

## DICHOTOMY OF LANGUAGE & THOUGHT IN THE INTERPRETATION OF METAPHOR IN THE QURAN

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### ABSTRACT

Previous literature either deciphered the literary and rhetorical aspects of metaphor or focused on its conceptual basis in the interpretation of the Quran. No attempt has so far been made to harness the linguistic and conceptual metaphor approaches to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the metaphors in the Quran. This paper reviews the existing literature on the interpretation of metaphor in the Quran from different theoretical perspectives. The review reveals that the application of different theoretical approaches has led to the dissociation of language and thought in the interpretation of metaphors. The linguistic approaches miss the bulk of conventional metaphors, while the cognitive approaches ignore the linguistic aspects of metaphor. The findings also reveal that the linguistic studies of metaphor concern themselves with the rhetorical beauty of the Holy Quran, while the conceptual metaphor studies explore the generic categorization of concepts. This paper calls for a more elaborate mechanism, which can account for both the linguistic and conceptual aspects of metaphor, to fill the gap between the linguistic and conceptual knowledge in the existing literature for a comprehensive interpretation of metaphors in the Quran.

**Keywords:** Cognitive models, conceptual metaphor, lexical concept, linguistic metaphor, *majaz*, metaphor.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This paper reviews the existing theoretical literature on the concept of metaphor and the different exegetical and metaphor approaches that have been taken to interpreting the Quran. The introduction of cognitive semantics has made a thorough appraisal of these different approaches necessary, and has demonstrated the need for a sound proposal that combines these methodologies to create a figurative language interpretation of the Quran. Traditional legalistic analysis is literal, built on semantic analysis, whereas literary and rhetorical theories are more concerned with the aesthetic beauty of the Quran, and cognitive theories are preoccupied with categorizing the experiential correlation between concepts while omitting the idiosyncratic use of language. Analysis of the literature reveals that there is a missing link between language and thought in the interpretation of metaphors, which the present paper will attempt to bridge in order to offer a comprehensive understanding of the Quran. This paper is divided into three sections: Section 1 briefly expounds the concept of metaphor; section 2 elaborates the approaches to the interpretation of metaphor in the Quran, which are either linguistic/rhetorical or conceptual; and section 3 defines the research gap and proposes a mechanism for the interpretation of metaphors in the Quran.

## **2.0 THE CONCEPT OF METAPHOR**

Metaphor in the Quran has been investigated either from rhetorical perspective or from cognitive linguistic perspective. In rhetorical tradition, the locus of metaphor is placed in language, while in cognitive linguistic tradition it is regarded as a cognitive tool. These two approaches to metaphor are briefly outlined below.

### ***2.1 Linguistic View of Metaphor***

The literary device of metaphor was present in the literature prior to its inclusion as a rhetorical element: Isocrates considered metaphor to be a means of adornment, for example (O'Rourke, 2006). But, it was Aristotle who defined it as the application of a name to something that belongs to something else, as is the case with '*Zaid is a lion*' (Aristotle, 1920). From his definition, three