

## PRAGMATIC MEANING OF QUESTIONS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN: SPEECH ACT STUDY ON THE VERSES ABOUT STORIES

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### Abstract

There are many kinds of questions in the Qur'an. This paper is about how questions are clearly described to show the connectivity of the components of the Quranic texts. Questions found in the stories of Qur'an are understood using contextual frameworks. The speech act theory is employed through content analysis. The result shows that questions in the Qur'an function as question words, to inquire about something of understanding the past and the future. Specifically, the questions are used to ask about the time, place, number, circumstances, case dubious and uncertain. Question words in its original meaning come out to another meaning and can be seen through the sentence structure. The function of questions is not as a question word anymore. Therefore, the sentences are not interpreted as interrogative sentences.

**Keywords:** Pragmatic meaning, speech act study

### Introduction

An intersection study between Tafsir and Linguistics is part of study of textual relations in the holy Quran, and usually regarded as *Munasaba* or the organic unity. Whether the Quran possesses such an integrity or not in terms of linguistic analysis of the verses and suras remain debatable among scholars. Dispute occur on the muslim literature on this issue in which the existence of unity within the holy scripture whose inimitability and authenticity exist. There might be cases, however, where the themes in consecutive verses are not related to the same idea unit. They are unified in terms of conveying the Islamic preaching to the recipients. Thus, spiritual unity can be traced in sequence of verses (Setyarahajoe, 2012).

In the Qur'an, many passages appear in dialogical forms. Readers can cover not only the Qur'anic but also the legal and theological debates using this broader perspective. Such a scope enriches the study of the debates so far and confines almost entirely to literary *munazarah*. Furthermore, it is helpful for us to take a closer look at the study of Qur'an in their literary and theological environments. By doing so, we take the benefits from the study of other dialogical forms in Arabic literature (Cuypers, 2007). The Qur'an disposes of a very huge argumentative vocabulary. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, with reference to this fact, has already enhanced certain forensic activities related to the Qur'an such as "explaining, proving, making manifest, etc."

Frequently the text asserts the persistent necessity of demonstrable proof and convincing argumentation” (McAuliffe, 1999).

Ignorance or lack of attention to aspects of rhetoric in the verses may result in a considerable number of forms and misconceptions. Metonymy, one important issue in rhetoric, is lack of understanding of the causes that raise in some verses of the Quran, especially related to verbal arguments, errors and misunderstandings. Shoaie and Lalehzari did some examination on the dimensions and angles of metonymy in the Arab Word, especially the Quran, its role in resolving some difficulty and uncertainty that are relevant to this discussion. (Shoaie & Lalehzari, 2016).

*Istifham* is one of aspects of rhetoric in Alquran is. Derived from the Arabic *istafhama*, *istifham* means you understand, know obviously. The addition of *aleph*, *sin*, and *ta'* at the beginning of a word make its functions as to ask. Therefore, it has a meaning of demand of explanation (*thalabul fahmi*). The term can be traced as follows; Al Zarkasi explains in his book *Al- Burhan fi Ulumil Quran* that *istifham* is to seek understanding of something unknown. *Istifham* in *Al Mu'jam Al Mufashshal* means looking for an understanding of the name, number, and nature of a thing. The definition of *istifham* in the book of *Al Balaghatul Wadhihah* is: seeking knowledge of everything that was previously unknown. *Istifham* has various meanings, covers one central purpose to look for an understanding of a case, as revealed by the author of the book *Al Itqan fi Ulumil Quran* (Chirzin, 1998).

This paper, therefore, makes an attempt in affirmative study of how *istifham*, which means questions in simplified terms, are clearly understood using contextual frameworks to enhance the connectivity of the components of the Quranic texts. In a specific manner, how questions in the stories in Alquran are found and understood by considering the context.

## **Methods**

This study employs “content analysis”. The study covers a series of procedures which is carried out to derive conclusions from a particular text. The desired conclusions which are attained may either involve the message itself or addressees or the sender of the message. In some are, content analysis can be used for many purposes (Weber 1990: 9).

The thematic analysis is the type of analysis in this study. Some exegesis methods focus on a specific subject and examine the verses from word to word in a systematic scheme which is parallel with this analysis (Namazi 2010: 49). The questions which are found in the verses about stories in holy Quran are analyzed following systematic and scientific procedures. After we determined how many times the questions which have been used, then they are analyzed which terms they have been used, how many times and in which sense in the text they were contained. In the section of results and interpretation, all conclusions are shown resulting from the analysis. To analyse discourse functions and identification of questions, pragmatic is used primarily to define whether the questions behave like genuine questions in terms of answer, the linguistic indicators that signal the rhetoricity of a question, and the settings in which rhetorical questions are used.

## **Result of the Analysis and the Discussion**

In this result of the analysis, questions are meant that the hearers have to provide a particular information to the speakers. The questions have many differences, but not all of those questions important for illocutionary taxonomies, it also covers a disclaimer exams and rhetorical questions. "Interrogative" also means something that is not contained in the "questioning", in addition to "probing" and "test" and they are not

applicable be used to report the contents of the question but they are only required to steer the topic.

The data analysis results can be seen at the table below.

No	Type of question	Stories	Number of Surah in Quran and Verses
1	Asking whether?	Noah	7 : 63
		Abraham	21 : 67
		Hud	7 : 69
		Dwellers of cave	18 : 9
		Ya'kub	2 : 133
		Moses	20 : 9
		Abraham	11 : 73
		Tsamud People	69 : 3
		Abraham	6 : 80
		Abraham	2 : 258
2	Asking will not?	Noah	71 : 15
		Abraham	21 : 67
		Abraham	29 : 19
		Hud	11 : 51
		Adam	7 : 22
		Abraham	29 : 19
		Mohammed	105 : 1
3	Asking the reason?	Hud	46 : 28
		Luth	27 : 54
		Ilyas	37 : 124
		Noah	71 : 13
4	Asking is there?	People of Ad	54 : 22
		People of Luth	54 : 40
5	Asking would you?	Moses	28 : 12
6	Asking have you?	Ilyas	37 : 125
7	Asking May I?	Moses	18 : 66
8	Asking who?	Isa	61 : 14
9	Asking which one?	Joseph	12 : 39

The table shows there are 10 verses that asks about whether? They are found in with Arabic variative questions. Firstly, أفلا (*Afala*) word is found in combination with several words, أ (a) means whether, ف (fa) means then, and لا (la) which meaning it is not. This sentence has a purpose to warn the people if we do not think wisely, we will not have a good deed. In Surah al Anbiya' (21) verse 67 it is mentioned further about Abraham's speech to his people that they would be damned along with statues they worship if they worshipped other gods than Allah. Didn't they realize their ugly and perverse actions? The worshippers of the statue was indeed cornered, once touted.

Then, there are 2 questions using أو عجبتم (*awa 'ajibtum*) which mean are you surprised? The questions are found in surah al Araf verses 63 and 69. God explains the Noah's criticism to his people (in verse 63). The people should not be surprised or

hesitant with the warnings from God which is brought by a man among themselves. Then, the question *اتعجبين (ata 'jabīna)* means are you surprised? It is found in verse 73 of surah Hud /11. " Do you wonder at Allah's decree?" the angel said. With His will, it is not difficult for Allah Almighty to confer children to anybody in spite of the fact that by custom and habit it is not likely possible to happen."

Question, *hal atāka* is found in surah Taha/20 verse 9. It has the meaning whether it has reached you? The verse is about Moses story, Muhammad the prophet when he was preaching his people asked whether it has come to him the Moses story and events with him. Then, in surah al Hāqah/69 verse 3 there is a question *وما (wamā)*. The question is about whether you know the Day of Resurrection? It is said *wa ma adroka* in the Qur'an, meaning that the Prophet was told about, the affairs he was not informed yet.

In surah al -An'am/6 verse 80, it is found a question *اتحاجون (atuḥājūnnī)* if you want to deny?. It is about the Abraham story, that is the truth got tough challenge from the people. When Abraham delivered the religion of monotheism, He was denied by his people. It is because he expressed the people's fault on idolizing stars.

Furthermore, there is a question *mā ta 'budūna* in surah al Baqoroh/2 verse 133 meaning what do you worship? This verse is attributed to the Jews, when they asked Muhammad s.a.w the Messenger, "Don't you know that Jacob in the days of dying bequeath to his sons to embrace Judaism? Then this verse came to argue their speech. The verse is against the truth of the Jewish people who dare utter such a way.

In the table above there are seven questions with 'would not?' First, in surah al Ankabut verse 19, there is a question *Awalam yaraw* is a combination of several words *أ* means what, *و* means and *ل* means no, *yaraw* that is *fi'il mudhori'* that means to see or pay attention. Thus the meaning is why they do not pay attention? Here Allah confirms when the unbelievers still do not believe in God Almighty as what has been delivered by His Apostles, then they are invited to see and think about the events themselves from the beginning to the end.

Surat Al Anbiya' /21 verse 67 there is a question *Afalā* are you not? It is associated with the verse which is previously disclosed regarding the pagan people who recognize that the statues were not able to listen, think and speak, then Ibrahim immediately responded by saying why they worship besides Allah something that can not give benefit at all, and not Similarly *madharat* can bring to them, even he can not speak and defend himself. In verse 67 it is mentioned continuation of Ibrahim greeting to them, that they would be damned along with statues they worship besides Allah. Do they not understand the ugliness and perversity of their actions? The question in a letter Hud /11 verse 51 regarding the prophet Hud in presenting propaganda to his people, he did not ask for wages and fees, so they can not accuse him of to look for advantage for himself.

Surah Al Araf/7 verse 22 on the question (*Alam anhakuma*) haven't I banned? with regard to the story of Adam and his wife when Satan tempted both of them as if he is giving good advice. Questions in the Al Fil ( 105 ) paragraph (*alam tara*) have you not noticed? is the story of the birth of Prophet Muhammad. While (*alam tarau*) have you not noticed? in Surah Noah (71) paragraph 15 is Noah asks his people to pay attention to the sky which consists of seven levels. This verse uses natural *tarau* (have you not paying attention). This question has meaning ruled to pay attention. Noting here means using the mind. Therefore, the way that commanded attention is common ways to use.

Questions (*awa lam*) if they do not? in the Al Ankabut (29) paragraph 19 is a series of warnings the prophet Abraham to his people.

The question of why? found 4 paragraph. First, surah Noah ( 71 ) paragraph 13 *mā lakum* why you ... . ? Namely Noah asked who had advised his people the sense that



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