

Research paper
Year (Vol.), ...-, 2025

Conceptualization and Embodied Meaning in Sūrah Al- Ḥamd: A Cognitive Grammar Perspective

Mohammad Yousefvand 

¹Assistant Professor of Linguistics, Department of Language and Literature, Farhangian University, Tehran, Iran. Email: m.yousefvand@cfu.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Research article

Article history:

Received: 27 December 2025

Accepted: 6 May 2026

Keywords:

Cognitive Grammar,
Qur'anic linguistics,
Sūrah Al-Ḥamd,
construal conceptualization,
embodiment

ABSTRACT

This study examines Sūrah al-Ḥamd, the opening chapter of the Qur'an, through the framework of Cognitive Grammar developed by Ronald Langacker. The analysis explores how grammatical and semantic structures in the Qur'an reflect conceptualizations of divinity, praise, mercy, sovereignty, guidance, and human dependence. Cognitive Grammar views meaning as the conceptualization of experience rather than a reflection of an objective world. Within this perspective, the study demonstrates how the linguistic constructions of Sūrah instantiate schematic and embodied cognitive patterns shaping believers' understanding of divine-human relations. Particular attention is given to construal, profiling, and image schemas as expressed in key verses of praise, authority, judgment, and supplication for guidance. The findings show that the sūrah employs dynamic conceptual construals integrating spatial, temporal, and evaluative domains into a unified cognitive scene. Overall, the research contributes to Qur'anic linguistics and cognitive semantics by revealing universal conceptual principles linking embodiment, cognition, and spiritual meaning.

Cite this article: Yousefvand, M. (2025). "Conceptualization and Embodied Meaning in Sūrah Al-Ḥamd: A Cognitive Grammar Perspective". *Journal of Linguistic Studies: Theory and Practice*, Year (Vol.), ...-....



© The Author(s).

Publisher: University of Kurdistan.

DOI: [10.22034/jls.2026.145237.1334](https://doi.org/10.22034/jls.2026.145237.1334)

Introduction

The study of language and meaning has undergone a significant paradigm shift in recent decades. Scholars have increasingly moved away from purely formalist or truth-conditional approaches, adopting cognitively grounded models that view language as a reflection of human conceptualization. In these approaches, meaning emerges not only from words and grammar but from the dynamic interaction between linguistic form, cognition, and embodied experience. Religious texts, with their dense conceptual and linguistic structures, provide a particularly rich domain for such analysis, and the Qur'an stands out as a uniquely intricate and profound corpus.

Among its chapters, Sūrah Al-Ḥamd (also called Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, “The Opening”) holds special significance. Recited in every unit of Muslim prayer and considered the spiritual and conceptual essence of the Qur'an, it embodies key theological and moral themes such as praise, mercy, sovereignty, and guidance. These themes operate at a conceptual level, shaping the ways believers perceive and organize their understanding of the divine. The chapter's concise yet profound linguistic form thus invites analysis through the lens of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2008), which emphasizes that grammar is inherently meaningful, linking linguistic structures directly to conceptual content.

Despite the Qur'an's centrality in linguistic and religious scholarship, most studies have relied on exegetical, philological, or rhetorical approaches. Research in Qur'anic linguistics often emphasizes syntax, semantics, or discourse coherence, but few investigations have explored how grammatical constructions encode cognitive processes. In particular, little attention has been paid to how meaning arises from the interplay of linguistic form, conceptualization, and embodiment. This study addresses that gap by treating Sūrah al-Ḥamd as a conceptual network, revealing how its linguistic patterns reflect human cognitive capacities to construe, categorize, and ground experience.

Cognitive Grammar (CG) provides a useful theoretical lens through which to analyze Qur'anic language because it interprets grammar as an integral part of meaning rather than as an autonomous system. According to Langacker (1987, 2008), linguistic expressions profile particular conceptual structures against background knowledge, and meaning arises from the dynamic interaction between these profiles and their cognitive domains. Unlike formalist models that treat grammar as rule-based symbol manipulation, CG treats grammar as symbolic—linking phonological forms to conceptual content.

This approach aligns well with the Qur'an's own self-referential emphasis on language, cognition, and meaning. Numerous verses describe the Qur'an as *Kitāb mubīn* (“a clear book”) and as guidance that appeals to human understanding (*Li-qawmin ya'qilūn*—“for people who use reason”) (Abdel Haleem, 2011). Such expressions foreground the cognitive dimension of revelation, implying that comprehension of divine language involves active construal rather than passive reception. In this sense, Cognitive Grammar provides a descriptive framework capable of articulating how linguistic form, cognitive process, and theological meaning interact in the Qur'anic text.

By applying Cognitive Grammar to Sūrah Al-Ḥamd, the study contributes to both linguistics and Qur'anic studies in several ways.

First, it demonstrates that Qur'anic discourse can be systematically analyzed in terms of conceptual structures and construal operations, thereby integrating the study of sacred language into the broader field of cognitive linguistics.

Second, it shows that the Qur'an's meaning architecture is not purely symbolic or referential but fundamentally embodied—grounded in universal patterns of human experience such as motion, perception, and relational orientation.

Third, it provides methodological innovation: rather than treating Qur'anic expressions as isolated theological statements, it interprets them as conceptual acts that organize human cognition and emotion in relation to the divine.

In doing so, the study opens a space for dialogue between contemporary linguistic theory and traditional Islamic hermeneutics, highlighting how both domains converge on the recognition of meaning as a dynamic, contextually grounded process.

The primary aim of this research is to examine how the linguistic structures of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd realize core principles of Cognitive Grammar—construal, profiling, grounding, and schematicity—in expressing theological concepts. Specifically, the study investigates the following questions:

1. How does the grammatical organization of the Sūrah Al-Ḥamd reflect particular conceptualizations of divine attributes and human experience?
2. What image schemas and embodied patterns underlie key expressions such as *Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh* (“All praise is for God”), *ar-rahmān ar-rahīm* (“the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”), and *iḥdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (“Guide us to the straight path”)?
3. How do these cognitive and linguistic mechanisms contribute to the overall coherence and spiritual resonance of the Sūrah Al-Ḥamd?

By applying Cognitive Grammar to Sūrah Al-Ḥamd, this study demonstrates that Qur'anic discourse is not merely referential or symbolic but conceptually structured and fundamentally embodied. The surah's linguistic constructions encode multiple layers of construal, shaping the ways human cognition and emotion relate to divine reality. In doing so, the research contributes both to Qur'anic studies and to cognitive linguistics more broadly, providing a model for analyzing sacred texts as highly organized systems of meaning.

A brief note of previous works

The linguistic study of the Qur'an has been historically shaped by classical exegetical, philological, and rhetorical traditions, which provided sophisticated analyses of morphology, syntax, and semantic nuance. Classical scholars such as al-Zamakhsharī (2009) demonstrated acute sensitivity to grammatical structure and lexical choice, often linking linguistic form to theological interpretation. While these works remain foundational, they are primarily interpretive and normatively theological in orientation, offering limited explanatory models of how meaning is cognitively constructed

(Boyalık, 2019).

Modern Qur'anic linguistics has significantly expanded this tradition by introducing tools from functional linguistics, discourse analysis, and stylistics. Studies have examined textual cohesion, rhetorical symmetry, and thematic progression in Qur'anic discourse, highlighting the internal coherence of the text (Abdel Haleem, 2011; Neuwirth, 2010). These approaches have successfully demonstrated that the Qur'an exhibits systematic linguistic organization rather than stylistic randomness.

Nevertheless, these studies largely remain descriptive rather than cognitively explanatory. Meaning is typically treated as a property of the text or as an outcome of discourse structure, without explicit theorization of the mental processes through which readers construe linguistic meaning. In particular, grammatical phenomena are often described in functional or rhetorical terms, while their role in conceptualization—such as attentional focus, perspective selection, and embodiment—remains unaddressed. Consequently, the cognitive dimension of Qur'anic meaning construction has not yet been fully integrated into mainstream Qur'anic linguistics.

Cognitive Linguistics has fundamentally reshaped semantic theory by rejecting the separation of grammar from meaning and emphasizing the embodied, experiential basis of conceptualization (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Langacker, 2008). Within this paradigm, language is understood as a means of structuring experience rather than encoding abstract truth conditions. Religious discourse has been shown to rely heavily on embodied schemas and conceptual metaphors to articulate abstract theological ideas (Johnson, 2017; Gibbs, 2017).

Research on religious texts—particularly within Biblical studies—has demonstrated how spatial schemas, motion metaphors, and force dynamics structure moral and theological reasoning (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014). These studies have established that sacred language is not conceptually exceptional but exploits the same cognitive resources as everyday language, albeit in highly condensed and symbolically charged forms.

However, the application of cognitive linguistic theory to Islamic texts remains uneven and theoretically fragmented. Existing studies of Qur'anic metaphor often focus on isolated lexical items or thematic metaphors without addressing how grammatical constructions themselves function as conceptual prompts. As a result, cognitive linguistic insights have not yet been systematically integrated into Qur'anic studies, and the explanatory potential of cognitive theory for Qur'anic grammar remains underutilized.

Among cognitive linguistic frameworks, Cognitive Grammar (CG) offers a particularly powerful model for analyzing the interaction between grammar and meaning (Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2008). CG reconceptualizes grammar as an inventory of symbolic units, each pairing a phonological form with a conceptual structure. Meaning arises through construal operations such as profiling, grounding, and perspective alignment, rather than through abstract syntactic rules.

Despite its explanatory scope, CG has rarely been applied systematically to Qur'anic Arabic.

When cognitive approaches are invoked in Qur'anic studies, they tend to draw selectively on conceptual metaphor theory while leaving grammatical structure theoretically unexamined. This selective adoption limits analytical depth, as it overlooks how meaning is distributed across grammatical constructions rather than confined to metaphorical expressions.

In Persian there has not been any research on Qur'an from the view point of cognitive grammar. Vahhabi et al. (2024) have studied Surah Al-Fil from the perspective of Halliday's systemic functional grammar. The results showed that in textual metafunction, due to the simplicity of verses' structures, unmarked themes have a higher frequency which makes it easy to understand the message and meaning of the verses. Fazaeli and Zeini Malekabadi (2023) have done a study about semantics of the word "Doa" in the Holy Quran based on the relations of companionship and succession and they stated that in order to reach the semantic components of the word prayer, "we will examine the vocabulary companions of the word prayer and the companions of the word prayer, and the semantic components will be: speech, faith, science, guidance, coming, disbelief, grace, Wanting, hearing, sinking, adherence, truthfulness, Wisdom , scripture and endurance."

Furthermore, studies that do engage with Qur'anic grammar often remain confined to descriptive categories inherited from traditional Arabic grammar, without translating these categories into cognitively motivated explanations. As a result, crucial questions remain unanswered: How do grammatical choices in the Qur'an guide attention? How do definiteness, nominalization, and verbal mood shape conceptual perspective? How does grammar encode relational asymmetries between the divine and the human?

Image schema theory has demonstrated that abstract reasoning is grounded in recurrent patterns of bodily experience such as motion, containment, and balance (Johnson, 1987). These schemas have been shown to structure moral and religious cognition across languages and cultures (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Qur'anic language, with its frequent references to paths, guidance, weighing, and enclosure, appears to draw extensively on such schemas.

Yet, most Qur'anic studies addressing embodiment focus on metaphorical interpretation rather than on grammatical realization. The result is a conceptual gap: embodied schemas are identified at the level of imagery, but their integration with grammatical form is rarely analyzed. This omission is particularly significant in chapters such as Sūrah al-Ḥamd, where meaning emerges not from isolated metaphors but from tightly coordinated grammatical and conceptual structures.

Without a grammatical theory capable of linking embodiment to linguistic form, analyses risk reducing Qur'anic meaning to thematic symbolism rather than explaining how that symbolism is cognitively enacted through language. Cognitive Grammar offers precisely this missing link by treating grammar itself as meaningful and embodied.

Sūrah al-Ḥamd has been widely described as the conceptual and theological core of the Qur'an, and scholars have noted its remarkable thematic unity and rhetorical progression. Traditional exegesis emphasizes its role as a summary of divine attributes and human dependence, while modern

scholarship highlights its discourse structure and liturgical function.

However, existing studies typically stop short of explaining why this surah achieves such cognitive and affective resonance. Unity is often asserted rather than explained, and coherence is described without reference to the cognitive mechanisms that generate it. The absence of a cognitively explicit framework means that the surah's grammatical economy and conceptual density remain theoretically under-accounted for.

The critical review of existing literature reveals a clear and persistent gap at the intersection of Qur'anic linguistics, cognitive semantics, and grammatical theory. While Qur'anic studies have achieved considerable descriptive sophistication, they have not yet fully engaged with cognitively grounded models of grammar. Conversely, cognitive linguistic research has rarely addressed Qur'anic Arabic in a sustained and theoretically systematic manner.

The present study addresses this gap by applying Cognitive Grammar to Sūrah al-Hamd as a unified conceptual system. Unlike prior studies that focus on metaphor or discourse structure alone, this research treats grammatical constructions as central to meaning construction. Drawing on Langacker's theory of construal and symbolic assemblies (Langacker, 2008), as well as embodiment-based models of cognition (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999), the study demonstrates how grammatical form encodes embodied conceptualizations of praise, mercy, sovereignty, and guidance.

By foregrounding grammar as a locus of conceptualization, this study advances Qur'anic linguistics beyond descriptive analysis and positions it within contemporary cognitive theory. It offers a theoretically explicit, linguistically grounded account of how theological meaning is cognitively structured, thereby contributing to broader debates on meaning, embodiment, and the cognitive foundations of sacred discourse.

Cognitive Grammar and Meaning Construction

The Cognitive Basis of Grammar

Cognitive Grammar (CG), developed by Ronald Langacker (1987, 1991, 2008), represents one of the foundational frameworks within the broader field of Cognitive Linguistics. It posits that grammar is not an autonomous formal system but an integral part of human cognition. According to Langacker (2008), linguistic structures reflect general cognitive abilities such as attention, categorization, schematization, and conceptual integration. Meaning in CG is not an abstract symbol–referent relation but a dynamic process of conceptualization—the mental construal of experience through linguistic form.

From this perspective, grammar is symbolic in nature: every grammatical construction consists of a pairing between a phonological pole (its form) and a semantic pole (its conceptual content). The relationship between the two is conventionalized through language use but grounded in general cognitive processes. Thus, grammatical structures such as noun phrases, verb forms, and prepositions do not merely encode logical relations; they represent patterns of conceptual organization that reflect how speakers perceive and construe the world. This view contrasts sharply with formalist traditions

such as Generative Grammar, which treat syntax as an independent level of linguistic representation governed by abstract, modular principles (Nefdt, 2016).

Cognitive Grammar also assumes that linguistic meaning is usage-based. The meanings of grammatical constructions emerge from recurring patterns in language use and are shaped by human experience. As Langacker (1987, 5) emphasizes, “grammar is the structuring and symbolization of conceptual content”. The speaker’s cognitive choices—what to profile, what to background, how to construe a relationship—determine the grammatical form of an utterance. Accordingly, the analysis of Sūrah Al-Hamd in this study treats Arabic grammatical constructions as symbolic manifestations of cognitive operations that organize conceptual content about divinity, praise, and moral orientation.

Construal and Conceptual Perspective

A central concept in Cognitive Grammar is construal, which refers to the cognitive ability of speakers to present a single conceptual content in multiple ways depending on perspective, focus, and attentional framing (Langacker, 1987, p. 120). Construal accounts for the flexibility of language in representing experience: the same event can be described as God guides humanity or humanity is guided by God, with the difference lying not in the event itself but in the conceptual focus of attention. Four key dimensions of construal are especially relevant for this study: specificity, prominence, perspectival alignment, and subjectivity/objectivity.

- Specificity concerns the level of detail or abstraction with which a scene is construed.
- Prominence involves the selection of a particular participant or element as conceptually foregrounded—the profiled entity.
- Perspectival alignment determines the vantage point from which the conceptualizer (speaker or reader) views the scene.
- Subjectivity/objectivity reflects the degree to which the conceptualizer is involved within or external to the scene of conception.

In the Qur’anic context, these construal dimensions are especially salient. The alternation between divine and human perspectives, the choice of grammatical roles for divine names, and the varying degrees of explicitness in reference all reveal how Sūrah Al-Hamd constructs a shared conceptual space between the speaker (humanity) and the addressee (God). As will be demonstrated later, the phrase Al-Hamdu li-llāh construes praise as a relational act anchored in human consciousness but oriented toward divine agency, while expressions such as *lhdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* shift the vantage point to collective human supplication, situating the speaker as trajector and God as landmark within a spatialized cognitive schema.

Profiling and Conceptual Structure

Another fundamental notion in Cognitive Grammar is profiling, which designates the cognitive process by which a linguistic expression highlights a specific substructure within a broader conceptual base (Langacker, 1987, p. 183). Every word or construction profiles a particular facet of knowledge against a background of shared cognitive domains. For example, the lexical item path

profiles the linear trajectory within the larger conceptual base of movement, space, and directionality. Profiling is particularly relevant to the semantics of divine names in the Qur'an. Each name, such as *ar-raḥmān* (the Most Gracious) and *ar-raḥīm* (the Most Merciful), profiles a distinct conceptual aspect of the divine nature against a background of theological knowledge. The repetition and juxtaposition of these names are not redundant but cognitively meaningful: they shift conceptual attention across complementary profiles of the same referent, thereby enriching the mental representation of God's mercy through multidimensional construal. Profiling also explains the cognitive impact of the surah's progression from praise (*Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh*) to supplication (*Ihdi-nā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*). Each clause reconfigures the conceptual scene by altering which entities are profiled as trajectors (conceptual foci) and which serve as landmarks (relational reference points).

Schematicity and Grounding

Cognitive Grammar further organizes meaning hierarchically in terms of schematicity—the continuum from specific, detailed conceptualizations to abstract, generalized schemas (Langacker, 1991, p. 27). A schema captures the essential relational structure common to multiple instances. For example, the notion of “path” in *Ihdi-nā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (“guide us to the straight path”) activates a schematic image structure found across human experience: a source–path–goal pattern representing motion through space. This image schema, when metaphorically extended, provides the cognitive foundation for conceptualizing moral and spiritual guidance as directional movement (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

Grounding refers to the anchoring of linguistic expressions in the discourse context—specifically, how abstract conceptual structures are linked to the speech event. In Arabic, as in many languages, grammatical elements such as definiteness markers, pronouns, and verbal inflections serve grounding functions. The definite article *al-* in *Al-Ḥamdu* (“the praise”) indicates that the praise in question is not indefinite or situational but universal and conceptually accessible to both speaker and hearer. Similarly, the imperative form *ihdi-nā* (“guide us”) grounds the abstract notion of divine guidance in the immediate speech situation, establishing a deictic connection between the collective human speaker and the divine addressee. These grounding devices are crucial in constructing the interpersonal and theological dynamics of the surah.

Image Schemas and Embodiment

A major insight of Cognitive Linguistics is that abstract meaning is grounded in embodied experience. Image schemas—recurring patterns derived from perceptual and motor interaction with the physical world—serve as the cognitive scaffolding for linguistic meaning (Johnson, 1987; Evans & Green, 2006). Common schemas include CONTAINER, PATH, BALANCE, and SOURCE–PATH–GOAL, among others. These schemas operate below the level of conscious awareness but structure our conceptualization of events, states, and relations.

In *Sūrah Al-Ḥamd*, several image schemas organize the text's conceptual architecture. The PATH schema underlies *Ihdi-nā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (“guide us to the straight path”), representing moral

progression as movement toward a goal. The BALANCE schema resonates in Māliki yawmi-d-dīn (“master of the day of judgment”), which conceptualizes divine justice in terms of equilibrium and evaluation. The CONTAINER schema informs expressions of mercy (Ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm), evoking the notion of being enveloped within divine compassion. These embodied structures are not arbitrary metaphors; they are grounded in the universal sensorimotor experiences through which humans understand space, force, and relation. The Qur’an’s language draws upon these foundational schemas to convey abstract theological concepts in experientially accessible form.

Conceptual Integration and Dynamic Meaning

Cognitive Grammar also interfaces with the theory of conceptual integration (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), which explains how disparate conceptual domains combine to yield emergent meaning. While Langacker’s model focuses on symbolic assemblies, it accommodates dynamic meaning construction through blending. In Sūrah Al-Ḥamd, multiple conceptual domains—spatial, moral, temporal, and relational—are integrated to form a unified cognitive scene. For instance, the “path” of moral rectitude blends spatial movement with ethical alignment and eschatological destiny, generating a rich composite meaning that transcends any single domain.

The integration of these domains in Qur’anic discourse exemplifies what Langacker (2008) calls cognitive coherence: the systematic alignment of linguistic constructions with the conceptual structures they evoke. Such coherence accounts for the surah’s linguistic economy and cognitive depth. Through minimal linguistic material, the text constructs an expansive mental model that connects the human conceptualizer, divine agency, and the embodied experience of moral orientation.

In summary, Cognitive Grammar provides a theoretical apparatus capable of capturing the complex interaction between linguistic form and conceptual meaning in Sūrah Al-Ḥamd. Its core principles—construal, profiling, schematicity, grounding, and embodiment—offer analytic tools for understanding how the surah encodes theological content through general cognitive mechanisms. By interpreting grammatical and lexical patterns as reflections of conceptualization, CG allows for a unified account of how the text engages both the mind and the body of the believer.

Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework provides the foundation upon which a research study is built. It consists of the theories and concepts that explain the relationships between variables and guide the formulation of research questions, hypotheses, and methodology. This framework helps situate the study within an established body of knowledge, ensuring that the research is not only grounded in theory but also contributes meaningfully to academic discourse. A well-defined theoretical framework also clarifies key terms and constructs, making the study’s assumptions and analytical approach transparent. The font and size should be **Times New Roman, 10 pt**.

Method

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretive research design grounded in the principles of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2008). Rather than testing hypotheses through quantitative data, the analysis focuses on identifying and explicating the conceptual structures underlying the linguistic constructions of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd. The approach is primarily analytical and hermeneutic, seeking to reveal how the text's grammatical, lexical, and semantic features instantiate specific cognitive operations such as construal, profiling, and image-schematic organization.

Given that Cognitive Grammar treats linguistic meaning as conceptualization, the methodological goal is to reconstruct the conceptual processes that the Qur'anic text invites readers or hearers to perform. This involves close linguistic analysis of key clauses, morphological forms, and conceptual relationships, with attention to how Arabic linguistic patterns encode embodied and relational meaning. The analysis also situates these findings within the broader cognitive-semantic literature, integrating insights from related models such as image schema theory (Johnson, 1987) and conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

Corpus and Textual Basis

The corpus for this study consists exclusively of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd (Qur'an 1:1–7), selected because of its linguistic compactness, thematic richness, and theological centrality. Comprising seven short verses, the surah encapsulates fundamental Qur'anic themes—praise, mercy, judgment, and guidance—within a highly integrated discursive structure. Its universality in Islamic ritual (recited in every unit of daily prayer) further reinforces its role as a cognitive and linguistic prototype for Qur'anic meaning construction.

The Arabic text analyzed here follows the canonical reading of Ḥafṣ 'an 'Āṣim, as found in standard critical editions. For accessibility and analytical clarity, the text is presented in transliteration rather than Arabic script. All English renderings are interpretive rather than strictly literal, serving the analytic goal of illustrating conceptual relations rather than producing formal translation.

Analytical Framework

The study operationalizes the principles of Cognitive Grammar through a three-level analytical framework:

1. Grammatical analysis – examining how specific constructions (nominal, verbal, and prepositional) encode conceptual relationships.
2. Conceptual analysis – identifying the underlying cognitive operations such as profiling, construal, and image-schematic mapping.
3. Integrative analysis – exploring how these operations interact across the surah to produce a coherent conceptual network.

(a) Grammatical Level

At the grammatical level, the analysis investigates how Arabic morphological and syntactic features contribute to conceptualization. Elements such as definiteness, aspect, and case are treated as grounding mechanisms (Langacker, 2008, p. 259) that connect abstract meaning to the discourse situation. For example, the definite article *al-* in *Al-Ḥamdu* (“the praise”) signals universal rather than particular praise, while the genitive construction *li-llāh* (“for God”) expresses relational dependency through possessive grounding. Similarly, verbal forms like *ihdinā* (“guide us”) encode directive modality and establish an interactive frame between speaker and addressee.

(b) Conceptual Level

At the conceptual level, the study identifies how linguistic forms evoke image schemas and conceptual metaphors that structure meaning. Following Johnson (1987), image schemas are recurring patterns derived from embodied experience—such as *PATH*, *CONTAINER*, and *BALANCE*—that serve as the scaffolding for abstract concepts. Conceptual metaphors extend these schemas to higher domains, mapping concrete experiences onto theological or moral understanding. For instance, the *PATH* schema in *Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm* (“guide us to the straight path”) maps spatial movement onto moral progress, reflecting the conceptual metaphor *MORALITY IS DIRECTIONAL MOTION* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

(c) Integrative Level

Finally, at the integrative level, the analysis considers the interconnections among different conceptual domains activated in the surah. This approach follows Langacker’s notion of symbolic assemblies, in which linguistic expressions combine hierarchically to form larger conceptual structures. It also draws on conceptual integration theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) to explain how multiple domains—such as divine attributes, human cognition, and spatial orientation—blend into a unified conceptual model. The aim is to reconstruct the surah’s conceptual architecture: a dynamic system of meaning that aligns human consciousness with divine reality through shared cognitive schemas.

Data Analysis Procedure

The analytic procedure involves four major stages:

1. Textual segmentation – The surah is divided into its principal semantic units, corresponding roughly to verses or clusters of related clauses (e.g., *Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh rabbi l-‘ālamīn*, *Ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*, *Mālikī yawmi-d-dīn*, *Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm*).
2. Grammatical-cognitive mapping – Each unit is examined for its grammatical structure, with attention to how specific constructions encode cognitive functions (e.g., definiteness as universality, prepositions as relational grounding).
3. Schema identification – Image schemas and conceptual metaphors are identified through semantic analysis, focusing on recurrent embodied patterns.
4. Conceptual integration – The findings are synthesized into a coherent model illustrating how

the surah's linguistic structures converge to form an integrated conceptual network.

Throughout this process, the analysis maintains a hermeneutically neutral stance. While the Qur'an is a sacred text, the study treats it primarily as a linguistic artifact—a coherent system of meaning governed by cognitive and semantic principles applicable to all human language. The aim is not to offer theological interpretation per se but to reveal the cognitive mechanisms that enable theological meaning to be linguistically encoded and understood.

Validity and Reliability

In qualitative and interpretive research, validity concerns the plausibility and coherence of the analysis rather than statistical generalizability. The present study ensures validity through theoretical triangulation—drawing on multiple cognitive linguistic frameworks (Cognitive Grammar, image schema theory, and conceptual metaphor theory) to corroborate findings. Analytical reliability is strengthened by the use of established linguistic sources for Qur'anic Arabic, including classical grammars (e.g., Ibn Hishām, Mughni al-Labīb) and modern linguistic analyses (e.g., Abdel Haleem, 2011). While the study interprets the text independently, it aligns its grammatical observations with recognized linguistic authorities to ensure accuracy.

Additionally, contextual reliability is achieved by situating the analysis within the broader Qur'anic discourse system. The conceptual patterns identified in Sūrah Al-Ḥamd—such as the PATH schema or the construal of mercy—are consistent with recurring cognitive themes throughout the Qur'an. This intertextual consistency supports the validity of the proposed cognitive interpretations.

Methodological Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study's focus on a single surah, while allowing for depth, restricts the generalizability of findings to the entire Qur'anic corpus. Future research could extend the analysis to other chapters that elaborate on the same conceptual domains (e.g., mercy, guidance, or judgment) to verify the cross-textual stability of these cognitive patterns. Second, although the analysis aims to remain linguistically and cognitively grounded, interpretive bias cannot be entirely eliminated, especially given the deeply symbolic nature of Qur'anic language. To mitigate this, the study emphasizes analytic transparency, explicitly linking each interpretive claim to linguistic evidence. Finally, the lack of quantitative data means that conclusions about frequency or prominence of particular patterns remain qualitative and exploratory.

Ethical Considerations

Given the sacred status of the Qur'an for over a billion people, scholarly analysis of its linguistic structures requires methodological sensitivity. The present study approaches the text with respect and neutrality, acknowledging its religious significance while maintaining academic rigor. The analysis avoids theological or doctrinal assertions and focuses strictly on cognitive and linguistic phenomena. All translations are interpretive and intended solely to illustrate conceptual relations; they do not claim to represent authoritative renderings of the Qur'an.

In summary, this study adopts a qualitative, cognitive-semantic approach to analyze Sūrah Al-Ḥamd as a system of conceptualization. Through the combined use of grammatical, conceptual, and integrative analyses, it seeks to uncover how linguistic form encodes embodied and relational meaning. By grounding its methodology in the principles of Cognitive Grammar, the study ensures theoretical coherence while allowing for a nuanced exploration of the Qur'an's meaning architecture. The following section presents the results of this analysis, focusing on how specific verses instantiate the core cognitive processes identified in the framework.

Cognitive Analysis of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd

Construal and Conceptual Profiling in *Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh*

The surah opens with the expression *Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh rabbi l- 'ālamīn* ("All praise is for God, Lord of the worlds"). From a cognitive-grammatical perspective, this clause exemplifies several foundational processes of meaning construction: profiling, grounding, and relational construal.

The noun phrase *Al-Ḥamdu* employs the definite article *al-*, marking the concept as both specific and universally accessible. This definiteness performs a grounding function, connecting the conceptual content to a shared cognitive domain rather than to an episodic instance (Langacker, 2008, p. 261). The construction does not refer to a particular act of praise but to the totality of praise as a type-level conceptualization. The profiling of *ḥamd* ("praise") therefore selects the category as a whole rather than an instance within it, an operation corresponding to what Langacker (1987) terms *summary scanning*—the holistic construal of a repeated relation.

The prepositional phrase *li-llāh* ("for God") encodes a relational construal of dependency and directionality. The preposition *li-* in Arabic frequently expresses ownership, purpose, or direction, but within this context it profiles a relationship of finality: praise finds its ultimate endpoint or target in God. The conceptual structure thus aligns with the SOURCE–PATH–GOAL schema, in which the act of praise originates from the human conceptualizer (source), moves through linguistic and cognitive expression (path), and culminates in divine reception (goal). Through this schema, the text linguistically represents an embodied experience of orientation—humans facing toward the divine as the ultimate landmark of all valuation.

The following appositive construction, *rabbi l- 'ālamīn* ("Lord of the worlds"), refines the conceptual profile of the divine referent. The genitive structure (*rabbi*, "Lord of") indicates a possessive and relational grounding that frames God as the trajector of agency and control. The plural *'ālamīn* ("worlds") expands the conceptual scope through schematic extension, indicating that divine lordship encompasses all domains of existence—physical, spiritual, and cognitive. The expression thus constructs a conceptual field in which divine agency is profiled against the background of total cosmic order.

From a construal perspective, *Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh* is remarkable for its subjectivity. The speaker is not explicitly mentioned, yet the utterance presupposes an implicit human conceptualizer who performs the act of praise. This absence of overt agency enhances the objectivity of the scene while maintaining an underlying subjective alignment: the utterance is meaningful only because a human consciousness

construes and directs praise toward the divine. The result is a balanced construal in which subjectivity is both present (as cognitive activity) and effaced (as linguistic omission), enabling the clause to serve as both statement and enactment of worship.

Table 1. Cognitive–Grammatical Profiling of *al-ḥamdu li-llāh rabbi l-‘ālamīn*

Linguistic Element	Grammatical Form	Cognitive Operation	Conceptual / Schematic Construal	Resulting Meaning
al-ḥamdu	Definite noun phrase	Profiling; grounding	Type-level / summary scanning	Presents praise as a universal, abstract category
al-	Definite article	Grounding	Non-episodic reference	Establishes conceptual accessibility and universality
li-llāh	Prepositional phrase	Relational construal	SOURCE–PATH–GOAL schema	Directs praise toward God as ultimate endpoint
li-	Preposition	Directionality; finality	Goal-oriented construal	Encodes orientation and dependency
rabbi	Genitive head noun	Relational grounding	Control / possession schema	Profiles divine authority and agency
l-‘ālamīn	Plural genitive complement	Schematic extension	Scope expansion	Extends lordship to all domains
Implicit speaker	Zero expression	Subjective construal	Objectification	Balances subjectivity and objectivity

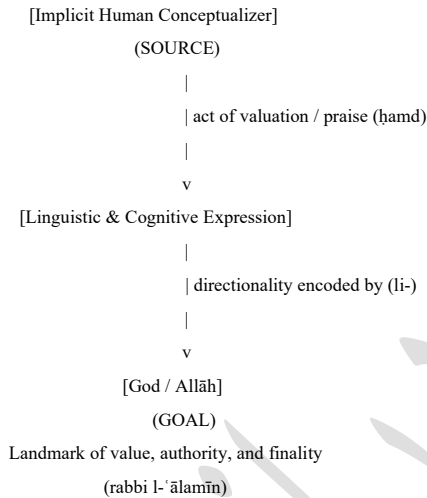


Figure 1. Conceptual Schema of Praise

Figure 1 illustrates the SOURCE–PATH–GOAL schema underlying the construal of praise in al-ḥamdu li-llāh. Praise originates in an implicit human conceptualizer, is linguistically structured through al-ḥamdu, and is directed toward God as the ultimate evaluative landmark, further specified by rabbi l-ʿālamīn.

The Schema of Mercy and Relational Symmetry in *Ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*

The second key expression, *Ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm* (“the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”), consists of two divine epithets derived from the trilateral root *r-ḥ-m*, connoting compassion, tenderness, and nurturance. In Cognitive Grammar terms, these lexemes are lexical profiles of the same underlying conceptual domain—divine mercy—but with distinct construals of scope and intensity.

The first epithet, *ar-raḥmān*, profiles mercy as an all-encompassing experiential field, corresponding to a CONTAINER schema. It evokes the sense of being enveloped by divine beneficence, a conceptualization rooted in embodied experience: humans understand protection, care, and inclusion through spatial containment. The second epithet, *ar-raḥīm*, profiles mercy as an agentive act, focusing attention on the process of bestowing compassion rather than the state of encompassing it. Together, the two epithets construct a complementary construal—one stative and inclusive, the other dynamic and relational.

From a grammatical perspective, the repetition of the definite article *ar-* and the assonance of the morphological pattern (faʿlān–faʿīl) produce a parallel conceptual alignment that invites cognitive comparison. The symmetrical structure guides the conceptualizer to view the two attributes not as distinct entities but as interacting dimensions of a unified conceptual domain. This phenomenon can be interpreted through the principle of conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002): two inputs (universal compassion and active mercy) integrate to yield an emergent structure—divine mercy as both pervasive and personal.

Embodiment further enhances this construal. The *r-h-m* root is etymologically related to *raḥim* (“womb”), a prototypical source domain of nurturance and protection. Thus, the conceptualization of mercy in Qur’anic Arabic is not abstract but deeply embodied, grounded in the sensorimotor and emotional experience of maternal care. Through this embodied metaphor, the divine–human relationship is construed as nurturing and life-sustaining. Cognitive Grammar accommodates such etymological embodiment by recognizing that lexical semantics often arise from entrenched image-schematic patterns.

Table 2. Cognitive–Grammatical Schema of Mercy in ar-rahmān ar-rahīm

Linguistic Element	Grammatical Form	Cognitive Operation	Conceptual / Image Schema	Resulting Meaning
ar-rahmān	Definite divine epithet	Profiling; scope construal	CONTAINER schema	Mercy construed as all-encompassing and universal
ar-rahīm	Definite divine epithet	Process profiling; agentive construal	ACTION / FORCE schema	Mercy construed as actively bestowed and relational
Shared root r-h-m	Trilateral lexical root	Domain activation	Embodied nurturance schema	Anchors mercy in compassion, care, and tenderness
Definite article ar-	Repeated determiner	Grounding; symmetry	Parallel alignment	Invites comparison and conceptual integration
Morphological pattern fa’lān-fa’īl	Derivational symmetry	Conceptual blending trigger	Structural parallelism	Encourages integration of stative and dynamic mercy
Combined expression ar-rahmān ar-rahīm	Coordinated epithets	Conceptual blending	Emergent structure	Divine mercy construed as both pervasive and personal
Etymological link to raḥim (womb)	Embodied source domain	Embodiment	NURTURANCE schema	Divine–human relationship construed as life-sustaining

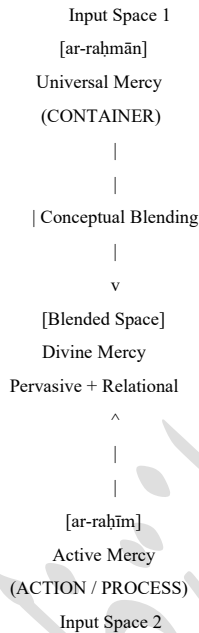


Figure 2. Conceptual Blending Schema of Divine Mercy

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual blending underlying the paired epithets *ar-rahmān* and *ar-rahīm*. Universal, encompassing mercy (Input Space 1) blends with agentive, relational mercy (Input Space 2) to produce an emergent construal of divine mercy as simultaneously pervasive and personally engaged. This blended structure is grounded in embodied experience through the r-h-m root, etymologically linked to *rahīm* (‘womb’), a prototypical domain of nurturance and protection.

Temporal and Eschatological Construal in *Māliki yawmi-d-dīn*

The phrase *Māliki yawmi-d-dīn* (‘Master of the Day of Judgment’) introduces a new conceptual domain: time and eschatology. Here, the nominal form *māliki* (possessor/master) profiles control as the salient relational concept, while the genitive complement *yawmi-d-dīn* (‘day of judgment’) specifies the temporal and evaluative domain over which this control extends. The construction thereby instantiates a BALANCE schema, mapping the conceptual domain of judgment onto the embodied experience of weighing and equilibrium.

The term *dīn* encompasses meanings of judgment, recompense, and moral order. Cognitively, it evokes a moral accounting schema—an extension of the TRANSACTION schema, in which actions correspond to consequences. The reference to *yawm* (‘day’) temporalizes this schema, situating the moral evaluation within a bounded temporal frame. Langacker’s (1991) notion of boundedness applies here: the ‘day’ construes the otherwise continuous process of divine justice as a delimited episode, thus enhancing conceptual focus and coherence.

The relationship between *māliki* and *yawmi-d-dīn* exemplifies profiling and scope of predication. The head noun *māliki* profiles the role of an agentive possessor, while its conceptual base includes the temporal and moral domain represented by the genitive complement. The expression thus projects a hierarchical conceptual structure in which divine agency governs temporal and moral reality. This hierarchical construal is cognitively resonant with human experience: control over time and consequence is prototypically associated with authority, hence reinforcing the conceptual mapping between divinity and sovereignty.

The shift from the preceding verses—where mercy dominates—to the theme of judgment introduces a perspectival reorientation. The conceptualizer's focus moves from affective proximity to evaluative accountability. Yet the transition remains cognitively coherent: mercy and justice are integrated within a single conceptual network through the higher-order schema of ORDER. This schema organizes both compassion and judgment as modes of divine governance, demonstrating the text's ability to maintain conceptual unity amid lexical contrast.

Table 3. Temporal and Eschatological Construal in *māliki yawmi d-dīn*

Linguistic Element	Grammatical Form	Cognitive Operation	Conceptual / Image Schema	Resulting Meaning
<i>māliki</i>	Agentive nominal (genitive head)	Profiling; relational construal	CONTROL / POSSESSION schema	Profiles divine sovereignty and authority
<i>yawmi</i>	Temporal noun	Temporal grounding	BOUNDED TIME schema	Construes judgment as temporally delimited
<i>ad-dīn</i>	Abstract moral noun	Domain activation	MORAL ACCOUNTING / TRANSACTION schema	Frames judgment as recompense and moral order
<i>yawmi d-dīn</i>	Genitive construction	Scope specification	BALANCE / EVALUATION schema	Maps judgment onto weighing and accountability
Head-complement relation	Genitive hierarchy	Scope of predication	HIERARCHY schema	Divine agency governs time and morality
Bounded “day” construal	Temporal delimitation	Boundedness (Langacker 1991)	EVENT STRUCTURING	Enhances focus and coherence of justice
Shift from mercy to judgment	Discourse transition	Perspective shift	ORDER schema	Integrates compassion and justice within divine governance

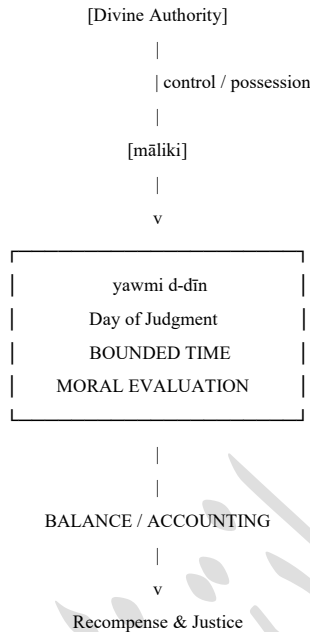


Figure 3. Temporal–Eschatological Schema of Judgment

Figure 3. Temporal and eschatological construal of judgment in *mālīki yawmi d-dīn*. Divine authority is profiled through the agentive noun *mālīki*, while the genitive complement *yawmi d-dīn* delimits the scope of this authority to a bounded temporal episode of moral evaluation. Judgment is cognitively structured through BALANCE and TRANSACTION schemas, integrating time, accountability, and sovereignty within a unified conceptual framework.

The Path Schema and Directedness in *Ihḍinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm*

The clause *Ihḍinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm* (“guide us to the straight path”) represents a paradigmatic example of an embodied conceptual schema. The verb *ihḍinā* (imperative form of *hadā*, “to guide”) encodes a motion metaphor grounded in human experience of movement and orientation. The object phrase *ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm* profiles the target of motion, constructed through the SOURCE–PATH–GOAL schema—a central organizing pattern in human cognition (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

At the linguistic level, *ṣ-ṣirāṭ* (“path”) designates a bounded linear space, while *al-mustaḳīm* (“straight”) modifies it to indicate the absence of deviation. The adjective invokes the ALIGNMENT schema, which in embodied terms corresponds to balance and directedness. The phrase thus construes moral rectitude as spatial linearity, allowing the abstract concept of ethical guidance to be understood through a physically grounded schema.

The imperative mood (*ihḍinā*) performs a dual cognitive function: it establishes an interactional frame between speaker and addressee, and it enacts the process of conceptual alignment. By requesting guidance, the speaker linguistically constructs themselves as trajector (the moving entity) and God as landmark (the orienting reference point). This relational configuration aligns perfectly with Langacker’s

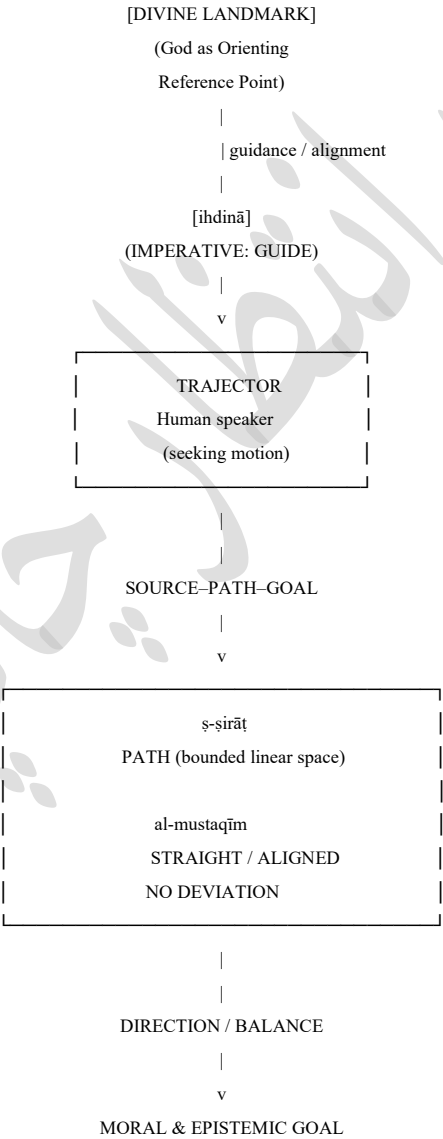
(2008) description of trajector–landmark organization, wherein meaning arises from the asymmetrical relationship between a focal participant and its reference entity. The directive *iḥdinā* thus encodes not merely a request but a cognitive orientation, positioning the believer’s consciousness along a trajectory toward divine truth.

The conceptual economy of the phrase further illustrates schematic compression: through minimal linguistic material, the text integrates spatial, moral, and epistemic domains into a unified image. The PATH schema serves as a conceptual bridge between embodied movement and abstract guidance, demonstrating how Qur’anic language leverages universal cognitive structures to express theological meaning.

Table 4. Cognitive–Embodiment Analysis of *iḥdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*

Linguistic Element	Conceptual Domain	Embodied Image Schema	Cognitive Construal	Cognitive Function	Theoretical Anchoring
<i>iḥdinā</i> (imperative “guide us”)	Guidance / directedness	Motion / SOURCE–PATH–GOAL	Dynamic, participatory	Establishes interactional frame; positions speaker as trajector, God as landmark	Langacker (2008): trajector–landmark
<i>ṣ-ṣirāṭ</i> (“path”)	Bounded linear space	Path / linearity	Static, descriptive	Profiles ethical trajectory; provides spatial scaffold for moral reasoning	Johnson (1987); Lakoff & Johnson (1999)
<i>al-mustaqīm</i> (“straight”)	Alignment / moral rectitude	ALIGNMENT / BALANCE	Directed, goal-oriented	Eliminates deviation; reinforces ethical and epistemic orientation	Image schema theory; embodiment hypothesis
Imperative Mood	Interaction / relational positioning	Trajector–Landmark	Subjective / dynamic	Creates speaker–addressee relational frame; enacts conceptual alignment	Langacker (2008): subjectification
Conceptual Economy	Integrative schematic compression	Multi-schema integration (path + alignment + goal)	Multi-domain construal	Unifies spatial, moral, and epistemic meaning in	Schematic compression; usage-based cognition

				minimal linguistic material	
Overall Clause	Ethical and epistemic guidance	PATH / ALIGNMENT / MOTION	Dynamic and interactive	Positions human consciousness along trajectory toward divine truth	Cognitive linguistics; embodied conceptual metaphor



(ethical rectitude / divine truth)

Figure 4. Path Schema and Directedness in *ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*

Figure 4. Embodied PATH schema and directedness in *ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*. The clause is structured around the SOURCE–PATH–GOAL schema, a foundational pattern of embodied cognition. The imperative *ihdinā* profiles guided motion and establishes an interactional frame in which the human speaker functions as trajector and God as landmark (Langacker, 2008). The noun *ṣ-ṣirāṭ* construes ethical life as a bounded linear path, while the modifier *al-mustaqīm* invokes ALIGNMENT and BALANCE schemas, eliminating deviation and reinforcing directedness. Through schematic compression, spatial movement, moral rectitude, and epistemic orientation are integrated into a single coherent image, illustrating how Qur'ānic discourse grounds abstract theological guidance in universal sensorimotor experience.

Integrative Conceptual Structures and Embodiment

When analyzed as a cohesive whole, *Sūrah Al-Ḥamd* reveals a network of interconnected conceptual schemas that collectively model the divine–human relationship. The sequence of verses can be interpreted as a conceptual progression through successive domains:

1. Orientation and valuation (*Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh*)
2. Compassion and inclusion (*Ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*)
3. Authority and judgment (*Māliki yawmi-d-dīn*)
4. Dependence and direction (*Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*)

Each stage builds upon the previous by adding a new dimension of cognitive construal—moving from static to dynamic, from descriptive to interactive, and from declarative to supplicatory modes. This progression mirrors the cognitive cycle of conceptual alignment (Langacker, 2008): the process by which the conceptualizer (human speaker) situates themselves within an increasingly complex mental model of reality.

From an embodiment perspective, the surah's meaning architecture is grounded in sensorimotor experience. Praise corresponds to upward orientation, mercy to enveloping containment, judgment to balance and weighing, and guidance to directional motion. These embodied schemas are not arbitrary metaphors but cognitive universals that structure human understanding of abstract domains. The Qur'an's linguistic genius lies in its ability to align these universal schemas with specific theological concepts, creating a discourse that is both experientially grounded and semantically profound.

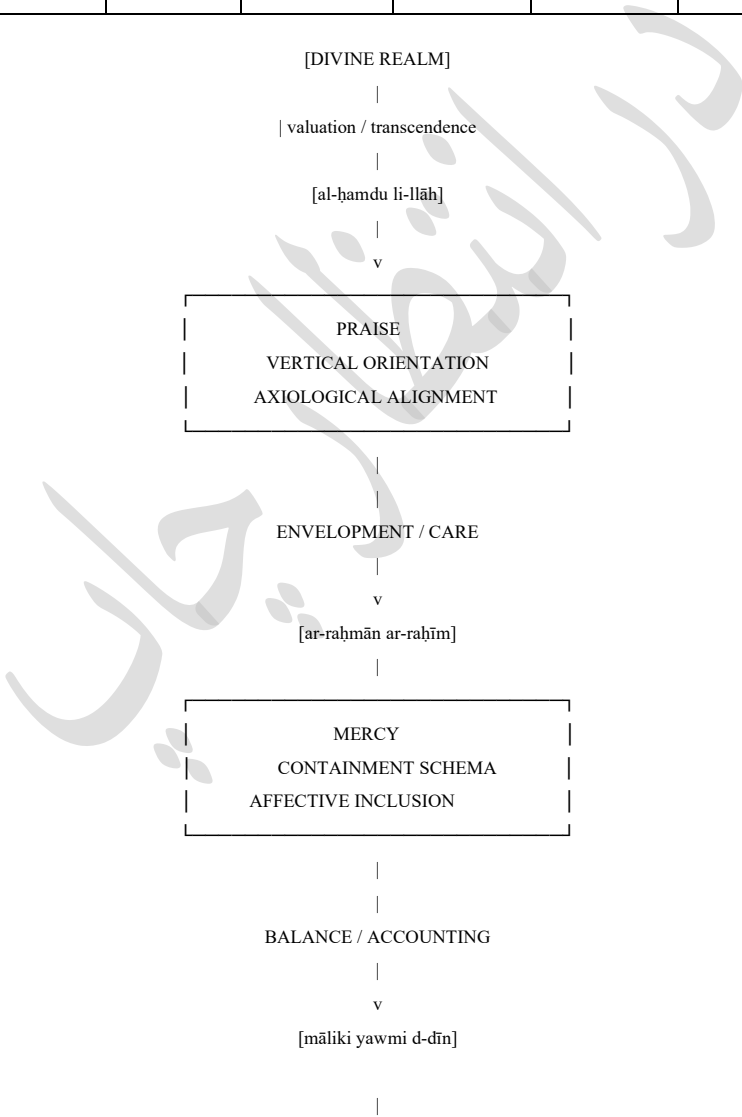
Furthermore, the surah exemplifies dynamic construal—meaning construction that evolves across clauses. The initial objectivity of *Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh* gradually gives way to subjectivity in *Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, reflecting a shift from declarative acknowledgment to participatory engagement. The text thus models a cognitive movement from perception to action, from conceptual recognition to embodied enactment of meaning. This transition parallels Langacker's (1991) continuum of subjective to objective construal, illustrating how linguistic form can encode shifts in cognitive stance.

Finally, the surah's internal coherence can be explained through the principle of cognitive chaining: each conceptual domain activates the next through shared schematic elements. Praise presupposes beneficence (mercy); mercy implies justice (judgment); judgment necessitates guidance (path). These interconnections form a conceptual network that unifies theological meaning through cognitive continuity. The result is a discourse that operates simultaneously on grammatical, semantic, and experiential levels, engaging the believer's linguistic, cognitive, and affective faculties in an integrated act of understanding.

Table 5. Cognitive-Embodiment Analysis of Sūrah al-Ḥamd

Qur'ānic Segment / Conceptual Stage	Dominant Conceptual Domain	Embodied Image Schema	Type of Cognitive Construal	Cognitive Function in Discourse	Theoretical Anchoring
al-ḥamdu li-llāh (Praise)	Orientation & valuation	Verticality / UP-DOWN (elevation, transcendence)	Objective, static construal	Establishes conceptual alignment by situating the speaker within a value-laden worldview	Langacker (2008): baseline conceptualization
ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm (Mercy)	Compassion & inclusion	Containment / Envelopment	Descriptive but relational	Expands the mental model through affective inclusion and beneficence	Embodiment theory; affective cognition
māliki yawmi d-dīn (Judgment)	Authority & moral order	Balance / Weighing	Normative, evaluative construal	Introduces accountability and structured moral space	Image schemas of justice; moral cognition
iḥdīnā š-širāṭ al-mustaqīm (Guidance)	Dependence & direction	Path / Motion	Subjective, dynamic construal	Transitions from recognition to action and participation	Langacker (1991): subjectification
Sequential Progression	Integrated conceptual network	Chained schemas (UP → CONTAINER → BALANCE → PATH)	Dynamic construal across clauses	Models a cognitive cycle from perception to embodied enactment	Cognitive chaining; discourse processing
Overall Surah Structure	Divine-human relational model	Multi-schema embodiment	Objective → subjective continuum	Unifies grammar, semantics, and experience into	Usage-based cognitive grammar

				coherent meaning	
Meaning Construction	Experiential grounding	Sensorimotor universals	Dynamic meaning emergence	Aligns abstract theology with embodied cognition	Embodiment hypothesis
Discourse Effect	Engagement of believer	Perceptual–motor simulation	Participatory construal	Activates linguistic, cognitive, and affective faculties	Cognitive linguistics & religious discourse



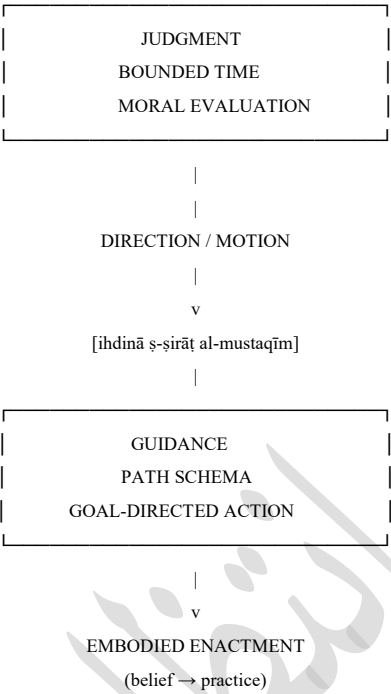


Figure 5. Integrative Cognitive-Embodiment Schema of Sūrah al-Ḥamd

The sūrah unfolds as a chained sequence of conceptual schemas progressing from axiological orientation (*al-ḥamdu li-llāh*) through affective containment (*ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*), moral evaluation (*māliki yawmi d-dīn*), and finally goal-directed motion (*ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*). Each stage activates a distinct embodied image schema—VERTICALITY, CONTAINMENT, BALANCE, and PATH—while collectively modeling a dynamic shift from objective acknowledgment to subjective participation. The figure illustrates how theological meaning is cognitively structured through embodiment, dynamic construal, and schematic continuity.

Discussion: Implications for Cognitive Semantics and Qur’anic Hermeneutics
The Cognitive Architecture of Theological Meaning

The analysis of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd reveals that the Qur’anic text is not only a repository of theological propositions but also a system of conceptual operations. Through its grammatical structures and lexical patterns, the surah encodes a network of embodied image schemas that underlie abstract theological meanings. Within the framework of Cognitive Grammar, meaning arises not from symbolic reference alone but from construal—the speaker’s or hearer’s way of mentally structuring a scene (Langacker, 1987, 2008).

The findings indicate that Sūrah Al-Ḥamd systematically employs construal mechanisms that correspond to universal cognitive tendencies:

- Grounding (as in Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh), where definiteness and relational marking establish universal scope and dependency;

- Profiling (as in *Māliki yawmi-d-dīn*), where specific relational aspects of divine agency are foregrounded;
- Subjectivity and intersubjectivity (as in *Ihdiṇā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm*), where the text positions the speaker as a trajector within a dynamic divine–human relation.

By mapping these construals, the study demonstrates that theological meaning in the Qur'an is mediated through ordinary cognitive processes rather than abstract theological reasoning. The surah's linguistic design recruits sensorimotor schemas such as PATH, CONTAINER, BALANCE, and SOURCE–GOAL orientation to render divine realities conceptually accessible. This finding aligns with the principle of embodied cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Johnson, 2017), according to which abstract thought is grounded in bodily experience.

In this light, *Sūrah Al-Ḥamd* exemplifies how sacred discourse operates within the same cognitive constraints as all human language, while simultaneously transcending them through semantic layering and conceptual integration. The surah's compactness enables a high degree of semantic density, allowing multiple cognitive operations to occur simultaneously. This property supports the claim that Qur'anic Arabic achieves its expressive depth through the strategic exploitation of grammatical and conceptual polysemy—a key feature of cognitively sophisticated discourse (Evans, 2019).

Integration of Embodiment and Abstraction

One of the most significant cognitive insights from this analysis is the Qur'an's ability to integrate embodied imagery with abstract theology without reducing either domain. The recurrent PATH schema in *Ihdiṇā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm* and the CONTAINER schema in *Ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm* both demonstrate how spatial and experiential patterns are extended to moral and metaphysical domains. This mechanism reflects what cognitive linguists describe as conceptual metaphor and image-schematic projection (Grady, 1997; Lakoff, 2014).

However, in *Sūrah Al-Ḥamd*, such mappings are not metaphorical in the narrow rhetorical sense; they are structural correspondences that define the believer's experiential relationship with the divine. The invocation of the PATH schema, for instance, constructs the human subject as a mover through moral space, whose progress is contingent upon divine orientation. This movement metaphor is not merely illustrative—it embodies the existential dynamics of faith, dependence, and guidance.

Similarly, the semantic field of *raḥma* (“mercy”) demonstrates how affective embodiment—rooted in the maternal experience encoded by the etymon *raḥim* (“womb”)—is elevated to a universal theological principle. The conceptual blending of maternal containment with divine compassion yields a hybrid cognitive model in which human and divine experiences are integrated but not conflated. This supports Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) notion of conceptual integration networks, wherein multiple input spaces (here, human nurture and divine benevolence) produce emergent meaning that cannot be reduced to either domain alone.

Thus, *Sūrah Al-Ḥamd* provides empirical support for the claim that embodiment and abstraction

are not opposites but interdependent dimensions of conceptualization (Johnson, 2017). In Qur'anic discourse, embodiment provides the cognitive grounding necessary for abstraction, while abstraction allows embodiment to transcend its literal source domain. The result is a dual-layered construal of meaning: concrete enough for cognitive accessibility, yet abstract enough for theological transcendence.

Cognitive Grammar and Qur'anic Semantics

Applying Cognitive Grammar to Qur'anic Arabic reveals the potential of this framework for explicating classical semantic phenomena that traditional exegesis often treated impressionistically. For instance, Arabic grammarians recognized the rhetorical significance of definiteness, word order, and morphological symmetry in Sūrah Al-Ḥamd, but Cognitive Grammar provides an explanatory model that links these formal patterns to mental representation.

The definite article *al-* in Al-Ḥamdu functions not merely as a grammatical marker but as a grounding device that connects conceptual content to shared cognitive experience. Similarly, the morphological parallelism between *ar-rahmān* and *ar-rahīm* establishes a cognitive frame of conceptual symmetry, promoting parallel activation of semantically related domains. These features illustrate how Qur'anic Arabic exploits the symbolic capacity of grammar—the ability of formal patterns to encode conceptual relationships (Langacker, 2008).

Moreover, the surah's alternation between nominal and verbal constructions reflects a conceptual shift from static to dynamic construals. Nominal clauses such as *Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh* represent timeless states, while verbal imperatives like *iḥdinā* introduce temporal progression and agency. This alternation enacts what Langacker (1991) describes as sequential scanning, where conceptualization unfolds dynamically through discourse. By moving from description to action, the surah models a cognitive transition from contemplation to participation—a hallmark of religious language that seeks to engage the believer's entire cognitive apparatus.

Thus, Cognitive Grammar offers a framework that unifies syntax, semantics, and cognition within a single explanatory system, demonstrating that Qur'anic meaning is not confined to lexical semantics but distributed across grammatical, conceptual, and interactive levels.

The Role of Conceptual Integration in Theological Coherence

The internal coherence of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd can be explained through the mechanism of conceptual integration, whereby distinct domains—praise, mercy, judgment, and guidance—are blended into a unified conceptual network. Each verse activates a specific domain, but through cross-domain mapping, the surah achieves theological synthesis: praise presupposes mercy, mercy anticipates justice, and justice necessitates guidance.

In Cognitive Grammar terms, these domains form a complex symbolic assembly (Langacker, 2008), in which smaller symbolic units combine hierarchically to create higher-order meaning. This layered architecture corresponds to what Fauconnier and Turner (2002) describe as emergent structure—new meaning that arises from the integration of previously separate domains.

The Qur'an's discourse structure thus exhibits a form of cognitive modularity, where each conceptual domain functions as a module that contributes to the whole. Yet the modules are not isolated; they are interlinked through shared schemas and metaphoric extensions. The PATH schema, for example, recurs across multiple domains: praise moves toward God (li-llāh), mercy flows toward creation, justice culminates in a destined "day," and guidance directs the believer's movement. These recurrent schemas ensure semantic resonance and cognitive coherence throughout the surah.

By grounding theological coherence in cognitive integration, this study aligns with recent developments in cognitive linguistics that emphasize the dynamic, networked nature of meaning construction (Evans, 2019; Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014). The Qur'an, in this sense, operates as a cognitive ecosystem, where linguistic, conceptual, and affective elements interact to produce a unified experience of meaning.

Cognitive Hermeneutics and Interpretive Neutrality

Beyond its linguistic significance, the cognitive analysis of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd contributes to the emerging field of cognitive hermeneutics—the application of cognitive science principles to textual interpretation. Cognitive hermeneutics reframes exegesis not as a search for authorial intention or historical context but as an exploration of how texts evoke conceptual structures within the human mind (Gibbs, 2017).

In this framework, meaning is neither wholly objective (residing in the text) nor purely subjective (constructed by the reader) but interactively emergent from the cognitive encounter between text and reader. Sūrah Al-Ḥamd exemplifies this interactional model: it invites the reader to enact cognitive processes—orientation, alignment, and moral motion—that constitute its meaning.

This perspective also clarifies the role of neutrality in academic analysis. While the Qur'an is a sacred text, cognitive linguistic inquiry treats its language as a phenomenon of human cognition—a structured reflection of how humans conceptualize reality. Such neutrality does not diminish the text's sacred status but ensures that linguistic description remains empirically accountable and theoretically rigorous. In this way, cognitive linguistics provides a non-theological yet deeply respectful approach to religious language.

Theoretical and Disciplinary Implications

The implications of this study extend beyond Qur'anic linguistics to broader cognitive–semantic theory. First, it demonstrates that Cognitive Grammar is cross-culturally applicable, capable of describing meaning construction in non-Indo-European languages with rich morphological systems. Arabic, with its derivational morphology and root-based semantics, provides fertile ground for testing and refining cognitive–linguistic hypotheses.

Second, the study highlights the need for integrative models that bridge formal linguistic analysis and cognitive interpretation. Traditional approaches to Qur'anic exegesis, though philologically rich, often lack an explicit theory of cognition; conversely, much of cognitive linguistics has focused on modern vernaculars and secular texts. By combining these perspectives, this research contributes to

a more comprehensive understanding of how language mediates spiritual and conceptual experience. Finally, the findings suggest that sacred discourse represents a unique type of cognitive construction—one that maximizes conceptual integration, embodiment, and intersubjective participation. Future cognitive–linguistic research may thus treat religious texts not as exceptional cases but as prototypical examples of the human capacity to encode abstract, affective, and moral knowledge in language.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how the linguistic structures of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd encode conceptualization and meaning within the framework of Cognitive Grammar. Specifically, it addressed three research questions: (1) how the grammatical organization of the Sūrah Al-Ḥamd reflects conceptualizations of divine attributes and human experience; (2) which image schemas and embodied patterns underlie key Qur’anic expressions; and (3) how these cognitive mechanisms contribute to the coherence and spiritual resonance of the Sūrah Al-Ḥamd.

In response to the first research question, the analysis demonstrates that the grammatical organization of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd systematically reflects distinct yet interconnected conceptualizations of divinity and human dependence. Nominal constructions such as *Al-Ḥamdu li-llāh* construe praise as a universal, timeless entity through definiteness and nominal profiling, while genitive structures encode relational grounding that positions God as the ultimate locus of authority. The alternation between nominal and verbal constructions further reflects a shift from objective description to subjective engagement, culminating in the imperative *Ihdinā*, which positions the human speaker as an active participant within the divine–human relationship.

With respect to the second research question, the findings reveal that key expressions in the sūrah are structured by embodied image schemas grounded in human experience. The CONTAINER schema underlies the construal of divine mercy in *Ar-raḥmān Ar-raḥīm*, integrating notions of inclusion and nurturance, while the BALANCE and MORAL ACCOUNTING schemas structure the eschatological meaning of *Māliki yawmi d-dīn*. Most prominently, the SOURCE–PATH–GOAL schema shapes the conceptualization of guidance in *Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, allowing abstract moral orientation to be understood through embodied experiences of motion, alignment, and direction.

Addressing the third research question, the study shows that these grammatical and conceptual mechanisms collectively contribute to the coherence and cognitive unity of Sūrah Al-Ḥamd. Rather than functioning as isolated theological statements, the verses form a tightly integrated conceptual network in which praise, mercy, judgment, and guidance are cognitively chained. This integration enables the sūrah to guide the reader from acknowledgment of divine reality to embodied participation in moral and spiritual orientation, thereby accounting for its enduring affective and spiritual impact.

In conclusion, the analysis confirms that Sūrah Al-Ḥamd is linguistically structured in accordance with general cognitive principles rather than purely rhetorical or doctrinal conventions. Its meaning emerges through dynamic construal, profiling, grounding, and embodied schematic organization,

demonstrating that Qur'anic discourse is deeply rooted in universal patterns of human cognition. Such findings contribute to ongoing research on embodied cognition, narrative simulation, and the role of language in shaping moral and spiritual cognition (Gibbs, 2017; Johnson, 2017).

The findings of this study have several important implications. Theoretically, they support the applicability of Cognitive Grammar to Holy Qur'an and extend cognitive-semantic research beyond predominantly Indo-European and secular corpora. Methodologically, the study illustrates how grammatical analysis can be integrated with embodiment and image schema theory to yield a cognitively explanatory account of sacred texts. Finally, from a disciplinary perspective, this research contributes to Qur'anic linguistics by offering a non-theological yet conceptually rigorous model for understanding how linguistic form mediates spiritual meaning, opening new avenues for interdisciplinary dialogue between cognitive linguistics and Islamic studies.

References

- Abdel Haleem, M. A. S. (2011). *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and style*. I. B. Tauris.
- Al-Zamakhshari, M. J. (2009). *Al-Kashshaf: A Commentary on the Qur'an Uncovering the Realities of Revelation and the Subtleties of Interpretation* (Vols. 1-4). Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
- Barsalou, L. W. (2021). Categories at the interface of cognition and action. *Building categories in interaction: Linguistic resources at work*, 35-72.
- Boyalık, M. T. (2019). A Constitutive Work in the Qur'anic Exegesis Tradition of Sharh and Hashiya: Qutb al-Din al-Razi's Sharh Mushkilāt al-Kashshāf. *Nazariyat*, 5(2), 143-166.
- Croft, W., & Cruse, D. A. (2004). *Cognitive linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dancygier, B., & Sweetser, E. (2014). *Figurative language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, V. (2019). *Cognitive linguistics: A complete introduction*. Routledge.
- Fazaeli, S. A. and Zeini Malekabadi, H. (2023). Semantics of the word "Doa" in the Holy Quran based on the relations of companionship and succession. *Linguistic Studies: Theory and Practice*, 1(2), 105-127. doi: 10.22034/jls.2023.62825
- Fauconnier, G., & Turner, M. (2002). *The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*. Basic Books.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/378014> journals.uchicago.edu+2scribd.com+2
- Gibbs, R. W. (2017). *Metaphor wars: Conceptual metaphors in human life*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grady, J. E. (1997). *Foundations of meaning: Primary metaphors and primary scenes* (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Berkeley.
- Ibn Hishām, J. (n.d.). *Mughni al-labīb 'an kutub al-a'ārīb* [In Arabic]. Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Johnson, M. (1987). *The body in the mind: The bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*. University of Chicago Press.
- Johnson, M. (2017). *Embodied mind, meaning, and reason: How our bodies give rise to understanding*. University of Chicago Press.

- Lakoff, G. (2014). *The all new don't think of an elephant!: Know your values and frame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*. Basic Books.
- Langacker, R. W. (1987). *Foundations of cognitive grammar: Volume I, Theoretical prerequisites*. Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R. W. (1991). *Foundations of cognitive grammar: Volume II, Descriptive application*. Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R. W. (2008). *Cognitive grammar: A basic introduction*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195331967.001.0001oxfordbibliographies.com+3academic.oup.com+3researchgate.net+3>.
- Nefdt, R. M. (2016). Scientific modelling in generative grammar and the dynamic turn in syntax. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 39(5), 357-394.
- Neuwirth, A. (2010). Two Faces of the Qur'ān: Qur'ān and Muṣḥaf. *Oral Tradition*, 25(1).
- Stefanowitsch, A. (2020). *Corpus linguistics: A guide to the methodology*. Language Science Press.
- Turner, M. (2014). *The origin of ideas: Blending, creativity, and the human spark*. Oxford University Press.
- Vahhabi, S. , Zare, A. and Sharafzadeh, M. H. (In Press). Linguistic Analysis of Surah Al-Fil: Functional Approach. *Linguistic Studies: Theory and Practice*. doi: 10.22034/jls.2024.142168.1167.