

CONSTRUCTING COSMOLOGICAL MEANING IN Q.S. AL-ANBIYĀ' [21]: 30: INTEGRATING AL-JURJĀNĪ'S CONTEXTUAL SEMANTICS, LAKOFF, AND JOHNSON'S CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY

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Abstract: Studies of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 have largely focused on correspondences between the Qur'anic concepts of *ratq* (joining or closure) and *fatq* (opening or separation) and modern cosmological theories, especially the Big Bang, while the linguistic and cognitive processes through which cosmological meaning is constructed remain less examined. This study analyzes the construction of cosmological meaning in Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 by integrating al-Jurjānī's contextual semantics with Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Using qualitative library research, the study employs a two-stage integrative procedure. First, *naẓm* analysis identifies the syntactic and semantic relations that constrain the *ratq-fatq* construction. Second, Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory maps only those textually licensed relations into source–target conceptual structures, after which the cognitive interpretation is checked against the Arabic linguistic structure. The findings show that the *ratq-fatq* relation forms a transformational semantic pattern from unity to differentiation. This pattern is conceptualized through three interconnected metaphors: The cosmos is a unified entity, creation is separation, and divine creation is cosmic transformation. The study proposes a Semantic-Cognitive Integrative Model in which *naẓm* provides textual constraints for conceptual mapping, while Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains how those relations are cognitively represented. Accordingly, the relationship between the verse and Big Bang cosmology is understood as limited conceptual correspondence rather than empirical scientific validation. The model offers a controlled interdisciplinary framework for analyzing Qur'anic cosmological meaning.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, *Naẓm*, Qur'anic Cosmology, *Ratq-Fatq*, Semantic-Cognitive Integration.

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Abstrak: Kajian mengenai Q.S. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 30 sebagian besar berfokus pada korespondensi antara konsep Qur'ani *ratq* (keadaan menyatu atau tertutup) dan *fatq* (pembukaan atau pemisahan) dengan teori kosmologi modern, khususnya *Big Bang*, sementara proses linguistik dan kognitif yang membentuk makna kosmologis belum mendapat perhatian memadai. Penelitian ini menganalisis konstruksi makna kosmologis dalam Q.S. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 30 melalui integrasi semantik kontekstual al-Jurjānī dengan teori metafora konseptual Lakoff dan Johnson. Dengan menggunakan penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan, penelitian ini menerapkan prosedur integratif dua tahap. Pertama, analisis *naẓm* mengidentifikasi relasi sintaktis dan semantis yang membatasi konstruksi *ratq-fatq*. Kedua, teori metafora konseptual Johnson memetakan hanya relasi yang memiliki landasan tekstual ke dalam struktur konseptual sumber-sasaran, kemudian hasil pembacaan kognitif diperiksa kembali terhadap struktur linguistik Arab. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa relasi *ratq-fatq* membentuk pola semantik transformasional dari kesatuan menuju diferensiasi. Pola ini dikonseptualisasikan melalui tiga metafora yang saling berkaitan, yaitu kosmos adalah entitas yang menyatu, penciptaan adalah pemisahan, dan penciptaan ilahi adalah transformasi kosmik. Penelitian ini menawarkan model integratif semantik-kognitif yang menempatkan *naẓm* sebagai pemberi batasan tekstual bagi pemetaan konseptual, sedangkan teori metafora konseptual Johnson menjelaskan bagaimana relasi tersebut direpresentasikan secara kognitif. Dengan demikian, hubungan ayat dengan kosmologi *Big Bang* dipahami sebagai korespondensi konseptual yang terbatas, bukan validasi ilmiah empiris. Model ini menawarkan kerangka interdisipliner yang terkontrol untuk menganalisis makna kosmologis Al-Qur'an.

Kata-kata Kunci: Integrasi Semantik-Kognitif, Kosmologi Al-Qur'an, *Naẓm*, *Ratq-Fatq*, Teori Metafora Konseptual.

Introduction

Developments in contemporary Qur'anic studies indicate a growing focus on the relationship between revelation and science, particularly in the interpretation of cosmological verses. Within the scientific exegesis paradigm, the Qur'an is understood not only as a normative guide but also as a source of inspiration for the development of modern scientific knowledge (Ghani et al. 2024, 3331–32). This development has spurred the emergence of various studies that seek to explain the relationship between the cosmological verses of the Qur'an and theories of the origin of the universe. However, most studies remain oriented toward finding correspondences between the Qur'anic text and modern scientific findings, so that the aspect of meaning formation through linguistic structure and conceptual systems has not yet received adequate attention (Hasan et al. 2014, 124–25).

One of the verses most frequently studied in the discourse on Qur'anic cosmology is Q.S. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 30, which contains the terms *ratq* and *fatq*. These two terms are often understood as representing the unification and separation of the cosmos, which are then linked to the Big Bang theory (Hasan et al. 2014, 128–30). Various studies indicate a tendency to cite this verse as textual justification for modern cosmology (Ansharullah and Imamuddin 2025, 566–87). However, the relationship between Q.S. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 30 and the Big Bang theory remains a subject of academic debate. Some scholars view the verse as having conceptual alignment with modern cosmological theory, while others argue that a scientific interpretation risks overlooking the linguistic and rhetorical characteristics of the Qur'anic text (Supriadi 2018, 149–86). This debate demonstrates that the central

issue lies not in whether the connection between the verse and the Big Bang theory is correct or not, but rather in how the Qur’anic text constructs cosmological representations through linguistic and conceptual mechanisms (Isaacs 2026).

In the development of contemporary Qur’anic studies, linguistic approaches have gained an increasingly important role in explaining the construction of textual meaning (Allouche 2025, 1–7). Chukhanov and Kairbekov assert that a semantic approach allows for a deeper understanding of the Qur’anic text compared to readings that are solely oriented toward referential meaning (Chukhanov and Kairbekov 2024, 5–10). On the other hand, developments in cognitive linguistics have also spurred various studies that view metaphors not merely as rhetorical devices, but as conceptual mechanisms that enable humans to understand abstract realities through concrete experiences within the human cognitive system (AlAjmi 2019, 114).

From the perspective of classical Arabic linguistics, ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, through his theory of *naẓm*, explains that meaning does not arise from individual words but is formed through syntactic relations, context, and the coherence of linguistic structure (Mubassyir et al. 2024, 54–55). Several studies indicate that the *naẓm* theory has strong relevance in explaining the coherence of the Qur’an’s meaning (Alqurashi 2017, 51–60). However, this theory focuses more on the mechanisms of meaning formation within the linguistic dimension and has not yet explained how meaning constructed through linguistic structure is processed within the human cognitive system. In contrast, Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains that humans understand abstract concepts through the mapping of concrete experiences into specific conceptual structures (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 3–6). Research by Khan and Roslan Ali demonstrates that Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory is capable of revealing the conceptual patterns at work in the language of the Qur’an (Sardaraz and Ali 2019, 220–23). Nevertheless, this approach has not given sufficient attention to the linguistic structure of the Arabic language, which serves as the foundation for the formation of meaning in the Qur’anic text.

Recent scholarship relevant to this study can be mapped into three clusters. First, Qur’an–science studies examine scientific exegesis, cosmological interpretation, and claims of scientific miraculousness, while also warning against reducing revelation to changing scientific theories (Cahyono et al. 2023, 142–49; Bigliardi 2017, 146–53; Daneshgar 2023a, 952–69; Daneshgar 2023b, 970–1004; Daneshgar 2023c, 1005–28; Faizin 2020, 77–96). Second, studies of al-Jurjānī’s *naẓm* emphasize that Qur’anic meaning depends on relations among linguistic elements rather than isolated lexical items (Alqurashi 2017, 51–60; Mubassyir et al. 2024, 54–72; Alshizawi and Ithawi 2026, 456–77). Third, cognitive-linguistic studies identify conceptual metaphors and image schemas in Qur’anic discourse, and several explicitly call for closer coordination between linguistic-

semantic analysis, *tafsīr*, and cognitive mapping (Sardaraz and Ali 2021, 95–117; Sowaidi et al. 2021, 161–73; Pirmansyah and Nur 2021, 146–60; Primadana et al. 2023, 167–76; Shamsudin and Aladdin 2024, 58–78; Fathurrohman and Nur 2024, 30–45; Tantowi et al. 2025, 269–87; Rumman and Salem 2023, 649–55). The remaining methodological gap is therefore narrower than a general lack of interdisciplinary work: limited research has made the output of *naẓm* analysis an explicit constraint on Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory and then checked the resulting cognitive interpretation back against the Arabic textual relations in a single operational procedure.

The integration of al-Jurjānī's contextual semantics and Lakoff-Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory in this study does not begin by seeking correspondence with the Big Bang. It begins with the Arabic clause structure of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30. The concepts of *ratq* and *fatq* are treated as relational meanings whose interpretive range is constrained by syntactic sequence and context, not as isolated lexical labels. Conceptual mapping is introduced only after those textual constraints have been established. In this sense, the procedure is sequential in analytical order but integrative in function: *naẓm* delimits which mappings are textually defensible, while cognitive analysis explains how the licensed relations can become a structured mental representation. This design responds to calls for Qur'anic metaphor analysis that joins linguistic form and conceptual structure rather than treating them separately (Sardaraz and Ali 2021, 95–117; Shamsudin and Aladdin 2024, 58–78).

The literature mapping also clarifies the novelty of the present case study. Alshizawi and Al Ithawi show the continuing exegetical relevance of al-Jurjānī's *naẓm* for explaining relations among Qur'anic linguistic elements (Alshizawi and Ithawi 2026, 465–77), while Sardaraz, Rashid, and Nusrat demonstrate how Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory can reveal systematic conceptual patterns in Qur'anic language (Sardaraz et al. 2022, 2–10). Khan and Nazir specifically discuss Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 through linguistic and scientific perspectives (Khan and Nazir 2021, 21–38). More recent Qur'anic metaphor studies likewise show that cognitive analysis benefits from semantic, exegetical, and textual controls rather than from lexical association alone (Sowaidi et al. 2021, 161–73; Shamsudin and Aladdin 2024, 58–78; Rumman and Salem 2023, 649–55). These studies provide important foundations, but they do not operationalize the present study's specific constraint-and-feedback relation in which *naẓm* output governs candidate conceptual mappings and those mappings are subsequently rechecked against the same textual relations. The novelty claimed here is therefore methodological and case-specific, not a claim that linguistic and cognitive approaches have never previously been combined.

The study is deliberately bound in three respects. Its corpus is limited to Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 and to the *ratq-fatq* relation, so the proposed model

is not presented as a comprehensive account of all Qur’anic cosmology. The analytical framework is limited to al-Jurjānī’s *naẓm* and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory; image schemas are used only as a supporting construct within the cognitive-metaphor analysis, not as a third independent theory. Finally, any comparison with Big Bang cosmology is restricted to a post-interpretive comparison of representational structure and does not claim prediction, semantic identity, or empirical verification. These boundaries sharpen the study’s novelty by defining precisely what the integrated procedure can and cannot establish.

To address this issue, this study employs qualitative library research focused on Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30, using exegetical works, *Dalā’il al-I’jāz* by ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, literature on Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and research on Qur’anic cosmology. The procedure has two ordered but reciprocally controlled stages. First, *naẓm* analysis identifies syntactic governance, sequence, predication, and semantic relations that constrain the *ratq-fatq* construction. Second, Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory identifies candidate source-domain structures and maps them to the cosmological target only when the mapping preserves those textual relations. The cognitive result is then checked back against the Arabic construction and relevant *tafsīr* so that a mapping that overrides the linguistic evidence is revised or rejected. Context-sensitive and methodologically explicit Qur’anic interpretation supports this type of controlled movement between textual evidence and analytical model. The final comparison with modern cosmology is conducted only after the textual-semantic and cognitive analyses are established.

The Cosmological Meaning Construction of *Ratq* and *Fatq* in Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30

Discussions regarding cosmology in the Qur’an are not only concerned with what the text says about the universe but also with how the text constructs representations of the origin and order of the cosmos through its linguistic structure (Cahyono et al. 2023, 142–49). In this context, Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30 is one of the most discussed verses because it contains a narrative regarding the relationship between the heavens and the earth in the early phase of creation. Most previous studies have tended to place this verse within a scientific exegetical framework by highlighting its connection to the Big Bang theory and modern cosmology (Rahman et al. 2024, 358–89). Although this approach has successfully opened a dialogue between the Qur’an and science, the focus has often been directed toward conceptual compatibility between the text and scientific theories, resulting in insufficient attention to the linguistic mechanisms that shape the verse’s meaning. Based on this situation, this study focuses its analysis on the construction of cosmological meaning formed by the semantic relationship between *ratq* and *fatq* within the verse’s structural composition.

The analysis shows that the cosmological meaning of the verse is not constructed by the lexical meanings of *ratq* and *fatq* individually, but by the structural relationship that connects the two within the verse's *naẓm* system. In other words, the center of meaning is not the words *ratq* or *fatq* separately, but rather the relationship formed by the two within the verse's overall structure. This finding indicates that the representation of the cosmos in Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 is constructed through a pattern of changing states that moves from unity toward differentiation.

Lexically, *ratq* means to unite, to be closed, or to have no gap, while *fatq* means to open, to split, to tear, or to separate something that was previously united (Manẓūr 1990, 176). In the tradition of Arabic lexicography, these two terms are used to describe concrete physical activities that can be directly observed (Qazwīnī 1979). However, when these two terms are placed within the context of *al-samāwāt wa al-ard*, the resulting meaning no longer resides in the physical realm but shifts toward a representation of cosmological states. This shift indicates that the meaning of the verse cannot be reduced to a dictionary definition alone.

From a contextual semantic perspective, meaning is not understood as an entity permanently attached to a word, but as the result of an interaction between the basic meaning and the linguistic environment in which the word is used (Atabik 2020, 65–86). Therefore, the shift in reference from physical objects to cosmological entities causes a transformation of meaning. What becomes important is no longer the basic meaning of *ratq* and *fatq*, but rather their function in constructing a relationship of meaning within the verse.

This phenomenon can be explained through 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's *naẓm* theory. al-Jurjānī rejects the view that places meaning on individual words. According to him, meaning arises from the relationships between linguistic elements arranged in a specific structure (Jurjānī, n.d., 83). The semantic value of an element is determined by its position within the network of relationships that form the entirety of the utterance (Jurjānī, n.d., 83). Therefore, understanding Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 cannot begin with a search for the meanings of the words *ratq* and *fatq* separately, but must start with an analysis of the relationship connecting the two.

This principle is the central tenet of al-Jurjānī's theory. Meaning is not something inherent in the word itself, but rather something that emerges due to the interconnections between elements within the linguistic structure (Hifni 2025, 46–60). Thus, *ratq* and *fatq* do not function as two independent concepts, but as two mutually defining elements within the verse's semantic network. This relationship produces a new meaning that cannot be found in each word separately. This perspective simultaneously explains why lexical analysis alone is unable to grasp the cosmological meaning constructed by the verse.

Table 1. The *Naẓm* Structure and the Construction of Cosmological Meaning.

Element in the <i>Naẓm</i>	Relational/Syntactic Function	Semantic Contribution
<i>Al-Samāwāt wa al-Arḍ</i>	Coordinated cosmological referents governed by the dual predicate <i>kānatā</i> .	Establish the two referents whose relation is described under one prior state.
<i>Kānatā</i>	Dual past copula linking the two referents to a predicated state.	Marks a shared condition before the subsequent divine action.
<i>Ratqan</i>	<i>Maṣḍar</i> used predicatively as the state assigned to the dual referents.	Constrains the initial state as joining/closure rather than an unspecified cosmological object.
<i>Fa</i>	Sequential connectors relating to the prior state to the following action.	Signals ordered transition and prevented <i>ratq</i> and <i>fatq</i> from being read as unrelated lexical items.
<i>Fafataqnā Humā</i>	Perfect transitive verb with divine first-person plural subject and dual object pronoun.	Transforms the previously predicated state into separation/differentiation while preserving reference to the same two entities.

Table 1 makes the *naẓm* claim explicit at the level of relational syntax. The dual subject *al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ* is linked by *kānatā* to the predicative *maṣḍar ratqan*, so the initial meaning is not produced by *ratq* in isolation but by the predication of a shared state to two coordinated referents. The particle *fa* then orders the next clause in relation to that prior state, and *fatqnāhumā* introduces a transitive divine action whose dual object pronoun refers back to the same two entities. In al-Jurjānī’s framework, this ordered dependence among grammatical positions is precisely what makes an utterance mean more than the sum of its separate words (Jurjānī, n.d., 81–83; Alqurashi 2017, 51–60; Mubassyr et al. 2024, 54–72).

The semantic opposition between *ratq* and *fatq* is therefore generated by clause-level relations. *Ratq* functions as the predicated prior state, while *fatq* occurs as the subsequent action introduced by *fa* and directed toward the dual referents already established in the first clause. Their opposition is consequently not a free lexical contrast but a governed sequence of state and transformation. The meaning of *fatq* is read against the prior *ratq* state, and the interpretive force of *ratq* is sharpened by the following act of *fatq*. This mutual specification is the textual basis for describing the relation as transformational rather than merely antonymic.

From that syntactic-relational sequence, the study derives the semantic pattern unity-differentiation. Unity summarizes the state predicated by *kānatā ratqan*, whereas differentiation summarizes the transition encoded by *fa-fatqnāhumā*. The labels are analytical abstractions from Arabic construction, not descriptions of the verse’s physical mechanism. Because the verse does not specify the material form of the prior state or the physical procedure of separation, the *naẓm* analysis establishes

a relational pattern while leaving the cosmological mechanism underdetermined. This textual underdetermination becomes an important constraint on the later conceptual-metaphor and Big Bang comparison.

The unity-differentiation pattern functions as a semantic framework that organizes the entire representation of the cosmos in the verse. Through this pattern, the cosmos is represented as an entity undergoing a transformation from an initial unified state toward a differentiated state. This structure indicates that Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 is more oriented toward the representation of a process than a material description of the origin of the universe. In other words, the verse presents a cosmological logic through the semantic relationship connecting two distinct conditions.

The findings of this study differ from the trends in both classical and contemporary exegesis. In the classical exegetical tradition, the primary focus is on identifying the referents of *ratq* and *fatq*. Ibn Kathīr understood *ratq* as a condition in which the heavens and the earth were in a single, interconnected, and overlapping unity (*muttasilan ba'duhu bi ba'd mutalasiqan mutarākiman*), after which Allah separated the two, thereby creating a cosmic differentiation that allowed for the descent of rain and the growth of life on earth (Kathīr 2002, 339).

Meanwhile, al-Rāzī examines various possible interpretations of *ratq* and *fatq*, concluding that the meaning most consistent with the apparent text of the verse is the transformation from a state of attachment (*ratq*) to separation (*fatq*), though he acknowledges the possibility of other interpretations that can be justified linguistically and contextually (Rāzī 2004, 140). Although differing in the details of their interpretations, both exegetes focus on identifying the referents of *ratq* and *fatq* as forms of the unity and separation of the heavens and the earth. In contrast, this study shifts the focus from the question of what is being separated to how the meaning of separation is constructed. Thus, the cosmological meaning of the verse is understood as the result of relational construction within the structure of the *naẓm*.

A similar distinction is evident when compared to various contemporary cosmological studies. Many modern studies attempt to explain the relationship between Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 and the Big Bang theory and the expansion of the universe (Ansharullah and Imaduddin 2025, 566–87). These studies successfully demonstrate a conceptual correspondence between the Qur'anic narrative and modern cosmology. However, most research still treats scientific theories as the starting point for interpretation. This study takes a different approach by using linguistic structure as the starting point for analysis. Thus, the representation of the cosmos is understood as the result of a construction of meaning established by the text before being linked to any cosmological theory.

The semantic pattern of unity-differentiation reveals that the *naẓm* structure not only organizes semantic relations within the verse but also constructs a

conceptual framework that enables the process of cosmic creation to be represented and understood systematically. Within this framework, cosmological meaning does not stop at the linguistic relationship between *ratq* and *fatq* but rather serves as the foundation for the formation of a more complex conceptual structure. This framework further opens the door to the analysis of conceptual metaphors, as the semantic relationships established by *naẓm* provide the foundation for a conceptual mapping process that bridges concrete experience with abstract cosmological reality. Therefore, before being understood as cosmological metaphors, *ratq* and *fatq* must first be understood as semantic constructions arising from the relationships between elements within the *naẓm* system of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30.

The Conceptual Metaphors of *Ratq* and *Fatq* in the Representation of the Creation of the Cosmos

The cosmological meaning of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30 is constructed not only through the semantic relationship between *ratq* and *fatq*, but also through a conceptual structure that allows abstract cosmological reality to be understood within the framework of human experience. The semantic analysis in the previous section shows that the relationship between these two terms forms a unity-differentiation pattern as the basis for representing the process of creation. At the cognitive level, this pattern does not remain merely a semantic relationship within the text but is projected into conceptual metaphors that connect human physical experience with the conceptualization of the cosmos. This perspective aligns with the view of Lakoff and Johnson, who position metaphors not merely as linguistic devices but as cognitive mechanisms that enable humans to understand abstract domains through more concrete experiential domains (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 3–6).

An analysis of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30 identifies three main conceptual metaphors: the cosmos is a unified entity, creation is separation, and divine creation is cosmic transformation. These three metaphors form an interconnected conceptual network that produces a coherent cosmological representational model. Unlike lexical approaches that focus on word meanings, the conceptual metaphor approach allows for the identification of cognitive mechanisms that explain how cosmological meanings are produced and understood by readers.

Table 2. Textually Licensed *Ratq-Fatq* Conceptual Mappings.

Conceptual Metaphor	Textual Trigger	Source → Target Mapping	Analytical Function
Cosmos is a Unified Entity	<i>Kānatā ratqan</i> : <i>ratqan</i> is predicated of the dual cosmological referents.	Joined/closed entity initial cosmological state.	Represents primordial unity only because the clause predicates <i>ratq</i> of the heavens and earth.

Creation is Separation	<i>Fa-fatqanāhumā</i> : sequential <i>fa</i> plus the separation verb acting on the same dual referents.	Opening/separating a joined entity cosmogenic change.	Represents differentiation as a transition from the textually established prior state.
Divine Creation is Cosmic Transformation	The full sequence <i>kānatā ratqan fa-fatqanāhumā</i> .	Change of state caused by an agent cosmological transformation.	Synthesize the clause sequence into a process model without specifying a physical mechanism.

The first candidate metaphor, The Cosmos is a Unified Entity, is licensed not by the lexical meaning of *ratq* alone but by the clause *kānatā ratqan*. The linguistic trigger is the predication of *ratqan* to the dual cosmological referents, which invites a source-domain structure drawn from ordinary experience of joined, closed, or undivided objects. That source structure is mapped to the target domain only at the level specified by the text: the heavens and earth are represented as sharing a prior state. The mapping therefore constructs a mental model of primordial unity without asserting that the cosmos was literally a familiar physical object.

The second metaphor, Creation is Separation, is triggered by *fa-fatqanāhumā* in relation to the preceding *ratq* predication. Here the source domain is not supplied by *fatq* as an isolated dictionary gloss. It is supplied by the ordered experience structure encoded in the clause sequence: something previously joined is acted upon so that separation occurs. The target domain is the cosmogenic change attributed to divine agencies. Because the mapping preserves the same referents and the sequence marked by *fa*, it is textually constrained by the *naẓm* analysis rather than projected onto the verse independently.

This mapping explains why the study describes the verse as representing transformation rather than providing a material account of cosmic origins. At the semantic level, *kānatā ratqan fa-fatqanāhumā* yields an ordered relation between a prior state and a subsequent action. At the cognitive level, Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory models how that relational structure can be understood through embodied experiences of joining and separating. The CMT analysis therefore elaborates the *naẓm* output; it does not replace it or independently determines the verse's referent.

The third metaphor, Divine Creation is Cosmic Transformation, is licensed by the full sequence rather than by either term separately. Human experience of a change of state provides the source-domain structure, while the target domain is the verse's representation of cosmogenic change under divine agency. What is mapped is the relation between prior state, transition, and resulting differentiation. This composite mapping is analytically stronger than treating *ratq* or *fatq* as self-evidently metaphorical because it is anchored in the syntactic and semantic organization already established by *naẓm*.

Table 3. Schemas as Supporting Structures within Conceptual Metaphor Analysis.

Metaphor	Image Schema (within CMT)	Embodied Experience	Cosmological Function
Cosmos is a Unified Entity	Unity/ Connectedness	Uniting, binding, stitching.	Primordial Unity
Creation is Separation	Separation	Opening, splitting, separating.	Cosmic Differentiation
Divine Creation is Cosmic Transformation	Transformation	Change in the form of an object.	Formation of the cosmic structure.

In this study, image schemas are not introduced as a third independent theoretical framework. They are used as supporting constructs within the cognitive-linguistic component of Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory to describe the embodied organization of the source domains that the text licenses. Thus, the unity/connectedness and separation schemas do not by themselves establish the meaning of the verse; their analytical function is to make explicit the recurring bodily-experiential structure through which the *ratq-fatq* relation can be cognitively organized after the linguistic relation has been identified (Johnson 1987, 29–35; Kövecses 2020, 112–30; Primadana et al. 2023, 167–76).

In the context of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30, the word *ratq* activates the unity or connectedness image schema, which refers to the experience of objects that are unified, interconnected, or lack clear dividing boundaries. Conversely, the word *fatq* activates the separation image schema, that is, the experience of opening, separation, or the severing of a connection between two entities that were previously part of a single unity. These two schemas do not operate in isolation but form a transformational pattern that yields the conceptual structure unity-differentiation. Thus, the representation of the cosmos in the verse is not constructed through a material description of the universe, but rather through a structure of experience that is embedded within the human cognitive system.

From the perspective of embodied cognition, these three metaphors are rooted in human bodily experience. The experience of sewing torn fabric, joining two separate parts, untying knots, splitting objects, or separating two attached objects is a concrete experience that forms the basic conceptual structure of the human cognitive system. Lakoff and Johnson explain that abstract concepts are constructed through repeated bodily experiences in interaction with the environment (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 56–57). In the context of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30, these embodied experiences are projected into the cosmological realm so that the abstract reality of the cosmos can be understood through universal experiences.

The analysis of conceptual metaphors in Q.S. Al-Anbiyā’ [21]: 30 aligns with Al-Ajmi’s study, which demonstrates that Qur’anic metaphors operate through

the relationship between concrete experience and abstract concepts (AlAjmi 2019, 114–15). Research by Alshennawi also demonstrates that metaphors in the Qur'an are constructed through a process of conceptual mapping that enables readers to understand complex concepts through everyday experiences (Alshennawi 2025, 510–32). However, most previous research has focused on theological, moral, or eschatological metaphors. In contrast to this trend, this study demonstrates that the same mechanism also operates in the Qur'an's cosmological representations.

This perspective simultaneously expands the arguments of Sardaraz and Ali, who assert that Qur'anic metaphors cannot be understood solely through conceptual analysis but must be linked to the linguistic structures that shape them (Sardaraz and Ali 2019, 220–23). In the context of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30, conceptual metaphors do not emerge independently of language but are built upon the semantic relations of *ratq* and *fatq*, which have been analyzed through the theory of *naẓm*. Thus, this study demonstrates that the Qur'an's cosmological representations are formed through the interaction between linguistic and conceptual structures.

Although Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides an effective analytical framework for explaining the conceptual structures of *ratq* and *fatq*, this study aligns with Yaşar's critique, which asserts that Qur'anic metaphors cannot be separated from the linguistic context and textual structure that shape them (Yaşar 2022, 561–81). Therefore, the conceptual metaphor in Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 is not analyzed independently of the verse's *naẓm* structure but is understood as the result of an interaction between linguistic relations and conceptual structures. Thus, a metaphorical reading of this verse does not replace semantic analysis but rather complements it by explaining the cognitive mechanisms that generate cosmological representations.

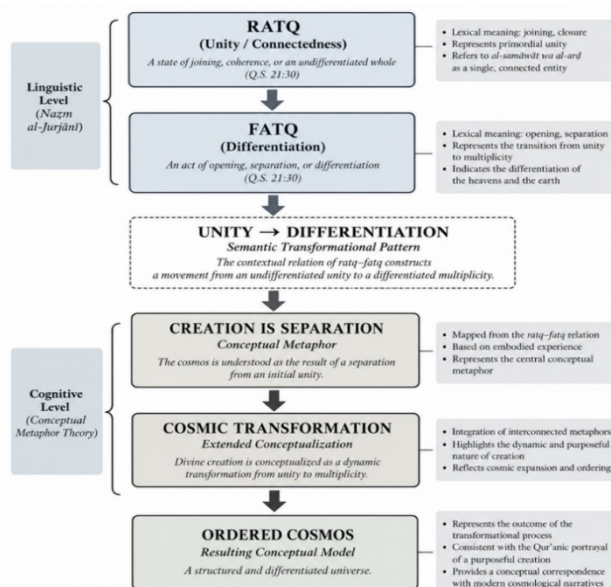


Figure 1. The *Ratq-Fatq* Cosmogenesis Conceptual Model.

This model demonstrates that the representation of the creation of the cosmos in Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 is constructed through a transformational process that moves from unity toward differentiation, ultimately producing cosmic order. Interestingly, this conceptual pattern exhibits structural correspondence with modern cosmological narratives regarding the transition from an integrated initial state toward cosmic differentiation. This correspondence does not imply that the Qur'an literally predicted the Big Bang theory but rather indicates some correspondence at the level of conceptual structure. Therefore, the relationship between the verse and modern cosmology is more accurately understood as a conceptual correspondence rather than an empirical one.

Methodological Implications for Contemporary Qur'anic Cosmology

The transferable contribution of the Semantic-Cognitive Integrative Model lies in its procedure rather than in the verse-specific finding of unity-differentiation. Beyond Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30, the procedure can be applied by: establishing the relevant Arabic syntactic and semantic relations through *naẓm*; identifying a candidate source-domain structure only when it is licensed by those relations; mapping that structure to the target domain; checking the mapping back against the Arabic context and relevant *tafsīr*; and only then comparing the resulting interpretation with an external scientific discourse. What transfers is therefore a sequence of evidential controls and reciprocal validation, whereas the particular metaphor, image schema, and cosmological representation must be re-established for each new verse. This emphasis on explicit method is consistent with broader calls for context-sensitive Qur'anic interpretation and for cognitive metaphor

models that incorporate context rather than treating conceptual mappings as decontextualized structures (Saeed and Akbar 2021, 2–5; Calis 2022, 188; Kövecses 2020, 112–30).

This methodological orientation also addresses a long-standing problem in scientific exegesis (*āyāt kawniyyah*). Retrospective scientific confirmation can make the interpretation depend too strongly on theories that remain open to revision and can narrow the semantic range of the Qur'anic text. The present model instead treats linguistic organization and context as the first interpretive controls, while modern science functions only as a later comparative horizon. This distinction is particularly important in light of contemporary analyses of *i'jāz 'ilmī* and scientific *tafsīr*, which document both their intellectual appeal and their methodological risks (Guessoum 2011, 45; Bigliardi 2017, 146–71; Daneshgar 2023c, 1005–28; Faizin 2020, 77–96; Kroesbergen 2018, 9–28).

Furthermore, integrating al-Jurjānī's contextual semantics with Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory does not collapse classical Arabic scholarship into contemporary cognitive linguistics. The two frameworks retain distinct tasks. *Naẓm* explains how semantic coherence is licensed by relations in the Arabic expression; Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains how those licensed relations can be organized as source–target conceptual structures. Their integration occurs at the interface between outputs: textual relations constrain the cognitive mapping, and the proposed mapping is accepted only if it can be returned to the text without overriding grammar, context, or exegetical evidence. This is the model's methodological contribution to Qur'anic hermeneutics (Gibbs 2011, 541–44).

The Integration of Contextual Semantics and Conceptual Metaphors in the Construction of Big Bang Cosmology

A reading of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 shows why the study describes its procedure as integrated but not simultaneous. The first analytical output is textual: *naẓm* analysis establishes the relational pattern generated by *kānatā ratqan fa-fatqnāhumā*. That output then functions as an evidential constraint for Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Candidate source domains are admissible only if they preserve the verse's established referents, sequence, and state-to-action relation. The cognitive analysis in turn makes explicit what experiential structure is required for readers to conceptualize that relation. It can direct the interpreter back to a linguistically salient relation that deserves closer scrutiny, but it cannot revise Arabic grammar or create a textual relation that is absent. The integration is thus a constraint-and-feedback relation between two distinguishable analytical stages (Sardaraz and Ali 2021, 95–117; Shamsudin and Aladdin 2024, 58–78).

The rationale for combining the two frameworks is therefore functional rather than based on an assumption that they are theoretically identical. Al-

Jurjānī explains why meaning depends on the ordered relations among linguistic elements (Jurjānī, n.d., 81–83). Lakoff and Johnson explain how abstract meaning can be structured through mappings grounded in embodied experience (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 3–6). The combined model produces an analysis that neither framework supplies alone: *naẓm* prevents cognitive mappings from floating free of the Arabic text, while Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains the cognitive representational consequences of relations that *naẓm* identifies but does not model as source–target mappings (Kövecses 2020, 112–30).

In *naẓm* theory, the relationship between linguistic elements is the primary factor determining the emergence of meaning. A word does not possess independent significance but acquires its semantic function through its relationship with other elements within the textual structure (Ridlo 2025, 336–41). In Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30, this relationship is evident in the opposition between *ratq* and *fatq*. These two words not only present a contrast in meaning but also form a transformational sequence linking the initial state and the subsequent state. This relational structure produces the semantic pattern unity-differentiation, which serves as the foundation for the construction of the verse's cosmological meaning.

Once the textually constrained pattern has been established, the cognitive stage asks how that relation can be conceptualized. *Ratq* evokes embodied structures of joining or closure because the verse predicates it as a prior state; *fatq* evokes opening or separation because the following verb transforms that same state. These experiences are mapped to the cosmological target only insofar as they preserve the text's sequence and reference. The analytical movement is therefore from textually licensed relation to cognitive representation, followed by a return check against the text, rather than from an isolated word directly to a cosmological metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 6; Reijnierse et al. 2018, 129–47).

The transformation from linguistic structure to conceptual structure explains why the cosmological meaning of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 cannot be reduced to the dictionary meanings of *ratq* and *fatq*. Lexical analysis only explains the basic meanings of these two words, whereas the cosmological meaning emerges through a more complex network of relations. Semantic relations generate transformational patterns, transformational patterns generate conceptual metaphors, and conceptual metaphors form cosmological representations. This layered process demonstrates that meaning construction occurs dynamically through the interaction between language and cognition.

At this point, conceptual metaphors function as a bridge connecting semantic structures with cosmological representations. The metaphor Cosmos Is a Unified Entity represents the initial state of the cosmos as an undifferentiated unity. The metaphor Creation Is Separation represents the process of differentiation that produces new structures. Meanwhile, the metaphor Divine Creation Is Cosmic Transformation connects these two states within a single sequence of changes that

produce cosmic order. These three metaphors do not appear arbitrarily but are rooted in the *ratq-fatq* semantic relationship established by the *naẓm* structure of the verses.

This interconnection between linguistic and conceptual structures aligns with critiques of the tendency in Qur'anic metaphor studies to separate conceptual analysis from its linguistic context. Yaşar emphasizes that the application of Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory in Qur'anic studies must account for the linguistic structure and interpretive traditions that shape the text's meaning (Yaşar 2022, 561–81). Therefore, the conceptual metaphor in Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 is not understood as a standalone mechanism, but rather as a continuation of the semantic relations established by the verse's linguistic structure.

The resulting framework is best described as a two-stage integrative model with reciprocal validation. Stage one establishes the linguistic-semantic constraints through *naẓm*; stage two develops a cognitive representation through Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory and supporting image schemas. Integration occurs because the second stage is constrained by the first, and its result is checked back against the first. The verse-specific output is a semantic-cognitive representation of transformation, while the transferable output is a procedure for preventing either lexical atomism or unconstrained conceptual projection. This distinction between analytical stages and integrative control resolves the apparent tension between sequential procedure and theoretical integration.

This integrative framework also narrows the claim made when Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 is compared with Big Bang cosmology. Earlier Qur'an–science discussions have often sought direct compatibility between the verse and modern cosmological theory (Cahyono et al. 2023, 142–49). The present study does not treat *ratq* and *fatq* as technical equivalents of cosmological singularity, expansion, or any specific physical mechanism. Standard contemporary cosmology is formulated through observationally constrained physical models, including the Λ CDM framework and measurements of cosmic expansion and the cosmic microwave background (Aghanim 2020, 67). Those scientific descriptions and the Qur'anic semantic categories belong to different explanatory registers.

Accordingly, the claimed correspondence is limited to a high-level representational analogy: the verse, in the present reading, organizes meaning as a transition from a predicated joined state to an act of separation or differentiation, while modern cosmology describes an evolving universe whose observable large-scale structure developed from an earlier hot, dense state. Unity-differentiation is the analytical label of this study, not standard cosmological terminology, and the two accounts need not mean unity or differentiation in the same conceptual sense. The comparison therefore does not establish semantic identity, historical prediction, or empirical confirmation; it identifies only a possible structural resonance after the Qur'anic meaning has been independently analyzed (Aghanim

2020, 67; Kroesbergen 2018, 9–28).

This restricted comparison allows the Qur'an to remain a religious discourse rather than a substitute cosmology while still permitting disciplined dialogue with scientific descriptions. The point of comparison is the abstract organization of change, not a claim that the verse encodes the equations, timescales, physical parameters, or observational evidence of the Big Bang model. The methodological benefit is that any future change in cosmological theory would affect the external comparison without automatically rewriting the text-internal *naẓm* analysis or its cognitively constrained interpretation.

This understanding differs fundamentally from the *i'jāz 'ilmī* approach when modern scientific theories are used as instruments to confirm a predetermined meaning of verses. Because scientific models are revisable, interpretations made dependent on a particular model may become unstable. By contrast, the semantic-cognitive model developed here does not treat Big Bang theory as the determinant of the verse's meaning. The analysis begins with *naẓm*, semantic relations, and textually licensed conceptual mappings, and only then identifies a limited conceptual comparison with modern cosmology. The relation between verse and science is therefore dialogical and comparative, not verificatory.

This approach also demonstrates that the Qur'anic cosmological representation is not constructed through technical scientific language, but rather through conceptual structures that can be understood by diverse communities of readers across space and time. The use of *ratq* and *fatq* illustrates how human experiences of unification, interconnectedness, opening, and separation are employed to comprehend phenomena beyond the scope of everyday empirical experience. Within the framework of embodied cognition, such strategies allow highly abstract concepts to become comprehensible because they are linked to universal bodily experiences (Johnson 1987, 29–35). Thus, Qur'anic cosmology speaks not only about the universe but also about how humans understand the universe through the cognitive mechanisms available within their lived experience.

Table 4. Interactive Semantic-Cognitive Analytical Model for Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30.

Component	Analytical Function	Integrative Relation / Output
Textual-Semantic Analysis (<i>Naẓm</i>)	Identifies syntactic governance, sequence, predication, and semantic relations.	Produces <i>ratq-fatq</i> constraints that delimit admissible cognitive mappings.
Conceptual-Metaphor Analysis (CMT)	Identifies embodied source structures and maps them to the cosmological target.	Operates only on mappings licensed by the textual-semantic constraints.

Reciprocal Validation	Checks the cognitive mapping back against Arabic syntax, context, and <i>tafsīr</i> .	Revises or rejects a mapping that overrides the text; cognitive salience may prompt textual re-examination but cannot alter grammar.
Semantic-Cognitive Synthesis	Combines constrained textual relations with the validated conceptual mapping.	Produces the verse-specific representation of unity differentiation/ transformation.
External Cosmological Comparison	Compares the validated representation with modern cosmological discourse.	Permits only limited structural analogy, not semantic identity, prediction, or empirical verification.

The model is integrative because the relation between *naẓm* and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory is not represented as a one-way ladder. *Naẓm* supplies the textual-semantic constraints; Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory elaborates those constraints as source–target mappings; and a reciprocal validation step returns the proposed mapping to the Arabic text and *tafsīr*. The two theories therefore remain analytically distinguishable while interacting through constrained input and feedback. This model differs from a merely sequential juxtaposition because a cognitive interpretation is not accepted as the final output unless it survives the return check against the linguistic evidence.

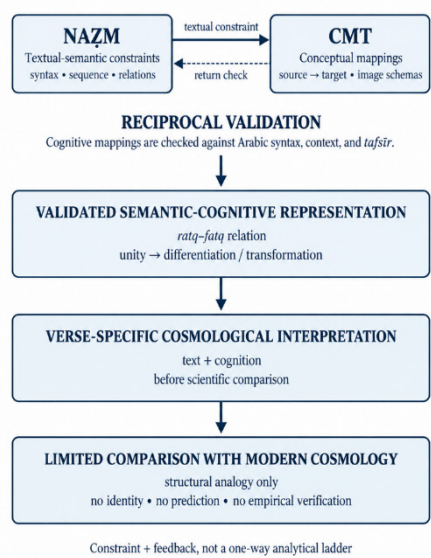


Figure 2. The Interactive Semantic-Cognitive Cosmological Model.

Figure 2 visualizes the reciprocal control that Table 4 describes. The *naẓm* and CMT components exchange information through a validation loop before a verse-specific semantic-cognitive representation is accepted. Only after that

representation is stabilized does the model permit comparison with modern cosmology. The Big Bang therefore remains an external interpretive horizon for limited structural comparison, not an object verified by the Qur'anic text.

The overall analysis demonstrates that the cosmology in Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 does not rely on the lexical meanings of *ratq* and *fatq* in isolation, but rather on a network of relationships connecting the *naẓm* structure, semantic patterns, and conceptual metaphors in the process of meaning formation. Through these relationships, the verse presents a cosmological representation that moves from unity toward differentiation and order. Therefore, the relevance of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 to Big Bang cosmology lies at the level of conceptual correspondence constructed by the structure of meaning, not in an attempt at scientific proof of the text. This kind of reading opens up space for the development of a more methodological cosmological interpretation by positioning language, cognition, and interpretation as intertwined elements in understanding the verses of creation.

Conclusion

An examination of Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 indicates that its cosmological meaning is constructed through an ordered relation between linguistic and conceptual analysis. The *naẓm* analysis first establishes the *ratq-fatq* semantic pattern by examining the syntax and sequence of *kānatā ratqan fa-fatqnāhumā*. Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory then explains how this textually constrained relation can be represented through embodied structures of joining, separation, and transformation. The two components therefore do not operate simultaneously in an undifferentiated sense. They form a two-stage integrative procedure in which the output of *naẓm* constrains the cognitive mapping, and the cognitive result is checked back against the textual relations.

The specific contribution produced by combining al-Jurjānī's contextual semantics and Lakoff-Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory is a constrained semantic-cognitive explanation that neither framework supplies independently. *Naẓm* identifies which relations the Arabic text licenses but does not by itself model their embodied source–target conceptualization; Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains that conceptualization but, without a textual constraint, can risk projecting mappings that exceed the verse. Their combination links textual warrant to cognitive representation and provides an explicit return check against the Arabic structure. Within this framework, the relation between Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 30 and Big Bang cosmology is limited to a high-level conceptual analogy rather than scientific proof, prediction, or semantic identity. Future research should test the procedure on a broader corpus of cosmological verses and may incorporate Arabic corpus analysis, frame semantics, or conceptual blending to determine which parts of the model are genuinely transferable beyond the present case.

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