

## A Pragmatic Approach Towards the Quran in Medieval Muslim Exegeses

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### Abstract

Muslim exegetes have long sought to discover the wise secrets, rhetorical points, and explicit or implicit messages embedded in the expressions and structures of the Quranic text. In addition to the common methods of using lexicological approaches, Arabic morphology and syntax, ancient Arabic poetry or narrating the exegetical sayings from the prophet's Companions to literally interpret explicit meanings of Quranic words, they sometimes appealed to intellectual methods in order to extract implicit and implied meanings hidden in some Quranic verses. In modern times, most of these technics and methods have been classified and introduced in various branches of linguistics. One of the relatively new branches of linguistics which concerns inferring implied, and intended meanings out of the utterances is pragmatics. The present study aims at conducting a comparison between the newly developed elements of pragmatics and some of the medieval Quranic commentaries which applied those elements. In this regard, three much discussed elements of presupposition, entailment and conventional implicature have been selected and then a number of old Quranic exegetes in which these three elements have been indirectly used are introduced. The study indicates that Muslim commentators of the medieval era were aware of these technics and extensively used them in their works.

**Keywords:** Quranic exegeses, Pragmatics, Presupposition, Entailment, Conventional implicature

### Introduction

In modern times, the newly developed forms of linguistic branches such as semantic and pragmatics have been extensively applied in demonstrating and elaborating the contents and meanings of speeches, texts and other meaningful signs used in various fields, having had prominent influences in discovering novel concepts out of them. Since religious studies are classified under text-oriented disciplines whose basic foundation, at least in Islamic tradition, appears in the Quran and Hadith commentary, paying special attention to linguistic principles is an essential element in understanding the religion main sources and may choose to

open new gates before the researchers in this field. Considering the early Quran commentaries written by Muslim scholars, however, indicates that such principles, although unknown to Muslim scholars in details, have been observed and developed in some of the Quranic exegeses.

One of the linguistic branches which can have great function in Quran interpretation is pragmatics. Based on the definition agreed upon by most Muslim exegetes, Quran commentary (*tafsir*) includes the attempts made by the exegete to discover the intention of Allah behind His word expressed in the Qur'anic text (Dhahabī, 1977). According to this definition, in Qur'anic *tafsir*, special

attention is paid to the true intention of Allah, beside the apparent meanings of the words and structures. In other words, the aim of *tafsir* is to unveil the meaning of the Quran at two levels: the semantic meaning understood by literally translating of the words and expressions and by the means of Arabic dictionaries and linguistic elements, and pragmatic meaning which refers to the implicit and hidden concepts intended by Allah but not directly stated. In modern linguistics, the science which deals with this aspect of meaning, i.e. the one intended by the speaker, but not stated explicitly and can be discovered by linguistic signs and contextual elements is pragmatic. (Carnap, 1942; Gazdar, 1979; Kaplan, 1989; Morris, 1938; Stalnaker, 1970)

It is obvious that in all forms of communication, whether verbal or written, much of the communicational content is conveyed by the means of implication, rather than by making overt statements. We can say that, it is in the nature of communication, and as a result, it can be true in sacred scriptures as well. This natural feature of any communication results from a number of concepts discussed in pragmatics. By applying these elements, the listeners and readers can infer the implicated meanings. Presuppositions, entailments and implicatures are some of these elements which cause to transfer and infer the implicit meanings in any utterances. Although these elements have been introduced and discussed in modern time, there are signs of applying the same technics in Muslim exegetical works during Medieval Centuries. These linguistic features besides a number of other elements were thoroughly and in details discussed by early Muslim literati which led to the emergence of Arabic Rhetoric in early Islamic period: "Rhetoric in Arabic illuminates the bridge between syntax and semantics. Through Arabic rhetoric, style becomes the link between

the linguistic form and context. Arabic rhetoric is a discipline through which linguistics, pragmatics, and aesthetics overlap." (Abdul-Raof, 2006, p. 3). The purpose of the present study is to identify and analyze the instances in which Muslim exegetes used these elements in interpreting the verses of Qur'an.

## 1. Methodology

The study has been conducted using a qualitative approach by the content analysis method. First a brief explanation of the elements used and discussed in pragmatics in order to determine the intention of the speaker or writer of an utterance will be offered, then the differences of these elements and the tests used to distinguish them from each other will be introduced, and finally, after introducing some of the medieval Muslim commentaries, the application of such elements in commenting on Quranic verses will be indicated.

### 1.1. Presupposition

The presupposition is one of the pivotal elements discussed in pragmatics. It is a concept which deals with implicit meaning and is based on actual linguistic structures of the sentences. The inferences made as the result of presupposition trigger cannot be thought of semantics, because they are too sensitive to contextual factors which play an important role in pragmatic meanings (Levinson, 1983). The notion of presupposition, first appeared in Frege's work on the nature of reference: "Referring expressions (names, definite descriptions) carry the presupposition that they do in fact refer. For a sentence to have a truth value, its presupposition must hold. A presupposition of a sentence is also a presupposition of its negation." (Frege, 1892). Yule defined it as: "Presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Speakers, not sentences, have presupposition." (Yule, 1996). Hudson says

"A presupposition is something assumed to be true in a sentence which asserts other information" (Hudson, 2000). The common point in all these definitions is that the presuppositions are the meanings inferred from the utterances and indicate what the speaker has taken for granted. For instance, the sentence: "John's sister is married" presupposes that John has a sister or the statement: "John stopped smoking" presuppose that John smoked before. It is worth mentioning that all the presuppositions inferred from utterances are just potential judgments and can be absolutely wrong, they can be attributed to the speakers after considering the context and making sure the speaker has not meant differently (Yule, 1996). Although, presuppositions are not stated explicitly in an utterance, they arise from various lexical and syntactic sources which are referred to as presupposition triggers. In the previous examples the possessive "s" and the verb "stop" are the syntactic and lexical elements giving rise to the presuppositions. Based on the triggers, different kinds of presuppositions are classified:

### 1.1.1. Different Types of Presupposition

George Yule states, six kinds of presupposition based on various lexical and structural elements causing presuppositions:

#### 1.1.1.1. Existential presupposition

The possessive constructions and definite noun phrases, i.e. definite descriptions give rise to the presupposition of existence. Based on the mentioned triggers, the speaker is assumed to be committed to the existence of the possession or entities named. For instance, the sentence: "Mary's dog is cute" presupposes: a) There exists someone called Mary, and b) Mary has a dog. These presuppositions are inferred due to the mentioning of the proper name "Mary" and the possessive "s". (Yule, 1996)

#### 1.1.1.2. Factive presupposition

The presupposed information following the verbs like: "know", "realize", "regret" and the expressions like: "be + aware, odd ..." which require a clause after them, is treated as a "fact" and is described as factive presupposition. Consider the following sentences and their factive presuppositions:

- a. She didn't realize he was ill. (>> He was ill)
- b. We regret telling him. (>> We told him)
- c. I wasn't aware that she was married. (>> She was Married)
- d. It wasn't odd that he left early. (>> He left early)
- e. I'm glad that it's over. (>> It's over) (Yule, 1996; Levinson, 1983)

#### 1.1.1.3. Lexical presupposition

There are a number of presuppositions which are triggered from specific lexical forms. These forms include implicative verbs such as "manage to" which indicate an implicit meaning beside the asserted one (Yule, 1996; Levinson, 1983), the verbs demonstrating a change of state like "Stop" and "start" (Saeed, 1997), the verbs showing some sort of judgment, like: "accuse" and "criticize" (Levinson, 1983) and the expressions like "again" and "another" which indicate the repetition of an action (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). For instance:

- a. He managed to pass the test. (>> He tried to pass the test)
- b. He stopped smoking. (>> He used to smoke)
- c. John Criticized Mike for plagiarism. (>> John Thinks Mike did plagiarize)
- d. You're late again. (>> you were late before)

#### 1.1.1.4. Structural presupposition

The presuppositions which are triggered to certain sentence structures rather than

specific lexical forms are placed in this category. Such presuppositions can be found in all wh-questions, adverbial clauses, and comparative constructions (Yule, 1996; Levinson, 1983):

- a. When did he leave? (>> He left)
- b. She wrote the book when she lived in Boston. (>> She lived in Bston)
- c. John is a better linguist than Mike. (>> Mile is a linguist)

**1.2. Entailment**

Entailment is another notion which deals with inferring implicit meanings from utterances. It is mostly discussed in the formal logic and is often part of the study of semantics. It is something that logically follows from what is asserted in the utterance. Sentences, not speakers have entailments. It is symbolized by //-( Yule, 1996).Because of its logical nature, entailment is not generally discussed as much in contemporary pragmatic as the more speaker-dependent notion of presupposition. (Levinson, 1983) The following sentence expressed in (a) can have the entailments in (b):

- (a) Rover chased three squirrels.
- (b) Something chased three squirrels  
Rover did something to three squirrels  
Rover chased three of something  
Something happened

Or the sentence, "The president was assassinated", entails "The president was killed"

**1.2.1. The difference between presupposition and entailment**

One of the most controversial issues regarding the notions of presupposition and entailment is the problem of how to distinguish them from each other. As these two notions are different by nature, linguists have suggested different tests to make them distinct; they have also mentioned a list of differences:

**2.2.1.1 Truth conditions**

As entailment is a logical form, it is subject to the factor of the truth conditions. There is such relation between a sentence and its entailment: A sentence (p) entails (q) when the truth of the first (p) guarantees the truth of the second (q), and the falsity of the second (q) guarantees the falsity of the first (p). For instance the sentence: "John can read." entails "John is literate". Now. If "John can read" (p) is true, its entailment which is "John is literate" (q) is true too, and if "John is literate" is false, the sentence "John can read" is false too. But if (p) is false, the entailment can be true or false. For example if "John can read" is false, we are not sure that "John is literate" is true or false, because it is possible that his disability to read results from other problems rather than illiteracy (Saeed, 1997)

Composite truth table for entailment

p		→	q
T		→	T
F		→	T or F
F		←	F
T or F		←	T

In presupposition, if the presupposition sentence (p) is true, the presupposed sentence (q) is true too, but if (p) is false, then (q) is still true and if (q) is true, (p) could be either true or false. For instance if the sentence "John's sister got married" is true, its presupposition that "John has a sister" is true too, and if the first sentence is false, still the second one is true. If the sentence "John has a sister" is true, the fact that "John's sister got married" can be true or false. (Saeed, 1997; Lyons, 1970)

A Composite truth table for presupposition

p		→	q
T		→	T
F		→	T
T or F		←	T
T v F		←	F

### 2.2.1.2 Constancy Under Negation

The presupposition of the statement remains true even if the statement is negated. In other words, the fact that is inferred from the statement as presupposed, can still be inferred from the negated form of the same statement too. For instance, while the statement, "My sister will get married soon" presupposes that the speaker has a sister, its negated form, "My sister won't get married soon" presupposes the same concept. In entailment this is not true. For instance, the statement, "The president was assassinated" entails "The president is dead". But, the negative form "The president was not assassinated" does not entail "The president is dead" (Yule, 1996)

### 2.2.1.3 Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

Another major difference between entailment and presupposition is in the necessary and sufficient conditions of the terms used in each utterance. In entailment, the inference is made through the analyzing of the terms and displaying the components making up the meaning of the term leading to the inference of the entailed concept. For instance, in the statement "John can read" the analyzing of the terms "can" and "read" would lead to the inference of the entailed concept "John is literate". In fact the necessary and sufficient condition for the concept understood from "John can read" is that "He is literate". In presupposition, however, the inference is not due to the necessary and sufficient conditions of the terms. For instance the statement, "John's sister will get married soon" presupposes "John has a sister" which is not a necessary component of any terms used in the first statement such as "John" or "married". (Safavi, 2011)

### 1.3. Conventional Implicatures

The term Implicature was initially coined by the Philosopher Paul Grice as

laid down in his seminal article "Logic and Conversation". In this article, Grice differentiated between "What is said" and "What is implicated" in an utterance. Although both make up the meaning and intention conveyed by the speaker, "what is implicated" is not part of what is determined by the truth conditional semantics, and for this reason it should be included in pragmatics. According to Grice, there are two kinds of Implicatures: Conversational Implicatures are the ones inferred through observing or flouting the so-called cooperative principle (CP) and a set of maxims. (Grice, 1989). Conventional implicature is an implicature that is part of a lexical item or expression's agreed meaning, rather than being derived from principles of language use, and is not part of the conditions for the truth of the item or expression (Levinson, 1983). Thus, the conventional Implicatures are derived from specific words and expressions such as *too*, *either*, *also*, *even*, *only* and so on. (Karttunen, 1979). For instance, in the sentence,

1. "Even Bill likes Mary",  
the expression "even" can give rise to the following Implicatures:
2. "Other people besides Bill like Mary"
3. "Of the people under consideration, Bill is the least likely to like Mary".

The word "even" in the above mentioned sentence has no function in determining the truth condition of the sentence, which is why it is believed to be an implicature. In fact that sentence has the same truth condition as

4. "Bill likes Mary"

So, if in reality, Bill does not like Mary, both sentences are false, but if Bill is not the least likely to like Mary, then the statement "Even Bill likes Mary" is not false, but misleading. Following Grice, the concepts in the sentences 2 and 3 are implicated by the sentence 1, but not asserted. Furthermore, they are 'conventional' because they simply arise

from the word 'even'. (Karttunen, 1979)

### **1.3.1. Difference between entailment, conventional implicature and presupposition**

An implicature is different from an entailment or a semantic presupposition, in that it is not necessary for the truth of the sentence. (Bach, 1999). Grice does remark that conventional implicatures are detachable but not cancelable, but this cannot serve as a test for their presence. It does distinguish them from conversational implicatures, which are cancelable but not detachable (except for those induced by exploiting the maxim of manner, which depend on how one puts what one says), and from entailments, which are neither cancelable nor detachable. However, detachability is not an independent test. If a supposed implicature really were part of what is said, one could not leave it out and still say the same thing. To use 'and' rather than 'but', for example, would be to say less. (Bach, 1999)

Unlike an entailment the inference made in conventional implicature is irrelevant to the truth conditions of the proposition. It is cancelable and detachable. In the level of conventional implicatures in the study of meaning we claim that we can speak truly even if the information conventionally implied by our statements turns out to be erroneous. This sole feature isolates conventional implicatures from what is said, what is entailed, and what is presupposed. If what we say/entail is false, then our claim is judged to be false. (Sanz, 2007) Thus, the falsity of entailment and presupposition result in the falsity of the utterances from which they are arisen. For instance, if the utterance, "the president is dead" which is entailed from "the president was assassinated" is false, then the utterance "the president was assassinated" is also false, furthermore, if the utterance "France has a king" which is presupposed by the "The king of France is bald" is false, the

latter is necessarily false too. For the cases of conventional Implicatures, however, the falsity of implied concept has no influence on the falsity of the utterance with implicature's trigger. For instance, the utterance, "John is an English man, therefore he is brave" gives rise to the implicature that "John's bravery stems from his being English" due to the application of the term "therefore". Now, if in fact, John's bravery has nothing to do with his nationality, the utterance "John is an English man, therefore he is brave" is still right.

The CI-thesis says that there are certain locutions which give rise to implicatures by virtue of their meanings. The propositions are said to be implicatures because their truth value does not affect the truth value of the entire utterance, so that the falsity of such a proposition is compatible with the truth of the entire utterance. (Bach, 1999)

## **2. Presuppositions in the Quranic exegesis**

In early and medieval Muslim commentaries, there are various references to the implicit meanings conveyed by some Quranic verses. Some of them can be classified under presuppositions. Below are a few instances of Quranic verses including presupposition triggers which have been identified by early Muslim exegetes.

2.1. In Sura 26<sup>th</sup> of Quran, the anecdotes of several ancient prophets and the messages they carried to the people have been mentioned. There are several verses with somehow similar wordings by which the stories of the prophets begin. Here are some instances:

When Shu'ayb said to them: " Will you not perform your duty? (Quran, 26:177 )

When their brother Hud said to them: " Will you not do your duty?(Quran, 26:124)

When their brother Salih said to Them: " Will you not do your duty?(Quran, 26: 142)

When their brother Lut said to them:  
Will you not do your duty?(Quran, 26:161  
)

In the last three verses, the expression "their brother" has been used to refer to the prophets: Hud, Salih and Lut, while, when mentioning the prophet Shu'ayb, the expression "their brother" has not been used indicating that Shu'ayb was not considered one of the members of their society.

The presence of the expression "their brother" in three verses and its absence in the other can imply an additional meaning which can be included in presupposition. As mentioned above, one of the sub-categories of presupposition is existential presupposition which focuses on the definite expressions and possessive structures. In these Quranic verses, the expression "their brother" can give rise to this existential presupposition: the mentioned prophets were the native members of those societies and for this reason they were described as "their brother", while the negation of this expression in Shu'ayb verse indicates that there is no such presupposed fact. This presupposition trigger has been largely mentioned by Muslim early exegetes. For instance, in his commentary *Anvār al-Tanzīl va Asrār al-Ta'vīl*, *Beyḍāwī* says: "The dwellers of Aikah belied The Messengers'. Aikah was a town located near Madyan to which Shu'ayb was sent and he was not from that place, that is why God says: 'When Shu'ayb said to them: "Will you Not fear from Allah and regard piety." And did not say: When their brother Shu'ayb said..." (*Beyḍāwī*, 1998). *Qurtubī*, another prominent Quran commentator has a similar view: "... in this verse Shu'ayb has not been described as 'their brother' since he was not from the town of Aikah, rather he was from the city of Madyan." (*Qurtubī*, 1985)

2.2. In the second chapter of the holy Quran, verse 2, we read: "This is the Book,

there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the God wary". The phrase "the book" in this verse, which includes a definite article, refers to the Quran. As elaborated above, the definite expressions can give rise to existential presupposition. For instance, in the utterance: "The king of France is bald", the phrase "the king" presupposes the existence of such a person as the king of France. In some of the early Muslim uranic exegeses, this presupposition has been pointed out in the above mentioned verse. Mentioning the definite expression of "the book", they concluded that by the time of revelation of the second chapter, Quran had already been collected as a book. Since this chapter was revealed in Medina, the phrase "the book" in this verse refers to the Meccan chapters which were collected and formed in a scripture. For instance, *Ṭabarī* the prominent Muslim exegete of the twelfth century, in his *Jāmi al-Bayān* remarks: "By the expression 'This is the Book' the Quranic chapters which were revealed in Mecca and Medina prior to the revelation of the second chapter are meant. Thus, it seems as if Almighty God says to His Messenger: 'O Muhammad! In this Quran which includes the previously revealed chapters, there is no doubt (*Ṭabarī*, 1992). The fourteenth Muslim commentator, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, makes similar conclusion adding that the verse clearly proves that unlike the popular view of collecting Quran after the prophet Muhammad's death, it was done during his lifetime. (*al-Rāzī*, 1999, see also *Qurtubī*, 1985)

2.3. In chapter two, 3<sup>rd</sup> verse of Quran, we read: "[The pious are:] Those who believe in The Unseen; are steadfast in performing Prayers [five times daily]; and spend out [To the needy] of what We have provided For them." Here, the pious people are described as those who help the needy with what God has provided for them. Instead of simply saying "with what they own", the Quranic text mentions "with

what we have provided for them". The verb "provided" in this verse may trigger this presupposition that for charity, the person must have gained the property in a lawful and legitimate way so that it can be described as God's provision. Therefore, if a man owns money through an illegal way, it will not be regarded as God's provision and then spending such money out to the needy will not be taken as real charity. Since this presupposition is triggered by the verb "provide", it can be classified under lexical presupposition. Zamakhsharī, one of the greatest Muslim exegete of the fourteenth century has clearly alluded to this: "This verse indicates that unlawfully gained property is not considered provision, since God praises only those who spend money on charity with what He provided for them, and it is obvious that spending the unlawful money on charity does not deserve praise, thus it is not considered divinely provided property." (Zamakhsharī, 1987, See also Ṭabarsī, 1993)

2.4. The 22<sup>nd</sup> verse of the second chapter of Quran says: "So do not set up equals to Allah, while you know". Here the verb, "know" points to the previous utterance: "do not set up equals to Allah". As explained above, factive presupposition, which is triggered by the verbs such as "know" is one of the extensively applied kinds of presupposition. In this Quranic verse the verb "know" can presuppose the fact that all people know by nature that there are no equal beings to Allah, but since they are immersed in material pursuit, they have ignored this inherent awareness. Muslim exegetes were aware of this presupposition and obviously alluded to it. For instance, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī says: "... What is meant by the expression: 'while you know'? Response: It means that you human beings, because of your perfect wisdom and intellect have already known that such idols are not qualified to be considered

equals to God..." (al-Rāzī, 1999, See also Beyḍāvī, 1998; al-Rāzī, 1999). Thus, the mentioned verb, according to the Quranic commentaries, implicitly utters that all mankind enjoys a kind of innate awareness of monotheism.

3. 5. Chapter two, verse 30<sup>th</sup> of Quran says: "When your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth,' they said, 'Will You set in it someone who will cause corruption in it, and shed blood...'"

This verse reports on the dialogue occurred between Allah and the angels during the process of creating Adam. When God informs the angels of his intention to create Adam and his progeny on earth, they pose a question and say, why will you create beings that will spread out corruption? Irrespective of the meaning and purpose of this question which has aroused a lot of discussions among Muslim commentators, the issue which mostly concerns us here is the fact that has been presupposed in this question, that is the angels had already known that human beings will cause corruption and bloodshed on the earth, while apparently they had no previous experience of human acts to make such a judgment. Thus, although the question directly indicates the surprise, objection or the inquiry of the angels (based on different views expressed by the commentators), it implicitly presupposes that, the angels were aware of the future performance of human beings and their corruption on the earth. Therefore, it can be categorized in either structural or factive presupposition, as the former is triggered by a wh-question, which is available here, if the question in the verse is analyzed into its ultimate purpose of asking the reason behind creating mankind on the earth, and the latter is arisen due to the fact pointed to by the question. This presupposed fact which is inferred from the question in the verse has been mentioned by many of Muslim exegetes,

for instance Ṭabarī after mentioning a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās states: "This tradition from Ibn 'Abbās indicates that 'When your Lord said to the angels,...' means God addressed just a special group of angels, not all of them. And this group of angels consisted of the angels who were related to Iblīs with whom they had fought against the Jinni on the earth before the creation of Adam... and because this group of angels were aware of the corruption spread out by the Jinni, they could foretell the same thing with the creation of Adam" (Ṭabarī, 1992).

Ṭabrisī, has also this to say: "Based on the question in the verse, the angels already knew about man's corruption on the earth. Various explanations have been suggested for the reason how they were informed: 1- many of the commentators suggested that prior to the creation of Adam, there used to live other forms of creatures on the earth who made corruption and God sent His angels to expel them. Then the angels asked God whether the new creatures would do the same corruption or not. 2- The question posed by the angels was a real one by which they were seeking the purpose of creating Adam. 3- According to Ibn 'Abbās, God had already told the angels that Adam's offspring would cause corruption and blood shed on the earth, and when He created Adam, the angels asked God to know whether this Adam is the same creature whose offspring will commit corruption or not." (Ṭabrisī, 1993, See also al-Rāzī, 1999). All the possible explanations given by the exegetes to justify the reason why the angels asked the question, stem from the presupposition inferred from the question itself.

### 3. Entailments in Quranic exegeses

Considering its style of brevity and inclusion of numerous concepts in shortest structures, Quran encompasses a large number of implicit referents inferred from the terms and structures used in its verses.

Application of specific wordings with special implications and connotations can lead to a vast range of inferences. Muslim exegetes from the early centuries were aware of such hidden concepts and pointed to them in their works. Some of these inferred meanings can be placed in the category of entailed meanings as explained above. Two instances have been mentioned below:

3.1. "When your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth,' they said..." (Quran, 2: 30). This verse mentions the time when God informed the angels of His intension to create Adam, but instead of simply saying 'I am going to create Adam on the earth,' he said '... to set a viceroy on the earth...' the application of the structure "set a viceroy" can have various implications one of which is the superiority of Adam over the Angels. As claimed by many commentators, the term 'viceroy' here refers to the prophet Adam or all human beings and also they believe that the expression means that man is considered as the viceroy "of God" on the earth, then the complicated clause of "set a viceroy" used in the verse, logically entails the supreme position of Adam and his offspring before Allah, since they, not the angels, have been appointed to have such function on the earth. This implicated meaning which is inferred from the above mentioned structure can be an example of entailment, as firstly it has no constancy under negation, because if the sentence is negated to "I am not going to set man as viceroy on the earth" the implicated meaning of superiority of man is not inferred, and secondly the entailed meaning is understood from the necessary and sufficient conditions of the term "viceroy". In fact, if the meaning of the term is analyzed, one would confirm that such supremacy for man is naturally inferred.

Referring to some of Muslim exegetes indicates that such entailed meaning has

been noticed and mentioned. In earlier works, the inferred meaning of man's superiority has not been directly specified, but as we go ahead towards the later commentaries, it is more openly and explicitly mentioned. For instance, Beizāvī says: "... and the benefit of saying this to the angels is to mention the high position of this creature and to make the angels sure that man, in spite of his tendency toward corruption, possesses the features which justify his creation..." (Beizāvī, 1998). Fakhr Rāzī, mentions the views expressed by the early exegetes about the meaning of *Khalīfah* (viceroy), but does not point to the entailed meaning of man's supremacy: "The eighth question: *al-khalīfah* (the viceroy) who succeeds and who is succeeded? About the one who succeeds, there are two views: according to the first it is Adam who succeeds but the angels' question 'Will You set in it someone who will cause corruption in it, and shed blood...' (Quran: 2: 30) refers to his offspring. The second view holds that Adam's children are the ones who succeed. About the reason why Adam has been described as "the viceroy" and who does he substitute there are some views: one says that Adam substitutes the Jinni that used to live on the earth and were expelled by God, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Masūd say: Adam was sent to the earth as a viceroy to judge among people and to enforce His rules." (al-Rāzī, 1999) Ālūsī, the great commentator of the 19th century holds: "... it is also said that 'the viceroy' refers to the successorship of Adam and his offspring. This inference is confirmed by the angels' question and objection. By mentioning this, God proves the superiority of mankind over them..." (Ālūsī, 1995). Ibn 'Ashūr, one of the prominent exegetes of the 19th century has explicitly alluded to the entailed meaning inferred from the verse: "Here God reports to the angels the issue of creating His viceroy in order to have them realize the supremacy of the human beings

in nature, as He had already been aware of the suspicion they had in their minds about this creature." (Ibn 'Ashūr, 1985)

3.2. "They, [the hypocrites] are the ones who have purchased error at the price of guidance." (Quran, 2:16) In this verse, the status of the hypocrites has been analogized to the merchants who trade error for the guidance; a transaction in which the buyer is obviously the loser. The application of the term *Shirā'* (buy or purchase) in the verse which implies trade and exchange, contains this entailed concept that the hypocrites possess the price of their trade which is guidance. In other words, the verse implicitly points out that the hypocrites at the time of the prophet were guided or believers and then they exchanged it with misguidance. Here one may wonder what is meant by the guidance in this verse while we know that the hypocrites at the time of prophet were pagans and devoid of any kind of guidance? Perceiving such entailed meaning, many of Quran commentators have tried to explain and justify the meaning of guidance in the verse. For instance Zamakhsharī says: "If you say how they could buy error for guidance while they were certainly misguided, I would say since they were exposed to the guidance and could easily convert to Islam, it seemed to be in their hands and when they did not keep it and remained in the wrong way, it looked like they exchanged it with error, also the guidance here could mean the inherent and natural belief in everyone bestowed by God upon creation and pointed to in Quran: 'Allah has originally Created the nature of man's soul with Full tendency and love for the Divine Unity.' (Quran: 30:30) (Zamakhsharī, 1987). Ṭabarsī, after mentioning the entailed concept inferred from the phrase "buying error for guidance" and the consequence question raised by Zamakhsharī, suggests various explanations: "... by the guidance

mentioned here it is meant the indigenous belief laid down in every individual's nature by birth. Kalbī and Muqātil say: Before Prophet Muhammad, the hypocrites, based on the information they read in the divine scriptures, were expecting the advent of a promised prophet in whom they had already believed, but when he announced his mission, the hypocrites denied him and bough the error for the guidance they had already gained." (Ṭabarsī, 1993)

#### 4. Conventional Implicatures in Quranic exegeses

As mentioned above, a conventional implicature is an implicit meaning inferred from specific lexical forms and is not derived from principles of language use or contextual signs and is not part of the conditions for the truth of the item or expression. The common triggers which give rise to this kind of implicature and are mentioned by most linguists include: *but, too, either, also, even, only*, etc. In other words, conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions whose main function is to make a link between the components of a sentence and are categorized in Arabic language under *hurūf* give rise to conventional implicatures.

Since Quran includes numerous linking words similar to those triggering conventional implicatures and because such words contain multiple meanings expressed in Arabic dictionaries, Muslim exegetes paid much attention to the meanings of such words and managed to infer implicit and implied concepts out of the verses which include linking words. Such inferences can be categorized under conventional implicatures. Here are a few instances:

4.1. "[The pious] are on the Guidance from Their Creator and Nurture." (Quran, 2: 5)

In this verse, giving a description of the pious, God says, they are the ones who are

on the guidance. The application of the preposition "on" here is not necessary, as it could be: they are the ones who have guidance. Thus the preposition implies an extra concept which is not relevant to the truth conditions of the sentence but is significant in conveying the real intention behind it. This implicit meaning could be exactly what is introduced by Grice as conventional implicature. In some Quranic exegeses, this implied meaning which is understood by the word "on" has been pointed out: Zamakhsharī says: "the use of the word "on" in this verse indicates sublimity and dominance which means that the pious are dominant over guidance and it is within their reach like when it is said a person is sitting on something which means he dominates it." (Zamakhsharī, 1987). According to Zamakhsharī the extra meaning implied by the word "on" is the dominance and stability of such people over the guidance. Beyḍāwī mentioning the same comment adds: "in this verse, the application of the word "on" is to analogize the pious people to the jockeys who have control over the horses." (Beyḍāwī, 1998) FakhrRāzī remarks: "the verse indicates that the pious people must stick to the guidance and safeguard it against the doubts and misgivings." (al-Rāzī, 1999)

4.2. "When they are told," Do not cause corruption on the earth," they say," We are only reformers!" (Quran, 2:11)

In this verse Almighty God narrates the dialogue going on between the hypocrites and the believers. It says, when the believers tell the hypocrites not to cause corruption, they reply: we are just reformers and do not spread corruption. Here the application of the adverb "only" may lead to the inference of some implied meanings. "Only" is used to indicate a concept of restriction in a case where there is a possibility of generality. Thus, "only" is used whenever the speaker tries to emphasize on specific act, and not others, being done by the doer, and this happens

when it is assumed other acts are done too and the speaker would strongly reject it. In this verse, the hypocrites say they are only reformers to strongly reject the assumption of their act causing corruption. In fact, the extra meaning implied by "only" is the emphasis placed by the hypocrites on their act as a sample of reformation. Also it implies that, in spite of Muslims' accusation, they strongly regarded their acts as admirable which indicates either their deep hypocrisy or profound misguidance. These implied concepts, which can be regarded as conventional implicatures, have been mentioned by some Muslim exegetes. Ṭabarsī remarks: "... as for the reason why they considered themselves only reformers, two viewpoints have been suggested: 1- the hypocrisy which was practiced by them and was believed by the Muslims to be a kind of corruption, was rendered by themselves as an acceptable action. 2- They denied all the evil acts they were committing and claimed they were just performing the virtuous ones." (Ṭabarsī, 1993). Beyḍāvī holds that the insistence and emphasis of the hypocrites on just doing reformation is itself a sign of their hypocrisy and sickness which Quran alludes to: "There is a sickness in their heart." (Quran, 2:10) (Beyḍāvī, 1998). Pointing out the above mentioned possibilities, FakhrRāzī adds a third view. He says: "If the previous clause is rendered as: when they are told, do not cause corruption by interacting and associating with the pagans... then, the sentence 'we are only reformers' means that they really believed that by associating and talking with the pagans, they will be able to make peace between the Muslims and the pagans, the concept which has been emphasized by this Quranic verse: 'then they Come to you swearing by Allah, Saying: "We did not mean but Good-will and concord."' (Quran, 4: 62) (al-Rāzī, 1999).

## 5. Conclusion

The review of a number of old Quranic commentaries in interpreting the selected verses will reveal the following conclusions:

- Although the linguistic and pragmatic principles have been discovered and developed in recent centuries among western scholars, since they are mostly based on rational and common rules of communication, samples of these principles can be detected in old Muslim exegeses, indicating that although Muslim exegetes did not explicitly mention these linguistic principles, they practically applied them in their works and in discovering the ultimate meaning behind divine text.

- Considering the signs and triggers such as, definite structures, factive verbs, conditional sentences, wh questions and...in Quranic verses, can lead us to the presupposed meanings included in the verses and can reveal new concepts and implicit intentions behind them.

- Analysis of the literal meanings of Quranic words and expressions and paying attention to the necessary and sufficient conditions of those meanings may cause to discover various entailed meanings and implications.

- Also, implied meanings can be extracted from the linking words and expressions in Quran and can lead us to the recognition of delicacy, elegance and eloquence of Quranic text.

- Considering the presupposition of Muslims in regarding Quran as a divine revelation whose messages are eternal and undying with profound and multilayer meanings, it is incumbent upon Muslim exegetes to apply the new linguistic approaches to infer novel and implicit meanings from Quranic text and they can be sure that they will be following the methods already applied by previous prominent exegetes.

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