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CONCEPTUALISATION OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION IN THE HOLY QURAN: A COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Conceptual metaphor is the discursive linguistic strategy employed in the Holy Quran to imprint upon the human mind the Quranic worldview. This approach can better explain the abstract concepts of death and resurrection in the Holy Quran through cross domain mapping with human experiential concepts. Traditional exegetes and rhetoricians missed this phenomenon in the Holy Quran because of their preoccupation with rhetorical and theological aspects of death and resurrection. The existing cognitive semantic research has also paid little or no attention to the investigation of death and resurrection in the Holy Quran. Therefore, this paper attempts to investigate the conceptual metaphor themes of death and resurrection in the Holy Quran. Data were retrieved from the Holy Quran on the basis of key words and phrases encapsulating the abstract concepts of death and resurrection. The analysis of data reveals various conceptual metaphor themes. It is also found that the data question the asymmetrical hypothesis of conceptual metaphor theory and its role as a sole model of metaphor interpretation. This study is part of the growing research on conceptual metaphor in the Holy Quran and is hoped to contribute to further research on the cognitive semantic analysis of the Holy Quran.

Keywords: cognition, cognitive-semantic, conceptual metaphor, experiential gestalt, Quran,

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Belief in death and life after death is one of cardinal pillars of faith in Islam (Quran 2:4; 4:59; 4:162). Traditional exegetes and rhetoricians missed most of the metaphoric concepts relating to the death and resurrection in the language of the Holy Quran because they were more concerned with legal, theological or rhetorical issues in the Holy Quran (Saeed, 2006). These metaphoric concepts were given literal treatment and thus a bulk of metaphoric concepts remained unexplored. This was due to the fact that exegetes and rhetoricians followed al-Jurjani's (1959) theory of metaphor in search for similarities between different domains using pragmatic principles. In other words, the focus in traditional exegetical works has been on resemblance based metaphors. Thus, the traditional school of thought misses the experiential correlation based metaphors which are pervasive in language and thought (Berrada, 2006). Moreover, the modern rational legalistic approaches to the Holy Quran have put further curbs on the rhetorical or linguistic research (Saeed, 2006). Thus, the Holy Quran offers a vast field for metaphoric linguistic research from diverse perspectives.

No doubt, the resurrection of the dead in the Hereafter has received much attention in the existing rhetorical tradition (Abdul-Raof, 2000; Fauzia, 2005, 2006; Haleem, 1999; Qutb,