

The Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis of the Holy Quran

Mohsen Varzandeh

Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran

Email: Mohsen.varzandeh@shirazu.ac.ir

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Given the interaction between language and thought, this novel work proposes a linguistic relativity hypothesis of the Holy Qur'an. Supported with evidence from thorough investigation of Sapir-Whorf's Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis, and linguistic characteristics unique to this divine book ranging from surface structure to deep structure, especially its semantic layers, the proposed hypothesis states that the linguistic structure of the Holy Quran influences and shapes the reader's thought. In the meantime, convergent thinking and divergent thinking emerge as two directions of thought, respectively. The language of the Holy Qur'an influences, shapes and directs one's thought about himself/herself and the universe.

Keywords: Holy Qur'an; language; thought; linguistic relativity hypothesis; Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Introduction

In linguistics, all languages are of equal value. Languages cannot be compared in terms of their value, however, the common people may think that one language is superior to another while this idea has no scientific basis. The recognition of the relationship between language and thought is one of the most important subjects in psychology and linguistics. It has long been believed that the language one speaks affects the way he/she thinks and how he/she perceives the world, and each language provides a different picture of the realities of the external world.

From the time man confronted different languages, he realized that languages are not used in a single way to refer to the external world. In English, you "wear" a hat and in Persian, you "put" a hat on your head. In Persian, "I know the city like the palm of my hand" and in English "I know the city like the back of my hand". "Saving jacket" in Persian is the same as "life jacket" in English. In Persian, you write with a *کَلَم*; In Arabic, you write with a *قَلَم*; in English you write with a *pen*, in German you write with a *Stift*, and in Spanish, you write with a *bolígrafo*. In Greece, "the owl is considered Athena's sacred animal; in England "the



owl is the god of the night"; in China "the owl is associated with lightning "; and "the owl in French, is a symbol of good fortune ". The existence of countless such instances has led scholars such as Edward Sapir and Franz Boas to claim that our perception of the world is to some extent shaped by our language. In other words, we perceive the world as our language delineates it; For example, the dozens of words used by the Eskimos for *snow* and by the Arabs for a *sword* and a *camel* imply differences in usage and in their perception of *snow*, *sword*, and *camel*. Sapir believes that language has a coherent nature, and a systematic and complete structure and is linked to thought beyond the word level. Sapir talks about the mutual influence of language and thought; he believes that there is a close correlation between language and thought, and one cannot think without language.

Different definitions of language have been proposed; including the following definition: "Language is used to convey the speaker's intent with particular choices of grammar and vocabulary, in a specific situation, with its own unique sounds and characters." In fact, language is an expression of thought and the potential power of the mind and needs stimulus. According to Ernst Schleiermacher, one must already know a man, to whom human language is unique, in order to understand what he says. The man who lives next to others takes advantage of his potential mental power.

On the other hand, the world and the phenomena within it play a decisive role in putting the speaking ability into practice. The effect of the environment on speech production is so obvious that some experts believe language can determine the way a person thinks and his worldview. However, Semyonovich Vygotsky believes that the relationship between word and thought is not stable but dynamic, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to the thought. Our language including vocabulary, grammar, and phonology can determine the way we see and think about the world. Although the influence of the environment, society, and dominant thinking styles should not be ignored, the influence of language on the formation of thought is undeniable. It is well documented that some language features direct our thought. Therefore, it can be concluded that language does not impose on its speakers a particular way of thinking, however, it plays a role in organizing his/her thought.

Edward Sapir says that language has a coherent nature, and a systematic and complete structure and is linked to thought beyond the word level. Sapir talks about the mutual influence of language and thought; he believes that there is a close correlation between language and thought, and one cannot think without language. Let us see the subject from another angle. *Discourse* is one of the

psychological antitypes of language and the medium for the interaction of language and thought. From a psycholinguistic perspective, the psychological process plays an important role in the production of speech. This process begins with a thought and then the inner coherent speech is produced through inner schema. Motivation or the need for communication plays a key role in shaping speech and discourse. In other words, behind the mental processes for the formation of speech, there is a discourse that expresses the views, opinions, and intentions of the speaker. Without motivation and stimulus, speech and discourse are not shaped. Therefore, the relationship between motivation and speech is of special importance. On the other hand, Vygotsky believes that the transition from thought to word is far more complex than is usually imagined; that is, the role of speech is not just to externalize your thought, but the process of shaping our thought has different stages and is completed in the form of speech.

The opinions of some philosophers of language on language and thought are also worthy of attention. For instance, Plato believes thought is the dialogue of the soul with itself. J.B Watson, one of the pioneers of the behavioral school of psychology, believes that thought is nothing but talking to ourselves in the form of slight movements in the vocal organs. Johann Gottfried Herder Believes that language and thought are inseparable. Language is not merely a tool for the expression of thought, it is the content and form of our thought. According to Herder, language and thought have a common origin and have gone through parallel development and evolution stages. He believes since language and thought are interdependent processes, the intellectual ideas of different nations and their desirable literature can be read and blamed only in their own languages. Humboldt considered language to be an instrument of thought and the external manifestation of the minds of people not merely an animal-like communication system. According to him, the forces generating language and thought are one and the same; In other words, language and thought are two sides of the same coin.

Result and Discussion

Theories of Language-Thought

In general, within the linguistic theory, there are two extreme positions concerning the relationship between language and thought: Mould Theories and Cloak Theories. Mould theories represent language as a mould in terms of which thought categories are shaped. Cloak Theories describe language as a cloak conforming to the customary categories of thought of its speakers. Linguistic relativity is more prominent among Mould theories.

Sapir-Whorf Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis

Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis was one of the most serious issues discussed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Germany. This subject is evident particularly in the work of Johann George Hamann, Johann Gottfried von Herder, and Wilhelm von Humboldt. *Sapir-Whorf Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis*: The particular language one speaks influences the way one thinks about reality.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis consists of two principles:

1. Linguistic Determinism: "Linguistic determinism is the idea that language and its structures limit and determine human knowledge or thought, as well as thought processes such as categorization, memory, and perception. The term implies that people who speak different languages as their mother tongues have different thought processes."
2. Linguistic relativity: "A principle claiming that the structure of a language affects its speakers' world view or cognition, and thus people's perceptions are relative to their spoken language."

According to the linguistic relativity hypothesis developed by Benjamin Lee Whorf, the structure of a language affects its speakers' world view or cognition, thought, classification of objects and affairs, judgment and reasoning in natural, biological, social, legal, and cultural categories. Man creates speech, and speech creates thought. In other words, language is an instrument for thought and a form in which the content of thought is formed, as well as the logic that determines the components of thought. According to some theories, differences in the system of thought can lead to different philosophies. Based on the linguistic relativity hypothesis language affects the direction, content, and structure of our thought and perception of phenomena, in the light of sociological and anthropological evidence. That is, language is effective in shaping our thought, perception, classification, and cognition of phenomena and limits our cognitive, perceptual, and judgmental biases.

Moreover, according to Sapir, human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. In other words, language is not just a random tool for communication, and man cannot adapt to reality without the use of language. The real world is, to a large extent, unconsciously built up on the language habits of the speakers. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. We see and hear and otherwise experience

very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

Furthermore, according to Whorf, as we do not realize that we need air till we are choking, we are unaware of the structural features of our language and if we pay attention to other languages we can realize that language shapes our ideas rather than merely expressing our ideas. So it shapes how we perceive the world, but we are not imprisoned by it. Whorf proposes that we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language. The world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory. We cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees.

Whorf's argument for this claim is "translation". If you try to translate a text from one language into another you will realize that translation is not an easy task at all. One of the reasons for the difficulty of translation is that words in different languages do not have a one-to-one correspondence. For example, in English, ape, and monkey have different definitions while in French, there is only the word *simien* for these two words. Also, different languages divide the same semantic field into completely different and overlapping parts. In English, for example, the three words road, street, and way cover the same semantic field as five words in French may cover, but none of these three English words is exactly the same as one of that five words in French.

Benjamin Lee Whorf believes that linguistic content and form are intertwined, and the use of intermediaries helps to shape meaning. Regarding linguistic relativity, Batini writes that since language divisions by world divisions are not illogical, and we think in terms of the categories of language, we perceive the world as our language delineates it. On the other hand, since different languages give different images of the world, each language has its own special metaphysics that its speakers perceive in terms of relative categories, in other words, speakers of different languages have different worldviews.

While only a few linguists have accepted the obligatory form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, many agree with its modified form, according to which a language affects its speakers' world view. In the modified Whorf-orientation, our thought is influenced by our language, not predisposed by our language inevitably. In addition, this process is two-way. That is, thought affects language

and language affect thought. The linguistic relativity hypothesis, which is more common today, consists of two main parts: Linguistic Diversity which states that all languages are essentially different; Our Language affects our thought, which means that the structure and vocabulary of a person's language affect how he recognizes and perceives the world.

The most famous experiment designed to test whether or not the linguistic relativity hypothesis holds true was performed by Carl Michael, Hogan, and Waller. In this experiment, various shapes were shown to the subject, with one of two descriptions underneath them. For example, once the image of a "crescent moon" was shown to the subject with the label "crescent moon" underneath and once again with the letter C underneath it. When asked to redraw what he had seen, he would change the drawing to make it more similar to the descriptions underneath it. This indicates the effect of language on thought.

As we have said, Sapir-Whorf claimed that language determines common cognitive/intellectual patterns, and according to relativity and determinism principles, speakers of different languages, under the influence of the grammar and language they use, view the world differently. This hypothesis has three versions: strong, weak, and cognitive:

The Strong version: "Language determines thought and that linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories."

The Weak version: "Language affects thought; that is linguistic categories and usage only influence thought and decisions."

The Cognitive version: Language increases or decreases the likelihood of thinking in certain ways.

According to the cognitive version of linguistic determinism, if a language has certain words to describe things but another language lack similar words, then speakers of the first language can speak about these things more easily. Also, from the point of view of formalist linguistics, especially Chomskyan formalists, the main role of language is "expression of thought". These formalist linguists believe that form is independent of meaning and thus consider meaning to be the product of form and that linguistic form i.e. syntax of a language has a biological origin, not the communicational origin. In general, according to the aforementioned discussion and according to the minimalist program (2000), language can affect thought considering the biological genetic foundations of language.

The Language of the Holy Quran

"Language" is of great significance in contemporary philosophy. Hosseini Ghaem Maghami says since the Second World War, the discussion of language replaced the discussion of epistemology. Western people have rightly realized that

the main problem is language. In the meantime, language has undergone changes. The general and traditional view is that language is a tool for expressing ideas, so our expectation of language is limited to the traditional view of language; Of course, the Qur'an contradicts the general and traditional view of language. In the traditional view, language is an instrument in nature. For example, paintbrush and painting canvas are painter tools and have no effect on the painter's thought or direct communication with the audience. In other words, in the traditional view of language, neither the audience nor even the role of language in conveying the message is considered. Hence, the traditional view of language is called the Picture theory of language, which was believed by traditional philosophers in the Islamic world and the West; however, it is rejected in the new approach and analytical philosophy. Wittgenstein, meanwhile, rejects this traditional view that "language is for expression and not for conveying a message" because it does not take the audience into account. Mystics, for example, have a private language called *shath* in which the audience is not considered. So a mystic expresses his perception of reality whether the audience is considered or not. However, modern philosophy refers to "applied" languages; i.e. language is considered a triangle with three sides: vocabulary, context, and message content.

In addition, audience understanding is taken into account in the language, and not every literature can be selected for each audience in any situation to convey a message. Note that the new approach is an important development. The Holy Quran does not use the traditional definition of language: "And we did not send any prophet except by the language of his people." This indicates that the prophets have conveyed messages in the language of their audience. The prophets were responsible for clear notification in the language of the people. They were audience-oriented. "We have sent down the Quran in Arabic, so haply you may reflect". Considering the language triangle mentioned above, although some people have considered the Quran's content to be Arabic from the beginning, the message of the Qur'an is not Arabic. In this the verse, the general audience is human and the message is trans-ethnic and historical, and on the other hand, territorial. At the same time, the audience must be considered.

The audience of the Qur'an is humans; the audience must have been considered so that the language could be shaped. If the audience was not considered, notification would not occur. The audience is important since it plays a pivotal role in language formation. Therefore, there is a distinction between the language of the Qur'an and Qur'anic language. The language of the Qur'an is not Arabic; it is the language of temperament, humanity, and human values and a

language for human beings. However, Qur'anic language, addressed to the first audience, is Arabic, the Qur'anic Arabic is different from the Arabic language and should be considered a unique and independent language because of its special features. In the new linguistic approach, a translation cannot be possible. Although it can be an approximate translation, you cannot be the audience for the text; since only a part of the Quranic language has been transferred, i.e. its vocabulary. The language of the Qur'an is communicative and guiding and it is consistent with Wittgenstein's theory of language games.

Therefore, Hosseini Ghaem Maghami believes that the language of the Qur'an is different from Qur'anic language and we should know Qur'anic language in light of the language of the Qur'an. Hence, today's audience needs commentaries on the Holy Qur'an and the whole Qur'an must be perceived instead of perceiving single predicates. So any perception of a verse must be within a network system. The language of the Qur'an is not a private language; it is the language of temperament and the language of humans. The language of the Qur'an is a common language and belongs to all human beings. Qur'an speaks of human beings in general terms considering them equally, and distortion in the Qur'an will change this characteristic.

The semantic layers of the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran is full of beautiful rhetorical effects and adorned with figures of speech such as metaphor and allegory. The illustrative Qur'an has artistic prose and rhetorical eloquence, and the arrangement and selection of words are meaning-oriented. Due to its unique stylistic and syntactic features, the Holy Quran has no common borders with other languages. In other words, it has its own lexical, syntactic, ideological, phonological, metaphorical, and metaphysical levels. One of the characteristics of the Arabic language is polysemy; that is, the speaker conveys several meanings using one single word. This linguistic phenomenon occurs in various ways, including verbal sharing. In the Holy Qur'an, verbal sharing is either accompanied by symmetry (which determines its meaning) or not accompanied by a symmetrical (probable meaning of verbal sharing).

Evidence shows that linguistic knowledge (style, lexical meaning, synonymy and collocation, metaphorical and figurative meaning and reference) as well as verbal, doctrinal, jurisprudential, and even sociological orientations and presuppositions are effective in our understanding of the verses. There is no unity of meaning and commentary for all the verses of the Holy Quran among the commentators since their interpretations of the divine verses are according to their

knowledge and awareness of the science of interpretation and the knowledge of the lexical meanings of words, and their schools and creeds.

One of the reasons for this difference in interpretations of the verses is the existence of more than one meaning for a word. In addition, other features of the Holy Qur'an are also involved in this difference, such as the possibility of being an absolute or restricted verse (Verses containing all instances of a concept are called absolute Verses that indicate a truth with a constraint are called constrained verses), being a general or special rule, the existence of truth or trope in the word, the existence of overt or covert pronouns which can have more than one interpretation, disagreement on being an abrogating or abrogated verse; the existence of decisive and allegorical verses, etc.

On the other hand, one of the characteristics of the Holy Quran is the congruence of the verses. This congruence exists between all the verses of a surah in addition to the co-descended and adjoining verses and helps the audience perceive the main theme of the surah. In other words, new meanings are discovered by recognizing the surah as an integrated unit and considering the relationship between the verses. "In the Holy Qur'an, each piece and sentence has an independent meaning besides the meanings it has along with other parts of the verse." This theory is taken from "Al-Mizan" by Allameh Tabatabai and relies on abundant narrative evidence and semantic capabilities of Quranic verses. Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, like some other Qur'anic scholars, believes that the Quran includes positions, stages, an apparent exoteric meaning as well as an esoteric meaning.

Therefore, he not only allows to be content with the appearances but also believes being satisfied with the appearances and neglecting inner, hidden implications can lead to perdition and ignorance of God. On the other hand, he forbids a group of people (who cannot tolerate listening to the argument and has not got a talent for such discussions) to think about some monotheistic verses.

These experts mention two conditions for entering the semantic layers of the Holy Quran. According to the rational and narrative evidence, the Holy Quran has different implicative layers. There are also many different narrations about the aspects of the audience and the limits of thinking about the esoteric meaning of the verses of the Holy Quran. The multiplicity of implicative layers is one of the characteristics of the Holy Qur'an as denoted by much rational and narrative evidence.

The Holy Quran is a book for all time and for all generations and the appearance of the verses has no room all the instructions and rulings meeting the

needs of human beings and some of the instructions of the Quran should be hidden so that deep thinkers can extract and infer them and put them at human beings' disposal throughout history, and this is the secret of immortality and universality of the Qur'an.

Discovering the underlying layers of meaning in the Holy Qur'an is very effective in achieving new interpretations of the Qur'an. Utilizing modern methods and new linguistic findings, along with applying the rules of the science of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence are considered effective steps in achieving the deep semantic layers of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an, as the infinite source of divine instructions, has various transverse and longitudinal levels and layers. This divine treasure and the narrations from Ahl al-Bayt (the family of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad Upon them prayer and peace) advise the audience to take advantage of all these semantic layers and levels. The extraction of these layers has been made possible in semiotics by introducing layered semiotics in Quranic studies. Various semantic dimensions of the text (explicit words with a single meaning) of the Holy Quran are achieved in vertical and horizontal axes (intra-textual and inter-textual relations) due to the multiplicity of different semantic layers and levels.

In addition to the multiplicity of different implicative layers within the text (explicit words with a single meaning) of the Holy Quran (vertical axis) resulting from the semiotic system within it, it has various philosophical, theological, scientific, political, narrative, intellectual dimensions in the horizontal axis. Each of these dimensions is an objective and textual manifestation of a symbolic system. An interpreter can achieve these dimensions through his cognitive knowledge of different symbols. Therefore, layered semiotics is a desirable technique for providing commentators with this framework. Layered semiotics can open the door to understanding and discovering different semantic layers of the Holy Quran.

In addition, the semantic implications of the Holy Quran have several features; these implications have multiple semantic layers and levels in addition to intertwinement (semantic interference and relations) and different implicative levels (including philosophical, scientific, jurisprudential, theological implications). Therefore, the Holy Quran differs from other text not only in the appearance but also in the hidden potential level not yet actualized. In other words, not only what the Holy Qur'an says, but also what it does not say directly (potential and hidden) would distinguish the Qur'an from other texts. Increase in the readers' knowledge and changes in their insights and attitudes from one era to another affects the

actualization of the Qur'an's contents, however, in other texts, we can see the least actualization over time. Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini writes in this regard:

The Quran includes positions, stages, an apparent exoteric meaning as well as an esoteric meaning of which the lowest stage is expressed in words; as it is stated in hadith: Indeed, The Quran possesses an external appearance and a hidden level, a limit and a beginning. For example, this holy verse refers to the differences between the audience's perceptions of the semantic levels of the Qur'an: "So when the night covered him [with darkness], he saw a star. He said, This is my lord." here, mystics may perceive the quality of Ibrahim's spiritual journey (SEIR-VA-SOLUK) while others may perceive his thinking about the world of appearances and the quality of his training. In fact, the Qur'an can affect humans' souls and minds and help them to understand the word of God through stories of the Qur'an stories as will be discussed later.

Of course, he does not attribute this difference to the mystical and non-mystical approaches, but believes that humans interpret the verses according to the degree of their perfection and their existential grades. In other words, a deeper understanding of the semantic layers of the Qur'an is not based solely on individuals' cleverness and intelligence. Although a logical and methodical analysis of the implications of the Qur'an and an investigation of the mutual influence and interactions of these implications in the Qur'an may reveal its hidden dimensions, correction and purification of the soul from impurities for observing the pure teachings and dimensions of the Qur'an is a unique feature of it.

According to the Holy Quran, piety is considered as the main condition for recognition of the truths in the Quran: "if you fear God, He will grant you the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood". This noble verse refers not only to mystical intuition but also to logical cognition ; for a further explanation we can say piety is effective in both intellectual understanding and heart-based intuition, to the extent that a complete and correct understanding of mental concepts and seeing objective truth will be achieved in the light of piety. It can be concluded that the discovery of the semantic layers of the Holy Qur'an is very important in achieving new interpretations of the Qur'an. Moreover, the application of modern methods and new linguistic findings in addition to the valuable rules of the science of principles of Islamic jurisprudence are considered effective steps in achieving the deep semantic layers of the Holy Quran. Also, the words of the Fourteen Infallibles, as well as commentators and religious leaders, should be used to ensure the correctness of such interpretations.

Arabic Language and Quranic Arabic

Arabic language and Quranic Arabic are vastly different due to the differences in syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical, and lexical functions besides the content depth. This difference was so obvious that the descent of the Holy Qur'an had a significant impact on the Arabic language. The Arabic language was used only to communicate in tangible and restricted everyday life situations and tribal events and adventures. However, the descent of the Qur'an led to the formation of a unique linguistic phenomenon: the scope of the words' meanings was expanded, the concepts were promoted from sensible to supersensible and from subsistence to afterlife, and many words obtained new usages beyond the boundaries of their lexical meaning. From a linguistic point of view, the descent of the Qur'an and the language of revelation had a very and profound impact on the Arabic language and literature. This is a wonderful book with extreme literary and verbal rhetoric and eloquence. Beautiful styles and extreme rhetoric as well as using technology for expressing the content and strengthening the order of content are among its characteristics.

Thanks to the Qur'an, the semantic field has expanded; since the Qur'an provokes thinking and promotes the concepts from the sensible to the supersensible realm. The meanings of the words have been carefully examined, and the congruity between word and meaning as well as the refinement of the words have been observed. The words not accepted by common sense are not used in the Qur'an. Interestingly, the words of the Arabic language have also been refined in imitation of the Qur'an.

Another important feature of Qur'anic Arabic is the breadth of implications; in this way, in addition to the lexical use, words have also been used for expressing religious truth. However, the second concept is not disproportionate to the first one; for instance, *Salah*, literally means praying but in religion, it also means performing special deeds. *Zakat* literally means to grow and to increase, and in Islam, it is a religious obligation ordering all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria to donate a certain portion of wealth each year to charitable causes. Or the words such as *believer*, *infidel*, *libertine*, *the hypocrite*, *fasting*, *uprising*, etc. with specific religious meanings are used in the Qur'an.

It is noteworthy that the common styles between pre-Islamic Arabic and the sacred text of the Qur'an do not indicate that the Qur'an was an ordinary commonplace text for the Arabs. The Qur'anic text, despite its extensive use of common Arabic language styles, had a new and innovative compilation mode and was considered a literary masterpiece. The early audience of the Holy Qur'an confronted, for the first time, a coherent text that changed their worldview with a

new system of ideas and teachings whose style of writing did not fit into a specific literary genre.

The uniqueness of the content and style of the text of the Qur'an is reflected in many verses of the Qur'an; The Qur'an considers itself a guiding, healing text and the light of the knowledge and teachings of God, and introduces its language as "clear" and expressive, and its words as the best true speech without any perversion.

The following list of unique linguistic features (in addition to the distinctive extra-linguistic and Metalinguistic features) of the Quran, which have made it a unique language in terms of form and content and independent of all languages, illustrates the fundamental difference between the Arabic language and Quranic Arabic, apart from differences in message, content, and deep semantic layers:

Verbal similarities; verbal and spiritual figures of speech such as the pun, Saj' (a form of rhymed prose), metaphor, Metonymy and Īhām (a literary device in which an author uses a word, or an arrangement of words, that can be read in several ways); precedence of sentence parts; music; extra letters in the structure of words and sentences; verb form shifting; The letter Nun (ن) used to convey emphasis; Meanings of verbs, especially the past tense; ellipsis laconicism leading to the omission of one or more words that are nevertheless understood due to the existence of symmetry which indicates the deleted words; multiple possible antecedents for a pronoun; Possibility of conjunction or appeal in the letter waw (و); Including metaphors; similes, Metonymy, and; speaking vaguely; redundancy (in which there is a subtle point adding to the beauty of the speech); Bound and Omission; truth and trope; Lack of accurate semantic equations in other languages; Unique syntactic structures such as a cognate object, Proper Noun, reflexive pronouns, etc.

The hypothesis of linguistic relativity of the Holy Quran

In addition to the specific features of the Holy Quran mentioned in previous sections, storytelling is another impressive and prominent feature used in the Holy Quran to express concepts and convey messages. One-third of the Qur'an consists of Qur'anic stories. From a literary point of view, literature can penetrate into the depths of human mind and feelings and indirectly make the reader think and search through the lens of lasting human values and stimulate his internal forces, especially cognitive processing, to perceive issues through critical thinking. In other words, storytelling may make the reader question, philosophize, and think. Hence, the creator of this unique masterpiece has used storytelling, which was the

first educational tool in human societies, as a means of conveying messages to humans so that they can perceive themselves and the universe.

As mentioned in previous sections, according to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity, the structure of language greatly influences the way a person perceives the world. The Holy Quran, as an independent and unique language in terms of form and content, is different from all other languages and has its own unique linguistic and metaphysical features. Moreover, through various semantic layers as well as storytelling, the Holy Qur'an has expressed the comprehensive concepts and secrets of the creation of man and the universe besides the attainment of human perfection from creation to resurrection and eternal life of man.

Therefore, the linguistic structure of the Holy Quran can influence and shape the reader's thought. In the meantime, two directions of thought emerge, respectively:

1. Convergent thinking: All human beings, as the audience of the Holy Quran, equally understand the general messages of this book at a surface layer regardless of their background knowledge and awareness.
2. Divergent thinking: All human beings, as the audience of the Holy Quran, differently understand the special messages of this book at a deep layer depending on their background knowledge and awareness.

Background knowledge means one's degree of knowledge in the field of linguistics, literature, logic and research methods, philosophy, theology, mysticism, ethics, history, sociology, humanities, religious sciences, Quranic sciences, and other scientific fields that are more or less, directly or indirectly involved in the process of analyzing and understanding the verses of the Holy Quran; *awareness* means one's degree of self-awareness and awareness of God, *self-awareness* goes beyond the concept of self-knowledge and refers to one's perception and awareness of his/her own existential dimensions, characteristics, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors over time, and *awareness of God* goes beyond the concept of the knowledge of God and refers to recognizing and feeling the presence of God, connecting and belonging to Him, and having a constant inseparable connection to God. The emphasis on *awareness* refers to the spiritual dimensions of this divine book. In addition, since the author of any written work should be able to communicate with readers, this variable can affect people's degree of intellectual orientation.

Conclusion

Accordingly, reading the verses of the Holy Quran, translating them, and deliberating them eruditely and knowledgeably can influence one's thought and

perception of himself/herself and the universe; in the light of convergent thinking, humans will share a common language and the same point of view. This is a vast wonderful field of research and in the postmodern and post-postmodern era, the hidden layers of this extraordinary book should be studied extensively and interdisciplinary and its endless treasures should be extracted within the human capacity using advanced research tools and methods. Clearly, learning and discovering apparent and hidden secrets of this unique miracle and understanding its practical messages are essential to human life; however, what our imperfect and limited mind can understand is only a single drop in the ocean. Perhaps, human beings will be able to experience immortality for which they have always been longing, through this elixir of life.

References

The Holy Quran

Sapir, Edward (1997). *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speaking*, translated by Ali Mohammad Haghshenas, Tehran, Soroush.

Batani, Mohammad Reza (2001). *Language and Thought*, Tehran, Abangah.

Palmer Farank (2002). *A New Look at Semantics*, translated by Koorosh Safari, Tehran: Nashre Markaz

Robert Lawrence Trask (2001). *Preliminaries to Linguistics*, translated by Faryar Akhlaghi, Tehran, Ney Publication.

Hosseini Ghaem Maghami, Seyed Abbas. *The distinction between the language of the Quran and the Quranic language. The Conference on Religion Language Pathology in the Contemporary World*, 2015.

Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, Sahifa Noor. *The international department of the institute for compilation and publication of Imam Khomeini's works.*

Parsaieyan Mohammad. 2018. *The multiplicity of semantic layers in the Qur'an from the perspective of Imam Khomeini / Conditions for contemplation on the dangars of the verses*

Asaadi Mohammad. 2015. *Semantic Layers and shadows: An Introduction to the Theory of Independent Semantics of Quran Corpus in the Light of Interpretive Narrations.* Qom Book Garden.

Noor Alizadeh, Miyanji Masoud, Bashiri Abolghasem, Jan Bozorgi Masoud. *The relationship between awareness of God and Self-awareness. Psychology and religion.* Year 5, No. 3, fall 2011, p.5.

Dabir Moghadam, Mohammad (1383). *Theoretical Linguistics - Development of generative grammar*, Second Edition, Tehran, Samt.

Robbins, R. H (2004). *A short History of Linguistics*, translated by Ali Mohammad Haghshenas, Tehran, Nashre Markaz.

- Safari, Cirous (2004). *An Introduction to Semantics*, Tehran, Surah Mehr.
- Safari, Kourosh (2001). *Seven speeches on translation*, fourth edition, Tehran, Nashre Markaz.
- Meshkat-al-Dini, Mehdi(1997). *Linguistics*, Mashhad, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.
- Rajaei Mehdi, Khaghani Isfahani Mohammad. 2014. The role of lexical deviation in discovering the semantic layers of the Holy Quran. *Quranic Linguistics Research (a new exploration of Quranic teachings) the third year, autumn and winter of 2014*, No. 2.
- Mohagheghyan Zahra. 2014. Layered Semiotics of verses of the Quran according to intra-textual and inter-textual relations. *Quran-Shenakht (Quran Recognition) Journal*. Seventh year No. 1, spring, and summer 2014.
- Abdollah Javadi Amoli. *Epistemology of the Quran*. nashr asra. 2014.
- Babazadeh Aghdam, Asgar; Talebi, Ghareh Gheshlaghi Jamal. 2014. A Critique of the Arabized words in the Qur'an in the mirror of modern linguistics. *Quranic Studies*. Spring 2020 No. 41, 57 to 77.
- Adel Ashkboos. *Characteristics of the Arabic language*. Summer 2015 - No. 97, pages 30 to 31.
- Ghoravi naieni Nehleh. The reason for the differences between the commentators in the interpretation of the verses of the Holy Quran. *Instructor of Humanities 2001*, Volume 5, Special Issue No. 6, 23; p. 115-138.
- Salimi, Hussein. Using storytelling to stimulate thinking. *Journal of Exceptional Education*. No. 99-98. March 2010.
- Eskandari Hosein, Kiani Jaleh. The effect of storytelling on increasing students' Philosophizing and questioning skills. *Curriculum Studies 386*, Vol. Winter 2, No. 7, p. 1-36.
- Afrashi, Azita (2002). *Reflective semantics, a new hypothesis in recognizing and explaining the meaning*, Ph.D. thesis in linguistics, Tehran, Allameh Tabatabaei University.
- Asher, R.E (1994). *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford. Pergamon Press.
- Lepschy, G (1982). *A Survey of Structural Linguistics*. 2nd Edition. London, Deutsch.
- April, 2001, The Sapir – Whorf Hypothesis: A Critique, www.aber.ac.uk/media/students/njp0001.html.
- Sapir – Whorf Hypothesis. <http://encyclopedia.lochergnome.com/s/b/sapir-whorf-hypothesis>.
- Book of Abstracts. International Conference on Qur'an Translation. 14-17 December 2014. Iranian Institute for Translation Studies. Allameh Tabataba'i University.
- Varzandeh, Mohsen. 2014. The impact of the translator's insufficient Qur'anic knowledge on their translation. International Conference on Qur'an Translation. 2014.