

Providing a Model for Evaluating the Dependency of Comprehension of Qur'an Verses on Cultural Studies

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ABSTRACT:

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Some religious modernists believe that correct and scientific comprehension of the Qur'an is merely provided through historical and cultural study of the context of revelation time. Others, on the other hand, advocate that knowing interior and connected evidence suffices for Qur'an comprehension. Further, they say that exterior and unconnected evidence such as cultural and historical studies can have little effect on Qur'an comprehension. These various attitudes made us research them and represent a model to assess the dependency of Qur'an comprehension on cultural and historical conditions of revelation time. The present study examined works of scholars in this field such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Khorramshahi, and Tabatabaei through a descriptive and analytical method.

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Then, a model was recommended to evaluate the dependence of understanding of the Qur'an on the cultural and historical conditions of revelation time. The model includes four components: cause of revelation; vocabulary; subject matter; expressions which encompass twelve rules based on the features of verses in each component. Input of the model is one verse and its output is a dependent, independent, or semi-dependent mode.

KEYWORDS: Comprehension of the Qur'an, method of interpretation, culture of revelation time, cultural study, cultural translation, model of assessment.

1. Introduction

The interaction between the Qur'an and the culture of the time is a topic that has recently attracted the attention of scholars; however, primary commentators have not ignored this issue and used it as one of their interpretive sources. Proof of this is their attention to the issue of the causes of revelation as one of the sources of understanding the Holy Qur'an. They have always expressed and sometimes analysed traditions of the cause of revelation in exegeses and used them to comprehend the verses.

Nowadays, with the emergence of modernist theories that call for a paradigm shift in Qur'anic studies and encourage the historical study of this text as a scientific method, has become an important issue that the interpretation of the commentator O in his method of interpretation and understanding of the Holy Qur'an. The result of this kind of paradigm shift is the formation of a range of views and opinions among scholars and experts in Qur'anic studies.

The level of impressionability of the Qur'an by the culture of the time is an issue that the commentators' position on it will have a significant impact on their method of interpreting the Qur'an. It is important, nowadays, to know how much Qur'an was influenced by the culture of the time since modernistic theories ask to shift paradigms in Qur'anic studies and emphasizes to investigate verses in a historic context as a scientific method. As a result, a range of various attitudes was formed among scholars and experts.

Some experts believe that the Qur'an was influenced by the culture of revelation time and understanding all its verses depends on cultural studies. In other words, it is impossible to comprehend the Qur'an without studying the culture of revelation era. Thus, the comprehension of the Qur'an will be incorrect if we do not care to this interpretive source. Others believe in the

independency of the Qur'an comprehension on cultural study and emphasize that the mere etymology, syntax, vocabulary and context of the text are sufficient to comprehend the verses of the Holy Qur'an. Meanwhile, a moderate attitude also exists which believes that the comprehension of a few verses of the Holy Qur'an are related to the cultural study of the revelation time.

The present study aims to provide a model to assess how much the comprehension of the Qur'an's verses depends on the culture of the revelation time. Thus, the comprehension criteria are extracted based on modernists' attitude and their analysis about this topic. Then, according to these criteria, the model will be designed in such a way that its input is a verse and its output determines one of the dependent, independent or semi-dependent modes for the input verse.

This research aims to provide possibility of discourse among scholars with different approaches to this topic. Since the criteria are defined in a conditional form in the model, each scholar will receive appropriate output according to their response to each condition. As a result, disagreement positions will be clarified, perspectives will be modified through discourse, and finally a reasonable and regular perspective will be provided for cultural comprehension of the Qur'an.

2. Literature review

The book "The Concept of the Text" written by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd is one of the significant works about cultural comprehension of the Holy Qur'an. Abu Zayd believes that Qur'an text is a cultural product in its essence (Abu Zayd, 2001, 68). He emphasizes that Qur'an text should be studied in its historical context and as a result some of its concept such as genie and Satan, which belongs to the revelation era and are not compatible with modern science, should be ignored (Abu Zayd, 2004, 283). Others consider his approach as extremist. For instance, Bahaoddin Khorramshahi believes that the main framework of the Holy Qur'an expresses eternal theological truths and a much less part of it reflects the causes of revelation or the events of revelation era and the culture of the time. Thus, not all of it is influenced by culture (1995, 97). However, a number of scholars agree with Abu Zayd and believe that we cannot achieve a comprehensive perception of the Holy Qur'an without knowing about cultural conditions (Pakatchi, 2013, 332). If the allegorical-allusive and customary-popular characteristics of a language expand, its apparent meanings will be further away from the main purpose of the speaker, leading to an increase in the permission of the allegorical

interpretation. We should investigate to know how much the Qur'an is allowed to use these similes and metaphors, and whether these similes and metaphors are influenced by the culture of the time (Jalili, n.d., 43).

Some, considering that the Qur'an speaks in the language of the nation, believe that the Holy Qur'an has used the same current phrasings of the Arabs to facilitate expression (Zekavati, 1995, 77). Some others criticize the theory, which believe that the Qur'an is influenced by the culture of the time, and express two significant viewpoints: first, the complete impressionability of the Quran by the culture of revelation era, and second, accepting the positive elements of the culture, confirming and reinforcing them along with rejecting negative elements and absurd beliefs. They eventually conclude that there is no reason to prove the first view, and the examples they cited are not valid. In addition, historical approach to the jurisprudential rules of the Qur'an is ultimately a polite denial of the Qur'an from the scene of social life. However, the second view is moderate and correct (Rezai Esfehni, 2014, 4: 100-113).

Some other researches were conducted on this subject. Kamali (2015) examines rhetoric and immortality in both perspectives of Tabatabaei and Muhammad Al-Jābirī, the first of whom believes that cultural space rarely influences Qur'an comprehension and the second one considers that acquaintance of the conditions of revelation era is necessary to comprehend the Qur'an. Faghihi (2012), in the field of Meccan Surahs, explains the degree of dependency of the Qur'an comprehension on the cultural conditions and shows that how much the commentators have used the conditions of revelation era in verses comprehension. Alami (2017) deals with the issue of historical or transhistorical approach to the jurisprudential rules of the Qur'an and criticizes the modernists' principles who believe in historical approach to the jurisprudential rules of the Qur'an. Bouazar (2011) creates a proper communication in accordance with the oral discourse and customary language of the Qur'an and provides an aesthetic comprehension of Qur'anic verses. Talebtash (2003, 21) believes that the dependence of a divine text leads to passivity of God's essence who is pure of any passivity. Rostami (2010) criticized the viewpoints of orientalist and some Muslims on the relationship between the Holy Qur'an and the culture of the time.

Based on the above studies, the scholars' approaches to the dependency of the Quran comprehension on the culture of the time can be categorized into maximal, minimal, and medium approaches.

According to the maximal approach, the influence of the cultural, historical, social, and political conditions of the Arabian Peninsula in the sixth century AD on the formation of the Qur'an is so decisive that the proper

comprehension of the Qur'an will not be reached without studying them. The gradual revelation, the Arabic language, having the Arab audience, causes of revelation, and rules of the Qur'an are among factors that show the influence of the culture of the time on the text of the Qur'an. Some followers of this approach are Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh (n.d.), Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (2001), Abdolkarim Soroush (2006), Muhammad Mojtahed Shabestari (2002) and Jafar Nekoonam (2001). Studying the opinions and views of these scholars on how the Quran is influenced and the dependence of the Quran on understanding the culture of the time, plays an effective role in determining the components and conditions in the model.

On the other hand, there is a range of approaches that believes in minimal dependency of Qur'an comprehension on the culture of the revelation era. They consider merely the use of knowledge of Arabic literature and linguistic evidences to be sufficient for a correct understanding of the Qur'an. Tabatabaei and Javadi Amoli are the commentators who assert this approach. Tabatabaei writes that the Qur'an, like human words, conveys its intended meaning and is never ambiguous in its indication, because anyone who is familiar with the language clearly understands the meaning of sentences in the verses (1974, 29-30). It seems that although he does not consider the comprehension of the Holy Qur'an dependent on cultural, historical and social conditions of the revelation time, he heeds to traditions and causes of revelation, and utilizes them in his commentary.

Adherents of the minimal approach believe that, in order to comprehend the Qur'an, we should pay more attention to the custom of the Qur'an and linguistic evidences existing in the verses and its guiding role for all human beings, rather than relying on the customary and cultural uses in the revelation time. Because the Qur'an itself explains its ambiguity and conciseness. Therefore, they regard interpretive method of Ahl al-Bayt (families of the Prophet) i.e. "Interpretation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an" as the best way to comprehend the verses of the Qur'an. They also emphasize rereading the text of the Holy Qur'an by relying on its universality, immortality, and innate language (Javadi Amoli, 2008, 29).

There is a medium approach too that believes that some verses of the Holy Qur'an depend on the culture of the revelation time. Marefat, Rezai Esfehni, and Khorramshahi are the proponents of this approach. They believe that the Holy Qur'an was descended to influence on the conditions, not to be influenced by them. Thus, the Qur'an criticizes and fights the ignorant Arab customs and is not passive against them (Rezai Esfehni, 2014, 4: 64). Marefat also writes that corruption and prostitution pervaded the Arab society at the revelation time so that Qur'an was descended to

rescue them from corruption, slavery and colonization and to donate a prominent civilization to all human beings, especially the Arabs. He affirms that many criminal sentences, which are thought to be violent, could be changed and updated with modern conditions (2000, 2: 461).

In accordance with minimal and medium approaches, the comprehension of the Qur'an is not limited to history and geography of the revelation time. These approaches rely on principals and solutions that are used to moderate the dependency conditions in the model.

3. A model for assessing the dependency of the Qur'an verses comprehension on the culture of revelation era

During the study of the works in this field, which were introduced in the background, five basic components were identified for evaluation including four levels of vocabulary, expressions and styles, subject matters and causes of revelation. In addition, based on the statements and reasons mentioned in these works, twelve rules were extracted. These rules contain conditions that associate with some effective features of the verses in dependency.

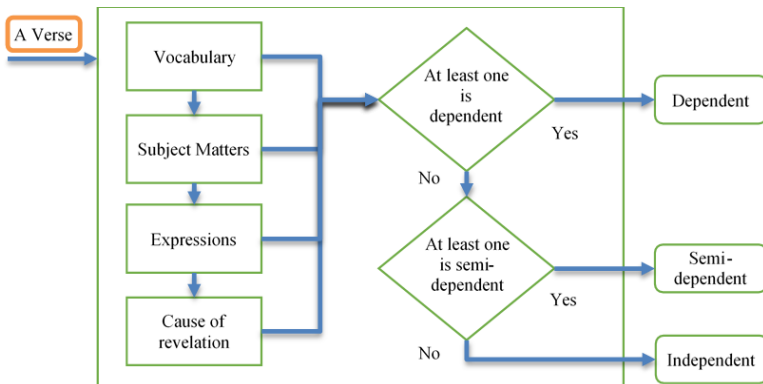


Figure 1. General diagram of the model of comprehension dependency assessment at the level of main components

Figure 1 shows the general diagram of the model. Model input is a verse that enters all four components including cause of revelation, vocabulary, subjects and finally expressions. Its output is determined as one of the three independent, dependent, and semi-dependent modes. Then, two conditions are investigated to convert the outputs of four components to one output, according to which the condition of dependency or semi-dependency is the existence of at least one dependent or semi-dependent output of the four

components.

Model output description:

Obviously, every linguistic text is culturally dependent because language is a cultural issue, but there are higher levels of cultural dependence to which the present study problem relates, a level that, beyond lexical and linguistic studies, considers text comprehension to be dependent on cultural, historical, and cultural geography studies. It is clear that all verses are dependent on linguistic studies if we consider linguistic studies as a condition of dependency and no thinker has denied this level of dependency. Therefore, in the present study, the comprehension of a verse will be dependent and requires cultural and historical study of the revelation time if knowing the linguistic evidences such as Arabic literature and syntax, as well as textual context and related verses, is no longer sufficient to comprehend the verse. In the same way, it became clear that the independence of comprehending verses from the culture of the time means that the study of the literature, context of the verse as well as similar verses are sufficient to comprehend the primary meaning of the verse. If it is possible to have an initial understanding of the verse, but cultural study improve the audience's understanding of the verse, this will be considered semi-dependent. Sometimes additional meanings that are reached by cultural study is not God's intention i.e. the initial and simple comprehension of the verse is God's intention, which has not been changed based on cultural study. In this case, although extra information about Arab's history and culture are provided, the comprehension of the verse is independent.

3.1. The component of Vocabulary

We reached five rules and five features for the component of vocabulary, as shown in figure 2.

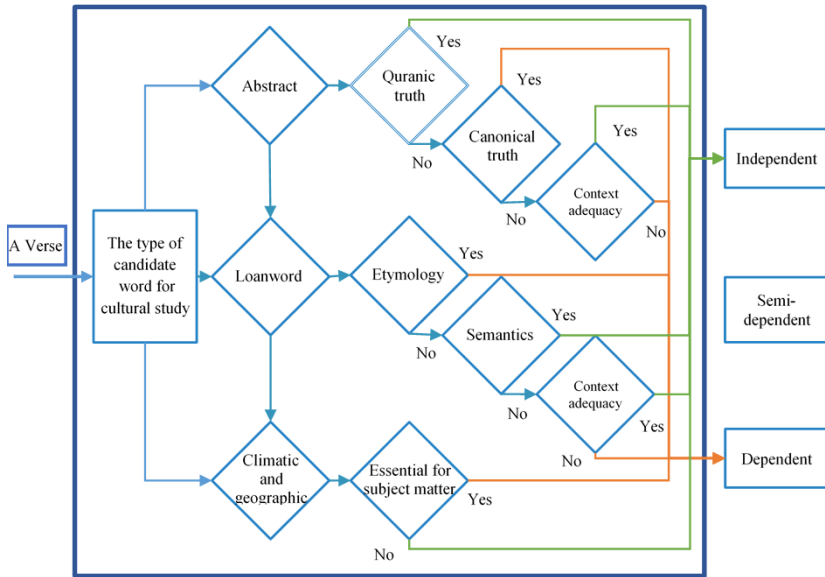


Figure 2. The detailed model for the component of vocabulary

3.1.1. The first rule

If the verse contains a word candidate for cultural study and the evidence is not sufficient to comprehend the verse, comprehension of the verse will be dependent.

For example, the word *ilāf* (Al-Quraysh, 1), according to commentators, introduced a type of trade in the economic conditions of the revelation time, so some argue that the comprehension of the verse depends on knowing the economic conditions of revelation time. However, according to the context of the previous surah, i.e. Al-Fīl, it is enough to understand the meaning of the verse, which is the worship of God for the sake of security and trade. Thus, further study about this commercial custom and more information may enhance our understanding of the subject space, but understanding the true meaning of God's Word does not depend on this information. As a result, the comprehension of the verse seems semi-dependent according to the speaker's intention.

3.1.2. The second rule

If the verse contains the climatic and geographical word that is essential to the subject matter, the verse comprehension will be dependent.

For example, some modern thinkers considered the word *al-ibil* (kamel)

in the verse (Al-Ghāshīyah, 17) as an evidence that the comprehension of the verse depends on the knowledge of climatic and geographical conditions. However, some commentators believe that God has mentioned the name of the camel in this verse because the under-discussion surah is one of the first surah revealed in Mecca which heard by Arabs and having a camel was one of the main pillars of life for the people of Mecca those days (Tabatabaei, 1995, 20: 459; Makarem Shirazi, 1992, 427). Though mentioning camels is instrumental and not essential to the subject matter, that is, any other animals could be mentioned as a blessing and a divine sign.

On the other hand, according to some theories, an animal such as a camel, due to its characteristics, is a special and unique example that has been studied in modern zoological books in Europe and America (Al-Qaradāwī, 2003, 632). Therefore, some thinkers, while referring its special features, consider mentioning this animal to be essential for the subject matter of the verse (Tayyeb, 1990, 14: 98; Faḍlallāh, 1998, 24: 227; Hoseyni Hamedani, 1983, 18: 115). However, some others, using the rule of "eliminating attributes", consider the subject of the verse to be applicable for other animals as well (Rezai Esfehani, 2007, 126). Thus, if we consider mentioning the word al-ibil to be instrumental, the comprehension of the verse will be independent of the cultural-geographical study, but if we consider mentioning it to be essential, the comprehension of the verse will depend.

3.1.3. The third rule

If the verse contains a word related to abstract concepts, which is not considered a Qur'anic truth, the comprehension of the verse will be dependent. However, if the verse contains an abstract word related to Qur'anic truth, it will be independent.

Since one of the purposes of the Qur'an is cultural change, it sometimes uses Arabic words to present a new concept in a new system of thought. Therefore, the only way to explain the new meaning of the Qur'anic word is a systematic analysis of the verses that used such words. Based on this principle, Izutsu in his book "God and Man in the Qur'an" has tried to enter the cultural world of the Qur'an and research about the culture of the Qur'an and its key concepts (Izutsu, 1982, 4; Al-Zarāl, 2012, 196). In fact, according to the Qur'anic truth principle, Qur'anic words, in addition to the main meanings mentioned in the dictionary, have additional and new meanings derived from the context and the system in which they are used. These additional and new meanings influenced by Qur'anic thought system are considered to be actual usage of the word, although they are not directly

included in the usages of the word.

For example, the word *al-rūḥ* (spirit) has a special meaning based on the context of the Qur'an. The study of its usages in the Qur'an shows that *al-rūḥ*, unlike *al-naḥs* (soul), is a sacred being and has a special role in human spirituality (Rohani Mashhadi, 2018, 73). In this case, the context of the Qur'an is sufficient to comprehend the meaning of the word, and this comprehension is independent of cultural studies.

3.1.4. *The fourth rule*

If the verse contains words related to rituals and ceremonies, which are not considered as canonical truth, its comprehension will be dependent.

For example, the word *al-qitāl*, according to the context of Qur'anic verses, means self-defense when Islamic region is attacked by unbelievers, unlike war, which literally means invasion and transgression (Tabatabaei, 1995, 2: 88). On the other hand, this word is considered as a canonical truth. There are some details about its ruling, which should be known from the tradition of the Prophet (PBUH). The tradition of the Prophet about it is not regarded as the verses interpretation since these details are not mentioned in the verses so that the comprehension of this word is considered as independent of the culture.

3.1.5. *The fifth rule*

If the verse contained a loanword whose etymology or genealogy changed the understanding of the verse, the comprehension of the verse will be dependent. For example, the commentators have raised two possibilities about the meaning of the word *rā'inā* in (Al-Baqarah, 104), which was misused by the Jews so God prohibited the believers to use it. First, it has an insulting meaning in Hebrew, and the Jews used this word as a weapon to insult the Prophet (Al-Ṭabarsī, 1993, 1:343; Al-Bayḍāwī, 1997, 1:98; Tabatabaei, 1995, 1:374). Second, it comes from the root *r, 'n* meaning "foolishness and intellectual weakness" and the Jews of Medina intended this meaning. However Eivazi quoted from Künstlinger's article that this word in Judaism and Christianity languages means shepherd which referred to God, the prophets and religious leaders without any negative meaning, while shepherding was a low-level job among Arabs, and was considered an insult to people. Considering these two points, it should be said that *rā'inā* in the mentioned verse is an imperative verb derived from *r, 'y* which means to shepherd us and is in correspondence with its alternative word *unḥurnā* (table1).

Table 1. Some examples based on the features of the verses in the component of vocabulary

<i>Input</i>	<i>constituents</i>					<i>Output</i>
<i>Features</i>	<i>Type of candidate word for cultural study</i>	<i>Role of climatic-geographical word for the subject matter</i>	<i>Abstract</i>	<i>Sufficiency of evidence</i>	<i>Loanword</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>Quantities</i> <i>Verses</i>	<i>Ideological/Economical/Ritual/Climatic-geographical/Loanword</i>	<i>Essential/Instrumental</i>	<i>Qur'anic truth/canonical truth</i>	<i>Linguistic, literal, rational</i>	<i>Influence of Etymology/Genealogy/Semantic</i>	<i>Dependent/Semi-dependent/Independent</i>
<i>tlāf</i>	<i>Social/Economical</i>			<i>has</i>		<i>Semi-dependent</i>
<i>al-ibīl</i>	<i>Climatic-geographical</i>	<i>Instrumental</i>		<i>has</i>		<i>Independent</i>
<i>al-rūḥ</i>	<i>Ideological/Abstract</i>		<i>Qur'anic truth</i>	<i>has</i>		<i>Independent</i>
<i>al-qitāl</i>	<i>Political/Social</i>		<i>Canonical truth</i>	<i>has</i>		<i>Independent</i>
<i>rā'inā</i>	<i>Loanword</i>				<i>Etymology</i>	<i>Dependent</i>

In other words, the Muslims of Medina to address the Prophet, as a result of associating with the Jews and without any intention of insulting, used the term which the Jews used for the prophets and even God. However, God advised the believers to say the word *unẓurnā* instead, since the expression *rā'inā* was displeasing to Him. Therefore, it can be concluded that the verse 104 of Surah Al-Baqarah forbids the entry of Judeo-Christian literature among Muslims (Eivazi, 2017, 214-215). Thus, this research shows that etymological study is effective in correct comprehension of the verse.

3.2. The component of subject matters

This component contains three rules and five features, which are explained as follows.

3.2.1. The sixth rule

If the subject matter of the verse is stories related to historical tribes, which are cultural myths, the comprehension of the verse will be dependent.

The story and history of the prophets such as the stories of the people of Lūt, Thamūd and the children of Israel is one of the subject matters in the

Holy Qur'an. Some view the stories of the Holy Qur'an from a mythological point of view, but the Qur'an opposes those who have called its verses the ancient myths and considers them to be stories of truth i.e. they were real histories which God revealed them. Although, if, according to a scholar, a cultural myth is found in the stories of the Qur'an, then the comprehension of the verse will depend on the study of mythology, and will be dependent.

3.2.2. The seventh rule

If the subject matter of the verse is related to religions and refers to the rituals and beliefs of a particular religion or sect, the comprehension of the verse will depend on cultural study, unless the context and related verses provide us with sufficient information to comprehend the meaning of the verse.

For example, the verse 111 of Surah Al-Baqarah refers to the specific belief of Naṣārā not Christians, which has a kind of spirit of religious exclusivism. We consider the verse semi-dependent if paying attention to the difference between Naṣārānīyah and Christianity, as Rostami states (2010, 71), is effective in comprehension of the verse. However, a cultural study merely enhances historical accessory information, since the context clarifies the intention of the verse.

3.2.3. The eighth rule

If the subject matter of the verse is about metaphysical issues, whose comprehension requires a cultural study, the comprehension of the verse will be dependent.

For example, the subject of the evil eye in the verse 51 of Surah Al-Qalam about which Tabatabaei writes, "izlāq bil-abṣār, as all commentators have asserted, means casting an evil eye that is a kind of psychic influence. We have no rational reason to deny it and say that it is a superstitious belief, even some events have been seen that are consistent with it, and some traditions have also confirmed it (1995, 19: 648)". It seems that the context does not have a specific point in explanation of the verse so that Tabatabaei utilized the opinions of the other commentators, experiences and traditions to interpret the verse. Thus, the comprehension of the verse is dependent (table 2).

Table 2. Some examples based on the features of the verses in the component of subject matters

<i>Input</i>	<i>constituents</i>					<i>Output</i>
<i>Features</i>	<i>Type of subject matter</i>	<i>Type of sufficiency</i>	<i>Type of effective study</i>			<i>Result</i>
<i>Quantities</i> <i>Verses</i>	<i>Stories/ Religions/ Metaphysics</i>	<i>Context/ Texture/ Rational evidence</i>	<i>Mythology</i>	<i>Cultural study of history of religions</i>	<i>Effective/ Necessary cultural study</i>	<i>Dependent/ Semi-dependent/ Independent</i>
<i>The story of the caw of Israel's sons</i>	<i>Stories</i>	<i>Context/ Texture</i>	<i>No</i>			<i>Independent</i>
<i>The story of Noah's Ark</i>	<i>Stories</i>	<i>Context/ Texture</i>	<i>No</i>			<i>Independent</i>
<i>Christianity and Hunafā'</i>	<i>Specific religious sect</i>	<i>Has</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>		<i>Independent</i>
<i>Evil eye</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i>	<i>Does not have</i>			<i>Yes</i>	<i>Dependent</i>

3.3. The component of expressions

In this section, metaphorical expressions used in the Qur'an were examined, and accordingly two rules along with four features were extracted as follows.

According to cognitive linguistics, metaphor means conceptual metaphor, which is divided into three categories: similarity-based, correlation-based and conventional. Most of the studies that have been done on the text of the Qur'an are related to correlation-based and conventional metaphors. The similarity-based metaphor is divided into apparent and unapparent similarity (Talebi Anvari, 2018, 50).

3.3.1. The ninth rule

If the verse contains a conceptual metaphor based on the source domain and Arab's specific culture, the understanding of the verse will be dependent.

For example, the cultural nature of metaphor of ṭayr (fly) and ṭā'ir (bird) in verses 18 and 19 of Surah Yāsīn and verse 47 of Surah Al-Naml was examined as follows. Metaphorical mapping in these verses is destiny as a bird. The important point about omen and destiny is that it is created by human actions not by birds flying and shouting in Islamic culture, so the

opposition of Islamic belief with the Arab people's belief about destiny is clarified in these verses.

It should be noted that the word bird in Islam refers to good or bad omen, and this does not mean that in Islam they also practice divination with a bird. Therefore, Islam took the word from the nation, but did not use it in the way of the nation, and this is called *mujārāt* (accompanying with the common custom in the use of words) in Islam as Marefat used (Talebi Anvari, 2018, 461). As a result, comprehending this metaphor is independent of cultural studies.

In addition, in verse 65 of surah Al-Şāffāt, in the imaginary realm of the mind, source concept is the heads of devils and there is a metaphor of "blossoms of Zaqqūm tree as the heads of devils". According to the commentators, it is a matter of expressing ugliness, and the head of the devil is an ugly image that is of the unreal image type. Because its vehicle is imaginary, but each of its components is actual and sensory. This verse is an example of a rich mental image (imaginal not schematic) whose resemblance is physical (apparent). The metaphor of the general level in this verse is the great chain of existence in which we could perceive the fruit of the hell's tree through metaphor of devil's head (Talebi Anvari et al., 2018, 72). Therefore, no real existence is considered for devil and its head is an imaginary image to express ugliness, which refers to abomination of blossoms of Zaqqūm tree in the Hell. Thus, it has nothing to do with what Arab's culture imagined it in the source realm.

3.3.2. *The tenth rule*

If the verse contains the similarity-based metaphor of non-apparent type in the source domain, the comprehension of the verse will be dependent.

For example, in verse 12 of Surah Muhammad, the metaphor of "unbelievers' eating as eating of cattle" is seen, which is a part of the great chain of existence metaphor. Several schemas have been used in this metaphor, which are aspects of similarity in this simile. Filling the belly, neglecting responsibility and not paying attention to *ḥalāl* (religious permission) and *ḥarām* (religious inhibition) of property are the common characteristics between unbelievers and cattle. The word *kamā* (as) has been used as the word of simile that indicates the similarity is non-physical (non-superficial) and behavioral. This is because the image of eating of cattle is not meant and unbelievers eat like other human beings, so we understand that the similarity of behavior and action is considered (Talebi Anvari et al., 2018, 62-63). The similarity in this metaphor is non-superficial, i.e. it is related to manners and behaviors. In other words, their faces do not

necessarily look like beasts while eating. Rather, their behavior and way of eating is functionally similar to that of animals, which presents the same picture for all cultures. As a result, cultural study in the source domain is ineffective to understand the meaning of this expression and the comprehension of this verse is independent of the cultural study (table 3).

Table 3. Some examples based on the features of the verses in the component of expressions

<i>Input</i>	<i>constituents</i>				<i>Output</i>
<i>Features</i>	<i>Type of expression</i>	<i>Type of metaphor</i>	<i>Type of similarity-based metaphor</i>	<i>Type of culture in the source domain</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>Quantities</i> <i>Verses</i>	<i>Metaphor/ Simile/ Metonymy</i>	<i>Similarity-based/ correlation-based/ experience-based</i>	<i>Superficial/ Non-superficial</i>	<i>General culture/ Specific culture</i>	<i>Dependent/ Semi-dependent/ Independent</i>
<i>The bird</i>	<i>Metaphor</i>	<i>Similarity-based</i>	<i>Superficial</i>	<i>Specific culture</i>	<i>Independent</i>
<i>Heads of devils</i>	<i>Metaphor</i>	<i>Similarity-based</i>	<i>Non-superficial</i>		<i>Independent</i>
<i>Cattle's eating</i>	<i>Metaphor</i>	<i>Similarity-based</i>	<i>Non-superficial</i>		<i>Independent</i>

3.4. The component of cause of revelation

We achieved two rules and four features for cause of revelation component, which are explained in this section.

3.4.1. The eleventh rule

If the verse have a valid cause of revelation which provide a referent for the verse, and interpretive evidences (literature, context, and verbal evidences) are not sufficient to understand the referent, then the output of the model will be dependent.

If a tradition of cause of revelation is sha'n al-nuzūl, i.e. it introduces a specific referent, such as the verses of al-wilāyah (Al-Mā'idah, 55), al-najwā (Al-Mujādalah, 12), and al-ikmāl (Al-Mā'idah, 3), the understanding of the verse will completely depend on the tradition. However, the point is that dependence on the infallibles' interpretive traditions is not considered a type of cultural-historical study, unless the tradition merely describes the space

of revelation time. Therefore, the comprehension of the verse is considered independent.

If the tradition of cause of revelation is not *sha'n al-nuzūl*, i.e. it does not introduce a specific referent, but merely expresses an example of the concept, it should be examined whether it helps to understand the verse or verbal proofs are sufficient. For example, the cause of revelation of the *al-wilāyah* verse reported that the donation of a ring to a poor man in prayer has been done by Imam Ali (PBUH) (Al-Qurtubī, 1985, 6: 221; Al-Suyūṭī, 1983, 2: 293), so the verse contains a special ruling for a specific person and does not include the general public (Tabatabaei, 1995, 6: 8). Although the understanding of the verse depends on the tradition, has maintained its independence from cultural studies.

3.4.2. The twelfth rule

If the verse has a valid cause of revelation which provides a meaning for the verse that cannot be inferred using proofs (context, literature, and rational, customary, empirical and religious decisive issues), the output of the model will be dependent.

In fact, if the cause of the revelation describes the verse in a way that is not of the type of introducing an example or referent, and the interpretive evidences cannot explain the same meaning, the understanding of the verse depends on the cause of the revelation. For instance, in the verse of *al-ahillah* (Al-Baqarah, 189), Tabatabaei trusted in the mentioned revelation cause which is a historic evidence and refers to a custom among ignorant Arabs in the Hajj time, to interpret the verse (Tabatabaei, 1995, 2: 82). Thus, the comprehension of the verse is regarded dependent (table 4).

Table 4. Some examples based on the features of the verses in the component of cause of revelation

<i>Input</i>	<i>constituents</i>			<i>Output</i>	
<i>Features</i>	<i>Type of cause of revelation</i>		<i>Type of the tradition of infallibles</i>	<i>Type of sufficiency of verbal evidences</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>Quantities</i>	<i>Valid/ Invalid</i>	<i>Referent/ Example</i>	<i>sha'n al-nuzūl/ The concept of the verse</i>	<i>Context/ Texture/ Rational evidence</i>	<i>Dependent/ Semi-dependent/ Independent</i>
<i>Verses</i>					
<i>Verse of al-wilāyah</i>	<i>Valid</i>	<i>Referent</i>	<i>sha'n al-nuzūl</i>	<i>Does not have</i>	<i>Independent</i>
<i>Verse of al-ahillah</i>	<i>Valid</i>			<i>Does not have</i>	<i>Dependent</i>

4. Conclusion

Qur'anic scholars, based on their principles, represent range of viewpoints about dependency of Qur'an comprehension on cultural studies. Considering these evidences, we produced a model to assess the dependency of Qur'an comprehension on cultural studies. The model input is a verse and its output is one of three dependent, semi-dependent, and independent modes for the same verse. This model provides the ability to evaluate input at four levels, which are named four components of the model. These components are cause of revelation, vocabulary, the subject matter and the expressions. In total, 12 rules flow in these four components of the model, which determine the output of the model based on the evaluation of eighteen features (or conditions) in the input.

It is worth noting that the conditions of the model were defined considering a range of various viewpoints, and enable users of the model to respond to these conditions based on their knowledge and inquiry, to receive output from the model accordingly. This model is shown in the form of tree diagram of decision.

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