BRIDGING CLASSICAL ARABIC RHETORIC AND COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF *KINAYAH* AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY

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ABSTRACT

Descriptive classical *balaghah* approaches have dominated figurative studies in the Qur'an. In its development, Qur'anic studies have begun to utilise cognitive linguistic approaches, albeit to a limited extent. These two approaches have not been systematically integrated, even though they share a common vision in understanding indirect meaning. This study aims to map the integration of the concept of *kinayah* in classical *balaghah* with the conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) framework in Qur'anic linguistic studies through a systematic literature review. Following the PRISMA 2020 protocol and searching for data from the Scopus database, 15 articles were obtained that met the inclusion criteria and became the object of analysis. The findings show that studies discussing *kinayah* and CMT in the Qur'an are still scattered and partial. The characteristics of the definition and classification of *kinayah* refer to classical, pragmatic, and contextual semantic approaches. CMT is applied variably to explain abstract concepts in the Qur'an through metaphorical mapping, both in eschatological and theological themes, as well as in social discourse. The main challenges in integrating these two approaches include epistemological and terminological differences, as well as linguistic and cultural gaps. However, the opportunities for integration appear promising, especially at the textual and semantic analysis levels through a hybrid approach. This study emphasises the importance of developing an interdisciplinary methodological framework based on *kinayah*-CMT in Qur'anic linguistic studies. These findings reinforce linguistic-interpretation epistemology, advance adaptive models for Qur'anic figurative analysis, and open new directions for interdisciplinary Qur'anic studies in the digital age.

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INTRODUCTION

The language of the Qur'an possesses rhetorical beauty (Rippin, 2016) and has complex figurative characteristics in conveying divine messages to humans (Al-Ali et al., 2016). Studies of the language of the Qur'an have thus far relied heavily on classical balaghah concepts (Versteegh, 2023), represented through the study *of kinayah* as a primary means of uncovering implicit meanings. Kinayah is a figurative expression used to convey meaning indirectly, thus requiring skill in interpreting its meaning and sensitivity to the underlying socio-cultural context (Al Farisi, 2020; Alsemeiri & Nordin, 2023). In the context of modern linguistics, the study of figurative meaning can be examined through the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) approach popularised by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). In CMT, abstract or figurative meanings are mapped onto conceptual constructs based on a person's cognitive experience so that they can be understood more clearly and systematically (Kövecses, 2020). Epistemologically, kinayah in balaghah and CMT in cognitive linguistics share a common vision in revealing meanings that are not present in literal form through cognitive mechanisms rooted in human experience. Therefore, the integration of these two approaches is crucial to strengthen the study of figurative language in the Qur'an through the unification of rhetorical description and conceptual understanding models. Furthermore, the depth of the revelatory message can be fully understood within the framework of human cognitive construction.

The study of kinayah has long been the foundation of figurative analysis in the study of the language of the Qur'an (Al Farisi, 2020). However, the approach used is still dominated by a classical balaghah perspective that is descriptive and structural in nature (Alruwaili et al., 2025). The main focus of research tends to be on classifying forms (Nurbayan, 2019) and the functions of expressions (Alsemeiri & Nordin, 2023), so that the conceptual and cognitive aspects behind implicit meanings have not received much attention. On the other hand, modern linguistic studies that apply the CMT approach in analysing religious texts, including the Qur'an, have begun to show developments (Andri Nirwana et al., 2024), but generally work separately from the constructs of Arabic rhetorical theory. Studies conducted by Sardaraz et al. (2022) use CMT to examine the preposition "ala" in the Qur'an because they consider the traditional (Arabic) syntactic approach to be unreasonable. This condition can lead to fragmentation in scientific approaches, such as differences in frameworks of thought and terminology. Thus, despite initial efforts to connect the two, the epistemological and operational integration of the concept of kinayah and the CMT framework has not been fully established. This condition indicates the need for systematic mapping of existing literature in order to objectively examine the connection between the two approaches that has been attempted in the academic realm.

Along with the increasing attention to the study of figurative language in the Qur'an in the last two decades (Al Zahrawi et al., 2024; Andri Nirwana et al., 2024), several studies have begun to apply a cognitive linguistic framework in analysing conceptual metaphors in the text of the Qur'an (Pourebrahim, 2025). Empirical studies of conceptual metaphors are still fragmented and partial in the realm of conceptual meaning translation in the Qur'an (Al-Sowaidi et al., 2021; Hammoodi & Moindjie, 2024; Rumman & Al Salem, 2023) and mapping figurative meanings in the Qur'an (Khan & Ali, 2020; Suri & Tanjung, 2025). Nevertheless, this indicates an interest in understanding abstract meanings in the Qur'an through cognitive mapping mechanisms. There are critical studies conducted by Yazar & Batur (2025)

explaining that the application of CMT in Qur'anic studies has not provided an adequate epistemological explanation of the intertwined language structure and conceptual meaning in the Arabic rhetorical tradition. Shamsudin & Aladdin (2024) emphasise that there is still a considerable methodological gap between classical and modern approaches in the study of Qur'anic figuration. Thus, despite indications of progress in Qur'anic studies, CMT-based Qur'anic linguistic research still offers opportunities for systematic exploration of theoretical and methodological collaboration.

Based on the conditions described above, there are several scientific gaps that need to be bridged. First (RQ1), there is no comprehensive mapping of the characteristics of the development of kinayah studies within the framework of cognitive linguistics. Second (RQ2), there has been no study synthesising the concept of kinayah in balaghah literature with cognitive linguistic conceptual tools to explain the construction of figurative meaning in the Qur'an. Third (RQ3), there has been no systematic mapping of the implementation of CMT in the analysis of religious texts. Fourth (RQ4), there has been no scientific evaluation highlighting the epistemological and methodological challenges in integrating classical balaghah with CMT as a modern scientific paradigm. Fifth (RQ5), the direction of mapping the development of interdisciplinary methodologies in Qur'anic linguistic studies in the future. Based on the problems described above, this study was conducted to map the scientific landscape related to the study of kinayah from a cognitive linguistic perspective by examining relevant scientific publications over the last decade. This condition confirms that there has been no systematic literature review study that specifically examines the integration between the concept of kinayah and the conceptual metaphor framework in the context of Qur'anic studies. This research provides a novel theoretical contribution in strengthening the framework for integrating the tradition of balaghah with cognitive linguistics. Another novelty offered is a methodological contribution in the form of a more systematic development of figurative analysis of the Qur'an.

METHOD

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the PRISMA 2020 protocol to ensure a structured, transparent, and replicable process of identifying, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing scientific literature (Page et al., 2021). The review was conducted through four rigorous stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, aimed at mapping and evaluating the development of *kinayah* studies from a cognitive linguistic perspective, particularly its integration with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in Qur'anic studies (Siddaway et al., 2019).

Data identification was carried out using the Scopus database, selected for its international credibility and strict publication standards. The search employed the string ("*kinayah*" OR "metaphor") AND ("Quran" OR "Quranic" OR "Koran") to capture studies that integrate classical Arabic rhetoric and cognitive linguistics within Qur'anic analysis. This search, conducted in September 2025, yielded 124 Scopus-indexed articles, which were subsequently screened using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to minimize bias and enhance methodological rigor (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

The screening process applied criteria including empirical focus, peer-reviewed publication, English language, full-text availability, and a publication period between 2015 and 2025, based on evidence of increased CMT application in Qur'anic studies since 2015

(Andri Nirwana et al., 2024). After eliminating duplicates, non-empirical works, inaccessible documents, and studies not directly focused on figurative meaning in the Qur'an, 20 articles met the eligibility criteria and were included in the final synthesis.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Original research articles (primary)	Non-research articles (reviews, opinions, editorials)
Examining the figurative meaning of the Qur'an through a *balaghah* or cognitive linguistic approach	*Balaghah* and cognitive linguistics are not used to examine the Qur'an.
Written in English	Not in English
Publication between 2015 and 2025	Outside the 2015–2025 timeframe
Full text available (final article, not in press)	Only abstract available or article in press
Accessible through a university institutional subscription	Not accessible via a university institutional subscription

The *eligibility* stage was conducted after the screening process was completed, leaving 20 articles that were considered relevant for further review. At this stage, all articles were reviewed in full-text form to ensure the suitability of the methodology and depth of scientific contribution to the research objectives. Eligibility was assessed based on the quality evaluation criteria set out in Table 2, which included examining the alignment between the object of study, theoretical framework, and analytical methods used, particularly in relation to the application of classical *balaghah* (*kinayah*) or cognitive linguistics in analysing the figurative meanings of the Qur'an.

In-depth examination of articles involved two independent reviewers who assessed the eligibility of articles in parallel to minimise subjective bias and maintain data reliability. Disagreements that arose during the assessment process were resolved through discussion until a mutual decision was reached. This procedure ensures that the articles retained truly meet academic eligibility and are in line with the research focus. Based on the full-text assessment results, there were three articles that explored the Qur'an only as a medium of language use without focusing the analysis on figurative meanings or the concept of kinayah, so they were excluded from the SLR data list. Furthermore, two articles were eliminated because they did not use a cognitive linguistic approach or kinayah theory as a framework for analysing meaning, thus failing to meet the established theoretical criteria. Thus, 15 articles were declared to be of sufficient quality and were designated as final data to be included in the inclusion and thematic synthesis stages.

Table 2. Study quality criteria

Study Quality Criteria	Explanation
Clear design and methodology	Research objectives are well defined; research design and procedures are consistent and appropriate to the research questions.
Data collection and analysis methods	Data collection techniques (e.g., text extraction) and analysis methods (e.g., identification of conceptual metaphors) are applied systematically and objectively.

Study Quality Criteria	Explanation
Data validity and relevance	Data sources (the Qur'an text and its translations) are valid; conclusions are relevant and supported by strong evidence.
Publication credibility	Published in a reputable peer-reviewed journal, which guarantees the scientific review process (peer review) and accessibility to the full text.

The PRISMA protocol used in selecting data eligibility resulted in 15 Scopus publications being analysed thematically to complement and answer the research questions. The PRISMA protocol in this study is visualised in Figure 1 below.
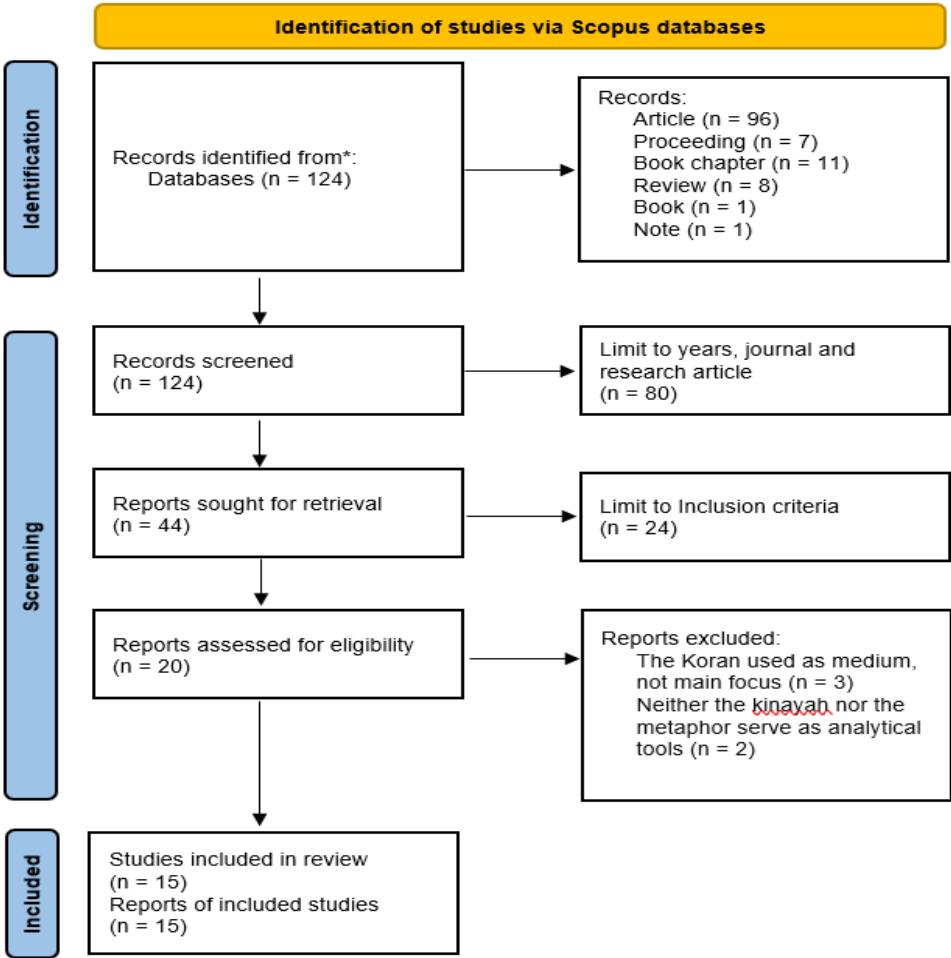
Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

Based on the eligibility assessment results, 15 articles were found to meet all the relevance and methodological quality criteria set in this study. These articles became the main basis for the thematic analysis and synthesis process to answer all the research questions posed. Thus, the final data from these 15 articles represent the landscape of research development regarding the integration of the concept of kinayah in classical balaghah and conceptual metaphor theory in Al-Qur'an linguistic studies, which were then processed and reported in the research results section.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The systematic review data came from 15 articles that entered the inclusion stage and were analysed thematically to answer the research questions that had been set. The five research questions essentially analysed the balaghah scheme and CMT as tools for studying the Qur'an. The first research question examined the characteristics of the selected studies in terms of year, country, design, and target discussion. Meanwhile, the next research questions are listed in Table 3 of the data extraction as follows.

Table 3. Data Extraction

No	Author, Year & Country	Country	Study Design	Target Discussion	RQ2 (Definition of *kinayah*)	RQ3 (CMT for religious texts)	RQ4 (Challenges and Opportunities for Integration)	RQ5 (Interdisciplinary methodological direction)
1	Amini & Fattahizadeh (2023)	Iran	Qualitative (Cultural Linguistics + CMT)	The metaphor of "court" for the Day of Judgement	N/A	Using the "court - resurrection" mapping to conceptually explain Qur'anic eschatological concepts.	N/A	Demonstrating the importance of source-domain cultural context as the basis for Qur'anic metaphorical analysis.
2	Chukhanov & Kairbekov (2024)	Kazakhstan	Qualitative (Semantic, Semiotic)	Semantic and figurative structure of the Qur'an	N/A	Emphasises contextual and symbolic meaning; CMT is not formally used.	Proposes a combined linguistic and conceptual approach to improve the accuracy of interpretation.	Suggests integration of linguistic–semiotic–AI for the systematisation of Qur'anic figurative analysis.
3	Suri & Tanjung (2025)	Indonesia	Qualitative (CMT + Relevance Theory)	The Metaphor of Tawhid in Al-Fatihah	N/A	CMT is used to explain the conceptual structure of Tawhid through mapping PATH, AUTHORITY ( ), and JUDGMENT.	Opportunities for integration with classical balāghah at the level of the rhetorical structure of the verse.	Offers a direction for figurative Qur'anic research to deepen the concept of theological with a cognitive framework.
4	Al Farisi (2020)	Indonesia	Descriptive (Case Study)	Foreignisation vs domestication in *kinayah*	*kinayah* is defined as a double-meaning utterance (primary–secondary) with supporting qarīnah.	N/A	Focuses on the classical balāghah framework; opens up opportunities for alignment with the cognitive framework of translation.	Emphasises the integration of rhetorical theory and translation strategies for the preservation of figurative meaning.
5	Yazar & Batur (2025)	Turkish	Qualitative (Comparative)	Rhetorical transformation (space, animals, nature)	N/A	N/A	Demonstrates the convergence between classical symbols (space/animals/nature) and modern conceptual frameworks.	Promotes a comparative approach to classical rhetoric and sacred texts for a Qur'anic figurative framework.

No	Author, Year & Country	Country	Study Design	Target Discussion	RQ2 (Definition of *kinayah*)	RQ3 (CMT for religious texts)	RQ4 (Challenges and Opportunities for Integration)	RQ5 (Interdisciplinary methodological direction)
6	Al-Sowaidi et al. (2021)	Yemen	Mixed Methods (CMT + Translation)	Strategies for translating Qur'anic metaphors	N/A	Using CMT & CTH to identify metaphorical mappings and intercultural translation problems.	Demonstrating conceptual gaps between Arabic rhetorical forms and English representations.	Emphasising a cogno-translational model for cross-linguistic research on Qur'anic metaphors.
7	Khan & Ali (2020)	Pakistan	Qualitative (CMT, MIP)	"ARGUMENT IS WAR" in the Qur'an	N/A	CMT was used to test the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR; results show the dominance of container schema & personification.	The gap between Arab war culture and Qur'anic expression opens up opportunities for classical–cognitive integration.	Suggests textual exploration of pre-Islamic poetry to test the limits of CMT's universality.
8	Sharaf Eldin (2015)	USA	Qualitative (CMT)	Conceptual metaphors in the Qur'an	N/A	CMT is used to identify structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors in Qur'anic texts.	Potential alignment between classical metaphor categories and CMT.	Demonstrating the need for a systematic and replicable approach in Qur'anic figurative studies.
9	Nurbayan (2019)	Indonesia	Qualitative (Translation Discourse)	Accuracy of *kinayah* translation	*kinayah* is positioned as a style of *bayān* with implicit meaning based on *qarīnah*.	N/A	Focuses on classical rhetorical analysis; has the potential to be combined with a cognitive framework.	Emphasises interpretative aspects in translation to preserve the integrity of metaphorical meaning.
10	Harb (2015)	USA	Textual-historical analysis	*Jurjānī's* theory (form–content)	*kinayah* as indirect signification, which supports the balāghah system.	N/A	Provides a strong theoretical basis for integrating classical balāghah with modern linguistics.	Serves as an important foundation for the development of Qur'anic figurative analysis methodology based on classical theory.
11	Sardaraz et al. (2022)	Pakistan	Qualitative corpus (CMT)	Preposition "ʿalā"	The phenomenon "ʿalā" has an implicit *kinayah* function, even though it is not mentioned directly.	CMT is used to explain *the support-contact schema* and domain mapping.	Demonstrates the potential for integrating classical preposition analysis with the CMT model.	Encourages cross-linguistic research to strengthen the analysis of classical Arabic semantic figurative language.
12	Shamsudin & Aladdin (2024)	Malaysia	Qualitative (CMT)	Understanding the concept of Hubb (love)	N/A	The use of CMT to identify figurative instantiations and map abstract domains (LOVE) through	The need for the integration of interpretation as a mitigation of interpretative bias; opportunities	Promoting future SLR models that combine literal–figurative, semantic–cognitive, and

No	Author, Year & Country	Country	Study Design	Target Discussion	RQ2 (Definition of *kinayah*)	RQ3 (CMT for religious texts)	RQ4 (Challenges and Opportunities for Integration)	RQ5 (Interdisciplinary methodological direction)
				through CMT		cognitive and social relations in Qur'anic verses	for applying a cross-framework approach (Izutsu + CMT)	exegesis-based analyses.
13	Ferdinal et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Qualitative (CMT)	Religious metaphors in Islam	*kinayah* is implied through the function of indirect metaphor.	CMT is used to analyse spiritual meaning structures	Opportunities for integration between the function of *kinayah* and the CMT framework	Expanding the use of Qur'anic metaphorical analysis to an interdisciplinary literary context.
14	Alsemeiri & Nordin (2023)	Malaysia	Qualitative (Comparative)	Qur'anic *kinayah* & English tropes	*kinayah* is defined as an implicit metaphor, distinct from euphemism and metonymy.	N/A	Demonstrates epistemological and terminological gaps between *kinayah* and English tropes.	Encourages recognition of *kinayah* as an independent rhetorical trope in modern linguistics.
15	Muwafi & Fareh (2025)	UAE	Qualitative (Linguistic-rhetorical)	Qur'anic euphemisms for same-sex relationships	*kinayah* is approached as euphemism and talaṭṭuf to obscure taboo meanings.	N/A	Linking classical rhetorical strategies with modern linguistic approaches.	Proposing a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural analysis model based on rhetoric and CMT.

RQ1: Characteristics of the Study

A bibliometric analysis of 15 articles shows an increasing trend in publications over the last decade. The first publications appeared in 2015 with two articles affiliated with the United States, followed by more stable growth in the 2021-2025 period with a total of 9 articles or 60% of all articles analysed (see Table 3). The distribution of publications is still fluctuating, and the limited number of articles indicates that this research has not yet been established as a methodological stream in Al-Qur'an linguistic studies. Nevertheless, these findings indicate a growing academic interest in the integration of classical balaghah epistemology and CMT in Al-Qur'an linguistic studies.

Based on geographical aspects, this study shows the dominant contribution of the Middle East and Asia, followed by publications from Europe and America. This illustrates that the development of Qur'anic studies is not only growing in Muslim-majority countries, but also in Muslim-minority countries. It also indicates that the flow of epistemological development is still centred on the Muslim academic community. Hence, visibility and recognition in the global scientific arena still need to be expanded.

In terms of scientific fields, Qur'anic Linguistics (7 articles) is the most dominant focus, followed by Islamic Studies (4 articles), Translation Studies (3 articles), and Cognitive Linguistics (1 article). In terms of methodology, the majority of studies apply a qualitative approach (80%) through semantic and stylistic analysis of Qur'anic verse data. Only a small portion is descriptive (13.3%) or uses mixed methods (6.7%). This fact shows that research is more in the realm of applied linguistics and qualitative methodology, indicating that the

study of kinayah-CMT is still in an exploratory stage that emphasises the discovery of forms of cognitive construction, not yet at the stage of comparative evaluation or the development of a more systematic integrative theory.

Thus, this SLR study emphasises the urgent need to strengthen methodological consistency, clarify the epistemological framework of balaghah-CMT integration, and open up opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration involving studies of interpretation, translation, and Islamic cognition. This bibliometric map also provides a strategic contribution as an early indicator of the development of a new paradigm for the study of Qur'anic linguistics based on a cognitive-figurative approach. Overall, these bibliometric findings confirm that the integration of classical balaghah theory and cognitive linguistic approaches is a growing field of research, but one that still has ample room for methodological strengthening and more in-depth interdisciplinary exploration.

Table 4. Study Characteristics

Category	Results	Number	Percentage
Year of Publication	2015-2017	2	13.3
	2018–2020	3	20
	2021–2023	5	33.3
	2024–2025	5	33.3
Author's Affiliated Region	Middle East	5	33.3
	Southeast Asia	4	26.7
	South Asia	3	20
	Europe/America	3	20
Field of Study	Linguistics	7	46.7
	Islamic Studies	4	26.7
	Translation Studies	3	20
	Cognitive Linguistics	1	6.7
Methodological Approach	Qualitative	12	80
	Descriptive	2	13.3
	Mixed Methods	1	6.7

(Source: Authors' Analysis)

RQ2: Definition and Categorisation of Kinayah in Classical Balaghah

The definition of kinayah in contemporary Qur'anic studies departs from a relatively uniform conceptual basis but has varying theoretical orientations. In general, kinayah is understood as an expression with two layers of meaning, namely the literal meaning as the surface and the implicit meaning as the rhetorical purpose oriented towards the context. This implicit meaning is recognised through *qarīnah*, which are situational or textual clues that direct the reader not to take the literal meaning as the final interpretation (Al Farisi, 2020; Nurbayan, 2019). This basic formulation remains the foundation for the majority of studies analysing figurative expressions in the Qur'an.

Nevertheless, the approach to defining kinayah reveals three different styles of interpretation. First, the explicit classical approach views kinayah as a form of implicit majaz that follows an indirect marking system in the structure of balaghah. This is emphasised in studies that refer to the theoretical traditions of classical scholars (Alsemeiri & Nordin, 2023;

Harb, 2016). Second, the implicit cognitive approach observes kinayah through its conceptual function and highlights how readers map abstract meanings through mental associations that are not always explained terminologically in classical theory (Ferdinal et al., 2023; Sardaraz et al., 2022). Third, studies define kinayah through the perspectives of euphemism and *talattuf*, particularly when the Qur'an obscures taboo meanings in issues of sexuality or social morality (Muwafi & Fareh, 2025). This perspective reveals the pragmatic dimension of kinayah, which is more adaptive to the values of modesty inherent in the culture and ethics of speech in Muslim societies.

Table 5. Definitions and Categorisation of Kinayah in the Corpus

Category Definition	Main Characteristics	Citation
Classical Explicit Definition	Double-meaning utterances (primary-secondary) with supporting *qarīnah*; *indirect signification* in the *bayān* system	(Al Farisi, 2020; Alsemeiri & Nordin, 2023; Harb, 2016; Nurbayan, 2019)
Implicit Approach	*Kinayah is* implied through the function of indirect metaphor without mentioning terminology.	(Ferdinal et al., 2023; Sardaraz et al., 2022)
Kinayah as Euphemism	*Kinayah* is approached as *a euphemism* and *talattuf* to obscure taboo meanings.	(Muwafi & Fareh, 2025)

(Source: Authors' Analysis)

A literature review shows that recent studies still adopt the classical taxonomy without any systematic effort to expand the analytical framework in line with developments in modern linguistics. These findings indicate terminological inconsistencies and epistemological limitations in defining the boundaries of kinayah in the classical tradition. With the development of cognitive linguistic perspectives, it is necessary to remap the categories of kinayah, taking into account how readers construct implicit meanings through cognitive mechanisms. Therefore, a more integrative conceptual map can provide a basis for a more comprehensive analysis of the depth of figurative rhetoric in the Qur'an.

RQ3: The Application of CMT in Religious Text Studies

The results of the study on the application of CMT in religious text studies show that there are four patterns of meaning-making schemes. First, the dominant approach places metaphors as mechanisms for understanding abstract theological and eschatological concepts through the mapping of concrete domains. Research by Amini & Fattahizadeh (2023) and Khan & Ali (2020) interprets the structural metaphors RESURRECTION IS COURT and ARGUMENT IS WAR, which show that eschatological imagery in the Qur'an is understood through human social experiences such as trials and conflicts. Eldin (2015) emphasises that orientational-ontological metaphors form the cognitive foundation for spiritual meaning. This confirms that metaphors function to mediate abstract spiritual experiences through cognitive constructs.

Second, there is a direction of development that integrates CMT with Qur'anic pragmatics and semantics. Studies conducted by Suri & Tanjung (2025) using the PATH and

AUTHORITY schemas to describe the conceptual structure of Tawhid show that CMT can explain theological meaning constructions that were previously understood through the classical balaghah framework. On the other hand, Sardaraz et al. (2022) utilise *the support-contact schema* to interpret the function of kinayah in the preposition 'ala, emphasising the potential of CMT in revising the epistemological boundaries of the definition of kinayah.

Third, Qur'anic spirituality studies based on religious experience have emerged as a new direction of research. Ferdinal et al. (2023) emphasise that spiritual meaning in the Qur'an is constructed through the mapping of relational experiences, while Shamsudin & Aladdin (2024) expand the domain of study to the emotional concept of love, which shows that Qur'anic spirituality can be understood through affective experiences. Fourth, translation studies based on cross-cultural conceptual mapping reveal serious challenges in maintaining the depth of spiritual meaning. Studies conducted by Al-Sowaidi et al. (2021) identify shifts in meaning when Qur'anic metaphors are translated into other languages. Meanwhile, Chukhanov & Kairbekov (2024) demonstrate the contextual use of metaphors, but these have not yet been framed within an operational CMT framework. This indicates a methodological gap that still needs to be developed.

Table 6. Application of CMT in Qur'anic Studies

Type of CMT Application	Application in the Qur'an	References
Modelling theological and eschatological meaning	Representation of Divine Justice within the Human Cognitive Framework	(Amini & Fattahizadeh, 2023; Eldin, 2015; Khan & Ali, 2020)
Integration of CMT with Qur'anic semantics-pragmatics	Construction of the implicit meaning of Tawhid as a hierarchical cognitive relationship and the interpretation of Qur'anic prepositions	(Sardaraz et al., 2022; Suri & Tanjung, 2025)
Analysis of spiritual meaning	The structure of spiritual meaning as human cognitive-affective relations	(Ferdinal et al., 2023; Shamsudin & Aladdin, 2024)
Cross-cultural mapping and translation	Intercultural metaphor conversion as contextual-symbolic mapping	(Al-Sowaidi et al., 2021; Chukhanov & Kairbekov, 2024)

(Source: Author's Analysis)

The results of the review of the application of CMT in Qur'anic studies show that CMT has strong epistemological potential for revealing the conceptual structure behind the figurative meanings of the Qur'an. However, these findings also reveal gaps in theoretical and methodological depth. The studies reviewed have applied metaphors as conceptual labels, but there is no explanation of the cognitive mechanisms involved. On the other hand, the studies reviewed ignore the position of kinayah as a rhetorical system that has a different knowledge base from metaphors. This inconsistency has led to the fragmentation of knowledge because Qur'anic figurative studies have been conducted using two approaches

that are not yet integrated, namely balaghah as classical rhetoric and CMT as a modern cognitive framework. Thus, this study emphasises the need to develop an integrative framework that harmonises kinayah as a conceptual mapping structure in CMT.

RQ4: Challenges and Opportunities for Integrating Classical Balaghah with CMT

The results of the study show that efforts to integrate classical balaghah with CMT face a series of epistemological, terminological, methodological, and structural challenges. Based on these challenges, opportunities for developing a more cohesive, integrative framework are actually opening up. At the epistemological level, Chukhanov & Kairbekov (2024) and Sardaraz et al. (2022) show that Qur'anic metaphors cannot always be reduced to universal bodily experience schemes because they are also shaped by faith and interpretive traditions. This indicates that the integration scheme is not sufficient in conceptualising balaghah, but requires a framework capable of connecting the theological dimension with modern cognition without negating either.

At the methodological level, problems arise when Arab rhetorical culture and non-Arab readers have different cognitive cultural structures, resulting in a mismatch between linguistic form and cognitive representation (Khan & Ali, 2020; Yazar & Batur, 2025). Alsemeiri & Nordin (2023) explain that kinayah is often narrowed down to euphemism or metonymy in translation, whereas kinayah is an implicit figurative system unique to Arabic rhetoric. This condition risks negating the conceptual uniqueness of the Arabic tradition. On the other hand, Al-Sowaidi et al. (2021) offer *a cogno-translational model* for Qur'anic metaphors that opens up opportunities for hybrid methodologies combining cognitive analysis with culture and interpretation. This raises the possibility of explicit recognition of kinayah as rhetoric that can be reinterpreted in the CMT system without losing its identity.

At the structural level, there is a scheme showing that balaghah in Qur'anic cognitive studies functions as a rhetorical mechanism of the text, while CMT focuses on conceptual mapping behind the text (Al Farisi, 2020; Suri & Tanjung, 2025). This indicates that there is an opportunity for integration between balaghah and CMT. This scheme also implies that there is an interrelated relationship between balaghah and CMT. This scheme is reinforced by studies conducted by Eldin (2015), Ferdinal et al. (2023), and Sardaraz et al. (2022), which show that when the analysis focuses on specific language units, such as prepositions, syntactic patterns, or imagery, balaghah and CMT work complementarily in revealing the aesthetic and cognitive dimensions of the text.

Table 7. Challenges and Opportunities for Integration

Integration Aspects	Challenges	Opportunities	Citation
Epistemological	The gap between theological significance (*balaghah*) and embodied experience (CMT)	Integration of Qur'anic existential analysis with classical rhetorical frameworks	(Chukhanov & Kairbekov, 2024; Sardaraz et al., 2022)
Methodological	The gap between Arab culture and modern language representation	A cognitive-translational model	(Al-Sowaidi et al., 2021; Alsemeiri & Nordin, 2023; Khan

Integration Aspects	Challenges	Opportunities	Citation
		for Qur'anic metaphors	& Ali, 2020; Yazar & Batur, 2025)
Structural	*Balaghah's* focus on rhetoric versus CMT's focus on cognition	Integration at the level of the rhetorical structure of verses	(Al Farisi, 2020; Eldin, 2015; Ferdinal et al., 2023; Harb, 2016; Muwafi & Fareh, 2025; Nurbayan, 2019; Shamsudin & Aladdin, 2024; Suri & Tanjung, 2025)

(Source: Author's Analysis)

Thus, the results of this analysis show that the challenge of integrating balaghah-CMT is not merely a technical obstacle, but touches on the fundamental perspective of religious language. This indicates the opening of opportunities for integration to formulate an integrative framework that makes kinayah a bridge between the theological significance of balaghah and the cognitive meaning model of CMT. This opportunity leads Qur'anic figurative studies to transform from a fragmented approach to a more coherent interdisciplinary paradigm.

RQ5: Direction of Interdisciplinary Methodology Development

The results of the analysis show a methodological shift in the study of Qur'anic figurative language, namely from a classical textual rhetorical approach to an interdisciplinary analysis model that integrates rhetorical theory, cognitive linguistics, hermeneutics, and cross-cultural studies. This change is not only an expansion of analytical tools, but also an epistemological response to the limitations of each approach when standing alone. Balaghah offers sensitivity to rhetorical structure and implicit meaning, while CMT provides conceptual mechanisms that explain the process of figurative meaning formation. The synthesis of these two major approaches can provide a more comprehensive methodological formulation.

The direction of study development presented by Chukhanov & Kairbekov (2024) is the integration of linguistics, semiotics, and artificial intelligence to analyse Qur'anic metaphors computationally. This is a unique opportunity in the digital-cognitive aspect of methodology that can be used for algorithmically mapped figurative analysis of the Qur'an based on the kinayah-CMT category. Furthermore, studies conducted by Al Farisi (2020) and Sardaraz et al. (2022) found that differences in language typology create metaphorical shifts in translation. This issue raises new possibilities in the development of cross-language comparative models. This development is confirmed by Al-Sowaidi et al. (2021), who offer a cogno-translational model that can preserve figurative meaning in various linguistic contexts. Upon examination, the two directions of development in Qur'anic studies are actually very interesting when integrated, namely digital-cognitive and cogno-translational

models in the field of translation that can utilise artificial intelligence to reveal and preserve figurative meaning in linguistic contexts.

The direction of development in studies on the comparative approach category emphasises the importance of kinayah in the figurative meaning of the Qur'an as a foundation for revealing implicit or deeper meanings. This development is reinforced by the studies of Alsemeiri & Nordin (2023), which affirms the stability of kinayah as the foundation of an integrative framework of balaghah and cognitive linguistics. The studies Nurbayan (2019) and Suri & Tanjung (2025) show that the integration of balaghah-CMT is most productive when hermeneutics is used as the third layer of analysis. This study produces an interdisciplinary methodology, namely classical rhetoric (meaning structure), metaphorical cognition (meaning process), and hermeneutics tafsiriyyah (theological context). This highlights the importance of classical rhetoric, represented by balaghah, as a foundation for examining the cognitive mechanisms of the Qur'an (Yazar & Batur, 2025).

The next methodological development is historical-cultural analysis. This direction of development is based on studies conducted (Amini & Fattahizadeh, 2023; Khan & Ali, 2020), which confirm that the interpretation of Qur'anic metaphors is rooted in the cognitive experiences of pre-Islamic culture, early Arab culture, and early Islamic culture. Therefore, the application of CMT must consider the historical source domain to avoid being trapped in the universality of metaphors that do not align with the context of revelation. The next direction of development is the formulation of a systematic analytical framework for reading Qur'anic figurative language. Research conducted by Eldin (2015) and Ferdinal et al. (2023) emphasises the importance of replicable procedures for analysing Qur'anic figurative language, while the study by Muwafi & Fareh (2025) shows that Qur'anic studies must be based on a systematic rhetorical and CMT-based cultural and linguistic approach in order to be replicable.

Table 8. Interdisciplinary Methodological Direction

Development Direction	Characteristics	Methodological Implications	Citation
Digital-cognitive	Systematisation of figurative analysis with technology	Computational analysis of Qur'anic metaphors	(Chukhanov & Kairbekov, 2024)
Cross-linguistic comparative model	Cross-linguistic metaphor research	Preservation of figurative meaning in translation	(Al-Sowaidi et al., 2021; Al Farisi, 2020; Sardaraz et al., 2022)
Comparative Approach	Classical rhetoric, cognitive metaphor, and hermeneutics	Universal Qur'anic figurative framework	(Alsemeiri & Nordin, 2023; Harb, 2016; Nurbayan, 2019; Shamsudin & Aladdin, 2024; Suri & Tanjung, 2025; Yazar & Batur, 2025)

Development Direction	Characteristics	Methodological Implications	Citation
Historical cognitive	Historical contextualisation of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arab culture	Validation of the universal boundaries of CMT	(Amini & Fattahizadeh, 2023; Khan & Ali, 2020)
Systematic analysis framework	Systematic corpus-based analysis	Replication of figurative methodology	(Eldin, 2015; Ferdinal et al., 2023; Muwafi & Fareh, 2025)

(Source: Author's Analysis)

Discussion

The results of a systematic review reveal that the language of the Qur'an is very rich in conceptual metaphorical expressions. The results of the study also show that kinayah is a distinctive style of Arabic balaghah and is revealed to have dual functions and layered meanings in the Qur'anic text. The study indicates that kinayah expressions display the process of mapping abstract concepts to concrete objects in accordance with the mechanism of conceptual metaphor. These findings support the integration of two major approaches in studying the Qur'an, namely classical balaghah and cognitive linguistics. The research findings are in line with recent studies that emphasise the important role of the cognitive approach to Qur'anic language. For example, Rumman & Al Salem (2023) highlight that metaphors in the Qur'an must be understood not only linguistically, but also conceptually. Furthermore, Alwazna & Alfaify (2025) explain that Qur'anic metaphors transform abstract theological concepts into concrete ideas that can be understood by the people. These two studies reinforce the findings that metaphorical and sensory structures are very important in revealing the figurative nature of the holy verses.

The integration of these two approaches is wide open, but it has epistemological challenges. In the classical view of balaghah, kinayah does not completely overlap with Western conceptual metaphors. This is explained by Alsemeiri & Nordin (2023) that kinayah has a specific function and cannot be equated with Western metonymy or euphemism. On the other hand, Sardaraz et al. (2022) emphasise that understanding metaphors requires complex multimodal knowledge. They illustrate that cognitive mapping in Arabic is complex, not a consistent linear process. These two studies reinforce the research findings that of the 15 articles reviewed, they still use the balaghah-CMT approach partially, not complementarily, but separately.

In this research, we offer a methodological innovation in Qur'anic studies by using classical balaghah and cognitive linguistics approaches in a single corpus analysis process. This methodological innovation is based on the difference in cultural experiences in Qur'anic studies that can reduce the meaning of the divine message (Amini & Fattahizadeh, 2023). This shows that the presence of the classical balaghah approach is necessary in Qur'anic studies to explain figurative meanings that cannot be mapped by CMT due to different epistemological foundations. The presence of classical balaghah bridges CMT in constructing the source domain and target domain clearly, without reducing the figurative essence in the

verse or Arabic text. This novelty confirms that kinayah (classical balaghah) acts as a conceptualiser of Islamic themes in the abstract domain to represent concrete meanings.

These findings and discussions pave the way for the development of interdisciplinary studies of Qur'anic figurative language. Further research can expand the focus from kinayah to cross-linguistic conceptual language styles to reveal cross-cultural implications (Sardaraz et al., 2022). These cross-cultural implications have the potential to eliminate essential meanings and original nuances that are not revealed (Al-Sowaidi et al., 2021). This highlights the need for specific cognitive strategies in the translation of sacred texts. The development of a model that combines rhetorical, semantic, and cognitive elements will facilitate a more in-depth analysis of the meaning structure in the Qur'an. Studies on kinayah and CMT serve as a foundation for formulating interdisciplinary methodologies, thereby expanding their impact on contemporary Islamic studies and interfaith dialogue. In addition, the development of figurative studies can utilise artificial intelligence technology, as stated in the study by Bahariniya et al. (2025), namely that artificial intelligence can play an instrumental and supportive role in the stage of collecting evidence from the Qur'an.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically examines the relationship between the concept of kinayah in classical balaghah and metaphorical mapping in conceptual metaphor theory, as well as mapping the development of related research over the past decade. The findings show that although the two traditions are based on different epistemologies, they have a meeting point in the mechanism of revealing figurative meanings and representing abstract concepts. Theoretically, this study shows that the category of kinayah in classical balaghah can be reformulated through the lens of CMT without losing its rhetorical character. Methodologically, this study proposes the need for a tiered analysis model that combines classical rhetorical sensitivity, cognitive conceptual mapping, and hermeneutic verification through interpretation. Practically, this study provides a basis for the development of a Qur'anic translation model that is more sensitive to figuration and opens up opportunities for the application of artificial intelligence technology in systematically mapping the metaphorical structure of revelation.

This study has several limitations in the number of studies available in the kinayah-CMT domain in the Scopus database. In addition, limited access to several potentially relevant articles may affect the breadth of the analysis. Future research could explore methodologies in three areas, namely 1) historical-cognitive integration that traces the cultural sources of Qur'anic metaphors; 2) the development of a cogno-translational framework that maps figurative stability in various languages, and 3) the development of a digital corpus of Qur'anic figurative language based on artificial intelligence as a basis for computational analysis. This direction will strengthen a more systematic and responsive interdisciplinary framework for the complexity of revelatory language.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

[YAT] was responsible for conceptualization, systematic literature review design, data collection, analysis of classical Arabic rhetorical texts, and drafting the original manuscript. [S] contributed to the development of the theoretical framework, methodological refinement, and critical revision of the manuscript. [DS] provided scholarly supervision, contributed to analytical interpretation, and reviewed the manuscript for intellectual rigor. [MMED] contributed to conceptual validation, classical Arabic rhetoric expertise, and critical evaluation of the findings. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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