

Meaning Construction of Selected Quranic Metaphors

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Abstract

This paper examines a number of Quranic conceptual metaphors from the perspective of Kövecses (2013) model of metaphor analysis. This is a model of metaphorical expressions' meaning construction based on the idea of the main meaning construction that incorporates in its analysis aspects from both cognitive theories, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and the Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) (Fauconier and Turner, 1998, 2003). The purpose of the study is to demonstrate the adequacy of Kövecses (2013) four-stage model for studying the meaning construction of metaphorical expressions in the Holy Quran, and to draw attention to the important role of lexical items in the appropriate meaning specification which enables comprehending the divine messages implemented in Quranic metaphorical instantiation.

Keywords: Quranic Metaphors, Meaning Construction, CMT, CBT, Kövecses' (2013) model, main meaning focus

1. Importance of the Study

The Holy Quran is the leading religious text of Islam. Muslims believe that the Holy Quran in its original Arabic is the exact words of Allah. Thus, the unfolding of knowledge in the Quran came in the most precise and the most expressive manner conceivable.

Eloquence, especially in the use of metaphorical language, is part of what made the revelation of the Quran inimitable and miraculous (Elhindi 2017). Metaphorical expressions play an essential role in conveying the divine messages in the Quranic discourse. Whether metaphor, simile, metonymy or counterfactuals, figurative language proves vital to capture ineffable ideas and concepts that have no equivalence in the real experienced world (Berrada 2006).

In the field of Quranic language studies, metaphorical representations have been mainly dealt with by the traditional Arabic linguistic approach based on (*'ilm al-Bayan*); the use of metaphors and figure of speech, which was founded by Abdul Qahir Al-Jurjani in his seminal work "*Asrar Al-Balaghah*", (*The Secrets of Metaphor in Rhetoric*) in the ninth century. Very few contemporary scholars have shifted from this traditional framework, which deals with metaphors as linguistic ornamental tools, to the contemporary theory of metaphor (*The Conceptual Metaphor Theory, CMT*), which views metaphor as basically conceptual in nature.

Thus, the present study aims at providing illustrative examples of Quranic conceptual metaphors by implementing Kövecses (2013) model of metaphor analysis which makes use of the idea of the main meaning focus as the driving force in the process of Quranic conceptual metaphors' meaning construction and utilizing a dynamic system of cognitive mechanisms based on the two cognitive theories CMT and CBT.

2. Relevant Scholarship

In light of the above, Berrada (2006) as a conceptualist highlights the significant value of conceptual metaphors in promoting our understanding of the divine by examining the conceptual metaphors of LIGHT and DARKNESS in the Holy Quran. He finds out that metaphors of light metaphorically conceptualize faith, truth, conviction, and so on. In contrast, metaphors of darkness metaphorically conceptualize disbelief, falsehood, and hesitation. These findings demonstrate that such conceptual metaphors are structured and comprehended based on the underlying human experience of Light/Darkness in relation to Faith/Disbelief grounded through religious teachings.

In a similar vein, Shokr (2006) tackles the conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY and its pervasiveness in the Holy Quran. His study supports the proposition that "life" is conceptually structured and comprehended by means of a "journey" through providing various illustrative examples of linguistic manifestations in the Holy Quran. He further asserts that this shared conceptual metaphor in English and Arabic is attributed to a religious teaching in both Christianity (English) and Islam (Arabic).

Considering other conceptual metaphors in the Holy Quran, Golzadeh and Pourebrahim (2013) investigate the linguistic manifestations of DEATH metaphor in two texts, the Holy

Quran and “Nahjul-Balāgha” (The Peak of Eloquence) by Sharif Razi in the fourth century. They assert that there is a wide variety of metaphorical expressions in both texts in which the conceptual domain DEATH constitutes the target domain of the conceptualization. They further state that it is the power of death that is common to all source domains and the target domain DEATH.

Another study that tackles the same conceptual metaphor of DEATH has been done by Sardaraz and bin-Ali (2016). They have examined the conceptual metaphor of DEATH and RESURRECTION in the Holy Quran and proved that CMT provides a comprehensive model to the study of conventional metaphors in the Holy Quran and that it gives a systematic categorization of concepts in the Holy Quran. They have further concluded that abstract concepts of death and resurrection are explained through the experiential gestalts of human attributes and behaviour, human activities, human conceptual experience and growth.

Moving from the conventional to the nonconventional conceptual metaphors, Sharaf Eldin (2014) argues that the imaginative use of conceptual metaphors in the Holy Quran, whether conventional or novel, offers us new ways and possibilities to see the world around us. Based on his study of some selected metaphorical verses in the Holy Quran from a cognitive perspective, Sharaf Eldin asserts that Quranic linguistic creativity is extraordinary in the way that basic metaphors are used and presented in novel unprecedented ways.

Using a different way of addressing the conceptual nature of metaphorical language in the Holy Quran, Abdelaal and Kaigama (2015) investigate the use of metaphor in one Surah of the Holy Quran; namely, Al-Hadid, which is rich in metaphor, to convey abstract meaning. They conclude that conceptual metaphors used in this Surah are utilized to make abstract meanings clearer and easier to understand.

Nevertheless, El-Sharif (2016) asserts in his account on the study of metaphor analysis in didactic discourse that the analysis of metaphorical language in Islamic religious discourse is still dependent on CMT, and urges the study of religious metaphorical conceptualization based on other more advanced and refined cognitive frameworks in order to fully understand the principles and the commandments of Islam.

Thus, the present study is an attempt to apply a more recent analytical frameworks in the field, that is the four-stage process model proposed by Kövecses (2013) which incorporates two complementary cognitive semantic theories, namely CMT and CBT, based on the idea of the main meaning focus as the principal driving force for the process. Thus, the study highlights the crucial role of words’ embodied meaning, which does not only provide an aesthetic sense to the language, but also bridge the gap in enabling the reader to apprehend divine messages (Shadi 1995).

3. Theoretical Background

3.1 The Conceptual Theory of Metaphor

In their book “Metaphors We Live By”, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) put forth one of the earliest theoretical frameworks within cognitive semantics, that is the Conceptual Metaphor

Theory (CMT). Lakoff and Johnson (ibid) assert that metaphor is not simply a stylistic feature of language, rather that thought itself is metaphorical. They argue that metaphor pervades our way of conceiving the world and is reflected in our “language, thought and actions.” They say:

“Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish- a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.3)”

Thus, a metaphor is an essential cognitive tool that works at a conceptual level, helping us to conceive that world around us by connecting both conceptual and semantic domains of our experience. For example, the conceptualization of the abstract notion “time” in the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY, which promotes expressions such as “You’re wasting my time,” “This gadget will save you hours,” “I don’t have any time to give you,” ...etc. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.7)

However, despite being one of the most influential and most conventional theories of metaphor, it is important to note the CMT has some limitations concerning the type of metaphorical examples provided to support the theory. El-Sharif (2016) asserts that Lakoff and Johnson, and their followers, have presented different examples of metaphor from different domains but their examples are rather “invented and artificial” and are quoted out of their original context. He further asserts that:

“It is imperative in linguistic study and research that the reader, or the scholar, be given details about the examples of metaphors and their context rather than giving them the option to imagine a context for themselves.” (El-Sharif, 2016, p.104)

Furthermore, CMT as a cognitive model of metaphor analysis fails to account for why certain specific features are being transferred from a source domain into a target one in the process of conceptual mapping (Kövecses, 2013).

3.2 The Conceptual Blending Theory

A further development in the field of cognitive linguistics is the Conceptual Blending Theory (Fauconnier and Turner, 1998, 2003). Originally, this theoretical framework- variously referred to as the theory of “blending”, “conceptual blending”, and “conceptual integration” –seeks to account for both linguistic and non – linguistic blends, providing various insights on how we think, create, and understand the world around us (Omazić, 2005).

In its basic form, CBT is both described and studied in terms of “integration networks” (Fauconnier and Turner, 1998, 2003). They assert that the essence of the “blending” process is to construct partial connections between two or more input mental spaces, i.e. “small

conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action” (Fauconier and Turner, 2003, p.58). It is through “selective projection”, “pattern completion” and “dynamic elaboration” that a “blended” mental space is constructed from those inputs. Finally, this novel “blended” mental space develops dynamically into an emergent structure.

As for the theory’s role in cognitive semantics, CBT, as proposed by Fauconier and Turner (1998, 2003), offers a general model of meaning construction in which compositional processes work in analogy, metaphor, counterfactuals, and many other semantic and pragmatic phenomenon (Fauconier and Turner 1998, Coulson and Oakely, 2005). Omazić (2005) asserts that CBT can be regarded as a powerful on-line meaning construction process; hence it could be used to account for the creation of conventional and modified as well as novel figurative language.

Accounting for conceptual metaphor, Fauconier and Turner (1998) extends CMT’s traditional two- domain (source and target) conceptual model into a model that involves four “spaces”. These are mental spaces that hold a coherent bundle of information that are activated in the mind at a particular time, representing an understanding of real or imaginary scenarios (Gardy, 2007, p.199).

Thus, CBT provides a sufficient account for the role of linguistic structures in the process of meaning construction, especially for its creative aspects such as novel metaphors, counterfactuals and so on. CBT adds a unifying analysis for metaphors with other linguistic and conceptual phenomena. However, it is important to note that CBT does not contradict CMT but rather complements it (Grady et.al, 1999). El-Sharif (2016) further explains that while CMT is more concerned with conventional metaphors, CBT seems to be more feasible and practical dealing with more challenging novel metaphors.

On the other hand, just as CMT has its own limitation regarding the selection of features mapped in to target domains, CBT integrational system fails to explain how elements in the input spaces contribute to the construction of the appropriate meaning of novel metaphorical expression in the blend!

3.3 Kövecses (2013) Model

Driven by the question, which Theory provides the best account of the phenomenon of metaphor, Kövecses (2013) assesses the adequacy of various cognitive approaches to account for the meaning analysis of the metaphorical example “This surgeon is a butcher”. Accordingly, Kövecses (2013) proposes a unifying model of analysis of the meaning classification of metaphorical structures. This model proves that both theories (CMT and CBT) are compatible and complement each other’s cognitive role in a natural way. Kövecses (2013) further explains that the application of the main meaning focus is actually the main driving force in this process since it is the main feature that characterizes source domains, and it is exactly the one which is being carried over from the source to the target domain (in CMT view) and to the blend (in CBT view) by the appropriate cognitive mechanisms from both theories.

Kövecses' argument simply states that "given a conventional sense of a word, and given that source domains map their meaning focus (whose selection from several potential foci may depend on the context) onto the target domains; we can understand why a metaphorical statement means what it does" (2013, p.17).

In light of the above, Kövecses (2013) proposes that the meaning construction of a metaphorical statement such as "The surgeon is a butcher" proceeds as follows:

"First, there exist two independent conceptual categories: BUTCHER and SURGERY. Second, due to the similarities between the two, a metaphorical relationship is established between them. Third, the property of 'incompetence' emerges in the concept of BUTCHERY in light of and against the background of the concept of SURGERY. Fourth, this property is projected into the blend, in which the property will now characterize the surgeon." (ibid. 19 – 20)

4. The Meaning Construction of Selected Quranic Metaphors

4.1 Belief is a Straight Path

This conceptual metaphor is a highly conventional Quranic metaphor within the Quranic source domain "Journey" that is dominated by the linguistic expression "صراط مستقيم" (a straight path or way). This metaphor is established based on the correspondence between the target domain "Belief" and the source domain "Straight Path" as manifested in the Quranic verse (1:6) in the following example.

Example 1:

اهدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (1:6)

{Guide us to the Straight Way.}

The word "صراط" means: "طريق، سبيل، مسلك" (a route, a path, a way), and the word "مستقيم" means "لا اعوجاج فيه" (free from curves, bends, angles and irregularities). Thus, the expression "صراط مستقيم" (straight path) means "الطريق الواضح لا اعوجاج فيه" (a path free from curves). This establishes the main meaning focus "Immediacy" as the main meaning focus for the conceptual metaphor "Faith Is A Straight Path", and have its meaning constructed as follows:

- First, there exist two independent conceptual domains: "Faith" and "Path".
- Second, faith as it directs people to the means to attain Allah's forgiveness and His Paradise is similar to a straight path that directs a traveler straightaway to his desired destination.
- Third, the feature of "Immediacy" emerges in the concept of "Path" in light of the concept "Faith".
- Fourth, the feature of immediacy is projected into the blend, in which it will now characterize "Faith".

Thus the meaning of the metaphorical expression "صراط مستقيم" in example (1) is the path of guidance and straightforwardness that leads to Allah forgiveness and His Paradise, i.e. Islam. (Yusuf Ali 1988, p.7)

4.2 Disbelief is Straying

Within the same Quranic source domain, there is also the highly conventional metaphor "DISBELIEF IS STRAYING" which conceptualizes "Disbelief" in terms of "Straying" and is mostly dominated by the lexical keyword "الضلال" as manifested in the following Quranic Verse in example 2 below.

Example 2:

167(4): (إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

{Verily, those who disbelieve [by concealing the truth about Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his message of true Islamic Monotheism written with them in the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] and prevent (mankind) from the Path of Allah (Islamic Monotheism), they have certainly strayed far away.}

The word "ضلال" (Straying) is the noun form of the verb "ضل" (to stray) which has as one of its meaning foci, the meaning "انحرف عن الطريق الصحيح" (to wander from proper limits or routes). Accordingly, the meaning construction of the conceptual metaphor "Disbelief Is Straying" proceeds as follows:

- First, there are two independent conceptual categories; "Disbelief" and "Straying".
- Second, disbelief as it leads people away from the right path is similar to straying without a fixed cause or aim that leads to Allah's forgiveness and His Paradise.
- Third; the property of "Deviation" is emerged in the concept "Straying" in the light of and against the background of the concept "Disbelief".
- Fourth, the property of being deviated from the proper route is projected into the blend, where it will now characterize the concept "Disbelief".

Thus, the meaning of the metaphorical expression "ضلال" in the above example means deviation from Allah's way by the violation of his commandments.

4.3 Faith is Light

"FAITH IS LIGHT" is a highly conventional conceptual metaphor within the conceptual source domain "Light and Darkness" in the Holy Quran that represents the metaphorical relationship between the two conceptual domains; "Light" as the source domain and "Faith" as its target domain, with the lexical keyword "نور" (Light) dominating its various metaphorical expressions. An illustrative example is presented in example 3 below.

Example 3:

22(39): (أَقْمَنَ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قَوْلًا لِّلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَوْلَيْكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

{Is he whose breast Allah has opened to Islam, so that he is in light from His Lord (as he who is non-Muslim)? So, woe to those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allah! They are in plain error!}

The word "نور" (Light) has as one of its meaning foci; "ما بين الأشياء ويرى الابصار حقيقتها" (something that makes vision possible), which makes up the main meaning focus "Enlightenment". Thus, the meaning construction of the conceptual metaphor "Faith Is Light" proceeds as follows:

- First, there are two independent conceptual categories, "Faith" and "Light"
- Second, faith as it provides undeniable evidence to the truth of Allah Message is similar to light as it shines and makes vision possible.
- Third, the feature "Enlightenment" emerges in the concept of "Light" in light of the concept "Faith".
- Fourth, the feature of being enlightening is projected into the blend, in which it will now characterize faith.

Accordingly, the meaning of the metaphorical expression "أَقْمَنَ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ" means that Islam is the faith that expand believers spiritual knowledge and guides believers through the right path to Allah's forgiveness and His paradise.

4.4 Disbelief is Darkness

This metaphor is also one of the highly conventional ones in the Quranic source domain "Light and Darkness". "DISBELIEF IS DARKNESS" is manifested in a number of metaphorical instantiations in the Quranic discourse and is mainly associated with the lexical word "ظلمات" (Darkness) as illustrated in example 4 below.

Example 4:

17(2): (مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يَبْصُرُونَ

{Their likeness is as the likeness of one who kindled a fire; then, when it lighted all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness. (So) they could not see}.

The word "ظلمات" (darkness) is the opposite of "نور" (Light) and it is the plural form of "ظلمة" which has as one meaning focus "غياب النور" (the absence of light). Having this meaning focus in mind, the meaning of the conceptual metaphor "Disbelief Is Darkness" emerges as follows:

- First, there exist two independent conceptual domains; "Disbelief" and "Darkness".
- Second, disbelief as it veils the eyes of disbelievers and prevents them from light (Faith) is similar to darkness that also prevents vision.

- Third, the property of “Unenlightening” emerges in the concept of “Darkness” in light of and against the background of the concept “Disbelief”.
- Fourth, the property of being unenlightening is projected into the blend, where it comes to categorize Disbelief.

Thus, the meaning of the linguistic expression "ظلمات" that emerges in the context of this verse is that disbelief makes disbelievers unable to recognize the right guidance or faith.

4.5 Belief is a Profitable Trade

Another significant yet novel conceptual metaphor within the domain of Quranic source domain “Commercial Activity” is “FAITH IS A PROFITABLE TRADE”. This conceptual metaphor is represented by the linguistic expression "هل أدلكم على تجارة تُنجيكم من عذاب أليم" in examples 6 below.

Example 5:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ * تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (61: 10-11)

{O You who believe! Shall I guide you to a commerce that will save you from a painful torment * That you believe in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), and that you strive hard and fight in the Cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives, that will be better for you, if you but know!}

The lexical keyword in the above metaphorical expression is "تجارة" (Trade) which has as a meaning focus "تبادل الشيء بالشيء" (the exchange of goods, services, funds, etc.). Accordingly, the meaning of the conceptual metaphor “FAITH IS A PROFITABLE TRADE” emerges as follows:

- First, there are two independent conceptual categories; “Faith” and “Trade”.
- Second, the two domains are in a metaphorical relationship where “Faith” is a divine bargain between Allah and man, exchanging their souls and wealthy.
- Third, the property of “Profitable Transaction” emerges in the concept of “Trade” in light of the concept “Faith”.
- Fourth, the property of “Profitable Transaction” is projected into the blend, where it now characterizes faith.

Accordingly, in both of the above examples faith is represented as a successful bargain in which what you are asked to give is so little and what you are promised to get is so much. That is, “Man has to give up the ephemeral things of this world, while he gains eternal salvation, the fulfilment of his highest spiritual hopes-a supreme achievement indeed.” (Yusuf Ali, 1988, p.124)

4.6 False Charity is Barren Land

Within the conceptual source domain “Natural Phenomena” in the Holy Quran, the majority of the conceptual metaphors are characterized by novelty. The Holy Quran creatively utilizes a diverse selection of natural phenomena to manifest divine and metaphysical nations. One interesting elucidating metaphor is “False Charity is Barren Land” as manifested in the following Quranic verse in example 6 below.

Example 6:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ (2:264)

{O you who believe! Do not render in vain your Sadaqah (charity) by reminders of your generosity or by injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men, and he does not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day. His likeness is the likeness of a smooth rock on which is a little dust; on it falls heavy rain which leaves it bare. They are not able to do anything with what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.}

The conceptual metaphor established based on the underlined linguistic items is “FALSE CHARITY IS BARREN LAND”. Two lexical keywords; "صوان" and "صلدا", are responsible for the meaning construction of this conceptual metaphor by their main meaning foci. The word "صفوان" means "حجر أملس لا يستند عليه شيء" (a smooth rock on top of which nothing remains) and the word "صلدا" means "صلباً" (hard). However, the word "صلدا" also has a meaning focus "صلدت" (if land is harden then it doesn't produce). Thus, the meaning construction of the conceptual metaphor proceeds as follows.

- First, there exist two independent conceptual categories; “Charity” and “Land”.
- Second, the essence of charity is faith and love if not then it is false charity which is similar to hard smooth rocks that do not bring any good.
- Third, the feature of “Unproductive” emerges in the concept “Land” in light of the background of the concept “False Charity”.
- Fourth, the feature of being unproductive is now projected into the blend in which it will now characterize false charity.

Thus, the meaning entailed here by conceptualization is that hypocrites’ false charity is not rewarding just the way hard barren rock is. Even if by chance has fallen some soil on top of it, and then comes good rain which renders fertile land more fertile, what it does is washing away the soil.

4.7 Resurrection is Vegetation

Within a wide variety of novel Quranic metaphors that relate to the Quranic source domain “Natural Phenomena”, there exists a highly conventional one that is represented in a number of metaphorical instantiations in the Holy Quran is “RESURRECTION IS VEGETATION” as manifested in the elucidating example below.

Example 7:

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَسْفِنُهَا إِلَىٰ يَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ النُّشُورُ (35:9)

{And it is Allah Who sends the winds, so that they raise up the clouds, and We drive them to a dead land, and revive therewith the earth after its death. As such (will be) the Resurrection!}

In this example and the other 9 Quranic instantiations, the process of resurrection is assimilated to vegetation by which plants come to existence. The keyword here is "فأحيينا به" "الارض بعد موتها" which has as a meaning focus (to revive). Thus, the meaning of "RESURRECTION IS VEGETATION" emerges as follows.

- First, there exist two independent concepts; "Resurrection" and "Vegetation".
- Second, resurrection is similar to vegetation as both bring something back from an inactive state.
- Third, the feature of "Reviving" emerges in the concept of "Vegetation" against the background of the concept "Resurrection".
- Fourth, this feature of reviving is now projected into the blend where it characterizes resurrection.

The meaning conceptualized here is that the unfolding of a soul is comparable to a dry and unpromising land that may seem dead, however, Allah drives the clouds to the dead land, it rains, and the dead land flourishes back again (Yusuf Ali, 1988, p.300).

4.8 The Moon is an Old Date Stalk

Plants do also play a significant role as a source domain for Quranic metaphors in the conceptualization of Quranic abstract ideas and phenomena, as well as people and people's state and attributes. "THE MOON IS AN OLD DATE STALK" is one novel Quranic metaphor which corresponds to verse (36:39) in the following example, which presents a beautiful image of the moon as it fades away in its interlunar place.

Example 8:

39(36): (وَالْقَمَرَ قَدْرًا مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ

{And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old dried curved date stalk}

In this phrase, the moon in its interlunar phase is metaphorically manifested in the image of a curved date stalk. The linguistic expression "العرجون القديم" means "عود الشماريخ الذي إذا عتق فإنه يرق ويتقوس" (a date stalk that becomes curved and yellow in colour when it gets old). Thus, based on the idea of the main meaning focus, the meaning of the corresponding conceptual metaphor "THE MOON IS A CURVED DATE STALK" emerges as follows.

- First; there exist two independent conceptual categories; "The Moon" and "Date Stalk".

- Second; as the moon increases and decreases all through its phases, the new moon appears as a little thin curve similar to an old curved date disk.
- Third; the feature of “Sickle-like Appearance” emerges in the concept “Date stalk” in light of the background of the concept “The Moon”.
- Fourth, this feature of having a sickle-like appearance is then projected into the blend in which it will characterize the moon.

Such an expressive phrase, which would fascinate the perceiver of this verse in the Holy Quran, would bring the description of a significant natural phenomenon into a rather concrete entity that is closer to human’s life and experience of his environment.

4.9 A Star is a Night Visitor

In the Quranic discourse, metaphors including personification are manifested by giving the behaviors and capacities typically attributed to human to inanimate objects and abstract ideas. Example 9 below presents one of the non-conventional and most beautiful Quranic metaphors manifested by personification. That is “A STAR IS A NIGHT VISITOR”.

Example 9:

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ * وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ (86: 1-2)

{By the heaven, and At-Tariq (the night-comer, i.e. the bright star); And what will make you to know what At-Tariq (night-comer) is?}

The word "طارق" (one that knocks) has as one of its meaning foci the meaning "الوافد ليلا" (a night visitor). Considering this as the main meaning focus of the word "طارق", the meaning of the conceptual metaphor “A STAR IS A NIGHT VISITOR” emerges as follows:

- First, there are two independent conceptual categories: “Stars” and “Human”
- Second; as a star appears only at night and disappears at days, it is similar to a human who visits and have a short stay.
- Third, the property of “Visiting at Night” emerges in the category “Human” in light of the category “Stars”
- Fourth, this property of visiting at night is now projected into the blend in which it will characterize the star.

Thus, the meaning entailed from the expression "الطارق" in the above verse is that in the darkest sky shine out the most brilliant star (Yusuf Ali, 1988, p.446).

4.10 Believers’ Companions are Protected Eggs

A further interesting metaphorical instantiation from the Holy Quran within “Animals” source domain is “BELIEVERS’ COMPANIONS ARE PROTECTED EGGS” which has two main meaning foci that could be communicated into the blend in the meaning

construction of its corresponding conceptual metaphor. This is presented in example 10 below.

Example 10:

(37:48-49) وَ عِنْدَهُمْ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ عِينٌ * كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ

{And with them will be chaste females, restraining their glances (desiring none except their husbands), with wide and beautiful eyes; (Delicate and pure) as if they were (hidden) eggs (well) preserved}

By this verse's corresponding conceptual metaphor "BELIEVERS' COMPANIONS ARE PROTECTED EGGS", two desirable qualities of womanhood are assigned by means of the "Animals" source domain. These are: having a pure white complexion and being delicate. According to Kövecses (2013) model, the meaning construction of this metaphor proceeds as follows:

- First, there exist two independent conceptual categories; "Believers Companions" and "Eggs".
- Second; believer's companions have a beautiful complexion that is similar to the transparent shell of an egg.
- Third, two features "Delicate" and "Pure" emerge in the concept "Eggs" against the background of the concept "Believers' Companions".
- Fourth; these two features are now projected into the blend in which they will characterize the believers' companions.

Accordingly, as the companionship of beauty and grace is one of the highest pleasures of life, this is exactly what believers are promised to have in Heavens as a reward for their belief and good conduct (Yusuf Ali, 1988, p.386).

5. Conclusion

This study was mainly concerned with the meaning construction of a number of selected Quranic conceptual metaphors using as a model of metaphor analysis Kövecses' (2013) four-stage framework which unifies the two main streams of metaphor research; CMT and CBT, and allows a more refined and comprehensive treatment of the meaning construction of metaphorical language based on the idea of the meaning focus as its main driving force.

This model proves to be sufficient for the study of the meaning construction of Quranic metaphorical language since it eliminates two crucial predicaments of previous analyses which fail to account for why a certain feature is mapped onto a target domain / mental space, and how this selected feature contributes to the appropriate meaning specification of Quranic metaphorical structures, creating a dynamic system of cognitive mechanism that makes use of specific lexical items (based on conventional central knowledge and contextual clues) as prompts for the process of Quranic conceptual metaphors' meaning construction.

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