Conversational Implicature in Quranic Narratives: The Last Verses in Surat Al-Maida as a Model

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, the Holy Quran represents a perfectly structured text that is miraculous on all linguistic levels; phonetically, grammatically, syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically. Therefore, it has long been worthy of scholars' and analysts' attention and scrutiny. The Holy Quran is an eternal text that is not limited to a particular era of time. It is unique in its nature. Pragmatically, it is a conversational text between the Almighty creator-since it is His words- and the recipient, Prophet Mohamed, peace be upon him (PBH) who was the assigned prophet to deliver the message of Allah (God Almighty) as represented in the linguistic miracle of the Holy Quran. Such a unique miracle was a daring challenge for all eloquent and talented Arabs at the time. As proven in several linguistic studies, meaning is not confined to the surface or literal phrasing or directives, prohibitions, or interrogatives, but it might transcend beyond that to refer to indirect and deep meanings. Such implicit meanings depend primarily on their context. In the present study, researchers investigate conversational implicatures in the stories of the Glorious Quran. Particularly, the researchers examine the last verses of the Quranic Surat Al-Ma'idah as a model for application and analysis.

Keywords: Implicature, Conversation, Pragmatics, Quranic Stories, H. P. Grice.

Introduction

The Research Framework

Undoubtedly, the Holy Quran represents a perfectly structured text that is miraculous on all linguistic levels; phonetically, grammatically, syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically. It is an eternal text that is not limited to a particular era of time. It has a unique nature, and its meaning is not always explicit. Every single letter, word, structure and reference in the Holy Quran requires deep scrutiny and analysis. Therefore, it has long been worthy of scholars' and analysts' attention and scrutiny. In fact, analysts should be fully aware of Arabic linguistics and its phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, poetry, rhetoric, besides knowledge of the contexts of revelation, abrogation of verses, perspicuous verses, and ambiguous verses. Verses of the Glorious Quran are rich in meaning and require accurate interpretation. As Prophet Mohamed (PBH) said, Ibn Abbas (one of the prophet's followers) was the interpreter of the Quran at that time.

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In the Glorious Quran, some verses are explicit whereas others are implicit. The latter requires interpretation and contemplation. Implicit meanings of some Quranic verses depend on direct and indirect contextual clues. This underlines the transition from the literal meaning of words in narratives and conversations to the intended implicit and contextual meaning. In other words, this is called conversational implicature (Ashour, 2014) ; (Abasinya, 2023 : pp. 93-100). https://doi.org/10.22108/jrl.2023.138555.1784

Dialogue or conversation is an essential human quality. Man, by nature, cannot live in isolation. People tend to interact and converse with one another (Aldininawy, p. 71). A conversation involves interaction between a speaker and an addressee. For any successful conversation, there must be an intended hearer, a clear message, truthfulness of the message, and its justification. The former two are discursive while the latter two are epistemological that represent the core of argumentative interactions (Abdel-rahman, 2000, p .43).

Research Objectives

The present study aims at investigating conversational implicature as an important pragmatic mechanism. Conversational implicature refers to implicit meanings in discourse or conversation, their contexts and addresses, and their interpretation of the discourse.

Research Questions

This study aims at answering these questions:

1- What is conversational implicature?

2- Is the uttered linguistic phrasing sufficient to interpret the meaning of a narrative text? Or is it essential to resort to deep implicit references?

3- Who is responsible for interpreting the narrative or the text?

4- Is it necessary to be aware of different meanings of structures that belong to different contexts?

Method of Approach

This study applied a descriptive analytical approach.

Limitations of the Study

This study examines the topic of conversational implicature through the Holy Qur'an, specifically focusing on the last few verses of Surat Al-Ma'idah.Taken as a model for application, were selected. Interpretation of the meaning of these verses requires comprehension of the implicit meanings of words which transcend the explicit literal meanings.

The Design of the Study

This study is divided into two main parts. Part, one provides a definition of conversational implicature, its history, for Arabs, and in modern linguistics. Part two provides an application model. In this part, a detailed understanding and description of the concept of context are provided. This part offers pragmatic analysis.

The Concept of Conversational Implicature

Linguistically, in Arabic the root of this concept refers to the deep and constant connection between the embedded or implicit meaning and the surface or explicit meaning (Alqabaty, 2020, p.5). Differently, the same concept, in Arabic, might refer to transition between one expression

to another. In addition, the concept entails the meaning of demand, in some contexts, and deduction, in others. In fact, this underlines the connection between the embedded meaning and the explicit meanings. (Inam Ullah et al. 2024a : pp. 12223-12230. Doi:

10.53555/kuey.v30i5.5077).

In spoken language, a speaker may utter a sentence intending a certain implicit meaning different from the explicit meaning expressed by the uttered words. This reflects the transition from the direct and explicit meaning to the indirect conversational meaning. This conversational meaning is inevitably dependent on the context of interaction.

Conversations are not arbitrary. Interactions in conversations involve common principles and competencies. Interactants abide by these principles and competencies to maintain the success and efficiency of their interaction and attain their common conversational objectives (Alqabaty, 2020, p.7).

Conversational implicature is a linguistic theory of conversational analysis. It represents indirect communication; it also refers to implicit communication. In this type of communication, the speaker utters some words with an intended meaning that differs from the explicit or literal meaning of the words. On the other hand, the hearer infers the embedded or implicit meanings based on the conversational context. Intended meanings are not confined to the literal meaning of uttered words and structures. Understanding the intended meaning requires an interpretation of meaning that might be implicit or implied (Edwary, 2011, p.7) ; (Zubeldia, 2012 : pp. 2100-2103).

Furthermore, Conversational implicature as a pragmatic phenomenon is a type of speech acts that refer to actions performed by particular speech. Examples include demands, prohibitions, and promise (Garboaa, 2016) ; (Abdul-Raof, 2006). Nonetheless, this theoretical framework has gained attention recently. Within this theoretical framework, there are two levels of meanings of sentences, structures, or phrases:

-locutionary: refers to the explicit literal meaning of the utterance which mainly depends on the lexical meanings of words.

-illocutionary: refers to the intended indirect meaning of the utterance that is inferred through the conversational context. (Al-Aadili et al. 2023 : pp. 1-9 http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.903001).

Conversational implicature for Arabs

Arab scholars examined conversational implicatures and provided a description of this linguistic phenomenon within the study of form and meaning (Bekheit, 2015, p. 80), rhetoric and eloquence, and structure and syntax. They agreed that meaning is either:

- literal and does not require inferring.

- embedded but understood through the literal cues.

- implied and detached from the literal meaning (Bekheit, 2015) ; (Al-Badani et al. 2015 : pp. 27 – 41)

Moreover, they examined the various patterns of meanings in text:

- surface meaning, that is literal.

- embedded meaning, that is inferred.

- implied meaning, that is inferred too. (Abdul-Raof, 2006).

Accordingly, Arab scholars have made their observations and provided some examples highlighting certain concepts including:

- purpose.

- conceptions.

- contextual meaning.

- secondary meaning (Almutawakel, 1981, p. 21) ; (Gendler, 2005).

In the works of ancient rhetoricians, the concept of conversational implicature and many of its principles can be found. As illustrated in the work of Abdel-Qader Al-Grgany (471h) about eloquence, there is direct reference to the concept of implicature. He pointed out that eloquent speech involves the special skill of embedding meanings in a particular way that is implicit. Delivering indirect meaning is considered eloquence.

When referring to the theory of poetics, Al-Grgany underlined the process of conversational implicature. He explained how arrangement of letters produces a certain articulation whereas arrangement of words produce meanings. Such meanings are carefully constructed conveniently.

Furthermore, as Al-Grgany explained metonymy, he practically referred to implicature. In other words, he stated that metonymy is used to express a particular meaning. Nonetheless, this intended meaning is not explicitly stated; it is referred to indirectly through using a different form of expression that would be associated with it in one way or another. To illustrate, the Arabic expression "taweel alnigaad" [literally means the long sword belt] is used to refer to a tall man. Another example is the expression "katheer ramad alqidr" [literally means the one with a lot of burnt ashes under a cauldron] which implies that a person is hospitable and generous. Also, to refer to a woman who is living a luxurious life the Arabic expression "nauum alduha" is used which literally means sleeping till noon. In all three examples, there is an intended meaning that is not expressed directly implied through synonymous expressions (471h, p. 66).

It is noteworthy how Al-Grgany distinguishes between two approaches to deliver meaning. The first approach is using the direct and literal meaning of words to deliver your intended meaning. The second approach is using words with indirect meanings or references that differ from their literal meaning. This latter approach includes metonymy, metaphor, and simile (471h, p.262). Accordingly, it is observed how Al-Grgany differentiated between literal meaning of words and implied meaning intended by these words. To him, this implied meaning is understood by inferring.

Other analysts had some intriguing views. Ibn Gannyy (392h), for instance, pointed out that implicit meanings expressed through linguistic forms primarily rely on two major factors: the speaker's competence in delivering their intended meaning and the hearer's competence in comprehending this intended meaning (Aldininawy, p.72). In addition, Alskaky (626h) was a prominent scholar in rhetoric. He stressed the significance of expressing and perceiving different meanings and inferences. To him meaning involves:

- the utterance which is used with its direct and literal meaning within its context of use.

- how the utterance associates with different meanings that share a logical connection, e.g., the

logical connection between "suqf" [ceiling] and "beit" [house].

- other utterances share a different kind of connection, although they also associate logically, e.g., "haet" [wall] (Alskaky, 626h, pp.329-330).

There Alsakaky laid the foundation of conversational implicature. To him:

- association is not necessarily logical; it might rely on customs or popular habits. This, in turn, requires the hearer to exert some mental effort to perceive the implicit association and the implied meaning.

- one specific meaning can be expressed in various ways. Logical references and associations allow the transition from one form of expressing meaning to another. Implicature is one type of these associations.

- Implicature could be either:

Two-way association: the example of "amam" [front] and "khalf" [back] represents a logical association whereas the word "negad" is associated by custom with the physical height of a person.

One-way association: examples include the logical association between "alelm" [the science] and "alhayah" [the life], and also the customary association between "alasad" [the lion] and "alaraah" [the courage].

Alskaky concluded his discussion by highlighting that rhetoric primarily depends on:

- the transition from literal to implied.

- and the transition from implied back to literal (pp.329-330).

In fact, he provided some insightful suggestions that refer to implicature as a phenomenon. He established some principles and explicated the association between explicit meaning and implied meaning. He also provided a comprehensive linguistic description that encompasses all linguistic levels, i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics (Almutawakel, 1981, p.21) ; (Zaidi et al. 2024 : pp. 3546-3556, DOI: https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1411.23)

Alqabaty (2020) reported that Almwardy (1058h) had set the principles of discourse in his book Adab Aldunyah wa Aldeen [the literature of life and religion]. Almwardy (1058h) stated that discourse is bound to certain conditions. Speakers abide by these conditions as follows:

Condition 1 : discourse should have a targeted addressee either to demand benefit or prevent harm.

Condition 2 : discourse should be compatible with its context and should be composed to fit within this context.

Condition 3 : discourse should be confined to a specific purpose or need.

Condition 4 : a speaker should select words carefully in discourse (p.275).

These conditions are not so different from Grice's Cooperative Principle and its conversational maxims, i.e., Relevance, Quantity, Quality and Manner.

Accordingly, ancient analysts did not solely depend on words and phrasing to perceive meanings. Logic, culture, and contextual clues are crucial for perceiving meanings (Algeheny,

2015, p. 39) : (Grice, 2002 : pp. 719-732).

2.2 Conversational Implicature for modernists

Arab linguistics and rhetoricians attempted to define Pragmatics from a scientific perspective. They could not lay its foundation, but they have investigated a lot of its linguistic use and discourse features. Moreover, they translated several works on Pragmatics, particularly Declarative and Expressive discourse. Over time, Pragmatics has become vital for perceiving languages as a means of communication.

Morris was a pioneer linguist who defined Pragmatics as part of semiotics, the science of signs. Pierce later, pointed out that we cannot think without using signs. All thoughts involve signs (Wahidah, 2010, p.28) : (Grice, 2002 : pp. 719-732).

Several other definitions of Pragmatics emerged from numerous scholars representing their various perspectives and interests. Those who were interested in examining the communicative context defined Pragmatics as the study of intended communicative meanings and to what extent did the speaker communicate their intended meanings. Others were interested in investigating discourse and defined Pragmatics as the study of language in discourse and its discursive capacity. From the speaker's perspective, Pragmatics is concerned with utilizing language principles for discourse production within a particular context and how hearers infer the intended meaning (Wahidah, 2010, p.28).

Pragmatics revolves around the communication between a speaker and a hearer within a specific communication process (Kada, p.39). It is mainly concerned with the scrutiny of verbal discourse. As a branch of linguistics, Pragmatics investigates how the hearer infers the intentions of the speaker. In other words, it is the study of the intended meaning delivered by a speaker. (Gendler, Z. (2005)

Pragmatic studies focus on four aspects:

- deixis.

- presupposition.

- conversational implicature.

- speech acts. (Karimnia, 2016 : pp. 26–41)

Modern scholars have examined conversational implicature as an essential concept in Pragmatics and discourse analysis since it is connected to the process of communication. Conversational implicature is part of producing discourse and one of the valuable theories of Pragmatics which underlines how a speaker can deliver more than what they utter through transcending the limits of the literal meaning of words. This theory is a development on the theory of speech acts. (Al-Azab et al. 2012 : pp. 42-49. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ells.v2n3p42)

The American philosopher, Paul Grice, established this modern linguistic approach through his series of lectures in Harvard University in 1967. In these lectures, Grice proposed and explained his theory of implicature. Years later, his lectures were collected and published under the title Conversation and Logic (Nahlah, 2002, p.32).

To Grice, conversation is based on a main principle, he calls, Cooperative Principle (CP) (Almutawakel, 1981). Interlocutors, in a conversational interaction, follow this principle. According to the CP, interlocutors cooperate to deliver and perceive intended meanings which

her referred to as Illocutionary Force. This force is detected through contextual cues (Nahlah, 2002) : (Zufferey, 2017 : pp. 264–279).

In addition, Grice distinguishes between (Wahida, 2010):

- conventional implicature

- conversational implicature

Accordingly, meanings of utterances are divided into two categories (Nahlah, 2002, p. 97) :

Category One : Explicit meanings include

- Propositional meaning is represented through the lexical meanings within the context of their structure.

- Expressive meaning is represented through imperative, prohibition, and interrogative forms. (Hassan 2020 : pp. 1-8. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.11n.3p.1)

Category Two : Implicit meaning include:

- conventional meaning is connected to their utterances regardless of their context and these include:

  -presuppositions.

  -entailments.

- conversational meaning is generated through and confined to its context.

These include:

  - particularized implicature.

  - generalized implicature.

Indeed, Conversational Implicature is considered one of the most prominent features characterizing natural language use. It is one of the essential concepts in the study of Pragmatics. A lot of meanings in utterances are not limited to the lexical and literal meanings of words. The context of discourse is crucial to comprehend the accurate and intended meanings. (Atta-Allah, www.asjp.cerist.dz). Therefore, interpretation of meaning is not confined to the literal meaning of uttered words. It includes the deep and implicit meaning or the so called conversationally implied meaning. (Zubeldia, 2012 : pp. 2100-2103).

Grice established a pragmatic principle of discourse. He proposed four basic maxims that regulate the process of discourse. He argued that interpretation and comprehension of meaning does not depend only on the surface or literal meaning. Meaning of discourse involves the following:

1- the meaning of the utterance.

2- the context of the utterance.

3- the Cooperative Principle (Edwary,2011; Garboaah, 2016) ; (Nazzal 2005 : pp. 251-273).

The Cooperative Principle is the most important pragmatic conversational principle. This principle stipulates that:

(interlocutors in a conversational interaction cooperate to achieve a specific goal. They cooperate to interpret and comprehend the intended meanings of the ongoing conversation. Pragmatically, each interlocutor contributes to achieving the goal of this ongoing verbal conversation. They collaborate to express and interpret their intentions during the conversation to attain their goals.)

Grice underlines four essential maxims that regulate the cooperation of interlocutors in conversation. These maxims are:

-Quantity.   -Quality.

-Relevance.   -Manner.

The Maxim of Quantity regulates the quantity of information required for attaining the goal of conversational interaction. A speaker should provide sufficient information, not more or less than is required.

The Maxim of Quality regulates the truthfulness of the information shared in the interaction. A speaker should not share what they cannot provide evidence for or what they believe to be false.

The Maxim of Relevance regulates the relevance of the shared information to the goal of interaction. A speaker should not divert the focus of the interaction or share irrelevant information. This resembles rhetoricians' saying, "for every context a saying".

The Maxim of Manner regulates the clarity of the verbal phrasing of information. A speaker should use clear and unambiguous phrasing to enable other participants in interaction to comprehend the intended meaning and reach the common goal of the conversation. A speaker should also avoid obscurity, inaccuracy, overstatement, understatement, lengthy speech, and distorted or unorganized messages (Garboaah, 2016, p.5).

Resorting to Conversational Implicature (Atta-Allah, www.asjp.cerist.dz) :

a)- This is not essentially present in verbal discourse. In other words, the hearer or the addressee resorts to interpret implicit or indirect meanings that are not clearly expressed or shared in the ongoing conversational interaction. Thus, the addressee relies on discourse clues to comprehend embedded messages.

b)- Perceiving implied meanings in conversation requires common knowledge, traditions and beliefs.

c)- A number of aspects should be considered. These are:

- A speaker should make sure that the hearer or addressee will perceive the intended implied message.

- An addressee, on the other hand, should exert some effort and rely on the available verbal and non-verbal contextual clues to perceive the intended implicature.

- Both the speaker and the addressee should be aware of the pragmatics of discourse and conversation. They should follow the Cooperative Principle and its maxims as explained by Grice.

In addition, there are some features that characterize Conversational Implicatures, as stipulated by Grice. To him, Conversational Implicatures (Nahlah, 2002, p. 32):

- can be cancelled by adding one word or phrase that hide or eliminate implication.

- is not constant and can change since one utterance may have several implicatures within the same context.

- cannot be separated from its lexical or semantic content, even if the words and phrases are replaced by others.

The Application Model

Description of the Context

after the incident of "Almida" [the table spread]

This incident starts by the disciples of Isa [Jesus] (PBH) the prophet requesting a miracle. "Ith qal alhawaryuun ya Isa bin Mariam: Hal yastatiea Rabuka an yunazel Alayna maidah min alsamaa?" [When the disciples said: O Isa son of Marium! will your Lord consent to send down to us food from heaven? He said: Be careful of [your duty to] Allah if you are believers.]

The context is crucial. The disciples' request is illegitimate, especially since it is not the request of most of the community. This is the request of this particular group of people, i.e., disciples. This is the only group of people who believed in Issa [Jesus] (PBH) as the prophet of God.

Isa's situation with his disciples resembles Prophet Ibrahim (PBH) with God the Almighty . The Prophet Ibrahim (PBH) asked for a miracle to feel reassured and to reinforce his faith. Prophet Ibrahim (PBH) requested that God Almighty shows him how the dead are resurrected. As he asked [My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead]. In response, God Almighty asked [What! and do you not believe?]. Then, Ibrahim replied directly with no hesitation [He said: Yes] and he justified his request [but that my heart may be at ease].

There, God Almighty grants his request:

- [He said: Then take four of the birds, then train them to follow you, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying].

The story concludes by underlining the greatness of God the Almighty creator. After this bind blowing miracle, Prophet Ibrahim has no option but to admit God's power:

[know that Allah is Mighty, Wise]

Similarly, the dialogue between Prophet Issa [Jesus] (PBH) with his disciples follows the same model. In response to the disciples' request, Prophet Issa simply ask them [He said: Be careful of (your duty to) Allah if you are believers.] He put belief right after caution in a conditional structure [if you are believers]. It is explained that this dialogue had taken place in the early period of Issa's journey. That is the disciples were not fully aware of God's power. Therefore, Issa reproached them for [Be careful of (your duty to) Allah], claiming what is false about God. His words mean "do not doubt God's powers".

Then, the disciples' motive is clear as they demand a miracle of a table serving food for them and their people [They said: We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of witnesses to it.] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse, 115).

This motive includes four pretexts:

- eating from the table (materialistic demand).

            - reassuring their hearts (emotional demand).

        - reinforcing the Prophet's unprecedent miracle (spiritual demand).

        - witnessing the miracle of the ascendance of the table.

When Issa [Jesus] (PBH) sensed their sincerity, he prayed for God to grant their demand:

[Isa the son of Marium said: O Allah, our Lord! send down to us food from heaven]

He continued and provided justifications for their daring demands:

[which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us] and [and a sign from Thee].

Concluding his prayer:

[and grant us means of subsistence, and Thou art the best of the Providers.]

Then, answering the Prophet's and his disciples' prayers comes with a condition emphasizing His Almighty and glory:

[Allah said: Surely I will send it down to you, but whoever shall disbelieve afterwards from among you, surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise, anyone among the nations.]

It is necessary to point out that the disciples' demand was not inappropriate or skeptical of God's powers. Neither was it condescending of Issa [Jesus] (PBH). The disciples sincerely believed in the limitless powers of God Almighty, however, they needed reassurance as Prophet Ibrahim (PBH).

The verb form used in the demand "yastatea" is interpreted as [will He consent]. This proves it was not intended to question or doubt God's powers. Furthermore, the response of Prophet Isa [Jesus] was quite rational. He cared about his people from divine punishment since they had witnessed all his miracles:

[And (make him) a messenger to the children of Israel: That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah's permission and I heal the blind and the leprous, and bring the dead to life with Allah's permission and I inform you of what you should eat and what you should store in your houses; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers.- And a verifier of that which is before me of the Taurat and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden to you, and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord therefore be careful of [your duty to] Allah and obey me.](Surat Al-Imran, Verses 49-50) : (Al-Aadili, et al. 2023 : pp. 1-9, http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.903001)

If they had disbelieved the miracles, they would have been punished as God warned them. [but whoever shall disbelieve afterwards from among you, surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise, anyone among the nations.]

3.1.2 the dialogue shifts to an interrogation session in heaven between God Almighty and his Prophet Isa [Jesus] (PBH). The interrogation opens with a direct question to the Prophet:

[And when Allah will say: O Isa son of Marium! did you say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah he will say: Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say

what I had no right to [say]; if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse119)

In response, the Prophet Isa [Jesus (PBH) answers the question and defends himself providing solid evidence of his innocence:

1- He initiates by praising and glorifying God Almighty [Glory be to Thee]. This is significant for two reasons:

Extolment of God and denying any imperfection or deformity as mentioned in the grave accusation [Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah].

Selflessness as stressed by the Prophet (PBH): he did not start by denying the accusation; he was primarily eager to glorify his Almighty creator.

2- He then, denied all accusations. He explicitly stated [it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to [say]].

As a Prophet and a messenger of God, he has no right to say anything he should not say without permission from God Almighty. It is also noted that Isa [Jesus] did not mention the accusation [Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah] as he completely denies it.

The structure of this dialogue is completely different from the structure of dialogue in the context of the lie incident. Prophet Isa (PBH) started with praising God Almighty and then denied the accusation [Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to [say]]. In the context of the lie incident, the dialogue was different. The response started with denying the accusation followed by praising God [And why did you not, when you heard it, say: It does not beseem us that we should talk of it; glory be to Thee! this is a great calumny?] (Surat Al-Noor, Verse16).

This reveals:

- the dialogue with Prophet Isa [Jesus] is characterized as a polite dialogue with God Almighty. Therefore, he started with praising and glorifying his Almighty creator.

- the other dialogue in Surat Al-Noor, is an educational model for people to follow when they face a similar incident of slander, which has a grave impact of a person's reputation. Therefore, the denial came first.

Being in the presence of God Almighty, Prophet Isa [Jesus] (PBH) was careful about what he said. He politely said [if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it].

This is how he defended himself and denied the accusation reaffirming his sincere belief and stresses God's comprehensive knowledge of everything as he said [Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely]. Isa (PBH) denies the act of saying and believing, then he affirms God's supremacy [Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse119).

This is an acknowledgement and confession by Prophet Isa [Jesus] that God Almighty knows what is obvious and what is hidden, including people's thoughts, feelings and speech.

After Praising God Almighty and denying the accusation, Prophet Isa [Jesus] said [I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse 120). This reveals

how much Prophet Isa was committed to delivering God's message and commands.

Then, he specified the commands of God in His message as clear in the direct command to worship God Almighty [That serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse 120).

God's Message revolves around worship and complete submission to His Almighty power. He is Isa's God and all people's God. In fact, Prophet Isa is committed to bear witness on his folk as long as he lived among them [and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them]. However, once he ceased to live among them, he was no longer a witness. Only, God Almighty can watch them and bear witness of them [but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things]. Here again, Prophet Isa refers to God's powers [If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse 121). He, almighty, has the power to punish or forgive.

Implicature in the Quranic Verses

the verb "yastatea" [literally means can], in light of the concept of conversational implicature, and the polite discourse of the Prophet Isa [Jesus], is interpreted and understood as [consent to or grant our request.] This is evident by:

a)- this request was from the disciples of Jesus which means that they were the believers of his prophecy. They would not have asked for this miracle to believe.

b)- the disciples provided multiple reasons for their request.

c)- A different reciting of this verse led to a different interpretation of the meaning. One reading was "hal tastatea rabaka" meaning [could you ask your God?] This associates the explicit meaning of 'ability' to Prophet Isa [Jesus] not to God Almighty. (Yazdani,. 2010 : pp. 65–78)

The utterance "yastatea rabuka" meaning [will your Lord consent to]. This gives the meaning [agree to] or [grant request]. Accordingly, the verb 'yastatea' in Arabic was used with a different meaning from the literal explicit meaning, i.e., ability. Since the disciples believed in God's powerful ability, their request for a miracle was not intended to test or question God' powers. Their request was intended to strengthen their faith and reassure their hearts.

there is another implicature in the verse [He said: Be careful of (your duty to) Allah if you are believers]. The intended meaning of Isa's order to his disciples is different from the explicit literal meaning. Isa's order is intended as an expression of disapproval of their request. In other words, Prophet Isa underlines the contradiction between their being [believers of God] and their request for miraculous proof of God's powers.

in the verse "a'anta qulta lilnas" [did you say to men], the use of the word 'lilnas' [men or people] not the word 'disciples' reflects generalization. In fact, the issue is not simply confined to the disciples of Isa [Jesus]. It is a critical issue that is associated with distorting religious belief. Instead of worshiping one Almighty God, there emerged the claims of three gods. (Ali, 2008)

responding to lies and unjust claims requires two types of dialogue:

A-If injustice and claims are defying God Almighty and denying His divinity, the dialogue require:

- speech should open with praising and glorifying God whether the speaker is truthful or liar.

- then, the speaker denies the claim or the lie:

[They said: Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou art the Knowing, the Wise] (Surat Al-Baqara, Verse 33).

[And when Musa came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: My Lord! show me [Thyself], so that I may look upon Thee. He said: You cannot [bear to] see Me but look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place, then will you see Me; but when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain He made it crumble and Musa fell down in a swoon; then when he recovered, he said: Glory be to Thee, I turn to Thee, and I am the first of the believers.] (Surat Al-Araf, Verse 143).

[And on the day when He shall gather them, and whatever they served besides Allah, He shall say: Was it you who led astray these My servants, or did they themselves go astray from the path? (17) They shall say: Glory be to Thee; it was not beseeming for us that we should take any guardians besides Thee, but Thou didst make them and their fathers to enjoy until they forsook the reminder, and they were a people in perdition (18)] (Surat Al-Furqan, Verses, 17-18).

[And on the day when He will gather them all together, then will He say to the angels: Did these worship you?(40) They shall say: Glory be to Thee! Thou art our Guardian, not they; nay! they worshipped the jinn; most of them were believers in them. (41)] (Surat Saba', Verses 40-41).

Similarly, Prophet Isa [Jesus] followed the same pattern of discourse, in his dialogue with God Almighty [he will say: Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to [say]; if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things] (Surat Al-Maida, Verses, 119).

B- In other cases, lies and unjust claims are associated with people. In these cases, discourse starts with denying the accusation then praising God Almighty. An example is evident in Surat Al-Noor, Verse 16 [And why did you not, when you heard it, say: It does not beseem us that we should talk of it; glory be to Thee! this is a great calumny?]

The Closing of the Interrogation:

After Prophet Isa [Jesus] (PBH) had provided all evidence in his defense, being fully aware that God Almighty knows the whole truth, there came the closing of this dialogue highlighting the innocence of Isa. [Allah will say: This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones; they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever: Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Allah; this is the mighty achievement.] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse 122).

Prophet Isa [Jesus] is referred to as a "truthful" person whose truthfulness benefits him in the Day of Judgement. The expressions "truth" and "truthful" are intended to underline the innocence of Isa [Jesus]. No other expression is used, such as muslim or believer. The accusation was grave, i.e., lies and false claims, which required truthfulness to dismiss. In fact, the beginning of the narrative stressed how Prophet Isa [Jesus] was truthful and honest with his disciples [we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse 116).

Finally, truthfulness is to be rewarded by heaven. [they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them for ever: Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with

Allah; this is the mighty achievement.] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse 122).

the concluding part of the Sura aims to highlight the divine power of God Almighty who [Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is in them; and He has power over all things] (Surat Al-Maida, Verse 123).

Conclusion and Discussion

As analyzed and explained above, the pragmatic dimension has become clear in the selected Quranic. Accordingly, this study has revealed numerous insightful findings:

1- The Glorious Quran includes indirect and implied meanings as well as direct and explicit meanings in different contexts. The reader of the Holy Quran should contemplate and interpret the text cues to reach the intended implied meanings.

2- A given linguistic form or structure are never sufficient to interpret and comprehend an intended meaning of a narrative. Deep meanings and references usually hide beyond surface and literal meanings and structures.

3- Arab scholars investigated pragmatics and conversational implicatures as they scrutinized the connection between utterance and meaning, and the different types of meanings. Nonetheless, their work was mainly observations of the phenomenon.

4- The interpretation of meaning had long depended on logic and common knowledge of culture and language in context.

5- The conversational model selected in the present study has revealed how essential the pragmatic concept of Conversational Implicature is in interpreting the intended meaning of Quranic narratives, regardless of the literal and surface meanings of the words and phrases.

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