

## Providing a Model for Evaluating the Dependency of Comprehension of Qur'an Verses on Cultural Studies<sup>1</sup>

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Article History: Received 2 November 2021; Accepted 28 March 2022

Original Paper

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. 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

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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.

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

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## *I. 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 analyzed traditions of the cause of revelation in exegeses and used them to comprehend the verses.

Nowadays, 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 requires 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 the extent to which the Qur'an was influenced by the culture of the time since modernistic theories calls for shifting paradigms in Qur'anic studies and emphasizes investigating verses in a historical 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 make use of 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 to what extent 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 about and their analysis of 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 Concept of the Text* by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd is one of the significant works about cultural comprehension of the Holy Qur'an. He believes that the Qur'an text is a cultural product in its essence (Abu Zayd, 2001:68). He emphasizes that the Qur'an text should be studied in its historical context and as a result some of its concepts such as genie and Satan, which belong 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 (idem, 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 holding that the Qur'an is influenced by the culture of the time, and express two significant viewpoints: complete impressionability of the Quran by the culture of revelation era; 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 invalid. In addition, the 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 Esfehiani, 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 discussing Meccan Surahs, explains the degree of dependency of the Qur'an comprehension on the cultural conditions and shows to what extent the commentators have used the conditions of revelation era in the comprehension of the verses. 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 free from 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 Mojtabeh 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 takes into account the 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, 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).

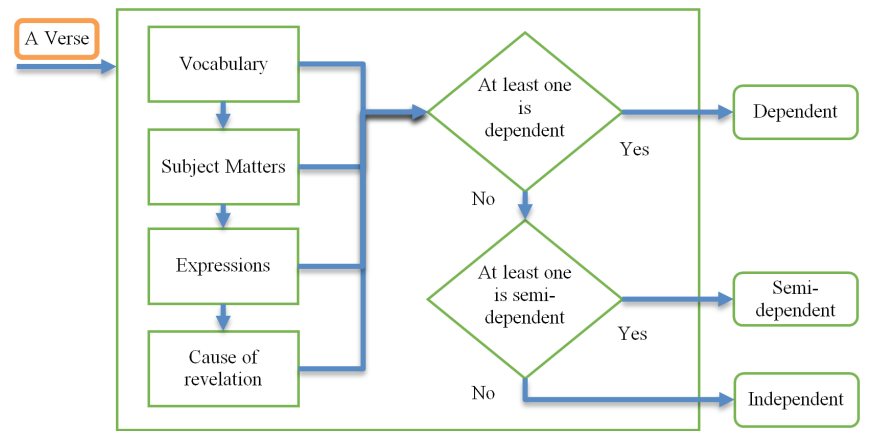
There is a medium approach too that believes that some verses of the Holy Qur'an depend on the culture of the revelation time. Marefat, Rezai Esfehani, and Khorramshahi are the proponents of this approach. They

believe that the Holy Qur'an was descended to impact the conditions, not to be impacted by them. Thus, the Qur'an criticizes and fights the ignorant Arab customs and is not passive against them (Rezai Esfehani, 2014, 4:64). Marefat also writes that corruption and prostitution pervaded the Arab society at the revelation time so that Qur'an was revealed to rescue them from corruption, slavery and exploitation and to donate a prominent civilization to all human beings, especially the Arabs. He affirms that many criminal sentences, considered as 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 the 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

In studying the literature 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.



**Fig 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. Semi-dependence includes the instances where an initial understanding of the verse is possible and the cultural study improves the audience's understanding of the verse.

Sometimes additional meanings 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 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. Vocabulary Component

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

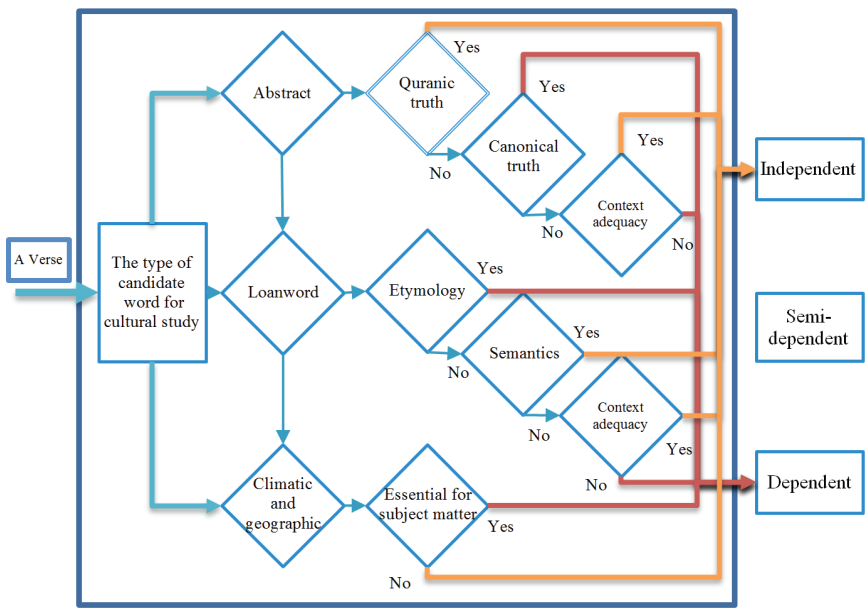


Fig 2. The detailed model for the component of vocabulary

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* (the Holy Qur'an 106:1), 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-Fil*, it is enough to understand the meaning of the verse – worshipping 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, 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 essential to the subject matter, the verse comprehension will be dependent.

For example, some modern thinkers considered the word *ibil* (camel) in 88:17 as evidence for comprehension of the verse dependent 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 surah in question is an early Meccan surah 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-Qarḍāwī, 2003:632). Therefore, some thinkers, while referring to its special features, consider mentioning this animal to be essential for the subject matter of the verse (Tayyeb, 1990, 14:98; Faḍl Allāh, 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 *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 *God and Man in the Qur'an* has tried to enter the cultural world of the Qur'an and research 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 dictionary meanings, have additional and new meanings derived from the context and the system in which they are used. These additional and new meanings, impacted by the Qur'anic thought system, are considered to be the actual usage of the word, although they are not directly included in the usages of the word.

For example, the word *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 *rūḥ*, unlike *nafs* (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 *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 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 (2:104),<sup>1</sup> 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-Ṭabrisī, 1993, 1:343; al-Bayḍāwī, 1997, 1:98; Tabatabaei,

1. O you who have faith! Do not say *rā'inā*, but say *unzurnā*, and listen! And there is a painful punishment for the faithless.

1995, 1:374). Second, it comes from the root *r'-n* 'engage oneself in foolishness and intellectual weakness' and the Jews of Medina intended this meaning. However, Eivazi quoted from Künstlinger that this word, within the context of Judaism and Christianity, connoted 'shepherd' which referred to God, the prophets and religious leaders without any negative connotation, 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* 'to shepherd' and the form is in correspondence with its alternative word *unḡurnā*.

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 *unḡurnā* instead, since the expression *rā'inā* was displeasing to Him. Therefore, it can be concluded that the verse 2:104 forbids the entry of Judeo-Christian literature among Muslims (Eivazi, 2017:214-215). Thus, this research shows that etymological study contributes to an accurate understanding of the verse.

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

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

Input	Constituents					Output
<i>rūḥ</i>	Ideological/ Abstract		Qur’anic truth	has		Independent
<i>qitāl</i>	Political/ Social		Canonical truth	has		Independent
<i>rā’inā</i>	Loanword				Etymology	Dependent

3.2. Subject Matter Component

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 divinely revealed real histories. 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 2:111 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),

contributes to the comprehension of the verse. However, a cultural study merely enhances the historical additional information, since the context clarifies the meaning 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 68:51 about which Tabatabaei writes, “*Izlāq bi-al-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 the 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. Some examples based on the features of the verses in the component of subject matters

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

### 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 conducted 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 36:18-19 and verse 27:47 was examined as follows. Metaphorical mapping<sup>1</sup> 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 chirping 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 used by Marefat (Talebi Anvari, 2018:461). As a result, comprehending this metaphor is independent of cultural studies.

In addition, in verse 37:65, in the imaginary realm of the mind, the 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. Its vehicle is

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1. If we consider the elements of the domain of a concept in one set and the elements of the domain of other concept in another set, mapping will occur between these two sets, i.e. elements from the source domain are mapped on the elements of the target domain (Houshang & Seyfi, 2009, 14).

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 the metaphor of the devil's head (Talebi Anvari et al., 2018:72). Therefore, no real existence is considered for the 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 47:12, the metaphor "unbelievers' eating as eating of cattle" is found, 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 form *ka-mā* (as) indicates that the similarity is non-physical (non-superficial) and behavioral. This is because the image of eating of cattle is not intended 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. Some examples based on the features of the verses in the component of expressions

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

3.4. The Component of Cause of Revelation

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

3.4.1. The Eleventh Rule

If the verse has a valid cause of revelation providing 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 *wilāyah* (5:55), *najwā* (58:12), and *ikmāl* (5:3), understanding 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 *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 understanding the verse depends on the tradition, it 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 religiously 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 *ahillah* (2:189), Tabatabaei, to interpret the verse (Tabatabaei, 1995, 2: 82), trusted the mentioned revelation cause, which is historical evidence, and refers to a custom among ignorant Arabs in the Hajj time. Thus, the comprehension of the verse is regarded as dependent.

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

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

#### 4. Conclusion

Qur'anic scholars, based on their principles, represent a range of viewpoints about the 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 are attested in these four components of the model, which determine the output of the model based on the evaluation of 18 features (or conditions) in the input.

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

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