

Conceptualizing the Grand Metaphor of 'Argument as War' in the Culture of the Holy Quran Based on Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory

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Introduction

One of the fundamental topics in cognitive linguistics, introduced by Mark Johnson and George Lakoff, is the concept of Conceptual Metaphor. This theory posits that one conceptual domain is understood and interpreted through another domain, providing a framework for understanding and expressing abstract and intangible concepts by mapping elements from all aspects of life. Within this framework, a Grand Metaphor (Macro-Metaphor) is a type of conceptual metaphor that does not explicitly appear in the surface structure of a text. Instead, it manifests conceptually throughout the text, forming the underlying cognitive structure of the discourse. The grand metaphor integrates all the Micro-Metaphors within the text, aligning them around a consistent central theme. The Holy Quran, by consistently encouraging reasoning and reflection, presents its intended truths to the audience through both direct and indirect arguments. In contrast, opponents of these arguments engage in opposition, leading to a form of conceptual conflict.

Analyzing the text of the Holy Quran through the lens of cognitive theories, particularly Conceptual Metaphor Theory, offers a dual benefit. On one hand, it highlights the value of this significant development within the field of cognitive linguistics. On the other hand, it allows for a fresh examination of aspects of the Quran that may have been overlooked or considered self-evident within traditional rhetoric. Such an approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the cultural system of the Holy Quran based solely on the text itself, without external references, promoting an intrinsic and text-based analysis.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory to conceptualize the Grand Metaphor of Argument as War in the Quranic verses related to muḥājjah (argumentation) and jihād (struggle). The research focuses on identifying and analyzing how this metaphor is manifested within the argumentative discourse of the Holy Quran.

Findings

The research findings indicate that in the metaphorical chain of the war domain, elements associated with this realm_such as attack, counterattack, retreat, defeat, surrender, and similar terms_are all reflected within the conceptual domain of argumentation and muḥājjah in the Quranic discourse.

Conclusion

The Holy Quran is fundamentally a book of argumentation (*muḥājjah*) and reasoning (*burhān*), presenting its truths through direct or indirect arguments, often framed as narratives of disputes between truth and falsehood. By examining the key Quranic verses related to *muḥājjah* (argumentation) and *jihād* (struggle), the Grand Metaphor of Argument as War becomes more evident. In this metaphor, argumentation (the target domain) is conceptualized through war (the source domain). The research demonstrates the clear mapping and correspondence of elements from the war domain to the argumentation domain through propositional representation between the two conceptual realms. An analysis of the term *muḥājjah* and its derivatives, considering the context of the cited verses, suggests that the meaning of conflict is most appropriate. This interpretation aligns with the primary element of the war domain, which involves initiating an attack and engaging in combat. Similarly, the succession of Quranic arguments in these verses is metaphorically depicted as throwing something at an adversary.

Moreover, elements such as strategy change, retreat, and counterattack from the war domain are vividly illustrated in Prophet Ibrahim's (A) debate with the tyrant of his time, where he shifts from an initial argument to a different one. The term *bahita* ("was confounded", Al-Baqarah 2:258) in this context evokes the imagery of defeat and surrender, elements commonly associated with physical warfare. The process of *mubāhalah* (mutual invocation of curses) and the related verse (Āl 'Imrān 3:61) perfectly aligns with the deadlock concept in warfare, where after numerous arguments, a new strategy is proposed. Ultimately, the refusal to engage in *mubāhalah* corresponds to the surrender element of the war domain.

Furthermore, the expression *dāḥidah* ("invalid" or "nullified", Ash-Shūrā 42:16) in the context of argumentation explicitly signifies defeat and falling down of the adversary. Similarly, the verse "He will smash it, and it will vanish" (Al-Anbiyā' 21:18) metaphorically shifts the imagery of complete domination and annihilation of a combatant after a decisive blow into the realm of argumentation.

The study also reinterprets the term *jihād* within the argumentative context, distinct from the physical warfare setting. The expression "and strive against them with it, a great striving" (Al-Furqān 25:52) evokes a sense of a comprehensive and all-encompassing assault using an effective tool-the Quran. The verse on striving against the hypocrites (At-Taḥrīm 66:9), which certainly does not imply physical *jihād*, is also elucidated through the lens of the Grand Metaphor of Argument as War.

This analysis reveals the intricate and deliberate use of war-related metaphors within the Quranic discourse on argumentation, demonstrating the profound depth of conceptual metaphor theory in understanding the Quran's rhetorical strategies.

Keywords

Culture of the Holy Quran, Grand Metaphor, Conceptual Mappings, War, Argumentation.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with research ethics. The authors observed the ethical principles in conducting and publishing this scholarly research, and this is confirmed by all of them.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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