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TA'RIF AND TANKIR IN QUR'ANIC DISCOURSE: A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF CONTEXTUAL MEANING FORMATION

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Abstract
This study aims to analyse the function of ta'rif wa tankir in the discourse structure of the Qur'an and to explain its contribution to the formation of contextual meaning from a Qur'anic linguistic perspective. This study is motivated by the tendency of previous research to treat ta'rif wa tankirprimarily as a grammatical and rhetorical phenomenon, whilst its role in meaning construction at the discourse level has received relatively little attention. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using library research. The research data consists of Qur'anic verses containing the phenomena of ta'rif wa tankīr, as well as various relevant literature in the fields of Qur'anic linguistics, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, exegesis, and rhetoric. The data were analysed through the stages of data reduction, thematic categorisation, semantic and pragmatic interpretation, and discourse analysis to identify the relationship between the forms of ma'rifah and nakirah and the formation of contextual meaning. The results of the study indicate that ta'rif wa tankir not only function as markers of definiteness and indefiniteness, but also play a role in reference management, the organisation of information structure, the formation of semantic focus, the development of themes, and the construction of cohesion and coherence in Qur'anic discourse. This study found that the meaning produced by the ma'rifah and nakirah forms is dynamic and determined by the interaction between grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-contextual aspects. The novelty of this research lies in the effort to reposition ta'rif wa tankiras a multidimensional linguistic mechanism functioning in the construction of contextual meaning at the discourse level, rather than merely a phenomenon of nahwu and balaghah. This study contributes to enriching the development of contemporary Qur'anic linguistics through the integration of semantic, pragmatic, and discourse analysis perspectives, whilst offering a new conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between definiteness, indefiniteness, and meaning formation in the Qur'an.
Keywords: *ta'rif wa tankir; Qur'anic linguistics; discourse analysis; contextual meaning; Qur'anic semantics; Qur'anic pragmatics.*

الملخص
تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل وظيفة التعريف والتنكير في بنية خطاب القرآن الكريم، وبيان إسهامه في تكوين المعنى السياقي من منظور لغوي قرآني. وتنطلق هذه الدراسة من الملاحظة بأن البحوث السابقة تناولت التعريف والتنكير في الغالب بوصفهما ظاهرةً نحويةً وبلاغية، في حين لم يَحظَ دورُهما في بناء المعنى على مستوى الخطاب باهتمامٍ كافٍ. وتعتمد الدراسة المنهجَ الوصفي الكيفي القائم على البحث المكتبي. وتتألف بيانات البحث من الآيات القرآنية المتضمِّنة لظاهرة التعريف والتنكير، فضلاً عن المصادر الأدبية ذات الصلة في مجالات اللسانيات القرآنية، والدلالة، والتداولية، وتحليل الخطاب، والتفسير، والبلاغة. وقد جرى تحليل البيانات عبر مراحل تقليص البيانات، والتصنيف الموضوعي، والتأويل الدلالي والتداولي، وتحليل الخطاب؛ بهدف الكشف عن العلاقة بين صيغتَي المعرفة والنكرة وتشكُّل المعنى السياقي. وتُشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن التعريف والتنكير لا يعملان فحسب بوصفهما مؤشِّرَين على التحديد والإبهام، بل يؤدّيان دوراً محورياً في إدارة الإحالة، وتنظيم البنية المعلوماتية، وتشكيل البؤرة الدلالية، وتطوير الموضوع، وبناء الاتساق والانسجام في الخطاب القرآني. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن المعنى الناتج عن صيغتَي المعرفة والنكرة ذو طابع ديناميكي، يتحدد من خلال التفاعل بين الأبعاد النحوية والدلالية والتداولية والسياقية الخطابية. وتتجلى أصالة هذا البحث في سعيه إلى إعادة تأطير التعريف والتنكير بوصفهما آليةً لغويةً متعددة الأبعاد تعمل في بناء المعنى السياقي على مستوى الخطاب، لا مجرد ظاهرة نحوية بلاغية. وتُسهم هذه الدراسة في إثراء اللسانيات القرآنية المعاصرة من خلال تكامل منظورات الدلالة والتداولية وتحليل الخطاب، مع تقديم إطار مفاهيمي جديد لفهم العلاقة بين التعريف والتنكير وتشكُّل المعنى في القرآن الكريم.
الكلمات المفتاحية: التعريف والتنكير؛ اللسانيات القرآنية؛ تحليل الخطاب؛ المعنى السياقي؛ الدلالة القرآنية؛ التداولية القرآني

INTRODUCTION

The qur'an is a text of remarkable linguistic complexity whose meaning is shaped not only by lexical choices and grammatical structures but also by the discourse organisation that establishes relationships among linguistic units within the text. In contemporary qur'anic linguistic studies, increasing attention has been devoted to semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-oriented approaches, as meaning is understood to emerge from the interaction between linguistic forms and their contextual usage. Various linguistic phenomena contribute to this process, including taqdim wa ta'khir (fronting and postponement), iltifat (shifts in grammatical perspective), and al-fashl wa al-washl (disjunction and conjunction). Each of these phenomena plays an important role in shaping discourse and guiding interpretation. (Hassan et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, this study focuses specifically on taʿrīf wa tankīr (definiteness and indefiniteness) because of its fundamental position in the management of reference and the construction of meaning within qur'anic discourse. Unlike other discourse phenomena that primarily affect emphasis, stylistic variation, or rhetorical organisation, taʿrīf wa tankīr directly influences how entities, concepts, events, and participants are introduced, identified, specified, or generalized within the text. As a result, the distinction between maʿrifah and nakirah forms has implications not only for grammatical interpretation but also for semantic meaning, pragmatic inference, information structure, and discourse cohesion. Furthermore, although taʿrīf wa tankīr has received considerable attention in studies of nahwu and balaghah, its role as a multidimensional mechanism of contextual meaning formation at the discourse level remains comparatively underexplored. This makes taʿrīf wa tankīr a particularly relevant object of study for examining the relationship between linguistic form, contextual meaning, and discourse structure in the qur'an. (Hassan et al., 2013).

In the tradition of Arabic grammar (nahwu), ta'rif is understood as a form indicating a specific and identifiable referent, whilst tankirrefers to a form indicating a general or undetermined referent. However, the use of these two forms in the Qur'an often transcends their grammatical functions. A noun in the nakirah form can be used to indicate glorification, emphasis, specification, or an expansion of meaning, whilst the maʿrifah form can be used to indicate uniqueness, exclusivity, closeness of meaning, or thematic continuity within a discourse. Thus, the alternation between the maʿrifah and nakirah forms in the Qur'an cannot be understood merely as syntactic variation, but must be viewed as a linguistic strategy with profound semantic and rhetorical implications (Suhaimi, 2020).

Developments in modern linguistic theory indicate that definiteness and indefiniteness are key elements in information structure and discourse analysis. From a discourse linguistic perspective, definiteness serves to maintain established references, whilst indefiniteness is often used to introduce new information into the discourse. Both these categories contribute to the formation of cohesion, coherence, and thematic development within a text. Therefore, studies on ta'rif wa tankirin the Qur'an are not only relevant within the framework of Arabic grammar but are also important for understanding how the Qur'an constructs contextual meaning through the management of information and reference within its discourse structure (طلال يحيى الطوبجى & محمد ابراهيم حمود, 2008).

A number of previous studies have discussed ta'rif wa tankirfrom various perspectives. Some studies have focused on the grammatical aspects and classification of the maʿrifah and nakirah forms in Arabic (طلال يحيى الطوبجى & محمد ابراهيم حمود, 2008). Others examine the functions of balaghah and the rhetorical purposes of using definite and indefinite forms in specific verses (Rahi, 2023). Further research highlights semantic aspects and the implications of translating definiteness and indefiniteness into different target languages (Ladan & Al-Janabi,

2024). Furthermore, several exegetical studies affirm that the use of ta'rif wa tankircontributes to the formation of diverse meanings according to the context of the verse and the communicative purpose sought (Pertiwi et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, the results of the literature review indicate that research on ta'rif wa tankirremains fragmented and dominated by partial approaches. Most studies focus on grammatical or rhetorical functions within specific verses without linking them to the broader discourse structure of the Qur'an. Consequently, understanding of how ta'rif wa tankircontributes to the formation of contextual meaning at the discourse level remains relatively limited. Existing studies generally treat ta'rif wa tankiras a local phenomenon at the word or phrase level, whilst its relationship with thematic development, referential continuity, information structure, and the construction of the text's global meaning has not received adequate attention (Hassan et al., 2013).

A more fundamental research gap lies in the absence of a scientific synthesis that integrates these various perspectives into a single, coherent conceptual framework. The available literature is scattered across the fields of nahwu, balaghah, tafsir, semantics, pragmatics, and translation, without any systematic attempt to map the relationships between research findings. This situation has prevented the formation of a comprehensive understanding of the function of ta'rif wa tankiras a mechanism for meaning formation within the discourse structure of the Qur'an. Furthermore, no Conceptual Review review has been found that specifically examines the development of research on ta'rif wa tankirfrom a Qur'anic linguistic perspective, particularly one that highlights the relationship between definiteness, indefiniteness, discourse structure, and the formation of contextual meaning.

Another gap lies in the dominance of micro-level approaches in previous research. Most studies have analysed only specific verses or surahs, resulting in findings that are localised and difficult to generalise. Consequently, there is currently no knowledge map illustrating research trends, theoretical developments, methodological approaches, or patterns of the semantic and pragmatic functions of ta'rif wa tankirwithin the broader field of Qur'anic studies. Yet, such mapping is essential for establishing a more robust theoretical foundation for the development of contemporary Qur'anic linguistic studies.

In light of this gap, this study aims to conduct a Conceptual Review review of various academic publications discussing ta'rif wa tankirin the Qur'an. Specifically, this study seeks to identify research trends, theoretical approaches, methodological orientations, and key findings regarding the semantic, pragmatic, rhetorical, and discursive functions of ta'rif wa tankīr. This study also aims to explain how the use of definite and indefinite forms contributes to the formation of contextual meaning within the discursive structure of the Qur'an.

The novelty of this research lies in three main aspects. Firstly, this study repositions taʿrīf wa tankīr from a phenomenon that has hitherto been understood primarily within grammatical and balaghah frameworks into a linguistic mechanism that contributes to the construction of contextual meaning at the discourse level. Secondly, this study integrates findings from various disciplines that have previously developed in relative isolation, including Qur'anic linguistics, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, exegesis, and translation studies. Thirdly, this study offers a conceptual synthesis concerning the relationship between definiteness, indefiniteness, reference management, information structure, discourse cohesion, and meaning formation within Qur'anic discourse.

Based on the research gap and objectives outlined above, this study is guided by two central research questions. The first question concerns the functions of taʿrīf wa tankīr in the construction of contextual meaning within Qur'anic discourse as identified through the synthesis of previous scholarly works. The second question

examines how the forms of definiteness and indefiniteness contribute to reference management, information structure, and discourse cohesion in the Qur'an. By addressing these questions, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of taʿrīf wa tankīr in Qur'anic discourse and to develop an integrated conceptual framework that connects grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse perspectives. formation in the Qur'an. Thus, this study is expected to provide new theoretical contributions to the development of Qur'anic linguistic studies whilst opening up avenues for further research that is more integrative and discourse-analysis based.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using library research. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand, describe, and interpret the linguistic phenomenon of ta'rif wa tankirin the Qur'an in depth, based on the context of its use within discourse structure. This study is not oriented towards measuring the frequency of occurrence of the maʿrifah and nakirah forms, but rather towards revealing the semantic, pragmatic, and discursive functions that contribute to the formation of contextual meaning in the verses of the Qur'an. A qualitative approach is deemed most appropriate as it allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the relationship between linguistic forms and the meaning constructed within complex religious texts (Alejandro & Zhao, 2024).

This study is grounded in a Qur'anic linguistic perspective that integrates semantic, pragmatic, and discourse analysis. This perspective is used to explain how the forms of ta'rif wa tankirfunction not only as grammatical categories but also as linguistic devices that play a role in managing reference, developing themes, building cohesion, and generating contextual meaning within the discourse structure of the Qur'an. The semantic approach is used to identify the meanings contained in the use of the maʿrifah and nakirah forms, whilst the pragmatic approach is used to understand the function of these meanings within the communicative context constructed by the Qur'anic text. Meanwhile, discourse analysis is used to explain the relationship between the use of ta'rif wa tankirand the organisation of information and meaning structure within the text as a whole (Alhaj, 2010) (Armayanti, 2019).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data consists of Qur'anic verses containing the phenomenon of ta'rif wa tankīr. Data selection was carried out purposively, taking into account the presence of the definite and indefinite forms that possess significant semantic, pragmatic, and rhetorical functions in the formation of the verse's meaning. Purposive data selection allows the researcher to focus on the verses most representative of the relationship between definite and indefinite forms and the discourse structure of the Qur'an. Primary data was obtained from the Qur'anic text based on the Madinah Mushaf and various digital Qur'an resources used to facilitate the identification of ta'rif wa tankirforms within various verse contexts.

Secondary data, meanwhile, was drawn from various scholarly sources relevant to the research focus. These sources include classical and contemporary exegetical works, literature on Arabic grammar and rhetoric, books on Arabic linguistics, works discussing the semantics and pragmatics of the Qur'an, as well as scholarly articles published in national and international journals. The use of these various secondary sources aims to strengthen the theoretical foundation of the research whilst providing diverse perspectives in the data interpretation process. The literature used was selected based on its substantial relevance to the themes of ta'rif wa tankīr, the discourse structure of the Qur'an, and the formation of contextual meaning, thereby supporting the academic validity of the research (Hassan et al., 2013) (Suhaimi, 2020).

Data collection was carried out using the documentation technique. This technique was used because all research data was sourced from written documents in the form of Qur'anic texts, exegetical works, and relevant academic literature. The data collection process began with the identification of verses containing the definite (*maʿrifah*) and indefinite (*nakirah*) forms. Subsequently, the data were classified based on the type of ta'rif and tankīr, the context of occurrence, and the semantic function indicated in the verse. Following this, a review was conducted of various sources of exegesis and linguistic studies explaining the use of these forms in specific contexts. All data was then documented and organised systematically to facilitate the process of analysis and interpretation (Fauzi, 2022).

Data analysis was carried out in stages by adapting an interactive analysis model that included data reduction, data presentation, data interpretation, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and focused on data relevant to the research objectives. Verses containing the taʿrif wa tankir phenomenon were analysed based on their relevance to the formation of contextual meaning. The next stage was data presentation, namely the process of organising data into thematic categories so that patterns of taʿrif wa tankir usage could be systematically identified.

The interpretation stage is carried out through an integrated analysis of semantics, pragmatics, and discourse. Semantic analysis is used to identify the meanings arising from the use of the definite and indefinite forms in a verse. Pragmatic analysis is used to understand the communicative purpose and contextual function of the use of these forms. Furthermore, discourse analysis is used to explain the contribution of taʿrif wa tankir to the management of reference, topic continuity, thematic development, information structure, cohesion, and coherence in the Qur'anic text. Through this process, the study seeks to explain how the use of definite and indefinite forms plays a role in constructing a complete and contextual meaning within the discourse structure of the Qur'an (Alhaj, 2010).

The validity of the data in this study is ensured through source triangulation and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing information obtained from the Qur'anic text, exegetical works, Arabic linguistic literature, and relevant previous research. Meanwhile, theoretical triangulation was carried out by combining the perspectives of nahwu, balaghah, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis in the data interpretation process. The use of these various theoretical perspectives aims to reduce the subjectivity of interpretation whilst enhancing the credibility and accuracy of the research results (Alejandro & Zhao, 2024).

Operationally, this study was carried out through several interrelated stages. The first stage involved identifying the forms of ta'rif wa tankirin the verses of the Qur'an. The second stage involved analysing the semantic functions produced by the use of these forms. The third stage involved analysing the pragmatic functions related to communicative intent and the context of the verse's usage. The fourth stage is a discourse analysis explaining the contribution of ta'rif wa tankirto reference management, information structure, and the formation of contextual meaning. The final stage is a synthesis of the analysis results to produce a comprehensive understanding of the role of ta'rif wa tankirin the discourse structure of the Qur'an.

Through this approach, this study is expected to provide an in-depth analysis of the linguistic functions of ta'rif wa tankirin the Qur'an, whilst explaining how definite and indefinite forms contribute to the formation of contextual meaning within the discourse structure. This approach also facilitates the integration of classical Arabic linguistic traditions with modern linguistic theory, thereby yielding a more comprehensive understanding of linguistic phenomena in the Qur'an

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ta'rif wa Tankiras A Mechanism for Contextual Meaning Construction in Qur'anic Discourse

The research findings indicate that the use of ta'rif wa tankirin the Qur'an cannot be understood merely as a grammatical phenomenon distinguishing between the maʿrifah and nakirah forms. Based on a synthesis of various studies in Qur'anic linguistics, semantics, pragmatics, exegesis, and discourse analysis, it was found that ta'rif wa tankirfunctions as a linguistic device that contributes significantly to the formation of contextual meaning in the Qur'an. These functions include the management of reference, the organisation of information structure, the determination of semantic focus, the reinforcement of rhetorical effects, and the construction of textual cohesion and coherence. These findings demonstrate that the meaning of the Qur'an is shaped not only by the lexical meaning of a word, but also by the relationship of that word to other elements within the broader discourse structure (Hassan et al., 2013) (Suhaimi, 2020).

Analysis of various literature indicates that one of the primary functions taʿrif wa tankir is as a mechanism for reference management within the discourse structure of the Qur'an The nakirah form is generally used to introduce new entities, concepts, or information into the discourse, whilst the maʿrifah form serves to maintain, reaffirm, or re-identify references previously introduced. This pattern indicates a close relationship between the use of ta'rif wa tankirand the information structure that distinguishes between new information and given information. In various verses of the Qur'an, it is found that a concept is often introduced via the nakirah form to draw the reader's attention to new information, followed by the maʿrifah form to affirm the identity and continuity of that reference. This linguistic strategy enables the reader to follow the development of meaning gradually, thereby producing a coherent understanding of the verse's content (2008 ,محمد ابراهيم حمود & طلال يحيى الطوبجى).

Further findings indicate that ta'rif wa tankirpossess highly diverse semantic functions that depend on the context of their usage. The definite form in the Qur'an does not always denote something already known to the general public, but may be used to emphasise uniqueness, exclusivity, specificity, or the closeness of a particular meaning. Conversely, the nakirah form does not always denote something unknown or general, but can serve to exalt a meaning, reinforce a message, broaden the scope of reference, or even create an effect of ambiguity that encourages the reader to engage in deeper reflection on the content of the verse. Therefore, the relationship between grammatical form and meaning in the Qur'an is dynamic and cannot be separated from the linguistic context and the communicative purpose underpinning it. This finding aligns with studies indicating that the meanings of definiteness and indefiniteness in the Qur'an are shaped through the interaction between linguistic forms, the context of the verse, and the rhetorical aims sought (Hassan et al., 2013).

From a pragmatic perspective, this study found that the choice between the definite (maʿrifah) and indefinite (nakirah) forms constitutes part of the communication strategy employed by the Qur'an to direct the reader's attention towards specific meanings. The use of the indefinite form is often intended to arouse curiosity, create a sense of surprise, or amplify the emotional impact of a message. Conversely, the use of the definite form serves to affirm the identity of a referent, reinforce the authority of the meaning, or link a concept to the reader's existing knowledge. In this context, ta'rif wa tankirfunctions not only as grammatical markers but also as pragmatic cues that help the reader understand the intent underlying the Qur'an's linguistic structure. This finding reinforces the view that the interpretation of the Qur'an's meaning is heavily influenced by the inferential processes undertaken by the reader based on the communicative context established by the text (Abdulla & Majeed, 2019). In addition to functioning at the semantic and pragmatic levels, taʿrif wa tankir also contributes significantly to the formation of cohesion and coherence in the Qur'anic text. Cohesion is established through the referential links between the definite (*maʿrifah*) and indefinite (nakirah) forms scattered throughout various parts

of the text, whilst coherence is formed through the continuity of themes and the development of meaning resulting from the systematic use of both forms. From a discourse analysis perspective, the definite form allows the reader to track previously introduced referents, thereby making the relationships between verses clearer and more integrated. On the other hand, the indefinite form allows for the introduction of new information that drives thematic development and broadens the scope of meaning. The combination of the two produces a dynamic information structure and supports the formation of a coherent discourse. Thus, the function of taʿrif wa tankir is not limited to the level of words or phrases, but also plays a role in the organisation of meaning at the level of the text as a whole (Alhaj, 2010).

The findings of this study also indicate that taʿrif wa tankir play a role in the formation of semantic focus and the highlighting of specific messages in the Qur'an. The use of the maʿrifah form is often employed to place a concept at the centre of attention within the discourse, whilst the nakirah form is used to emphasise specific aspects of a concept without limiting its scope of meaning. In many cases, the choice of these forms serves as a rhetorical strategy that reinforces the persuasive power and linguistic beauty of the Qur'an. Therefore, the function of taʿrif wa tankir is not only related to linguistic aspects but also to the effectiveness of message delivery and the rhetorical beauty of the Qur'an, as explained in various classical and contemporary studies of balaghah (Suhaimi, 2020).

Based on a synthesis of all findings, this study develops a conceptual model regarding the formation of contextual meaning through taʿrif wa tankir in the Qur'an. The model demonstrates that the process of meaning formation occurs through interrelated relationships between linguistic forms, semantic functions, pragmatic functions, and discourse structure. In the initial stage, the choice of the definite (*maʿrifah*) or indefinite (*nakirah*) form generates specific potential meanings. These potential meanings are then enriched by the linguistic context and the communicative situation underlying the verse. Subsequently, the meaning formed is integrated into the discourse structure, thereby producing a comprehensive and contextual understanding. Thus, taʿrif wa tankir can be understood as a multidimensional mechanism that simultaneously connects grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and discursive aspects.

The findings of this study expand upon the traditional understanding, which has tended to place ta'rif wa tankirsolely within the frameworks of nahwu and balaghah. The research findings indicate that the function of taʿrif wa tankir is far more complex, as it relates to the management of reference, information structure, thematic development, the formation of cohesion and coherence, and the construction of contextual meaning in the Qur'an. Therefore, studies on taʿrif wa tankir need to adopt a more integrative approach by combining Qur'anic linguistic, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse analysis perspectives.

Theoretically, this study makes a significant contribution to the development of contemporary Qur'anic linguistics. Firstly, this study demonstrates that taʿrif wa tankir must be understood as a discourse device that plays a role in meaning formation, rather than merely a grammatical category. Secondly, this study emphasises the importance of integrating semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis in understanding the meaning structure of the Qur'an. Thirdly, this study offers a new conceptual framework that explains the relationship between definiteness, indefiniteness, reference management, information structure, and the formation of contextual meaning in the Qur'an. Thus, this study provides a more comprehensive theoretical foundation for the future development of Qur'anic linguistic studies.

Implications of Taʿrif wa Tankir for Qur'anic Interpretation and Contemporary Linguistic Studies

The findings of this study further demonstrate that the analysis of ta'rif wa tankircannot be separated from the broader framework of Qur'anic interpretation. In classical tafsīr literature, discussions concerning definiteness and indefiniteness were generally associated with grammatical and rhetorical functions. However, contemporary linguistic studies reveal that the choice between ma'rifah and nakirah forms often influences the interpretation of meaning at a deeper level, particularly in relation to contextualisation, reader inference, and discourse development. Consequently, understanding the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of ta'rif wa tankirbecomes essential for explaining how meaning is constructed and communicated within Qur'anic discourse (Mohamed, 2019).

From the perspective of Qur'anic semantics, meaning is not determined solely by lexical definitions but also by the interaction between linguistic forms and contextual environments. The use of a definite form may signal specificity, uniqueness, or exclusivity, while an indefinite form may introduce openness of interpretation, generalisation, or emphasis. Such semantic flexibility illustrates the richness of Qur'anic language, where a single grammatical choice can generate multiple layers of meaning depending on the textual and situational context. This finding supports the argument that Qur'anic discourse operates through a highly sophisticated semantic system in which grammatical forms function as meaning-bearing units rather than merely structural categories (Mohamed, 2019).

Furthermore, the findings align with contemporary theories of discourse analysis that emphasise the importance of information management within a text. In discourse studies, the distinction between new information and given information plays a central role in shaping textual coherence. The Qur'an frequently employs nakirah forms to introduce new concepts before subsequently referring to them through ma'rifah forms. This pattern creates a progression of information that guides readers through the development of themes and arguments. Such a strategy contributes to the continuity of discourse and facilitates comprehension by establishing clear referential connections across verses and passages (Alhaj, 2010).

Another important implication concerns the relationship between ta'rif wa tankirand rhetorical persuasion. The Qur'an is widely recognised for its rhetorical excellence, and one aspect of this excellence lies in its ability to select linguistic forms that maximise communicative effectiveness. The indefinite form is frequently utilised to evoke curiosity, wonder, or reflection by leaving certain meanings open-ended. In contrast, the definite form often provides emphasis, certainty, and authority. Through this alternation, the Qur'an achieves a balance between explicit guidance and reflective engagement, encouraging readers not only to receive information but also to actively participate in the process of meaning construction(Hassan et al., 2013).

This observation is particularly relevant when viewed through the lens of pragmatics. Pragmatic theories emphasise that communication involves more than the literal meanings of words; it also involves the interpretation of speaker intentions and contextual assumptions. In Qur'anic discourse, the choice of definiteness or indefiniteness frequently functions as a pragmatic signal directing readers toward particular interpretive pathways. Readers are required to infer why a concept is presented as definite in one context and indefinite in another. Such inferential processes enable the text to communicate meanings that extend beyond explicit linguistic expressions, thereby enriching the interpretive experience (Abdulla & Majeed, 2019).

The relevance-theoretic perspective provides further support for this conclusion. According to relevance theory, successful communication occurs when linguistic expressions provide sufficient cognitive effects while minimising processing effort. The Qur'an often employs ta'rif wa tankirin ways that optimise relevance by guiding readers toward intended meanings without excessive explanation. Through strategic use of definiteness and

indefiniteness, the text activates background knowledge, directs attention, and shapes interpretive expectations. Consequently, the effectiveness of Qur'anic communication can be understood partly through the interaction between linguistic forms and cognitive inferential mechanisms (Ismath & Aziz, 2025).

In addition, the findings indicate that ta'rif wa tankir contribute to the universality of Qur'anic messages. The use of indefinite expressions frequently allows meanings to remain sufficiently broad to encompass diverse contexts, audiences, and historical situations. This characteristic enables Qur'anic teachings to maintain relevance across different times and places. At the same time, definite expressions provide specificity when particular references or concepts need to be clearly identified. The dynamic interaction between these two forms creates a balance between universality and specificity, which is one of the distinctive features of Qur'anic discourse (Rahi, 2023).

The significance of ta'rif wa tankir is also evident in translation studies. Translating Qur'anic expressions involving definiteness and indefiniteness poses considerable challenges because equivalent grammatical structures do not always exist across languages. Research on Arabic–Amharic translation demonstrates that shifts in definiteness often result in changes in meaning, emphasis, and rhetorical effect. Similar challenges can be observed in English, Indonesian, and other language translations of the Qur'an. Consequently, translators must pay close attention not only to lexical meanings but also to the discourse functions associated with definiteness and indefiniteness in the source text (Ladan & Al-Janabi, 2024).

These observations suggest that future Qur'anic translation projects should incorporate insights from discourse analysis, semantics, and pragmatics in addition to traditional grammatical approaches. Such integration would facilitate more accurate representation of the communicative intentions embedded within Qur'anic language. It would also reduce the risk of oversimplifying meanings that are conveyed through subtle grammatical distinctions. Therefore, the study of ta'rif wa tankirpossesses practical relevance not only for academic research but also for translation and interpretation activities.

From a methodological perspective, the present study highlights the value of interdisciplinary approaches in Qur'anic linguistic research. Traditional grammatical analysis remains important for identifying formal structures, yet it is insufficient for explaining the full range of functions associated with ta'rif wa tankīr. By combining semantic, pragmatic, discourse-analytic, and exegetical perspectives, researchers can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how linguistic forms contribute to meaning formation. This integrative approach reflects broader developments in contemporary linguistics, where language is increasingly understood as a complex system involving interaction between form, meaning, context, and cognition(Alejandro & Zhao, 2024).

Moreover, the findings support the growing recognition that Qur'anic discourse can be analysed using modern linguistic theories without diminishing its religious significance. Contemporary approaches provide additional analytical tools for understanding how meaning is structured and communicated. Rather than replacing classical interpretations, these approaches complement traditional scholarship by offering new perspectives on linguistic phenomena that have long attracted scholarly attention. In this regard, ta'rif wa tankirserve as an important example of how classical Arabic grammatical categories can be re-examined within modern theoretical frameworks.

Finally, the study contributes to ongoing discussions regarding the relationship between grammar and meaning in the Qur'an. The evidence suggests that grammatical categories should not be viewed merely as formal devices but as integral components of the communicative system of the text. The distinction between ma'rifah and nakirah functions as a mechanism through which the Qur'an organises information, manages references, directs

interpretation, and constructs coherent discourse. Accordingly, future research should continue exploring the interaction between grammatical structures and discourse functions in order to develop a more comprehensive model of Qur'anic meaning construction.

Overall, the expanded findings confirm that ta'rif wa tankirrepresent a multidimensional linguistic phenomenon that operates simultaneously at grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, rhetorical, and discursive levels. Their significance extends beyond traditional classifications of definiteness and indefiniteness, encompassing broader functions related to communication, cognition, and textual organisation. This perspective strengthens the argument that the study of ta'rif wa tankiroccupies a central position within contemporary Qur'anic linguistics and provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which contextual meaning is generated in the Qur'an.

CONCLUSION

This study found that ta'rif wa tankirin the Qur'an not only functions as a grammatical category distinguishing between the definite and indefinite forms, but also serves as an important linguistic mechanism in the construction of contextual meaning at the discourse level. The results of the analysis show that the use of taʿrif wa tankir contributes to the management of reference, the organisation of information structure, the formation of semantic focus, the development of themes, and the construction of cohesion and coherence in the Qur'anic text. The nakirah form is generally used to introduce new information or referents into the discourse, whilst the maʿrifah form serves to maintain, affirm, and link these referents to a broader network of meaning. Furthermore, this study found that the semantic and pragmatic functions of ta'rif wa tankirare dynamic and highly context-dependent. These findings suggest that the meanings produced by definite and indefinite forms in the Qur'an cannot be explained solely through traditional nahwu approaches, but must be understood through the interaction between grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and discursive aspects. Thus, this study affirms that the role of ta'rif wa tankirin the construction of meaning in the Qur'an is far broader and more complex than has hitherto been understood in classical Arabic linguistic studies.

In terms of scientific contribution, this study reinforces previous findings stating that ta'rif wa tankirpossess important semantic and rhetorical functions in the Qur'an. However, this study also expands the scope of research by demonstrating that these functions do not stop at the level of words, phrases, or sentences, but operate actively in the formation of discourse structure and contextual meaning. This study challenges the tendency of some previous studies to treat ta'rif wa tankirprimarily as a phenomenon of nahwu and balaghah, and offers a new perspective that positions it as a discursive device linking referential, informational, semantic, and pragmatic aspects simultaneously. Furthermore, this study introduces a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between definiteness, indefiniteness, reference management, information structure, and meaning construction in the Qur'an. This framework is expected to enrich scholarly discussion in the fields of Qur'anic linguistics, Qur'anic discourse analysis, semantics, pragmatics, and linguistically-based exegesis.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. As a descriptive qualitative study based on literature review, the research findings are highly dependent on the availability and quality of the analysed literature. Furthermore, this study did not conduct a comprehensive corpus analysis of all Qur'anic verses containing the ta'rif wa tankirphenomenon; consequently, the findings are more conceptual and interpretative in nature. Furthermore, the study's focus on theoretical synthesis and literature review means that variations in the use of ta'rif wa tankiracross each surah or theme of the Qur'an cannot yet be explained in detail or comprehensively. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop a broader approach through computational linguistic-based analysis of the Qur'anic corpus, comparative studies between the Makkan and Medinan surahs, as well as

empirical studies that integrate semantic, pragmatic, and discourse analysis in greater depth. It is hoped that such follow-up research will yield a more comprehensive understanding of the function of ta'rif wa tankirin the construction of meaning in the Qur'an and strengthen the development of contemporary Qur'anic linguistic theory

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