

A Cognitive-Semantic Study of the Spatial Preposition *Fī* (في) in the Quran

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Abstract. The existing literature has examined the preposition *fī* (في) in the Quran from lexical syntactic perspective in strict spatio-geometric sense, but its abundant use with abstract concepts, emotions and states needs an elaborate approach to investigate its complex semantic functions. Therefore, this paper has taken a corpus based approach to investigate the functional semantic complexity of the preposition *fī* in the Quran from a cognitive perspective. The conceptual metaphor perspective holds that the sensorimotor neural structures define the use of spatial preposition in both spatio-geometric positions and abstract states. The linguistic data reveals that the container image schema is at work both in the literal and metaphoric use of spatial preposition *fī*. However, the preposition *fī* carries its own distinct semantic argument in each context and sometimes overrides the symmetry of container image schema. This paper recommends a broader perspective for a comprehensive analysis of spatial preposition *fī* and suggests further studies on its functional semantic complexity in the Quran.

Keywords and phrases: metaphor, conceptual metaphor, sensorimotor neural structure, experiential gestalt, spatial prepositions

Introduction

Prepositions are linguistic devices in the Arabic language which play a crucial role in meaning construction and inferences. These linguistic particles play the relational function in language. If the intended meaning of these particles is missed in their situated usage, it may result in erroneous comprehension of the Quranic discourse (al-Sayyuti 1982). Keeping in view the importance of prepositions in