

The Root “Akhaḍ” “to take” and Its Pragmatic Connotations in Qur'anic Context A Practical Study in Light of Pragmatics

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Abstract

Qur’anic context is distinguished by its precision and semantic polysemy, making it fertile ground for analysis through modern linguistic approaches, like pragmatics, which focuses on language in context, speech acts, presuppositions, and implied meaning. The root “Akhaḍ” (to take) and its derivatives appear frequently in the Qur’an and convey pragmatic connotations that extend beyond their lexical meanings. This study aims to explore the semantic implications of “Akhaḍ” in Qur’anic usage, analyzing it pragmatically to uncover the layers of meaning shaped by intentionality, context, and communicative setting.

Semantic analysis represents one of the most prominent levels in modern linguistics and forms the foundation of pragmatic methodology. Qur’anic verses featuring the verb “Akhaḍ” are loaded with profound meanings and purposes within compact expressions. These cumulative semantics are not merely concise but serve as intensified expressions that blend brevity with richness to leave a lasting impact on the recipient. The verb appears in multiple forms in the Qur’an, reflecting meanings ranging from punishment, acquisition, elicitation, control, and others.

Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammed and his pure, immaculate household.

Arabic, unlike other Semitic languages, is uniquely honored as the language of the

Qur’an—a status that motivated deep linguistic inquiry into its mysteries and wonders. With the revelation of the Qur’an and the rise of Islam, Arabic became the lingua franca of Muslims, including non-Arabs. Scholars, fearing corruption in pronunciation and grammar, began documenting and studying Classical Arabic to preserve the Qur’an from misarticulation and mis-composition. Among the foundational linguistic sciences they studied was syntax and grammar (nahw), which safeguarded the language’s essential qualities and remains the most noble and beneficial of linguistic disciplines.

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology, surveying the morphological forms of the verb “Akhaḍ” and statistically documenting its frequency in the Qur’an. Key references include foundational texts like Sibawayh’s al-Kitab, Ibn Jinni’s Al-Khassais, Ibn Faris’s Mu’jam Maqayis al-Lughah, Al-Samarrai’s Tabeer Qurani, Austin’s How to Do Things with Words, pragmatic analysis of Qur’anic discourse by Ahmed Al-Karmi and Youssef Mohammed’s Analysis of religious texts, in addition to some Quranic exegeses let alone some other references that enrich the research.

The research unfolds across two main sections preceded by a prelude and succeeded by a conclusion:

1. The linguistic and Qur’anic origins of the verb “Akhaḍ”
2. The semantic nuances of “Akhaḍ” as viewed pragmatically.

The conclusion summarized key findings. And praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Introduction

Pragmatics

Undoubtedly, no linguistic communication occurs between a sender and a receiver without the mediation of concepts. When humans engage linguistically to express themselves and convey thoughts or emotions, they function either as speakers, listeners, writers, or readers. In each of these modes, they undergo mental processes whose substance and form are grounded in language.

Pragmatics is known by several terms: communicative semiotics, contextual linguistics, and practical semantics. Contemporary linguistic studies—particularly in pragmatics—have opened new horizons for

interpreting religious texts by emphasizing the speaker-listener relationship and the performative function of utterances.

Pragmatics stands out as one of the linguistic approaches that theorists have struggled to define unanimously. The proliferation of definitions and the variety of intellectual fields engaged in pragmatics - logicians, semioticians, sociologists, rhetoricians, philosophers, communication theorists, and linguists- have made it a focal point of interdisciplinary attention⁽¹⁾.

The Qur'an is not merely an informative or instructional text. Rather, it's a communicative discourse that seeks to influence the recipient psychologically, intellectually, and behaviorally through pragmatic concepts like: speech acts, contextual framing, implicatures, and intended meanings; all of which serve as effective tools in Quranic discourse analysis.

Linguistic Roots of “Tadawul تداول”

The Arabic root “Dawal دَوَلَ” carries dual meanings according to “Maqāyīs al-Lughā”: one suggests movement or transition from place to place, while the other implies weakness or relaxation. Linguists have stated: “‘Andāla al-qawm’” refers to a group moving from one place to another, and “‘tadāwala al-qawm shay'an’” describes an item being passed among people. The forms “duwla” and “dawla” are variants—used respectively for wealth and war—reflecting the shared connotation of circulating possession or transformation⁽²⁾.

In its Western origin, the equivalent term retains the stem of “change” and “transition”. “Asās al-Balāgha” records: “‘dālat lahu al-dawla’, ‘dālat al-ayām’, ‘ādāla Allāh Banī fulān’”, all signifying shifts in dominance, fate, or outcome. Time is described as cyclical and variable “revolving between people, alternating with triumphs and challenges,” “and ‘Yudawil Bayn Qadamayeh’ the one walking alternates between his feet, shifting from one to the other⁽³⁾.”

1- Kareem Hussein Nasih Al-Khalidi, “Critique and Construction in Contemporary Linguistics,” Safa Publishing House, Amman. p. 391.

2- Ibn Fāris, “Entry on the Root D-W-L,” in Maqāyīs al-Lughah, and verified by M. Hārūn, 1st ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Jīl, 1991, p. 314.

3- Al-Zamakhsharī, Asās al-Balāghah, commentated by Muḥammad Bāsīl ‘Uyūn al-Sūd, 1st ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, p. 303.

Terminologically, the word *pragmatic* generally signifies “what pertains to practical actions and real-world events.” Pragmatics emerged as a vast academic field addressing marginal disciplines that lie outside origins of Pragmatics such as linguistics, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and semantics⁽⁴⁾.

The term *Pragmatique* traces its roots to the Greek “Pragma”, meaning “action”, from which the adjective “Pragmatikos” derives denoting anything related to deeds or function. By the (17th century), it referred to any research or discovery aimed at generating knowledge, but not necessarily at producing practical and scientific results⁽⁵⁾.

Philosopher “Charles Morris” established the term pragmatics within semiotic theory, distinguishing three branches⁽⁶⁾:

Syntax: the inflectional and structural relationship among codes.

Semantics: the relationship between codes and their referents.

Pragmatics: the relationship between codes and their users/interpreters.

Researchers embraced pragmatics due to the limitations of formal linguistic analysis and its neglect of real-world communicative usage. Levinson asserted that pragmatics emerged as a reaction to “Chomsky’s abstraction of language” reducing it to a mental faculty and ignoring its use, users, and functions⁽⁷⁾.

Typologies of Pragmatics after the rise of contemporary linguistics, pragmatic studies diversified and developed competing methodologies. Linguists categorized pragmatics according to neighboring disciplines:

Pragmatics is a linguistic field concerned with the performative or functional dimension of speech, focusing on the speaker and the

4- Blanchet, Philippe, Pragmatics from Austin to Goffman, trans. by Šābir al-Ḥabbāshah, 1st ed. Latakia, Syria: Dār al-Ḥiwār li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī’, 2007, p. 17.

5- Abd al-Raḥmān Bashālgam, “Manifestations of Pragmatic Concepts in Arab Heritage,” in Master’s Thesis, 2013–2014, p. 13.

6- Abd al-Hādī ibn Zāfir al-Shahrī, Discourse Strategy, 1st ed., Libya: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd al-Muttaḥidah, 2004, p. 21.

7- - Avić, Linguistic Research Trends, trans. by Sa’d ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Maṣlūḥ and Wafā’ Kāmīl Fāyid, Supreme Council of Culture, p. 351.

context. However, what must be emphasized is that this interest, in itself, is neither coherent nor unified, as it is dispersed across different pragmatic domains. Accordingly, Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni divided pragmatics based on its proximity to adjacent fields into:

1- Utterance Pragmatics (Speech-based Linguistics): Focuses on the internal elements of the utterance and the expressive apparatus (speaker–listener–utterance situation). This was adopted by Charles Morris.

2- Conversational Pragmatics (Speech Act Theory): Investigates the interactive values embedded within utterances, enabling them to function as distinct linguistic actions, championed by Austin and Searle⁽¹⁾.

3- Dialogic Pragmatics: Emerged from importing foundational communicative theories into linguistics. It studies the unique nature of dialogue as verbal exchanges requiring linguistic and paralinguistic cues⁽²⁾.

Section One

The Root “Akhaḍ” and Its Morphological Forms in Arabic and the Qur’an

The verb “Akhaḍ (أَخَذَ)” meaning “to take,” is among the most semantically versatile verbs in Arabic. In the Qur’an, it appears frequently in varied morphological forms, each delivering distinct nuances such as:

- Punishment (e.g. divine retribution)
- Possession (e.g. acquisition or ownership)
- Seizure or control

In Arabic, verbs and their derivatives generate both syntactic and semantic functions that shift according to context and speaker usage. The meanings stem from the original linguistic root, with derivations giving rise to rich interpretations.

1- Françoise Armengaud, *The Pragmatic Approach*, trans. by Dr. Sa’id ‘Allūsh, Centre for National Development, 1st ed., Morocco, 1986, p. 84.

2 - Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Catherine, *Pour une approche pragmatique du dialogue théâtral*, in *Pratiques*, N° 41, mars 1984, p:46.

Derivational morphology is one of Arabic’s core linguistic strengths, allowing the language to expand and evolve over time in response to life’s ever-changing tools, ideas, and innovations⁽³⁾.

Linguistic Derivation of “Akhaḍ”

Arabic lexicons document a wide range of meanings for this verb, including:

1- Companionship and belonging: Quoting Al-Azhari (370 AH) in his: *al-Tahtheeb min Kalam al-Arab*: “If you were one of us, you would have (Akhaḍ) our (Akhaḍ),” meaning you would have adopted our way or style. Ibn al-Sikkīt said, “The sons of so-and-so are gone, and whoever (Akhaḍ akhthathum) follows their path⁽⁴⁾”; meaning, whoever walks their way and following their approach.

2- Gain & Benefit: Al-Layth described: “He took God’s (Duwala) wealth for himself (itikhaḍ and takhith,” indicating the act of acquiring or profiting. And “Takhithtu Mala” literally means: I took money and pragmatically means “I gained”⁽⁵⁾. In His saying, the Exalted: ‘He said: If you had wished, you could have (lat-ttakhaḍta) taken a payment for it’ [al-Kahf: 77], there is a divergence regarding the recitation of (la-ttakhaḍta). The Basran reciters and Ibn Kathīr read it as (lata-khiḍta)⁽⁶⁾.

3- Dominance & Overpowering: Ibn Faris (395 AH) wrote about an ailment said, “Istakhaḍa Ramad” meaning ‘took hold’ of someone⁽⁷⁾. Ibn Abi Rabeia said:

To them—whenever sleep **gains hold** among them... I have a gathering, were it

3- Abd al-Ḥamīd Abū Sakīn, *Central and Peripheral Semantics Between Linguists and Rhetoricians* (Master’s thesis), University of Baghdad, 2002, p. 67.

4- al-Azhari, *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, ed. by Muḥammad ‘Awaḍ Mur’ib, 1st ed., Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2001, vol. 7, p. 217.

5- *Tahdheeb al-Lughah*, vol. 7, p. 218.

6- Al-Jazari, *al-Nashr fi al-Qirā’āt al-‘Ashr*, ed. Ali Muhammad al-Dabba’, al-Matba’ah al-Tijariyyah al-Kubrā, vol. 2, p. 314.

7- Aḥmad ibn Fāris, “Entry on the root ل-خ-ض,” in *Ma’jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2nd ed. Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1979, vol. 1 p. 69.

not for the need, it would be more rougher⁽¹⁾.

4- Grasping / Physical Taking: As Al-Khalil (170 AH) defined, “Akhaḍ” refers simply to the act of grabbing or acquiring—physically e.g. Akhaḍ book= take the book; metaphorically e.g. or akhaḍ device= listen to advice.

5- **Detainment and Prevention** (*al-ta'khīḍ*): This refers to when a woman employs magical tricks to prevent her husband from sexual relations with anyone else. It is said: “So-and-so possesses a *'ukhḍah*—a spell—by which she holds men back from [seeking] other women.” From this usage, the term *'akhīḍ* came to denote a captive, and the expression qad *'ukhiḍa fulān* signifies “So-and-so was taken captive⁽²⁾.” The same semantic thread appears in the Qur’anic verse: “So kill the polytheists *wherever you find them*” [al-Tawbah: 5], as well as in ancient Arab expressions such as the lament of a woman mourning her brother, who was slain in his bed: **“I held you back from the rider, the runner, the walker, and the sitter—yet I did not hold you back from the sleeper⁽³⁾.”**

Here, she blames and mourns herself for failing to protect him from death while he slept.

6- Wrestling and Detainment: From this term comes the saying: “*'ittakhaḍa al-qawmu yattaḥiḍūna 'ittikhāḍan*”—used when a group engages in wrestling, and each individual seizes their opponent with an *'ukhḍah* (a grasp or hold) by which he detains him⁽⁴⁾. We may deduce from this usage that an *'ukhḍah* is a swift and overpowering hold by which a man is suddenly cast to the ground.

7- Appointment and Transformation: This is exemplified by the statement: “I (*akhaḍ*) took Muḥammad as a friend,” where the verb had transitivity to

two objects. Similarly, in the Qur’anic verse: “Woe to me! Would that I had not **taken** so-and-so as an intimate friend” [al-Furqān: 28].

8- Torture and treatment: This semantic field frequently appears in classical Arabic. Linguists have drawn a distinction between *al-akhḍ* (taking) and *al-mu'ākhaḍah* (holding accountable or punishing). For example, in the Qur’anic verse: “And thus is the seizure (*akthū*) of your Lord when He seizes (*akhaḍa*) the cities while they are committing wrong. Indeed, His seizure is painful and severe.” [Hūd: 102].

These meanings, as captured in classical sources, show that the root “Akhaḍ” holds great semantic flexibility, especially in Qur’anic use, where its (Quranic) implications go far beyond dictionary definitions.

Qur’anic Usage of the root “Akhaḍ” and its derivations

The root ‘*akhaḍa*’ holds a substantial and multifaceted presence in the Qur’an through its various derivations and semantic nuances. Upon thorough examination, it appears in its different forms a total of 273 times. The highest concentration is found in Sūrat al-A‘rāf, where it occurs 29 times. Across the Qur’an as a whole, the verb in its conjugated and nominal variations is found in 56 sūrahs, distributed across 24 morphological forms, comprising:

Past tense (*'akhaḍa*), present tense (*ya'khud*), imperative (*khud*), singular eventive noun (*'akhḍah*), verbal noun (*'akhḍ*), passive voice in the past and present (*'ukhiḍa*, *yu'khaḍu*), active participle (*'ākhiḍ*), augmented past verb (*ittakhaḍa*), its present form (*yattakhiḍu*), imperative (*ittakhiḍ*), its active participle (*muttakhaḍ*), verbal noun (*ittikhāḍ*), and the further augmented present verb (*yu'ākhiḍu*)—all of these derivations occur diversely, each according to its contextual and intended meaning within the Qur’anic text.

1- Fayez al-Dāyah, *Diwān 'Umar ibn Abī Rabī'ah*, 2nd ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1996, p. 125.

2- Tahdheeb al-Lugah, vol. 2 p. 217.

3- Ibn Sīda al-Mursī, *al-Muḥkam wa'l-Muḥīṭ al-A'zam*, ed. Abd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī, 1st ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000, vol. 5, p. 233.

4- Tahdheeb al-Lugah, vol. 2 p. 218.

Section Two

Pragmatic Semantics of “Akhaḍ” in Qur’anic Context

Pragmatic linguistics focuses on studying language in its use-based contexts, analyzing speech acts, presuppositions, and implicatures. The verb “Akhaḍ” and its derivatives occur frequently in the Qur’an, often conveying meanings that go far beyond dictionary definitions. This section explores how “Akhaḍ” operates pragmatically within Qur’anic discourse, revealing layers of meaning shaped by context and intent. Some of the meanings refer to:

First: Divine Selection and Honor

This is reflected in the Almighty’s saying: “And who is better in religion than one who submits his face to Allah while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth? And Allah (Ittakhada) took Abraham as an intimate friend.” [An-Nisā’: 125]. Analyzing the blessed verse lexically, the verb (Ittakhada أَتَّخَذَ — took) follows the morphological pattern “اَفْتَعَلَ”, which indicates gradual action or deliberate choice. In broader semantic terms, it can signify: to make, to select, or to appoint for oneself—just as in the expression “so-and-so took a friend,” meaning he chose him, accepted him, and acknowledged his high status⁽¹⁾.

The blessed verse begins with a rhetorical question that accentuates the meaning in the strongest possible way. The question is not meant to elicit an answer, but rather to affirm that no one holds a better religion than the one described by the given attributes. This formulation achieves semantic compression, distilling profound meanings into a style that deeply impacts the recipient, prompting the reader to reflect on the implicit answer embedded within the question itself.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the Qur’anic use of the verb (ittakhada) conveys the sense of divine selection—as expressed by Allah, the Exalted, regarding His Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) through the phrase: “Ibrahim was taken as a friend.” In this, the pragmatic function of the verb (ittakhada) accentuates divine election, carrying unique dimensions in

honoring the status of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). This aspect cannot be separated from the rhetorical and purposeful context of the verse. The statement is not mere information; rather, it assumes an illocutionary force that establishes an honorific value for the Prophet (peace be upon him)⁽²⁾.

The broader context here serves to underscore the completeness of the Abrahamic monotheistic religion, while also elevating the noble stature of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). The Qur’anic passage contains verbs that signify devotion, beneficence, and adherence to the Hanif tradition. It culminates in the past active verb (ittakhada) to signify that Allah Himself is the actor, reflecting a deliberate pragmatic intent to:

Magnify the status of Ibrahim.

Establish legitimacy and exemplary leadership for his religious tradition.

Moreover, the speech act embedded in (ittakhada) carries the force of declarative affirmation that Allah, the Exalted, has indeed chosen Ibrahim as His close friend. Implicitly, this reflects a directive call to follow the faith of Ibrahim—one built upon purity, grace, and divine favor—honoring him in his exclusive worship of Allah⁽³⁾.

Second: Substitution and Compensation

This concept is illustrated in the verse:

“They said, ‘O noble one, he has a father, an elderly man. So (Khud) take one of us in his place. Indeed, we see you as one of the doers of good.’” [Yusuf: 78]. This Qur’anic passage portrays the emotional state and pleading of Yusuf’s (peace be upon him) brothers as they appeal to the “noble one”—unaware that they are, in fact, speaking to Yusuf himself. They ask him to take one of them as a substitute for their brother Benjamin, invoking the principle of *exchange and compensation*—a proposal Yusuf ultimately rejects.

In this divine expression, the imperative verb “خُذْ” (take) from the triliteral root reflects the meaning of substitution and compensation. The usage of the imperative voice conveys urgency and eagerness in offering an alternative

1- Mohammad Abu Musa, “Al-I’jāz al-Balāghī: A Pragmatic Study,” in *Al-I’jāz al-Balāghī*, Dar Al-Fikr, Cairo, 2008: 68.

2- Muntaha Ali Al-Oboudi, “Al-Hiwar Al-Qur’ani: Tadāwuliyyatuhu wa Hījājiyyatuhu,” 1st ed. Dar Kunooz Al-Ma’rifa, Jordan, 2022: 64.

3- Abu al-Qasim al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl*, 3rd ed., Dar al-Kitāb al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1407 AH, vol. 1: 569.

decisively. The semantic density is amplified through their plea to extend Yusuf's previous benevolence toward them—he had already honored them with hospitality, granted them provisions, and gave them the goods without receiving any payment. A person who demonstrates such generosity is presumed not to deny them this heartfelt request⁽¹⁾.

From the perspective of Searle's classification of speech acts, the imperative “خُذْ” functions as a directive illocutionary act—an act meant to elicit an action from someone in authority (the noble governor of Egypt). It carries an emotional load and an appeal for mercy; it is more than a mere command—it is a rhetorical gesture embedded with an implicit request.

Within the Qur'anic pragmatic context, there is a central meaning tied to possession of its object “أحدنا (one of us),” as well as its associated adverbial complement “مكانه (in his place).” These expressions—marked by their linguistic containment and spatial connotation—coalesce to form a richly condensed semantic core. Few words encode an expansive emotional, psychological, and political plea. The verb “خُذْ” is deployed with precision to signify negotiation and substitution, clearly reflecting that the interlocutor wields both decision-making power and authority over execution⁽²⁾.

The speech act within the Qur'anic verse “أَخَذْنَاهُمْ” (We seized them) may outwardly appear to be informative in nature, yet it carries a profound warning and admonitory function within pragmatic discourse. The verse is not solely recounting the fate of former nations—it's a strategic alert to the nation of the Noble Messenger, warning them against the trials of denial and disbelief.

According to Paul Grice's theory of implicature, the explicit meaning here is informational (reporting past events), but the implicit message contains a serious caution: “If you yourselves deny the truth, you will be seized just as those before you were.” This kind

of embedded meaning is referred to as a pragmatic warning implicature⁽³⁾.

Third: Inflicting of Harm

In the words of the Almighty: "Indeed, We sent [messengers] to nations before you, and We seized (*akhadnahum*) them with suffering and adversity so that they might humble themselves." (*Al-An'am*: 42)

The lexical significance of the Arabic verb “أَخَذَ” (*akhada*) conveys meanings such as grasping, capturing, or causing someone to fall into something⁽⁴⁾. In this Qur'anic context, the verb illustrates the severity of punishment inflicted upon the disbelievers. It does not merely indicate a physical act, but rather an intensified moral and emotional blow—one that delivers profound harm to the hearts and souls of the disbelievers. These worldly punishments, which befell disbelieving nations of the past, represent the first stages in a divine disciplinary narrative. Each punishment was amplified to serve as a lesson and a warning for them in their state of heedlessness; urging them to return to their senses and recommit to obedience of the Lord of the worlds. However, despite both divine promise and threat, their hearts grew hardened, and they became more entrenched in arrogance and rejection.

The verb “أَخَذْنَاهُمْ” (We seized them) was strategically employed as a tool of intimidation by recalling past events. It conveyed a sense of encirclement and containment, indicating that the disbelieving nations were comprehensively encompassed, gathered in a way that made them a lesson for those who came after. Here, the elements of contextual composition were deliberately shaped to achieve a specific meaning: the infliction of harm upon them through the implied signification of the verb⁽⁵⁾.

Fourth: Loss and Deprivation

This concept appears in the Almighty's statement:

“Say, ‘Consider this: if Allah were to take away (*akhad*) your hearing and your sight, and seal your hearts, who is the deity other than Allah that could restore them to you? Look how We

1- Mohammad Mutawalli Al-Sha'rawi, *Tafsir Al-Sha'rawi – Al-Khawātir*, Akhbar Al-Youm Press, Egypt, 1997, vol. 11: 7034.

2- Muḥammad Abū Mūsā, *Al-Balāgha wa al-Uṣūl: Dirāsah fī al-Waḥīfah al-Tadāwuliyya lil-Uslūb*, Dār al-Baṣā'ir, 2012, p. 155.

3 - Ahmed Al-Mutawakkil, “Al-Wazā'if Al-Tadāwuliyya fī Al-Lughah Al-'Arabiyya,” 1st ed. Casablanca, Morocco: Dar Al-Thaqāfa, 1985, p. 77.

4- Ibn Fāris, “Māddat 'Akhadh,” in *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 1st ed. Baghdad, Iraq.

5- Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, “Tafsīr of Sūrat al-An'ām,” in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, 3rd ed. Beirut, Lebanon, 1420 AH, vol. 12, p. 533.

vary the signs, yet they turn away.” [Al-An‘ām: 46]. In this noble verse, there is a direct and forceful address to the wavering disbelievers, warning them of divine wrath, of being enclosed and blinded. The verse implies total sensory obstruction and mental chaos: “veiled from comprehension at its source, turning you into madmen.” The sealing of the heart is interpreted as a clarifying addendum to the previously mentioned “taking away” of hearing and sight, since those two faculties are the conduits to the heart through which perceptual input flows. By removing them, the heart is rendered void of intellect—its door shut completely—which explains why the act of “taking away” precedes the “sealing”⁽¹⁾.

The speech act, “Allah took away your hearing and sight,” is an explicit informational act that fulfills a pragmatic function of conditional warning, while simultaneously conveying a sense of threat infused with promise and punishment. This Qur’anic scene carries expressive force, imbuing the discourse with severity, intensity, and strength.

The conditional and pragmatic structure in “أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ” serves as a shock tactic, designed to provoke mental distress in the listener, forcing them to contemplate the loss of the greatest divine blessings: hearing, sight, and the heart. This construction also carries a meaning of encompassing divine power, illustrating that this punishment entails the complete removal of those faculties without hesitation. None of the false deities to which they appeal are capable of averting this torment⁽²⁾.

As one commentary states: “He made them aware of the extent of their incapacity and the truth of their need... He warned them saying: If the blessing of hearing and sight is not preserved for them, and if the well-being clothed upon them is not guaranteed, then who is the one that can restore what has been taken away, or provide what has been withheld, or return what has been purified, or replace what has been manifested?”

Fifth: Equilibrium and Firmness

1- Abū al-Su‘ūd al-‘Imādī, “Tafsīr of Sūrat al-An‘ām to Irshād al-‘Aql al-Salīm ilā Mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm, 3rd ed. Beirut, Lebanon, vol. 3, p. 134.

2- Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī, “Tafsīr of Sūrat al-An‘ām,” in *Laṭā‘if al-Ishārāt*, 3rd ed. Review by: Ibrahim al-Basyuni, Cairo, Egypt: Egyptian General Book Organization, vol. 1, p. 341.

This concept appears in the verse:

“Indeed, the likeness of the life of this world is only like water which We sent down from the sky; then the plants of the earth absorb it, from which people and cattle eat, until when the earth has taken on its adornment and beauty, and its people think they have power over it; Our command comes to it by night or by day, and We make it as a mown field, as if it had not flourished yesterday. Thus do We explain the signs for people who reflect.” [Yūnus: 24]

The linguistic implication of the phrase “*the earth has taken (akhadāt) on its adornment*” means it has fully dressed itself, matured, and become beautiful. The word “*taken*” here conveys acquisition, completion, and an abundance of growth and fertility⁽³⁾. The verse portrays the transient nature of this worldly life and how swiftly its pleasures vanish. It draws a parallel between people deceived by the beauty of the world and the image of vegetation that once thrived and stood tall, only to wither and become nothing but debris scattered on the ground, its glittering colors gone, its vitality erased; and they thought that its prosperity will not vanish⁽⁴⁾.

The Qur’anic discourse uses the verb “*has taken*” (*akhadāt*) rather than “*adorned itself*” (*tazakhrafat*) to emphasize a more profound depiction. This isn’t merely an incidental event, it illustrates the peak of the earth’s adornment and the psychological effect it has on those attached to it, who may even become fiercely devoted to protecting it.

The phrase “*the earth has taken on its adornment*” operates as an assertive speech act on the surface, but pragmatically it conveys an indirect warning (indirect commissive). It functions as a preparatory signal, hinting at the comprehensive nature of God’s command and the culmination of factors like adornment and beauty. All these unite to create a state of balance, stability, prosperity, and productivity. Once this fullness is reached, God’s decree arrives, rendering it cut down and lifeless.

Sixth: Triumph and Defeat

3- Ibn Fāris, “Entry on the root (‘-kh-dh),” in *Mu‘jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 1st ed. Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr.

4- Zamakhsharī, “Commentary on Sūrat Yūnus,” in *al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq al-Tanzīl*, 2nd ed. Baghdad, Iraq: Dār al-Tafsīr, vol. 2, p. 341.

This is referenced in the verse: “Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes (*takhuḍuhu*) Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.” (Surat al-Baqarah: 255). The lexical analysis of the verb “تأخذه” (*takhuḍuhu*, overtakes Him) identifies it as present tense, with the pronoun referring to the Divine Name. The meaning, “Neither drowsiness overtakes Him”, is that Allah is never afflicted, seized, or overcome by such a state. “سنة” (*sina*) refers to light drowsiness, meaning that no weakness, fatigue, or inattentiveness ever touches Allah⁽¹⁾. It is reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) that he said: “If this verse is recited in a house, Satan will avoid it for thirty days; no sorcerer or sorceress will enter it for forty days⁽²⁾.” Imam Alī (peace be upon him) said:

“I heard your Prophet speak from the pulpit saying: Whoever recites Āyat al-Kursī after every obligatory prayer, nothing prevents him from entering Paradise except death. Only a sincere devotee or worshiper maintains its recitation. Whoever recites it upon lying down will be protected by Allah, along with his neighbor and the neighbor of his neighbor and the homes surrounding him⁽³⁾.”

The declarative phrase “Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep” serves as an assertive speech act, not simply conveying information, but affirming Divine perfection, dispelling any notions of deficiency, and exalting the Divine Essence. In its pragmatic context within the Qur’anic text, it underlines the doctrine of Divine Unity (*Tawḥīd*) and affirms God’s perfect attributes through:

Negating attributes of deficiency (e.g., sleep, inattentiveness, fatigue)

Affirming God as al-Qayyūm—the Sustainer who never overlooks, nor anything is ever overlooked of Him.

Seventh: Rejection and Assertion of Authority

1- al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-Balāghah*, ed. Muḥammad Bāsīl ‘Uyūn al-Sūd, 1st ed., Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1998, vol. 1, p. 478.

2- Sayyid al-Burūjirdī, *Jāmi‘ Aḥādīth al-Shī‘ah*, 15th ed. Qom, Iran: Mu’assasat Āl al-Bayt li-lḥyā’ al-Turāth, vol. 15, p. 94.

3- Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, vol. 7, p. 5.

This section discusses the verse: “The adulterer and the adulteress, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes. Let not compassion for them (*takhuḍukum*) deter you from carrying out God’s law, if you believe in God and the Hereafter. And let a group of believers witness their punishment.” [al-Nūr: 2]. The expression “*Lā takhuḍukum bihimā ra’fah*” (Let not compassion for them seize you) employs a directive speech act, a command intended to discourage leniency or emotional hesitation during the enforcement of legal punishment. It functions as both a warning and a call for discipline, emphasizing the necessity of upholding divine law with resolve. The prohibition is placed not on the sentiment of *ra’fah* (compassion) itself, since that’s an inner emotion, but on the verb “*takhuḍ*” (take hold), implying a rejection of yielding to emotions that might hinder justice.

Implicatively, the phrase implicitly prohibits showing favoritism or undue mercy in the context of carrying out justice, not a blanket denial of mercy in general. It draws a sharp line between personal compassion and judicial integrity.

Eighth: Imprisonment and Captivity

This appears in the Almighty’s words: “So when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them, and capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every ambush. But if they repent, establish prayer, and give *zakāh*, then let them go their way. Surely God is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [al-Tawbah: 5]. At the beginning of Sūrat al-Tawbah, God declares His disassociation from disbelievers who broke their covenant with the Muslims. He then commanded the Messenger (peace be upon him and his progeny) to make this disassociation clear. They were granted a four-month period, these are sacred months during which fighting is forbidden, so that they might reflect and reconsider their position. If they repented to the Messenger, there would be no harm upon them. But if they remained obstinate in their tyranny and defiance, then they deserved to be fought, imprisoned, and prevented wherever they were found⁽⁴⁾.

As for the lexical analysis of the verb (*khuḍūhum* – seize them), it is in the imperative

4- Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Cairo, Egypt: Egyptian General Book Organization, 1990, vol. 10, p. 144.

form, indicating control, capture, or firm grasp. In this context, the verb signifies military or coercive apprehension and conveys a sense of humiliation or submission. It encompasses meanings such as imprisonment, captivity, and restriction⁽¹⁾, and applies specifically to the defiant disbeliever.

Thus, empowering the believers with meanings that imply encirclement and dominance over the other party is something God granted to them for purifying Mecca and Medina from the polytheists. In this surah, the believers are commanded to fight the polytheists, lie in wait for them, and besiege them. Among the verbs that express this notion of dominance and encirclement is the imperative (*khudūhum*), which follows other commands such as: (*kill the polytheists*), (*besiege them*), and (*lie in wait for them*). All these contextual verbs gave strong expressive force to the precise representation of imprisonment and captivity within the Qur'anic context.

Conclusion

This study has found that Qur'anic expression is rich in pragmatic connotations that cannot be deciphered without considering the context, circumstances, and rhetorical intentions. The frequent use of the verb “akhaḍa” (أَخَذَ – “to take”) throughout the verses we examined reveals the Qur'an's preference for verbal constructions, which intensify meaning due to their dynamic and non-descriptive nature. Through the use of “akhaḍa,” we observed how words transcend their lexical meaning to fulfill profound communicative functions related to persuasion, threat, reminder, obligation, promise, and warning. All these functions are employed through mechanisms of pragmatic linguistics, which serve as powerful tools for analyzing the Qur'anic text with greater precision and depth. One of the roles of meaning intensification in pragmatics is the ability to integrate seemingly distant elements into a unified context, creating a portrayal that closely resonates with the recipient.

1- Al-Rāghib al-İsfahānī, *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, ed. Şafwān 'Adnān al-Dā'ūdī, 1st ed., Damascus–Beirut: Dār al-Qalam & al-Dār al-Shāmiyyah, 1412 AH, p. 419.

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