discourses have the capacity to shape new ideologies, indicating that certain discourse structures are effective in communicating specific ideological meanings. Nonetheless, there is no theoretical framework that specifies unique discourse patterns for conveying ideological meanings (van Dijk, 1995). Discourse shapes individuals' beliefs and ideologies, thereby affecting their actions (van Dijk, 2006). He posits that cognitive manipulation is achieved by highlighting certain elements within the discourse, therefore leaving a lasting impression on the reader's memory and enhancing persuasive effects (van Dijk, 2006). The current research focusses on the discursive strategies and the linguistic tools of initialising subjects. Van Dijk's ideological square, characterised by a positive self-presentation alongside a concurrent negative other presentation, will be utilised to analyse these tools (2006).

Thus, it can be inferred that the aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in the study of terrorist discourse is to investigate the manipulative tactics utilised by terrorists in their communication. CDA seeks to reveal the fundamental ideologies, power dynamics, and social frameworks that shape language use. Through the examination of terrorist discourse, CDA aims to uncover the ways in which terrorists utilise language to influence their audience's perceptions, beliefs, and actions. The objective is to systematically analyse and question the narratives and ideologies put forth by terrorists, with the goal of formulating counter-narratives that can effectively diminish and weaken support for terrorism. Analysing terrorist discourse through critical and linguistic analysis reveals the linguistic strategies and techniques used by extremists and effectively helps in suggesting feasible measures to combat media propaganda.

While existing research has provided valuable insights into the use of religious symbolism and messaging strategies in ISIS propaganda, there is still a need for a more in-depth analysis of the specific linguistic and discursive techniques used to persuade the potential recruits and incite hatred and radicalisation through key texts like Rumiyah magazine. This study addresses this gap by applying van Dijk's socio-cognitive analytical framework to closely examine the persuasive strategies and linguistic techniques employed in Rumiyah magazine. Focusing on the cognitive aspects of discourse production and comprehension will provide a unique perspective on how Rumiyah appropriates and recontextualises religious, political, and cultural discourse to further its ideological aims for Western audiences. The findings of this analysis will not only enrich theoretical models of online radicalisation but also support the development of targeted measures and policies to combat the roots and effects of hate speech and propaganda on extremist media platforms.

1.5. Hate Speech:

The escalating prevalence of hate speech has become a pressing issue with the burgeoning utilisation of social media platforms and online communication channels. Extremist groups exploit hate rhetoric to radicalise individuals and promote violence against perceived enemies. This overview consolidates critical perspectives from the literature about the definition, effects, and function of hate speech in relation to radicalisation and extremist propaganda.

1.5.1. Defining Hate Speech:

Hate speech includes diverse forms of discriminatory expression aimed at groups based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and other characteristics (Tontodimamma et al., 2021). A standard definition shows public communications that target groups and provoke harm, although legal interpretations differ by country (Sellars, 2016). Numerous definitions recognise that hate speech may undermine social cohesion, promote intolerance, and legitimise violence

1.5.2. Forms and Impacts of Hate Speech:

Hate speech manifests in several forms, including racist slurs, sexist remarks, religious blasphemy, and ableist language (De Houwer, 2019). It may be explicit or contingent upon subtle bias. It influences not only certain groups but also society at a whole by normalising discrimination (Schmuck & Matthes, 2017). Exposure to hate speech can adversely affect mental health and intensify marginalisation for targeted minority groups.

1.6. Radicalisation:

Radicalisation is a multifaceted process shaped by individual vulnerabilities, social dynamics, extremist ideas, and favourable circumstances (Kruglanski et al., 2014; Moghaddam, 2005). At the person's level, perceived injustice, unfulfilled expectations, and the quest for personal significance establish cognitive openness for extremist ideologies that offer purpose and meaning (Kruglanski et al., 2014; Moghaddam, 2005). Embracing this worldview legitimises the employment of violence (Holt et al., 2015). Social networks and group dynamics markedly facilitate radicalisation via social support, conformity demands, and collective processes that induce moral detachment among adherents (Holt et al., 2015; Taylor & Horgan, 2001). Terrorist training camps, prisons, and online extremist networks provide material assistance, incentives, and identity reinforcement that reduce inhibitions and facilitate collective radicalisation (Holt et al., 2015; Moghaddam, 2005). Radicalisation occurs through various complex factors and is not a linear process (Horgan & Mullins, 2015). McCauley and Moskaleiko's (2008) pyramid model conceptualises radicalisation as an escalation of extreme beliefs, emotions, and behaviours that foster intergroup conflict. Their research elucidates mechanisms operating at individual (e.g., personal grievance), group (e.g., polarisation), and societal (e.g., competition, repression) levels. Empirically testing this model, Klausen et al. (2016) found that behavioural indicators associated with radicalisation stages followed predictable sequences among U.S. offenders inspired by al-Qaeda.

Radicalisation processes also manifest differently among lone actors versus groups. Hamm and Spaaij (2015) determined that lone wolves tend to fuse personal and political grievances early on, interact with online extremists, experience triggering events, and broadcast violent intent as they radicalise. Their research reveals commonalities as well as individual differences based on personal histories. The literature demonstrates that radicalisation emerges through multifaceted and nonlinear individual, group, and societal processes. Developing nuanced, contextualised understandings is crucial for prevention and intervention.

1.7. Radicalisation and Hate Speech: An Interdisciplinary Conceptual Analysis:

Hate speech is used by extremist groups to radicalise individuals (Borum, 2014). It constructs absolutist us-versus-them ideologies and dehumanises enemies. For example, ISIS propaganda depicts Westerners as subhuman *infidels* who must be annihilated in a holy war (Hassan, 2017). This moral disengagement facilitates radicalisation. Mainstream Muslim scholars condemn such toxic distortion of Islamic principles (Hassan, 2017).

This analysis examines the complex relationship between radicalisation and hate speech based on an interdisciplinary scholarly article from the Practices Research Project on addressing violent radicalisation (Lorenzi et al., 2018). The paper represents a collaboration between researchers in language sciences, discourse analysis and critical sociolinguistics. Radicalisation refers to an individual or discursive process leading to extreme principles and refusal to compromise, while hate speech involves expressions promoting discrimination and intolerance against targeted groups (Lorenzi et al., 2018). The article argues that radicalisation and hate speech progress in escalating tandem but remain distinct phenomena (Lorenzi et al., 2018).

In the early stages of radicalisation, as an individual adheres to a radical ideology or joins a radicalised social movement, hate speech may not be present (Lorenzi et al., 2018). However, as beliefs become more extreme and the rhetoric shifts to blaming and dehumanising outsiders, hate speech intensifies (Lorenzi et al., 2018)—an individual embracing hate speech signals progression to the final stages of radicalisation. Hate rhetoric justifies violence against the enemy outgroup (Lorenzi et al., 2018). The article defines radical hate speech as a discourse that intends to destroy a dehumanised other, using hallmarks of hate speech like emotional appeals and essentialising representations (Lorenzi et al., 2018). While radicalisation may begin without hate speech, the authors argue that hateful rhetoric increases throughout the process, reaching peak intensity when used to incite and justify violence (Lorenzi et al., 2018). This interdisciplinary analysis demonstrates the complex escalating relationship

between radicalisation and hate speech. It provides an important conceptual distinction between radical discourse and radical hate speech, showing how hate speech progresses in tandem with and provides justification for violence in radicalisation.

In summary, hate speech can enable radicalisation by providing moral justification for violence against dehumanised outgroups. It is an insidious psychological weapon for extremist indoctrination and recruitment. Critical analysis of hate speech requires examining interconnections between language, cognition, and social contexts. Further studies should explore and investigate measures to counteract the detrimental effects of hate discourse.

II. Methods and Materials:

This section details the methodology utilised in this research, emphasising the central research question: How does the ISIS propaganda magazine, *Rumiyah*, employ linguistic tools and discursive strategies to incite hatred and radicalisation? The methodology entails collecting articles from *Rumiyah* magazine downloaded from the website Clarion project website <https://clarionproject.org/2014/09/10/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq-50/> to compile a targeted corpus for analysis, utilising selected excerpts that emphasise the magazine's language and imagery. The analysis, based on van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive framework, systematically examines the linguistic devices and discursive strategies in the selected fragments. This framework enables a detailed analysis of the ways in which these strategies promote the normalisation of violence and the radicalisation of targeted audience, thereby revealing the mechanisms of extremist propaganda and their consequences for counter-radicalisation initiatives.

Following the English publication of *Dabiq* from September 2016 to September 2017, *Rumiyah* shifted its emphasis from the establishment of a caliphate to the call of lone-wolf attacks in Western countries. The magazine's evolving format over 13 issues illustrates ISIS's adaptive strategies in response to territorial losses, promoting hijrah (migration) and offering guidance for conducting terror attacks.

The study employs critical discourse analysis to examine salient excerpts (fragments) from *Rumiyah*. It does this by carefully reading all the 13 issues to identify sections rich in religious references and escalating extremist rhetoric. This analysis will examine linguistic devices—including *Rumiyah* magazine designers' selection of pronouns, lexicalisation, metaphors, intertextuality, and topicality—to understand their roles in vilifying perceived enemies and normalising violence.

For these reasons, and due to the ideological nature of the data under analysis, we conduct qualitative research aimed at gaining in-depth insights into the problem, even though a quantitative approach could also be appropriate for this type of study. Since we are not seeking generalisability, purposively selected discourse will satisfactorily fulfil the objectives of this study. As noted by Wodak and Meyer (2001), "there is no typical CDA way of collecting data" (p. 23). Moreover, van Dijk (2001) emphasises that critical discourse analysis typically involves large stretches of text, making an all-inclusive analysis unfeasible; thus, analysts must be selectively purposive in identifying relevant material.

The strategies of the ideological square are enumerated as follows

- Emphasise our positive traits
- Emphasise their negative traits
- De-emphasise our negative traits
- De-emphasise their positive attributes (van Dijk, 2006).

1. Linguistic Devices and Their Ideological Functions:

In *Rumiyah*, this study takes a critical look at how certain linguistic tools are used to spread and shape ISIS's ideological story. These tools play a key role in normalising violence and promoting radicalisation by shaping views, evoking solidarity, and justifying extreme actions. This section aims to demonstrate the roles played by various linguistic devices in the magazine's propagandistic endeavours.

1.1. Pronouns:

Pronouns such as "we" and "us" play a crucial role in establishing distinctions between in-groups and out-groups. They boost a shared identity among ISIS adherents but, meanwhile, create a hostile dynamic against perceived foes. Phrases such as "We will defeat the infidels" emphasise unity,

collective efficacy, and moral superiority; they present ISIS as a unified force of righteousness. Conversely, these expressions dehumanise enemies, intensifying their hostility.

1.2. Lexicalisation:

To strategically frame the narrative, Rumiyah's designers use ideologically laden lexical choices to strategically frame narratives. Words such as martyrdom, caliphate, loyalty, and disavowal evoke sacred and aspirational connotations within ISIS followers' minds and portray violence as a sacred duty. For instance, the frequent use of the term caliphate normalises the ideal of an Islamic state while demonising its enemies' regimes as unjust and corrupt, which strengthens the dichotomy that encourages and fuels extremism.

1.3. Metaphors:

Metaphors are powerful cognitive tools that cognitively shape readers' perceptions and views of violence and ideology. By showing violent acts as part of a religious journey, metaphors reframe brutality as a sacred and legitimate sacrifice. Likewise, metaphors such as "war on the West" create existential conflict and legitimise aggression as a defensive act authorised by Allah. Such metaphors emotionally immerse the target audience and reinforce the adoption of extremist ideologies.

1.4. Consolidated Contribution to Radicalisation:

We adopted carefully selected criteria to select excerpts from Rumiyah magazine, relying on linguistic and ideological indicators that align with the objectives of this study. The ideological square provides insights into in-group versus out-group dynamics, which are central to analysing hate speech and religious radicalisation. The analysis of lexicalisation and pronouns reveals the effects of discourse on identities and group solidarity. The selected themes focus on topics centred around radicalisation, while the rhetorical tools shed light on the techniques ISIS exploits to stimulate emotional responses. Additionally, the technique of extracting religious texts and decontextualising them illustrates the use of theological justifications to spread radical beliefs. Each indicator promotes our comprehension of the mechanisms of hate speech and religious extremism used by ISIS online propaganda.

Moreover, such critical analysis of sensitive discourse requires rigorous ethical considerations, which enhances the achievement of an objective and responsible research while avoiding glorifying radical narratives and raising security concerns related to collective consciousness.

2. Data Selection:

This research uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), drawing upon Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to analysis, to investigate linguistic devices and discursive strategies within *Rumiyah* magazine (Issues 1-13, 2016-2017), published by (ISIS). The present investigation adheres to the following research question:

How does the ISIS propaganda magazine, *Rumiyah*, employ linguistic tools and discursive strategies to incite hatred and radicalisation?

This section outlines the procedures adopted for data selection and the analysis to be performed.

2.1 Data Source and Sampling: The primary data source comprises all available issues (1-13) of *Rumiyah* magazine, published from the middle of 2016 to late 2017. This period is of particular interest, as *Rumiyah* shifted from a publication of broad ideological statements to one focused on specific terror tactics and guidance, while the Islamic State started to lose territory.

2.2 Sampling Strategy: The study employs a purposive sampling approach. This method seeks to select fragments from the source material to be analysed for their specific features and characteristics. The process of fragment selection involved a multi-layered process, guided by a set of inter-related. The fragment selection was iterative: the initially selected fragments were used to develop the criteria.

2.3 Selection Criteria: The selection was based on the following:

2.3 a. Macro-Level Analysis: This stage comprised an examination of the organisation and topics of the magazine issues.

2.3. b. Thematic Relevance: Priority was given to articles that are linked to the main themes of radicalisation and hate speech, with the focus being on those articles that discuss the core tenets of the ISIS ideology. Relevant topics include justification for violence, the portrayal of enemies, the promotion of martyrdom, and calls for action.

2.3.c. Linguistic Richness: The study prioritises fragments that contain specific linguistic and rhetorical features that are indicative of hate speech and radicalisation. These include:

- * Use of first-person plural pronouns ("we," "us," "our") to establish an in-group identity and contrast with "them".
- * Lexical choices that are related to the use of metaphors for glorifying violence.
- * The strategic deployment of the Quranic verses to support pre-existing arguments.
- * The deployment of imagery that reinforces the messaging of hate and radicalisation).

3. Analytical Framework:

The selected fragments will be analysed within van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework (*Rumiyah*, 1st issue, p. 3). Analysis will be conducted at three levels:

- 3.1. **Textual Level:** The linguistic and rhetorical features of each fragment will be examined.
- 3.2. **Cognitive Level:** The underlying beliefs, values, and attitudes the text seeks to convey, influence, or instil will be addressed. (*Rumiyah*, 2nd issue, 2016, p. 3).
- 3.3. **Social Level:** This research takes into account the social context, power dynamics, and historical issues. (*Rumiyah*, 1st issue, 2016, p. 3)
- 3.4. **Contextualisation:** Each fragment will be poisoned and analysed within its context within the issues (*Rumiyah*, 2nd issue, 2016, p. 4).

This detailed methodological approach will ensure a focused and rigorous CDA of *Rumiyah* magazine.

• Ethical Considerations:

The analysis will maintain a critical stance, deconstructing hateful language rather than replicating it.

III. Analysis and Interpretation:

This section offers a CDA of selected fragments from *Rumiyah* magazine (Issues 1-13, 2016-2017), focusing on linguistic and discursive strategies that contribute to hate speech and radicalisation. The analysis adheres to van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, as outlined in the methodological section. The analysis of each fragment will focus on particular areas to be relevant to the research question, including manifestations of hate speech and its justification, the promotion of radicalisation, and the use of religious legitimization to support extremist actions (2, 3-4). As the analysis proceeds, findings will be categorised according to themes to illustrate patterns of language use.

Fragment 5: Justification of Covert Operations

- **Issue:** 1 (Dhu al-Hijjah 1437, 2016, p. 2)
- **Fragment Type:** Article: "Stand and Die Upon That for Which Your Brothers Died"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Repetition, call to action, demonization of the enemy, and the idealisation of jihad.



Analysis:

The article uses the phrase "Stand and Die Upon That for Which Your Brothers Died" (*Rumiyah*, 3rd issue, 2016, pp. 42-43) as a repeated call to action. This repeated phrase reinforces the core beliefs. This phrase constructs a narrative where violence is presented as a noble act. It encourages readers to join the cause and uses emotive language to heighten tension and violence. The use of the word "enemy" implies an "us vs. them" mentality (*Rumiyah*, 3rd issue, p. 3).

Fragment 1: Building Identity/Ideology

- **Issue:** 1 (Dhu al-Hijjah 1437, 2016, pp. 4-5)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "The Religion of Islam and the Jama'ah of the Muslims"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** First-person plural pronouns, core ideological tenets, and positive self-presentation.



Analysis:

The fragment establishes a foundational in-group identity, central to the magazine's ideological project. The frequent use of "we," "us," and "our" creates a sense of shared identity and opposition to an implied "other" (*Rumiyah*, 1st issue, 2016, p. 4-5). ISIS positions itself as the correct interpretation of Islam, stressing concepts of *tawhid*, *ikhlas*, and *istislam*. The text constructs a narrative where *muwahhidin* (believers) are the rightful inheritors of the faith, implicitly contrasted with those who are not (*Rumiyah*). This builds legitimacy by presenting the group within a framework of order and law, establishing a sense of purpose and belonging for the audience.

Fragment 2: Building Identity/Ideology

- **Issue:** 1 (Dhu al-Hijjah 1438, 2016, pp. 10-11)
- **Fragment Type:** Article: Interview with the Amir of the Central Office for Grievance Investigation
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Utilise "we" to increase group unity; focus on justice.



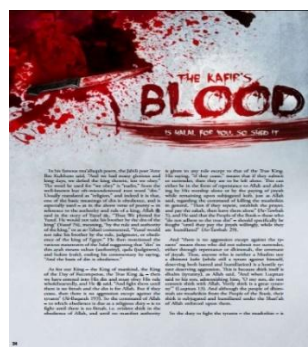
Analysis:

The interview portrays the Islamic State as a legitimate governing entity, devoted to justice and addressing grievances (*Rumiyah*, 1st issue, 2016, pp. 10-11). This stimulates a sense of collective identity, "We...". The use of "we" develops a sense of solidarity. Further, the mention of establishing the caliphate reinforces the commitment to the group's ideology. This builds identity and also reinforces the

organisation of the group by presenting it within a system of order and law. The text highlights the internal structures of the ISIS.

Fragment 3: Hate Speech/Violence Justification

- **Issue:** 1 (Dhu al-Hijjah 1437, 2016, pp. 34-36)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "The Kafir's Blood is Halal for You, So Shed it"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Categorisation of non-ISIS Muslims as "kuffar," religious justification for violence, and permissibility of violence.



Analysis:

The fragment exemplifies hate speech through dehumanisation, using the term “kuffar” (unbelievers) as a broad, negative label to categorise non-ISIS Muslims (*Rumiyah*, 1st issue, 2016, pp. 34-36). It then provides a religious justification for violence, framing the killing of “kuffar” as a religious obligation. The text creates a distinction between a legitimate in-group (“we”) and an out-group (the “kuffar”), paving the path to violence. The text promotes a sense of justified violence and the justification of hate speech.

Fragment 4: Justification of Violence

- **Issue:** 2 (Muharram 1438, 2016, pp. 12-13)
- **Fragment Type:** Article: “Just Terror Tactics” / Image of a fighter with weapon and the Quran
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Lexical choices promoting violence, explicit justifications for attacks, and the framing of enemies.



Analysis:

This fragment serves as a crucial component in legitimising violence as a means of achieving ideological goals. The article employs terms like "just terror" and "tactics," reframing violent actions as calculated and noble endeavours (*Rumiyah*, 2nd issue, 2016, pp. 12-13). The strategic use of language emphasises the righteousness of their cause, suggesting that acts of aggression are not only permissible but obligatory in the face of perceived oppression. By presenting violence through a framework of legitimacy, the magazine effectively normalises extremist actions and encourages readers to view them as heroic responses to injustice. This narrative not only vilifies the enemy but also fosters a sense of duty among followers, reinforcing their commitment to the cause.

Fragment 5: Justification of Covert Operations

- **Issue:** 3 (Muharram 1439, 2016, p. 42-43)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "Military and Covert Operations"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Justification for tactical violence, narrative of operational success, and framing of enemies.



Analysis:

This fragment details covert operations conducted by ISIS, presenting them as strategic and necessary actions in their ongoing conflict. The language used emphasises the tactical success of these operations, which are portrayed as divinely sanctioned efforts to defeat enemies of the *caliphate* (Rumiyah, 11th issue, 2017, pp. 42-43). By showcasing the casualties inflicted on opponents, the article serves to glorify these acts, framing them as vital contributions to the larger jihadist mission. This narrative not only legitimises violence but also seeks to inspire further engagement from followers, reinforcing a culture of operational secrecy and valour among ISIS members.

Fragment 6: Promotion of Hijrah

- **Issue:** 4 (Rabi' al-Awwal 1438, 2016, 4)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "Hijrah Does Not Cease"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Thematic relevance to migration, emotional appeals, and religious justification.



Analysis:

This fragment emphasises the concept of *Hijrah* (migration) as a continuous and essential duty for believers, portraying it as both a physical and spiritual journey (Rumiyah, 4th issue, 2016, pp. 2-3). The article frames Hijrah as a means to escape oppression and find safety within the Islamic community, invoking historical narratives that link current struggles to the early days of Islam. By using emotionally charged language and religious justifications, the text aims to mobilise followers to undertake this journey, reinforcing the notion that migration to ISIS-held territories is a sacred obligation. This strategic promotion of *Hijrah* serves to encourage radicalisation by legitimising physical movement towards conflict zones and reinforcing group solidarity among supporters.

Fragment 7: Vilification of Opponents

- **Issue:** 4 (Rabi' al-Akhir 1438, 2017, 26-27-28)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "Traits of the Evil Scholars"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Negative portrayal of religious figures, language of vilification, and ideological framing



Analysis:

This fragment systematically dismantles the credibility of perceived opponents, specifically targeting scholars viewed as "evil" or misguided (Rumiyah, 12th issue, 2017, pp. 20-21). The article employs derogatory language and vivid descriptions to paint these figures as corrupt and complicit in the oppression of true believers. By framing these scholars as obstacles to the true path of Islam, the magazine seeks to delegitimize alternative interpretations of the faith, reinforcing the idea that adherence to ISIS's ideology is the only way to achieve salvation. This vilification serves to create a binary worldview, fostering a sense of moral superiority among followers while justifying hostility and violence against those who oppose their beliefs.

Fragment 8: Call to Action, Hate Speech, Radicalisation, and Militarisation of Youth

- **Issue:** 5 (Rabi' al-Akhir 1438, 2017, 34-35)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "I Will Outnumber the Other Nations Through You"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Emphasis on youth engagement, recruitment strategies, and collective identity, direct calls to action, incitement to violence, and vilification of opponents.



Analysis:

This segment emphasises the critical role of youth in the jihadist movement, framing their participation as essential for overwhelming opposing nations (Rumiyah, 12th issue, 2017, pp. 28-29). The language used serves as a rallying cry, urging young individuals to take up arms and engage in militant activities. By portraying jihad as a collective and urgent mission, the magazine effectively mobilises its audience.

Additionally, the text employs hate speech by vilifying opposing forces, depicting them as obstacles to the true path of Islam. This dehumanisation serves to justify violence against these groups, fostering a climate of animosity and moral legitimacy for extremist actions. Such rhetoric not only reinforces the commitment of followers but also promotes an environment where hatred is cultivated and violence is seen as a necessary response.

Fragment 9: Justifying Violence and Mobilising Support

- **Issue:** 7 (Rabi' al-Akhir 1438, 2017, pp. 34-35)
- **Fragment Type:** Article: Article, "Military and Covert Operations"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Emphasis on operational successes, glorification of violence, and calls for further jihadist actions.



Analysis:

This segment details various military operations conducted by ISIS, portraying them as successful and divinely sanctioned endeavours (Rumiyah, 5th issue, 2017, pp. 34-35). The language used not only glorifies these acts of violence but also serves as a rallying cry for followers to take similar actions. By highlighting operational achievements, the magazine effectively cultivates a narrative that legitimises violence as a necessary and honourable pursuit in the name of jihad.

The text includes elements that vilify opposing forces, framing them as obstacles to the true Islamic mission, thus dehumanising enemies and inciting hatred. This combination of glorification of violence and vilification of opponents fosters an environment where hate speech and calls to action are intertwined, motivating individuals to participate in jihadist activities and reinforcing their commitment to the group.

Fragment 10: Ideological Justification and Sectarian Division

- **Issue:** 10 (Ramadan 1438, 2017, pp. 16-17-18)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "The Twelver Rafidah"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Emphasis on sectarian rhetoric, ideological justification for violence, and calls for action against perceived enemies. (Rumiyah, 10th issue, 2017, pp. 16-17-18).



Analysis:

This segment discusses the Twelver Shia sect, portraying them as adversaries to true Islam and justifying violence against them (Rumiyah, 12th issue, 2017, pp. 20-23). The language used is inflammatory, framing the Shia as heretical and a significant threat to Islamic unity. This vilification serves as a rallying point for ISIS followers, encouraging them to view violence against Shia Muslims as a righteous act.

The article includes a call to action, urging readers to engage in efforts to combat the influence of the Twelver sect, thus mobilising support for extremist activities. By framing these actions as part of a larger religious duty, the text effectively strengthens commitment to the jihadist cause.

Fragment 10: Ideological Propaganda and Gendered Discourse

- **Issue:** 12 (Ramadan 1438, 2017, pp. 36-37)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "The Female Slaves of Allah in the Houses of Allah"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Examination of linguistic and discursive devices promoting radicalisation and decontextualization of religious texts.



Analysis:

This segment employs various linguistic strategies to construct a narrative that reinforces extremist ideologies surrounding gender roles within the Islamic framework (Rumiyah, 12th issue, 2017, pp. 36-37).

* Hate Speech and Radicalisation

The text subtly promotes hate speech by framing non-compliance with these gender roles as a deviation from true Islamic practice. By positioning women solely in the context of their duties to men and the community, the article fosters an environment of exclusion for those who do not conform to these expectations, thus aiding in the radicalization of its audience.

* Decontextualisation of Religious Sayings

The article utilises religious quotes to decontextualise and manipulate traditional teachings, presenting them as authoritative mandates rather than contextual guidance. This strategy aligns with van Dijk's framework, where the selective presentation of religious texts serves to justify a patriarchal societal structure, stripping away the broader ethical considerations inherent in Islamic teachings.

* Propaganda Techniques

The use of prescriptive language creates a normative discourse that discourages dissent and promotes adherence to extremist views. By framing the roles of women in an idealized manner, the article acts as a propaganda tool, reinforcing the group's ideological framework and operational goals.

These fragments from the 12th issue of Rumiyah illustrate the strategic use of language and ideology to propagate radical beliefs, demonstrating how linguistic and discursive devices can be employed to manipulate religious narratives for extremist purposes.

Fragment 11: Propaganda and Decontextualisation of Military Information

- **Issue:** 12 (Rabi' al-Akhir 1438, 2017, p. 39)
- **Fragment Type:** Article addressing the military uses and health impacts of white phosphorus.
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Examination of linguistic and discursive devices that promote radicalisation and manipulate perceptions of warfare.



Analysis:

This pamphlet serves as a piece of propaganda, aiming to inform and influence public perception regarding the use of white phosphorus in military operations. By presenting this information in a structured and visually appealing manner, the text seeks to normalise the use of such controversial weapons while downplaying their harmful effects.

Propaganda Techniques

The pamphlet employs several persuasive strategies, including:

Selective Presentation: Highlighting military uses while minimizing or glossing over ethical concerns and health impacts. This selective focus aligns with van Dijk's framework, where the construction of knowledge is manipulated to support a specific ideological stance.

Simplification of Complex Issues: The pamphlet reduces the multifaceted implications of using white phosphorus to straightforward statements, potentially misleading the audience regarding its legality and ethical implications in conflict.

Radicalisation and Health Implications

The language used in the pamphlet may also serve to radicalise individuals by framing the use of white phosphorus as a justified military tactic, thus legitimising violence in the eyes of the readers. The mention of safety measures can create an illusion of care, which may further desensitize the audience to the weapon's destructive nature.

Decontextualisation of Information

The text decontextualises the consequences of using white phosphorus, presenting it in a manner that detaches it from the broader humanitarian implications and legal frameworks governing warfare. By doing so, the pamphlet aligns with extremist narratives that seek to justify violence through selective interpretation of military practices.

These elements illustrate how the pamphlet utilises language and design to propagate a specific ideological viewpoint, contributing to the radicalisation of its audience and the normalisation of violent tactics in conflict.

Fragment 12: Characteristics of the Munafiqin

- **Issue:** 12 (Dhul-Hijjah 1438, September 2017, p. 26)
- **Fragment Type:** Article, "The Characteristics of the Munafiqoon"
- **Specific Selection Criteria:** Focus on traits of hypocrisy, psychological manipulation, justification of actions, and the portrayal of ideological opponents.

Analysis:

This segment delves into the defining traits of munafiqin (hypocrites), emphasising their deceptive nature and the threat they pose to the integrity of the community. The language used characterizes hypocrisy as not merely a personal failing but as a serious ideological threat that undermines the unity and strength of the collective.

The article employs psychological manipulation by framing munafiqin as cunning individuals who exploit the faith of others for their personal gain. This portrayal creates an atmosphere of distrust within the community, urging followers to remain vigilant and discerning. By identifying specific characteristics associated with munafiqin, the piece serves as a warning to its audience, fostering a sense of urgency in safeguarding their beliefs.

Furthermore, the text incorporates theological justification for the vilification of munafiqin, depicting them as enemies of true faith. This dehumanisation paves the way for legitimising exclusionary practices or even violent actions against those deemed hypocritical. Such rhetoric cultivates an environment where adherence to ideological purity is paramount, and any deviation is met with severe condemnation.

This fragment demonstrates how the article strategically uses language to mobilise its audience against perceived threats within their ranks. The emphasis on the characteristics of munafiqin not only reinforces a cohesive identity among the faithful but also serves to isolate and vilify those who do not conform to the expected norms, thereby promoting a climate ripe for radicalisation and division.

This analysis, based on a selection of fragments from the *Rumiyah* magazine, reveals that the publication employs a range of linguistic and discursive strategies to achieve its goals. These strategies include:

- **In-group/Out-group Construction:** Defining a clear "us" (the *muwahhidin*) and "them" (the "kuffar," the "Crusaders") through specific vocabulary.
- **Hate Speech:** Dehumanising language used to portray targeted groups as enemies deserving of violence.
- **Violence Justification:** Providing religious justifications for the killing of the enemies.
- **Radicalisation:** Promoting violence and martyrdom as a means to achieve the group's aims.
- **Ideological Reinforcement:** Reiterating key beliefs, such as the importance of *tawhid*, obedience, and submission to the group's leadership.

The shifts in discourse, especially after the loss of territory, will require further analysis to understand how these methods have evolved.

IV. Findings and Discussion:

The analysis of *Rumiyah* magazine reveals a systematic deployment of linguistic and discursive strategies designed to incite hatred, legitimise violence, and radicalise Western audiences. Grounded in van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, the findings demonstrate how ISIS weaponises language to construct ideological binaries, manipulate cognition, and mobilise action. Below, we synthesise key themes and their implications for understanding online radicalisation.

1. Constructing a Polarised Worldview: The Ideological Square in Action

Rumiyah entrenches an "Us vs. Them" dichotomy through **pronoun usage** ("we," "us," "our") and **lexical polarisation** ("muwahhidin" vs. "kuffar"). This aligns with van Dijk's (2006) ideological square, where positive self-presentation ("defenders of true Islam") coexists with negative othering ("Crusader alliances," "apostates"). For instance, Fragment 1 (Issue 1, pp. 4–5) frames ISIS as the sole arbiter of Islamic legitimacy, while Fragment 3 (Issue 1, pp. 34–36) dehumanises non-ISIS Muslims as "kuffar," justifying violence through religious absolutism. Such discourse cognitively primes readers to perceive conflict as a sacred duty, eroding moral barriers to extremism.

2. Hate Speech as a Tool for Moral Disengagement

The magazine employs **decontextualised religious rhetoric** to reframe violence as divinely sanctioned. Phrases like "the killing of the kuffar is part of their worship" (Fragment 3, Issue 1) and visual-textual pairings (e.g., a fighter holding the Quran alongside a weapon, Fragment 4) exemplify this. These strategies resonate with van Dijk's (2006) concept of **cognitive manipulation**, where selective emphasis on theological imperatives (e.g., "martyrdom," "jihad") obscures ethical complexities, normalising brutality as piety.

3. Radicalisation Through Discursive Mobilisation

Rumiyah transitions from ideological indoctrination to actionable radicalisation via **direct calls to**

arms and operational guidance. Fragment 5 (Issue 3, pp. 42–43) glorifies covert operations as “divinely sanctioned,” while Fragment 8 (Issue 5, pp. 34–35) targets youth with militarised appeals (“I will outnumber the other nations through you”). This mirrors McCauley and Moskalenko’s (2008) pyramid model, where discourse escalates from ideological alignment (“identity-choice appeals”) to behavioural radicalisation (“lone-wolf tactics”).

4. Adaptive Propaganda: Resilience Amid Territorial Decline

Post-2017, as ISIS lost territory, *Rumiyah* shifted focus to **resilience narratives** and **lone-wolf recruitment**. Fragment 6 (Issue 4, pp. 2–3) redefines “hijrah” (migration) as a spiritual imperative, while Fragment 7 (Issue 4, pp. 26–28) vilifies “evil scholars” to consolidate in-group loyalty. This adaptability underscores Fairclough’s (1995) emphasis on discourse as both socially constituted *and* constitutive, reflecting ISIS’s capacity to recalibrate messaging in response to material losses.

5. Linguistic Devices and Cognitive Internalisation

- **Pronouns:** Fragment 2 (Issue 1, pp. 10–11) uses “we” to foster collective identity, positioning ISIS as a “legitimate governing entity.”
- **Metaphors:** Terms like “war on the West” (Fragment 4) frame violence as existential defense, leveraging cognitive schemas of heroism and sacrifice.
- **Intertextuality:** Fragment 10 (Issue 10, pp. 16–18) weaponises sectarian rhetoric (“Twelver Rafidah”) to inflame historical grievances, illustrating how discourse reshapes mental models of intergroup conflict.

6. Ethical and Practical Implications

The study’s ethical commitment to **deconstructing hate speech** (e.g., avoiding graphic replication of violent imagery) aligns with Wodak and Meyer’s (2001) reflexive CDA principles. Practically, the findings advocate for:

- **Counter-narratives** targeting ISIS’s ideological square (e.g., amplifying mainstream theological critiques of “kuffar” rhetoric).
- **Media literacy programmes** to disrupt cognitive manipulation (e.g., teaching audiences to identify decontextualised religious appeals).
- **Policy measures** regulating online spaces where lone-wolf radicalisation thrives.

Rumiyah exemplifies how extremist groups exploit language to transform ideology into action. By marrying van Dijk’s socio-cognitive lens with granular textual analysis, this study illuminates the mechanisms through which discourse radicalises vulnerable audiences. Future research should explore **audience reception** (e.g., how Western Muslims interpret *Rumiyah*’s appeals) and **cross-platform propagation** (e.g., synergies between magazines and social media). Such work is critical to dismantling the discursive foundations of global extremism.

V. Recommendations:

This study, examining *Rumiyah* magazine (Issues 1-13, 2016-2017), identified key linguistic and discursive strategies used to incite hatred and radicalisation. While the magazine itself is no longer active, the tactics it employed continue to manifest in online extremist propaganda across various platforms. Therefore, based on this research, the following recommendations are made to counter these tactics in the current (2025) context:

- **Countering the "Us vs. Them" Mentality:** *Rumiyah*’s discourse relies heavily on creating a stark divide between “us” (*muwahhidin*) and a dehumanised “other”. Counter-narratives should deconstruct this binary, emphasising shared values and common humanity. These narratives should be promoted on social media platforms to emphasise common values and the importance of mutual understanding. Counter-narratives should be localized to address regional grievances.
- **Addressing Online Hate Speech:** *Rumiyah*’s dehumanising language continues to be an issue. Online platforms should be required to expand their automated detection capabilities.
- **Promoting Critical Thinking and Media Literacy:** This remains a critical area. Educational programmes should promote critical thinking, media literacy, and the ability to identify the persuasive techniques employed in online extremist content. These programs should be implemented in educational institutions and community settings to reach a wide audience.

- **Combating Religious Misinterpretations:** The religious justifications employed by *Rumiyah* are still in use. Independent religious scholars, and moderate religious voices need to counter those justifications.
- **Amplifying Positive Voices:** Counter-messaging campaigns must amplify the voices of individuals, groups, and online networks that promote tolerance, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. This includes platforms that amplify the voices of moderate and liberal Muslims.
- **Supporting Community-Based Initiatives:** Support for community-based initiatives that build resilience to extremist ideologies remains critical. This includes community outreach programs and other activities.
- **Monitoring and Disrupting Propaganda Networks:** Law enforcement and intelligence agencies need to develop new methods to monitor and disrupt online extremist propaganda networks.

VI. Further Studies:

This study's socio-cognitive analysis of *Rumiyah* illuminates critical mechanisms of extremist discourse, yet several avenues remain underexplored. Future research could advance counter-radicalisation scholarship by prioritising the following interdisciplinary inquiries:

- 1- **Comparative Diachronic Analysis:** Contrast *Rumiyah* with earlier ISIS publications (e.g., *Dabiq*) or other extremist materials (e.g., Al-Qaeda's *Inspire*) to identify shifts in discursive strategies.
- 2- **Audience Reception:** Investigate how target audiences interpret *Rumiyah*'s messaging through qualitative interviews or focus groups.

VII. Limitations:

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged:

1. **Scope:** Focus on *Rumiyah* (2016–2017) limits generalisability to other ISIS/terrorist propaganda.
2. **Temporal Constraints:** Excludes pre-2016 caliphate-building phases and post-2017 adaptations.
3. **Translation Risks:** Potential distortion of nuanced religious/cultural terms (e.g., “kuffar”).
4. **Qualitative Design:** Prioritises depth over statistical breadth.
5. **Digital Ephemerality:** Archived content gaps due to takedowns or platform removals.

VIII. Conclusion:

This study reveals how *Rumiyah* magazine functions as a discursive instrument of radicalisation, employing linguistic strategies to construct ideological binaries, legitimise violence, and mobilise action. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) grounded in van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, we demonstrate that ISIS weaponises language not merely to inform but to reshape cognition—framing violence as sacred duty (“martyrdom”), polarising identities (“muwahhidin” vs. “kuffar”), and exploiting religious intertextuality to dehumanise adversaries.

These findings advance scholarship on extremist propaganda by exposing the performative role of discourse in radicalisation processes. Unlike prior studies focusing on visual or theological elements, this research delineates how linguistic devices (e.g., pronouns, metaphors) cognitively prime audiences to internalise violence as morally imperative. Such insights necessitate rethinking counter-radicalisation strategies: effective interventions must disrupt ISIS's discursive binaries, amplify moderate theological counternarratives, and prioritise media literacy to inoculate vulnerable populations against manipulative rhetoric.

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