A Functional Linguistic Analysis of the Incest Taboo Relationships in the Holy Quran

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Abstract

This paper presents the incestuous relationships as defined in the Holy Quran; they are regarded as the most sensitive aspects in the regulation of family structure and they are important in the people's righteous life. This study aims to link the social and religious concept of incest taboo with the functional-linguistic views by employing Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory (1985). It is an attempt to understand whether incestuous relations are determined by cultural, social or religious constraints. The data analysed in this study include a typical Quranic text selected purposefully from the Holy Quran for its functional and linguistic features. It was concluded that the analysis of the Quranic text is not a matter of displaying the linguistic form, but to arrange certain familial and marriage relations and to differentiate between incestuous relatives and non-incestuous ones and thus defining proper marriages. Moreover, the Authorized Participant *Almighty Allah* who has the power over the other participants who can be Muslims and non-Muslims as expressed in this Quranic text has imposed regulations and rules on them. The identification of the incestuous relations is based on the analysis of three situational dimensions: field, tenor and mode.

Keywords: incestuous relationships, kinship terms, marriage, systemic Functional Linguistics

INTRODUCTION

One can affirm a basic view that a nuclear family can be regarded as a universal social institution in all societies and from which all kinship relations are then established. In this context, Haviland, Prins, Walrath and McBride (2008, p. 218) stated that a family is defined as:

> Two or more people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. The family may take many forms, ranging from a single parent with one or more children, to a married couple or polygamous spouses with off spring, to several generations of parents and their children.

This definition indicates that the family is established through different forms of relatedness such as blood, marriage and adoption even though these forms may vary from one culture to another culture. Therefore, all human societies tend to enact certain kinship systems to organise the kinship relations within the families of these societies. In this regard, Nanda and Warms (2012, p. 205) proclaimed that each society should have its own rules to regulate marriage relations between males and females, nursing, divorce and inheritance. Generally, the cornerstone of all such forms is based on the kind of marriage that is adopted by all human societies.

Levi-Strauss (1963; 1969) emphasized the basic role of marriage in any society when he said that the kinship system of all societies is merely resulted from a set of marriage rules. However, such marriage rules are also based on the regulation of sexual relations between males and females. Therefore, all societies have their own rules, whether secular or religious, that regulate marriage relations such as incest taboo, mating (sexual relations), exogamy, endogamy, and number of spouses. Moreover, marriage establishes a structure of nuclear family in which its individuals, males and females, know and exchange their rights and obligations; marriage is the only means that leads to the survival of the human species. Marriage also legitimizes the children born to the husband and wife and, in turn, creates new kinship relations, rights of inheritance and residence. In this regard, Parkin (1997) stated that marriage relation is not only a matter of a prototypical or an institutionalized relationship between a man and a woman, but it forms the axis of an alliance relationship between families, communities, descent groups, or other social, religious, political, and economic groupings.

One of the basic cultural issues that is related to marriage relations is the incestuous relationships (also called incest taboo). Lavender (2006, p. 1273) stated that the incest taboo is considered as one of the universal taboo relations which prohibits marriage or heterosexual intercourse with specific persons who are near of kin. Although the incest taboo is consensual, it remains culturally specific because each culture has its own rules, norms and constraints that define the close relatives who are forbidden from marrying each other. In this context, Lavender (2006) mentioned that the definition of close relatives who are prohibited from marrying from each other is different from culture to culture because those who are "forbidden in one culture might be accepted, encouraged, or even expected in another culture" (p. 1274). Murty and Vyas (2006) mentioned that the term taboo which "means prohibition against an item, person, or type of behaviour" (p. 627) can be religious, cultural, behavioural and social. Murty and Vyas (2006) considered incest or marriage between certain relatives as a type of behavioural taboos. In this context Murdock (1949) also stressed that "the most striking effect of family structure upon individual behavior is to be observed in the phenomenon of incest taboos" (p. 12).

In order to avoid incest taboo relations, Levi-Strauss (1969) proposed a social theory called *alliance theory* which was mainly based on the system of exchange of women between males from other groups, tribes or communities. Such a system of exchange, according to Levi-Strauss, represents the basis of kinship systems in different cultures. Levi-Strauss's alliance theory was a reaction to avoid the incest taboo marriages among relatives and to push them towards exchanging their women with other external human groups or what the anthropologists call *exogamy*. Thus, the main function of applying the system of exchange in the alliance theory is to establish an affinal relationship with other social groups. Here, one can say that it is exogamy (a marriage that happens outside a particular group) rather than endogamy (a marriage that happens within a particular group) that can unite different and totally unrelated social groups.

Generally, the reasons behind prohibiting marriage between close relatives may be attributed to different views. Some anthropologists, such as Morgan (1871), Murdock (1949) and Stone (2006) stated that marriage between close genetic kins may increase and cause many genetic diseases and congenital malformations to the newborn babies. Malinowski (1913) in his study to the family of Australian aborigines declared that the incest taboo relations are prohibited in order to prevent some social problems and enmities between the members of a nuclear family if they marry from each other. Haviland et al (2008, p. 206) said that "sexual relations between members other than the husband and wife would introduce competition, destroying the harmony of a social unit fundamental to social order". The other view is adopted by the anthropologist Westermarck (1891) who claimed that the incest taboo is instinctively prevented in most if not all human societies. He asserted that "there is an innate aversion to sexual intercourse between persons living very closely together from early childhood" (p. 320). Hence, we can say that different social, genetic, cultural, medical, and religious constraints are regarded as the main reasons behind restricting or forbidding sexual or marriage relations among very close relatives. However, Lavender (2006) mentioned that "the reasons for the incest taboo have long been, and continue to be, a major debate within anthropology" (p. 1274).

As mentioned above that every society has its own rules to arrange sexual relations and customs of marriage among individuals of that society. Therefore, societies put certain rules to classify individuals who are permitted to marry or prohibited from marrying some people as well as to determine the allowed number of spouses within a society. Generally, the most universal and common prohibited marriage is particularly among close relatives within the nuclear family members such as father-daughter, mother-son, and brother-sister. The researchers believe that the incest taboos can be determined with regard to various religious, social and cultural circumstances. Thus, what is prohibited in one society may be permitted in another, for example, in a Muslim Arab society; it is permitted for a person to marry his/her parallel cousin; whereas in some American states, it is prohibited to do so (Kottak, 2009; Nanda & Warms, 2012).

This paper discusses the incest taboo relations in Islamic culture in terms of functional and linguistic concepts. The researchers attempt to identify the type of relatives

involved or prohibited from marrying from each other and who has the authority to impose the interdiction of incest from an Islamic point of view. To investigate the functional and linguistic aspects of the incest taboo relations, the researchers adopt Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (SFL) (1978; 1985; 2003; 2009) because this theory focuses on relating the social aspects, namely the incest taboo, with language-in-use.

Systemic-Functional Linguistic Theory (SFL)

Halliday was one of the functionalist linguists who developed many linguistic studies that focused on the relationship between language and society. One of these functional linguistic theories that he developed is named Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory published in 1985. This theory focused mainly on the way of how language is used for (language function) in preference to how language is composed (language structure). In SFL, Halliday (1978; 1985; 2009) and Halliday and Martin (1993) viewed language as a system that is composed of different sub-systems and such sub-systems are analysed with regard to four strata: phonology-graphology, lexicogrammar, semantics, and context. These four strata are related to each other through a stratified semiotic relationship. Thus, context can be realized in meaning (semantics and/or pragmatics), meaning (semantics and/or pragmatics) in lexicogrammar, and lexicogrammar in phonology or graphology. Halliday (1978) pointed out that language, in its interpersonal component, can be perceived as a code (system) and as a process (actual behaviour) that are related to each other within the socio-cultural context. In regard to the above four strata, Coffin (2001) affirmed that SFL is not only concerned with the linguistic form of language, but also with the effect of culture and society on language. Halliday (1978) and Halliday and Hasan (1991) mentioned that language, in addition to these four strata, can be organised in terms of three complementary metafunctions: ideational (experiential and logical), textual, and interpersonal. The recognition of these three metafunctions can be organised within two levels of analysis: macro-level of context of situation or registers (represented by field, tenor, and mode), and micro-level of lexicogrammar (represented by systems of transitivity, mood, and theme).

Burns and Knox (2005) stated that SFL approach can be used for different purposes, such as language education, discourse analysis, curriculum development, and child and adult ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) programmes. Halliday (1978) identified three situational variables that affect the development of language. These include the kind of social activity that specifies its topic (field), the participants' role relationships of such an activity in terms of power, contact (visual or aural), effect (tenor), and the kind of rhetorical modes in which the participants of interaction are adopting. Blommaert (2005) affirmed that because of its apparent and accurate linguistic categories for analysing the relationship between language-in-use (pragmatics and discourse) and social meaning, SFL approach is considered the base for the development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by the critical linguists such as Teun A. van Dijk, Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak. In this regard, Halliday

and Matthiessen (2004) contended that within the context of discourse analysis, researchers and textual analysts may recognize numerous social, educational, political, religious, legal, clinical, and pedagogical specimens of functional varieties or registers.

Halliday's theory (1985) is based on recognizing language as text and as social action that can be embedded in different acts of communication. This sociolinguistic theory analyzes language in terms of its function and meaning in certain linguistic, social and cultural situations. According to Halliday and Hasan (1991), whenever a text is mentioned, this would refer to language in use or to the social meaning in a particular context of situation. Luke (1995) argued that all texts could be found in the most important social institutions such as families, churches, mass media, governments, schools, and kinship relationships. The conceptual framework of Systemic Functional theory can be illustrated through three variables, or what Halliday (1978) called them registers, used to define the context of situation: field, tenor, and mode. These concepts, which are used to define the social context of a text as well as its functional meaning in a particular situation, can be regarded as the system that can analyse a socio-linguistic event and classify the nature and the kind of that text. In addition, these three register variables of situationality can be analysed and realised in regard to three corresponding metafunctions of language, represented by ideational (logical and experiential), interpersonal, and textual (Halliday & Hasan, 1991). Consequently, one can state that the context of situation and the communicative function are interrelated because each one can be defined by the other. Thus, certain functions may be identified for a certain context suitable for its occurrence. For example, in the context of marriage, one can identify the establishment of a new family, incest taboo relations, a new kin relationship, and a wedding ceremony; in the context of classroom, one can recognize the communicative function of learning, teacher-student and student-student relationships; in the context of sentencing, individuals may distinguish the end of trial or a declaration of a judge towards an accused person (Trappes-Lomax, 2004).

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative analysis that helps researchers better understand the text as a social phenomenon as stated by Altheide (1996). Leedy and Ormord (2013) stated that in qualitative analysis, researchers can collect their data from various sources such as text materials (spoken or written), objects, and audiovisual and electronic records. Rapport (2004) stated that in order to analyse textual data in qualitative research, researchers can use fragment data obtained from different sources such as journals, written documents, books, observations, and surveys. As this study aims to identify the incest taboo relations in the Holy Quran from a functional linguistic point of view, the researchers have chosen a Quranic verse extracted from the Holy Quran. This Quranic text includes an explicit list of the incest taboo relations in Islamic law.

The qualitative analysis is based on adopting Halliday's SFL theory (1978; 1985; 2009) as a theoretical framework for analysing the sampled Quranic text, Surat An-Nisā' (The Women), verses 22 and 23. This sampled text concludes all the incestuous relationships

in Islam. The three variables of the context of situation represented by *field, tenor,* and *mode* will be adopted in the analysis. The researchers have chosen SFL theory because it is one of the social-linguistic theories that studies and explains how language functions in various contexts. The following main two analytic procedures will be implemented:

1. To explain the context of the text and identify the basic forms of kinship terms.

2. To conduct a textual analysis of the sampled Quranic text in terms of Halliday's SFL theory.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the analysis of the Quranic text that was extracted from **Surat An-Nisā' (The Women), (4: 22-23)** and have a close relationship with incest taboo relations.

[وَلَا تَنكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا{٢٢} حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبُكُمُ اللَّاتِي فِي حُجُورِكُم مِّن نِّسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَإِن لَّمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَن تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا. {23}]. (سورة النساء: ٢٢-٢٣)

[And marry not women whom your fathers married,- except what is past: It was shameful and odious,- an abominable custom indeed{22}. Prohibited to you (For marriage) are:- Your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters, Mother's sisters; brother's daughters, sister's daughters; foster-mothers (Who gave you suck), foster-sisters; your wives' mothers; your step-daughters under your guardianship, born of your wives to whom ye have gone in,- no prohibition if ye have not gone in;- (Those who have been) wives of your sons proceeding from your loins; and two sisters in wedlock at one and the same time, except for what is past; for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful {23}]. (Sūrat An-Nisā' (The Women), 4:22-23), (Ali, Trans., 1937, pp. 185-6).

To explain the context, these Quranic verses provide the people with a list of women whom a man cannot marry forever because they are *Mahram* (an unmarriageable kins) to him. Thus, a man (an Ego, i.e., a term that refers to the central male or female person from whom the series of relationships are established and seen (Haviland et al, 2008)) cannot marry his female descendants, ascendants, siblings, aunts, nieces, in-law females, stepmothers and stepdaughters and their descendents, foster mothers and foster sisters. According to the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the prophet Mohammed (pbuh), the prohibited women are divided into two categories: the permanent prohibition and the temporary prohibition (Doi, 2002; Shirazi, 2013). The permanent prohibition in which a man (an ego) must not marry a woman forever includes the following:

1. The stepmother(s) (father's wife(s)) of an ego, in pre-Islamic period (the Jahiliyyah period) (Period of Ignorance), it was customary for some Arabs, particularly the eldest stepson of a man, to inherit and marry his father's widow(s).

2. The mother of an ego.

3. The grandmother(s) of an ego, including mother's and father's mothers regardless of how high up the direct lineal they may be.

4. The daughter(s) of an ego, including the granddaughters of sons and daughters regardless of how down the direct lineal they may be.

5. The sister (s), including full sisters, and/or half-sisters (consanguine or uterine).

6. The paternal aunts (father's sister(s), (including the grandfather's sister(s).

7. The maternal aunts (mother's sister(s), (including the grandmother's sister(s).

8. The niece(s) of an ego (brother's and sister's daughter(s).

9. Foster or suckling mother of an ego.

10. Foster mother's sister(s) of an ego.

11. Foster sister(s) of an ego.

12. The mother-in-law (wife's mother) of an ego.

13. The stepdaughter of an ego (refers to wife's daughter and such a daughter should have been born to the ego's wife with whom he has consummated a sexual relationship, but if the sexual relationship was not consummated, there is no prohibition).

14. The daughter-in-law (son's wife) of an ego.

As for the temporary prohibition, this refers to the temporary ban to marry a woman for a limited time and can be removed by a change of circumstances. The most important cases of temporary prohibitions include:

1. A man must not marry two sisters at the same time, but the temporary ban here is lifted as soon as his wife dies or gets divorced, then he can marry her sister.

2. A man must not marry a married woman unless she gets divorced from her husband or after his death, followed by the completion of her period of عدة *iddah* (retreat), i.e. a waiting period (at least three months, i.e. after having her monthly menstruation three times) in which a woman is not allowed to get married to another man after the death of her husband or after her divorce (Shirazi, 2013).

3. A man should not marry a woman during the period of *iddah* (retreat or waiting period), and the temporary prohibition is immediately removed when her *iddah* is over.

4. A man must not marry more than four wives simultaneously, but the impediment is instantly raised when one of the four wives gets divorced or dies (Doi, 2002).

The major theme of this text refers to the marriage relationship, specifically non-marriageable women (incest taboos). This Quranic text is a divine rule that is expected

to be adopted and regulated by Muslim lawmakers in their respective countries. This indicates that incestuous relations are determined and imposed by the Authorized Participant (Almighty Allah) to address ALL people, including the Muslims. This refers that such prohibition from marrying certain close relatives cannot be negotiated by the addressed participants (the people) because the social status between the participants is unequal.

Forms of Kinship Terms

In these two Quranic verses that define the female kins whom a man is forbidden to marry, the researchers have identified three forms of kinship relationship: blood (descent relationship), martial (affinal relationship), and breastfeeding (milk relationship). All these three forms are considered as the basic kinship forms that are included within the incest taboo relations.

The first form is blood or descent relationship which is constructed by the lineal relatives represented by آبَاؤُكُم *Abaokum* (Ego's fathers), أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ *Ommahatukum* (Ego's mothers), and بَنَاتُكُم *Banatukum* (Ego's daughters), and the collateral relatives represented by أَخَوَاتُكُمْ *Akhalatukum* (Ego's genetic sisters), عَمَّاتُكُمْ *Ammatukum* (Ego's paternal aunts), خَالَاتُكُمْ *khalatukum* (Ego's maternal aunts), بَنَاتُ الْأَخِ *Banatu al-akhi* (Ego's brother's daughters), and بَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ *Banatu al-okhti* (Ego's sister's daughters). These kinship terms (henceforth KTs) are part of unilineal decent groups in which these relatives are descended from the common ancestor or the male line. In order to emphasize the importance of this group of descent or blood relationships, the Quranic text starts the act of prohibition by referring to and focusing on these important KTs.

The second form is affinal relationship which is explicitly expressed by the word تنكحوا (marry) which indicates marriage relationship and the KTs أُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ *Ommahatu nisa-ikum* (Ego's wives' mothers or mothers-in-law), رَبَائِبُكُمُ *Raba-ibukumu* (Ego's stepdaughters or wife's daughters), and حَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ *Hala-ilu abna-ikum* (Ego's daughters-in law or Ego's sons' wives). The list includes also زوجات آبَاؤُكُم *Zawja'at Abaokum* (fathers' wives or stepmothers) and this has been indicated in the Quranic verse لَا تَنكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ "*and marry not women whom your fathers married*". Furthermore, another marriage form is expressed indirectly which includes wife's sisters (sisters-in-law) in which a man cannot marry two sisters at the same time. Thus, the Quranic text says: وَأَن تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ *wa-an Tajmaaoobayna al-okhtayn* "*And (it is forbidden unto you) that ye should have two sisters together*" (Pickthall, 1930), and here the term الْأُخْتَيْنِ (two sisters) means the Ego's wife and her sister. This is a temporary prohibition and can be lifted as soon as the Ego's wife dies or gets divorced, and then he can marry the sister of his ex-wife.

One can infer from this Quranic text that God (Allah) has specified and enacted the regulation of marriage relationships and the women whom a man can or cannot marry. Therefore, most Muslim societies, if not all, have regarded these Divine instructions as a practical guide in the regulation of family status law (Doi, 2002).

The third form is milk relationship which is explicitly stated in this Quranic text; it is regarded as another important form of kinship relations. Therefore, Arab and Muslim jurists and legislators affirmed that what is forbidden through blood relations is forbidden through breastfeeding. In this regard, the Glorious Quran regards foster-mother and foster-sister as if they are mother and sister by blood and thus the male nursling must not marry them because they are regarded as a *mahram* to this male nursling, and their marriage relations will be regarded incestuous. In this text, the milk relationships of kinship include أُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ *Ommahatukumu allatee ardaanakum* (Ego's foster-mothers (who breastfed you) and أَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ *Akhawatukum minal Arradaa* (Ego's foster-sisters). Thus, one can say that suckling is not only a matter of breastfeeding, but also a matter of creating new kinship social relations, new kin terms, and establishing another kind of prohibition from marriage relationships between the male nursling and the close family members of the foster-mother.

Functional Linguistic Analysis

This section discusses the textual aspects of this Quranic text. The analysis is based on adopting Halliday's SFL theory (1978; 1985; 2009) in terms of three variables: field, tenor, and mode.

Field

The variable *field* is mainly concerned with the subject matter of the text under analysis. Eggins (2004, p. 90) mentioned that field also explores "what the language is being used to talk about" in different contexts of situation. Thus, one can say that *field* aims to answer the question: "what is the kind of activity in which the text is talking about?" Hence, the main subject matter of this Quranic text under analysis refers to the prohibited degrees of marriage relationships between individuals under the Islamic Shariah law. These prohibited degrees include descent (blood relations), affinal (marriage relations), and sponsorship (breastfeeding relations). As the field of the text is mainly associated with the ideational metafunction (particularly its experiential sub-function) at the semantic level, the analysis of the text needs to examine the lexical items that are related to the subject matter in relation to the transitivity system. With regard to the transitivity analysis, the representation of the experiential meanings of the text can be interpreted by meanings of processes, participants, and circumstances (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

The contextual features of this text under analysis show that this text is a part of Quranic Sura, i.e. Surat An-Nisā' (*The Women*) which provides a detailed identification of the prohibited women with whom a man cannot marry. It provides a list of KTs with regard to their socio-cultural kinds in terms of descent, affinal, and milk kinships. Thus, it provides a thorough explanation for those who are concerned with investigating the cultural, sociological, and legal aspects of societies, particularly the rights of women and matters related to family relations such as laws of inheritance and marital relations.

The text under analysis is also viewed as a verbal communication which includes different literary aspects. It is divided into two main sentences, and these sentences are subdivided into subordinate clauses. The division of this text into main and subordinate clauses helps to identify the logical relations within these clauses. Thus, most of the lexical terms mentioned in this text include verbs and nouns that are related to KTs and marriage relationships. However, the manipulation of these KTs and marriage relations in this text is explicitly indicated and expressed through a number of material processes which refer to the acts of prohibiting certain marriage relations between people. These material processes, which are related to the participants in this text, are expressed by the lexical performative verb حَرَّمَ *ḥarrama* (prohibit) and the imperfect performative verb أَنكَحَ (marry) preceded by the prohibition particle لا الناهية *lā* (do not). In this text, Allah the Almighty (the actor or the agent who enacts the act of prohibition) prohibits the believers وا— (you or O you who believe) (the recipient) from marrying certain women (goal) -آبَاؤُكُم زوجات *Zawja'at Abaokum* (fathers' wives), أُمَّهَاتُكُم *Ommahatukum* (your mothers), بَنَاتُكُم *Banatukum* (your daughters), أَخَوَاتُكُم *Akhawatukum* (your genetic sisters), عَمَّاتُكُم *Ammatukum* (you paternal aunts), خَالَاتُكُم *khalatukum* (your maternal aunts), بَنَاتُ الأَخِ *Banatu al-akhi* (your brother's daughters), بَنَاتُ الأُخْتِ *Banatu al-okhti* (your sister's daughters), أُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُم *Ommahatukumu allatee ardaanakum* (your foster-mothers), أَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ *Akhawatukum minal Arradaa* (your foster-sisters), أُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُم *Ommahatu nisa-ikum* (your wives' mothers), رَبَائِبُكُمُ *Raba-ibukumu* (your stepdaughters), حَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ *Hala-ilu abna-ikum* (your daughter-in law or Ego's sons' wives) - in a certain setting إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ (except what is past) (circumstances).

Here, one can notice that the act of prohibition has been formulated by two forms: (1) the negative imperative form which is used to change the command into prohibition by the use of the prohibition particle لا الناهية *lā* (do not), (2) the explicit performative verb حَرَّمَ *ḥarrama* (prohibit). Moreover, the use of these forms of prohibition indicates that the relationship between the actor (Allah the Almighty) (the superior authority) and the addressed (the believers) (the inferiors) is unequal. This is because one cannot prohibit and prevent someone from doing something unless the addresser has a superior position to the addressee. Consequently, these acts of prohibition are regarded as the basic rules that should be taken into consideration by the lawmakers when legislating family laws as they are divine revealed by the superior authority to oblige people to abide by these rules.

Generally, most Quranic verses include two types of verbal communications: God-Man communication and Man-Man communication. In God-Man communication, one can distinguish different addressees whom God (Allah) is addressing. Hence, God (Allah) may sometimes address: (1) all human beings regardless of their religion, sex, and race by saying: "يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم *Ya ayyuha annasuittaqoo rabbakumu* (O mankind, fear your Lord) (An-Nisā'4:1), (2) His prophet Mohammed (pbuh) by saying: "يا أيها النبي اتق الله" *Ya ayyuha annabiyyuittaqi Allaha* (O Prophet, fear Allah) (Al-'Aĥzāb 33:1),(3) the believers (male and female) by saying: "يا أيها الذين آمنوا اتقوا الله وكونوا مع الصادقين" *Ya ayyuha allatheena amanooittaqoo Allaha wakoonoo maAAa assadiqeen* (O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true.) (At-Tawbah, 9:119), (4) the people

of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) by saying: "يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ" *Ya ahla alkitabi lataghloo fee deenikum* (O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion) (An-Nisā', 4:171). These Quranic verses are full of many speech acts such as promising, threatening, ordering, prohibiting, advising, and marrying.

In this Quranic text which involves God-Man relationship, God (Allah) is addressing men and prohibiting them from marrying certain women in certain contexts. Here, the actor *God (Allah)* does not appear explicitly, but it is inferred from the context of this Quranic Sura. In this regard, it is usual in Quranic verses to suppress the actor when the verb is used in a passive form. Thus, the verb حُرِّمَتْ *Hurrimat* (prohibited to) has been mentioned in the passive form and in this case the actor of this act is God (Allah) who is authorized to enact prohibition. In this respect, the original meaning of the sentence is as follows: .... حرم الله عليكم امهاتكم وبناتكم واخواتكم و (*God (Allah) has prohibited you from your mothers, daughters, sisters, and...*). Here, it appears explicitly that the actor or the doer of this material process of prohibition is *Almighty Allah*, and the affected entity by this action are the goal of this process represented by the KTs (*mothers, daughters, sisters, and so on*); whereas the recipients who receive or benefit from such an action of prohibition are the believers (the beneficiaries).

The transitivity analysis of this Quranic text that includes two independent clauses is summed up in the following tables. The focus in these tables is restricted to the main aspects and processes of transitivity relations that are concerned with relations and concepts of kinship. Hence, the transitivity analysis of the first and the second clauses is shown below in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1. Transitivity analysis of Quranic verse 22

Original text	إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ	مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ	تنكحوا	لا	و
Transliteration	illa maqad salafa	ma nakaha abaokum mina annisa	tankihoo	laa	wa
Lit. Translation	Except what is past	What married your fathers from women	Marry- (you)	not	and
Transitivity System	Circumstance	Participant: Recipient	Participant:(Actor), process: material		
Translation	You (believers) should not marry women whom your fathers married before except what is past.				

Table 2. Transitivity analysis of Quranic verse 23

Original text	أَمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ......	عَلَيْكُمْ	حُرِّمَتْ
Transliteration	Ommahatukum wa banatukum wa akhawatukum wa ammatukum ...	Alaykum	Hurrimat
Lit. Translation	Your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters, mother's sisters; brother's daughters, ...	To you (for marriage)	Prohibited- God (Allah)
Transitivity System	Participant: goal	Participant: Beneficiary	Process: material, participant: (implicit actor)
Translation	You (believers) are prohibited (by Allah) to marry your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters ...		

Tenor

The tenor of discourse deals with investigating the social and interpersonal relationships among the participants (addresser-addressee, speaker-listener, or writer-reader) in terms of their relationship, their relative status (equality/inequality), the social distance (formal/informal), and the roles of the participants involved in discourse. Therefore, in selecting the language and words in any kind of discourse, speakers or writers should take into account the nature of the involved participants, the setting, and the kind of exchange or interaction that takes place between the participants (Halliday & Hasan, 1991).

Generally, the tenor of the Holy Quran is regarded as the unique religious and literary genre that is mainly influenced and interpreted through its context of situation. As mentioned above, what one regards important behind studying the tenor of the text lies in the speech roles among participants (addresser-addressee) within the target discourse. Thus, in this Quranic text, the exchange or interaction happens between two main participants *God (Allah)* (the speaker) and *the believers* (the addressees). From the structure of the sentences, the chosen words, and the context of the text, one can conclude that the speaker (Allah) is addressing the addressees from a superior viewpoint. This fact can be deduced from the structure of this text that includes a kind of imperative expression expressed by a negative command or prohibition. In general, a negative imperative form, which is mainly utilised to indicate prohibition, is formed by using the particle of prohibition لا الناهية *lā* (do (not)) and should be followed by an imperfect (or present) verb in the jussive form. It is worth mentioning that the particle of prohibition لا الناهية *lā* (do (not)) is always associated with the imperfect verb فعل المضارع. Consequently, the setting of this utterance refers to the prohibited act not only at the time of utterance, but it may also be extended to involve a future course of action. Hence, the speaker can carry out the act of prohibition by preventing someone to do an act only when he/she has a position of superiority over the addressee. The other form of indicating superiority of the speaker on the addressees is indicated by the use of the lexical performative verb حَرَّمَ *ḥarrama* (prohibited) which has an illocutionary force and a connotative meaning of an emphatic speech act of prohibition. As for the context of this text, these two verses are extracted from Surat An-Nisā' *(The Women)* in which

its main context is talking about the rights of women, regulation of marriage relations, and some familial aspects. All these instructions mentioned in this Quranic Surah which are instructed by God (Allah) indicate that God (Allah) is the absolute legislator whereby He is the one who can impose such instructions as a superior and that the people should abide by these rules.

As the tenor of the text is linked with interpersonal metafunction in terms of Halliday's (1978; 1985; 2009) SFL, there is a need to know the concepts that are associated with the interpersonal component represented by modality, mood, and person. As for modality, Arabic language has no modal verbs that are equivalent to those in English such as *can-could, may-might,* and *must*. However, Arabic language, similar to English, utilizes certain words that may have similar semantic meanings to express *probability, certainty, obligation,* and *ability*. These words include يجب *yajib (must or should),* يمكن *yumkin (can),* ربما *rubama (may be, might be), and* يقدر *yakder (can)* (Al-Sabbagh, Diesner & Girju, 2013). In this Quranic text, there are no modal verbs that may express modality.

Pertaining to the Arabic mood, the interpersonal meaning of the text is realized in three verb categories represented by indicative mood حالة المضارع المرفوع, imperative (jussive) mood حالة المضارع المجزوم, and subjunctive mood حالة المضارع المنصوب (Ryding, 2005). These three cases are morphologically derived only from the present tense stem or imperfect stem. This indicates that Arabic moods are mostly non-finite and do not specify the tense or time of the act in that can be inferred either throughout the context of the text or via other words or particles used in the text. In this regard, each type of these moods is associated with certain grammatical functions. Thus, the indicative mood حالة المضارع المرفوع is used with declarative and interrogative sentences to express factual statements, performative, or simple questions; the imperative (or jussive) mood حالة المضارع المجزوم refers to acts of command, prohibition, and request; whereas Arabic subjunctive mood حالة المضارع المنصوب is used to express "an attitude toward the verbal action such as volition, intent, purpose, doubt, attempting, expectation, permission, hope, ability, or necessity. In Arabic, the subjunctive is also syntactically determined by the presence of particular 'subjunctivizing' particles" (Ryding, 2005, p. 609).

Generally, the clause in terms of interpersonal metafunction is composed of mood (subject and finiteness) and residue (predicator or verb and other complements). Consequently, the mood of this text is realized throughout the use of the imperative (jussive) mood and the indicative and passive mood. The imperative (jussive) mood is expressed by the performative clause وَلَا تَنكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم *(marry not women whom your fathers married)*. Here, the clause starts with the particle of prohibition **لا الناهية** *lā* (do not) which has an illocutionary force of negative command or prohibition; the imperfect verb **تَنكِح** that indicates a future sense is attached to the pronoun وا which has the position of the subject referring to the believers; and the other words مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم *(what your fathers married)* are in a position of the objective complement to the verbal phrase لَا تَنكِح (do not marry). As for the indicative and passive mood, the second clause has been expressed by the use of the passive performative verb of prohibition حُرِّم (prohibited). The mode of passivization is frequently used in the style of the Holy Quran to show

Almighty Allah's wills, instructions, prohibitions, orders, to the addressed people whether they are males or females, and believers or non-believers. This is because this style is more effective to the addressees and makes them focus on the action or the process of passivization rather than the form of the sentence (Keenan & Dryer, 2007). The interpersonal meaning of this Quranic text is shown in Tables 3 & 4 below.

Table 3. The interpersonal meaning of Quranic verse 22

Original text	مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ ...	وا	تَنكِح	لَا
Translit.	ma nakaha abaokum mina annisa-i illa maqad salafa innahu ...	oo	Tankih	laa
Literal Trans.	What married your fathers from women except what is past: it was...	You	Marry	(do) not
Interpersonal meaning	Complement	Subject	V.predicator	prohibition particle *lā* (do not)
	Residue	Mood		
Translation	You (believers) should not marry women whom your fathers married before except what is past: It was shameful and odious,- an abominable custom indeed.			

Table 4. The interpersonal meaning of Quranic verse 23

Original text	أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ و......	عَلَيْكُمْ	حُرِّمَتْ
Translit.	Ommahatukum wa banatukum wa akhawatukum wa ammatukum ...	Alaykum	Hurrimat
Literal Trans.	Your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters, mother's sisters; brother's daughters, ...	To you (for marriage)	Prohibited- (God Allah)
Interpersonal meaning	Subject is absent and known from the context of the text, but these terms which are in objective case replace the position of the subject and called نائب الفاعل (the deputy agent) when the verb is in a passive mode.	Complement	Predicator
	Mood	Residue	
Translation	You (believers) are prohibited (by Allah) to marry your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters ...		

With regard to the third interpersonal component represented by person which refers to the participant(s) engaged in the events of the speech act, Arabic verbs and subjective or personal pronouns distinguish three types of persons that may be associated with verbs: the first person, the second person, and the third person. The first person which has no gender distinction refers to the singular and plural male or female speaker represented by انا *'anaa* (I) and نحن *nahnu* (we). The second person which is determined by gender distinction identifies the listener(s) or the participant(s) spoken to represented by five personal pronoun forms derived from the stem انت *'anta* (you) as shown below in Table 5. The third person which can be determined by gender distinction between masculine and feminine represents the participant(s) whom other

participants are talking about in their absence, and includes five forms of personal pronouns as explicated in the same table below (Ryding, 2005). Therefore, the conjugation of the Arabic forms of personal pronouns with their English counterparts is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Conjugation of Arabic and English personal pronoun forms

			Conjugation of Arabic personal pronoun forms	English personal pronouns
1st person	Masculine & Feminine	Singular	انا *'anaa*	I
		Plural	نحن *nahnu*	We
2nd person	Masculine	Singular	أنتَ *'anta*	You (1 male)
		Dual	أنتما *'antumaa*	You (2 male & female)
		Plural	أنتم *'antum*	You (more than 2 males)
	Feminine	Singular	أنتِ *'anti*	You (1 female)
		Dual	أنتما *'antumaa*	You (2 female & male)
		Plural	أنتنَ *'antunna*	You (more than 2 females)
3rd person	Masculine	Singular	هو huwa	He
		Dual	هُما humaa	They (2 male & female)
		Plural	هُم hum	They (more than 2 males)
	Feminine	Singular	هيَ hiya	She
		Dual	هُما humaa	They (2 female & male)
		Plural	هُنَ hunna	They (more than 2 females)
		X		It

As for the persons involved in this text, the second and third persons are explicitly mentioned in this text; whereas the first person is not mentioned explicitly, but implicitly represented by God (Allah). As the first person is not mentioned explicitly, this indicates that the personal interaction among the participants is a formal exchange and there is no equal relationship among the interactants.

In general, the implicit Addresser, the Authorized Legislator (Almighty Allah), and the addressees represented by the addressed believers (ياايها الذين امنوا) and the involved participants within the text represented by the female relatives such as أُمَّهَاتُكُم (mothers), بَنَاتُكُم (daughters) أَخَوَاتُكُم (sisters) represent the main participants in this Quranic text. This religious text is expressed by the imperative (jussive) mood, the passive mode, and the declarative mode in the form of performative speech act of prohibition. Because God (Allah) is the main Actor (participant) in the material process of the act of prohibition in this religious text, one can infer that the status between God (Allah) and His servants who are prohibited from marrying certain women is definitely unequal. Thus, God (Allah) is the most powerful Authority; whereas those who are addressed are submissive to this most powerful Authority.

Mode

The mode of the text tells about: (1) the medium or the channel of the interaction whether it is spoken or written, or mixed; (2) the rhetorical function of the discourse (text type) in terms of such categories as argumentation, exposition, description, persuasion, narration, and didactic; (3) what part the language is playing in the

interaction; and (4) the linguistic mechanisms of coherent and cohesive devices that are used to join parts of the text (Halliday & Martin, 1981; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

As for the channel of interaction or the medium of this Quranic text, this extracted Quranic text is a written text to be read and to follow its instructions. It is a part of the Holy Quran which is revealed to the messenger of Allah Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to address all human beings, including Muslims. Therefore, many social interactions, stories, stylistic, textual, and rhetorical devices, themes, and different kinds of participants are identified in this Quranic text. The text includes a performative utterance which has a directive or imperative mode in which the Addresser (Almighty Allah) from His superior position and authority is directing, ordering, and prohibiting believers from marrying certain women from their relatives. The performative speech act of prohibition is expressed by two forms: an imperative sentence or negative command represented by the form of prohibition particle **لا الناهية** *lā* (do not) followed by the imperfect performative verb **تَنْكِح** (marry), and the explicit performative verb **حرَّمَ** (prohibited) which has an illocutionary force of prohibition. In this regard, the researchers can affirm that the act of prohibition expressed in this performative text is felicitous because it is performed by an authorized speaker, Almighty Allah, who has the power over the addressees. Here, different social themes are identified within the context of kinship, such as how to arrange family relations in terms of blood kins, affinal kins, breastfeeding kins, which are marriageable from non-marriageable persons and planning rules that arrange marriage relations among people. Thus, the rhetorical function of this text is to provide some instructions to the public to define and explicate marriage relations and conditions.

As the mode of the text is associated with the textual metafunction, it is important to shed light on the grammatical structure of the text under study in terms of the theme-rheme system as well as the forms of cohesion and cohesive devices. Generally, the theme-rheme system can be interpreted in the structure of a clause which may include two important elements: (1) the theme which functions as the first part or the starting point of the clause; (2) the rheme which represents the remainders of the clause that are not included in the theme. The theme-rheme system of this text which contains two main clauses is identified in the following tables below.

Table 6. The textual meaning of Quranic verse 22

Original 1st Clause	مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ ...	تَنكِحُوا	لَا	و
Translit.	ma nakaha abaokum mina annisa-i illa maqad salafa innahu ...	tankihoo	laa	wa
Literal Trans.	What married your fathers from women Except what is past: It was ...	Marry- (you)	not	and
Textual meaning	Rheme		Theme	
Translation	You (believers) should not marry women whom your fathers married before except what is past: It was shameful and odious,- an abominable custom indeed.			

Table 7. The textual meaning of Quranic verse 23

Original 2nd Clause	عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ	حُرِّمَتْ
Translit.	Alaykum Ommahatukumum wa banatukum wa akhawatukum wa ammatukum ...	Hurrimat
Literal Trans.	To you (for marriage) your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters, Mother's sisters; brother's daughters, ...	Prohibited- (God Allah)
Textual meaning	Rheme	Theme
Translation	You (believers) are prohibited (by Allah) to marry your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters ...	

As seen from the above tables, the themes of these two clauses, which signal the starting point of interaction between the Addresser (Almighty Allah) and the addressees (the believers, are initiated with two verbal processes which refer to the negative command and/or prohibition. These two verbal processes are considered as the themes of the text and refer to something already known by the addressees and pave the way to them to receive the new piece of information represented by the remaining elements (the rhemes) after the themes. Therefore, the focus will be on the new information (rheme) rather than the given information; and in this text the addressees or the readers are anxious to know who are not allowed for men to marry and why. Hence, it is the rhemes or the new information rather than the given information (the themes) through which the theme is developed.

With regard to the textual cohesive devices that link the parts of the text to each other, Arabic sentences and clauses in this Quranic text are linked by different means of particles, coordinators and words. Generally, most Arabic connective words and particles, which are described as discourse markers, are characterised as having syndetic coordination. These discourse markers or linkers have an essential function in structuring and understanding the textual themes of discourse. Furthermore, most of them are positioned initially to link between one clause and another, and to indicate different additive, contrastive, resultative, and explanatory relationships (Cantarino, 1975). The analysis of this text shows that the coordinator و *wa* (and) is the most common discourse marker. It appears three times in the first main clause, and 12 times in the second main clause. Moreover, it is located initially in the first clause to signal a recommencing particle to connect two sentences that may have different contexts or may occur as separate sentences. In this context, this coordinator is called الواو الاستئنافية *Waw Al-Istina'fiya* (the recommencing *Waw* (and)) which has the function of starting a new sentence as in وَلَا تَنكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم (**and** marry not women whom your fathers married). The other 14 times of *wa* (and), which occur within the text to connect between words and phrases, have the purpose of addition, continuation, and enumeration as in حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وِبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وِعَمَّاتُكُمْ وِخَالَاتُكُمْ (Prohibited to you (For marriage) are:- Your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters, Mother's sisters). Here, the conjunctive article *wa* (and) is called واو العطف *Waw Al-atif* (the additive Waw (and). Hence, *waw* (and) in the first main clause is used to give a continuation to the meaning of the previous idea which declares that the marriage of wife's father is

regarded as فَاحِشَةً *a sinful act*, as مَقْتًا *odious,* and as سَاءَ سَبِيلًا *an abominable custom*. The other remainders of the conjunctive article *wa* (and) in the second main clause gives addition and enumeration relationships among the words and phrases of this text.

The purpose of using *wa* (and) to link phrases and words is very significant to avoid the repetition of the whole clause. Furthermore, the use of *wa* (and) as a conjunction to connect between a series of nouns is to give the same value for each of these phrases and nouns. Hence, instead of saying حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَخَوَاتُكُمْ ,حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ بَنَاتُكُمْ ,حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ (prohibited to you are your mothers, prohibited to you are your daughters, prohibited to you are your sisters), one can delete the repeated phrase حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ and use the article *wa* (and) instead. This Arabic style of repeating *wa* (and) within a sentence is different from English language which utilizes the punctuation mark *comma* to separate or connect between items or clauses. Furthermore, the form of passivization, which is used in this text, is an Arabic style that can be used when one attempts to focus on the action or the process itself (prohibition in this text) rather than the form (Al-Batal, 1985; Ryding, 2005).

The other logical relations in this text include some relative pronouns اسم الموصول *ism al-mawṣūl* represented by the relative pronoun مَا *maa* (whom), feminine plural relative pronoun اللَّاتِي *allaatii* (those who or whom), and masculine plural relative pronoun الَّذِينَ *alladhiina* (those who). These relative pronouns are considered as one of the cohesive devices in Arabic language used to link a word (noun) or a noun phrase in a dependent relative clause to a word or noun phrase in the main clause of the whole sentence. It is relevant to say that the masculine/feminine plural relative pronouns الَّذِينَ *alladhiina* and اللَّاتِي *allaatii* are only used to refer to nouns of human beings (Ryding, 2005).

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis, one can conclude that the regulation of incest taboo relations in Islamic and Arab societies is governed by the Divine orders because Almighty Allah has decreed and distinguished between the incestuous relatives and the non-incestuous ones. The structure of the text is woven in a way that prevents the addressers (particularly Muslims) to object such a Divine decree of prohibition. The analysis has shown that three forms of incest prohibitions have been recognized in Islamic and Arab societies; they are represented by *blood, marriage,* and *milk* kinship relations, and each one of these relations has its own kinship categories.

It was found that the incest taboo is expressed by using two forms of prohibition, mainly the negative imperative form by the use of the prohibition particle لا الناهية *lā* (do not) and the explicit performative verb حَرَّمَ *ḥarrama* (prohibited) in the passive form. To emphasize the ugliness of violating these prohibited relations, the Holy Quran has used an implicit threat by describing the violation of incest taboo as فَاحِشَةً *a sinful act*, as مَقْتًا *odious,* and as سَاءَ سَبِيلًا *an abominable custom*. That is, the prohibition expressed in the Holy Quran is more emphatic in order to prevent readers or listeners from violating such Divine rules. The form of passivization in which both texts have used is an

important Arabic style that aims to make the focus on the action itself, i.e. prohibition, rather than the form of the verb.

The subject matter of the text analysed is explicitly denoted by employing different explicit and implicit lexical words and concepts that are related to the KTs and marriage relations. Therefore, detailed kinship categories that are included within the realm of incest taboo relations have been mentioned to eliminate ambiguity and misinterpretation of these taboo relations. It was found that the Holy Quran has listed the relatives who are included within the range of incest taboos in their plural forms in order to make the focus include not only one ascending, same, or descending generation, but also all generations. That is to say, the plural form used in this Quranic text is deliberately used to make a generalization of the given subject matter and to show that the order or instruction expressed in this text is directed to all the recipients regardless of religion and race.

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