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The Meaning of *Iqra'* From A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective: A Conceptual Metaphor Theory

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Abstract

The Arabic word Iqra' (اقرأ) is an imperative verb generally translated as "read." The activity of reading can be associated with reciting a text, conveying information, acquiring knowledge, and developing understanding. This study aims to explore possible conceptual metaphor mappings associated with Iqra' through five Indonesian equivalents: "bacalah" (read), "lafalkanlah" (recite aloud), "bacakanlah" (read aloud to someone), "pelajarilah" (study), and "pahamilah" (understand). The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach informed by Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The analysis involves identifying the equivalents, explaining their contextual meanings, and mapping the source and target domains. The findings yield five conceptual mapping hypotheses: READING AS ACCESSING INFORMATION, READING AS CONVEYING INFORMATION, READING AS COMMUNICATION, READING AS ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE, and READING AS BUILDING UNDERSTANDING. This study treats bacalah ("read") as the primary lexical equivalent of Iqra'. It is the only one of the five items attested as a rendering of Iqra' in the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' published translation of Surah Al-'Alaq (96:1, 3). The proposed mappings are treated as exploratory interpretations that require further examination using authentic linguistic data. This study is expected to provide an initial foundation for investigating the meaning of Iqra' from the cognitive linguistics and translation studies.

1. Introduction

Language serves as a means through which humans communicate ideas, express experiences, construct knowledge, and understand the reality surrounding them. Linguistic meaning is not limited to the lexical meaning of a word but also involves how

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humans categorize experiences, establish conceptual connections, and interpret information according to its meaning of use. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, language is closely related to cognition because meaning is understood as part of the conceptualization of human experience. Evans and Green (2006) explain that meaning and conceptualization are essential aspects of understanding the relationship between language and cognition. This perspective provides a foundation for examining how a linguistic form can represent experience and allow for possible interpretations based on the conceptual relationships underlying its meaning.

One of the principal approaches within cognitive linguistics is Conceptual Metaphor Theory, developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). This theory views metaphor not merely as a rhetorical device used to embellish speech but as part of the human conceptual system that enables one experience to be understood in terms of another. In metaphorical mapping, the source domain provides the conceptual structure used to understand the target domain. The concept of knowledge can be represented through the experience of light in the conceptual formulation KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT. This mapping illustrates how a more concrete experience can be used to understand a more abstract concept. The conceptual metaphor analysis needs to explain the relationships between domains that underlie meaning rather than merely identify associations between two concepts.

Lakoff (1992) explains that conceptual metaphor involves mappings between domains through which the structure of one concept can be used to understand another. Consistent with Kövecses (2010) emphasizes human experience and important elements in understanding conceptual metaphors. The relationship between two concepts can be classified as a metaphor. Functional, causal, and contextual relationships must be distinguished from metaphorical mappings through which one domain is used to understand another. The meaning of reading can help someone acquire information, but this relationship does not automatically establish reading as a metaphor for knowledge acquisition. The conceptual metaphor analysis requires an explanation of the basis of the proposed mapping and linguistic evidence supporting the relationship between the domains.

To identify potential metaphorical uses, Pragglejaz Group (2007) developed the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), which compares the contextual meaning of a linguistic unit with its basic meaning. This procedure helps researchers assess whether a particular language use may be metaphorical by examining the differences between these meanings. This framework is relevant to research examining words through translated equivalents because a translation may emphasize the function or purpose of an activity without being lexically equivalent to the source-language word. Accordingly, the analysis must distinguish lexical meaning, contextual interpretation, and conceptual metaphor hypotheses to avoid treating semantic associations as direct evidence of metaphorical usage.

The Arabic verb Iqra' (اقرأ) occurs at the beginning of two verses in Surah Al-'Alaq (96:1 and 96:3). The table presents the Arabic text, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' translation as published in the online edition of Qur'an Kemenag, and the authors' English renderings.

Tabel 1. Iqra' Translations

Verse	Arabic text	Indonesian translation	English
96:1	اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَۚ	"Bacalah dengan (menyebut) nama Tuhanmu yang menciptakan!"	"Read in the name of your Lord who created!"
96:3	اِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْاَكْرَمُۙ	"Bacalah! Tuhanmulah Yang Maha Mulia,"	"Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous."

The Quranic Arabic Corpus identifies Iqra' as a second-person masculine singular imperative verb in both occurrences (96:1:1 and 96:3:1). (Corpus, 2026) The Ministry's use of bacalah in both verses supports its treatment as the primary Indonesian lexical equivalent of Iqra' in this study. Of the five items examined, only bacalah occurs as a rendering of Iqra' in the cited edition. The study considers lafalkanlah, bacakanlah, pelajarilah, and pahamilah as proposed contextual readings.

Surah *Al-'Alaq* in verses 1–5 addresses human creation, teaching through the pen, and the teaching of human beings what they previously did not know. This sequence provides a discussing the relationship between reading and knowledge acquisition. The relationships between ideas in these verses do not mean that every concept associated with knowledge constitutes the direct lexical meaning of *Iqra'*. The meaning of a word must be distinguished from implications arising from its textual. In this study, the verses provide an interpretive background, while the conceptual metaphor analysis examines possible relationships between semantic domains that may be developed from the data. This distinction is necessary to ensure that linguistic interpretation accounts for the source-language form and remains within defensible interpretive boundaries.

Iqra' is associated with the activity of reading or reciting. The Quranic Arabic Corpus records the root ق ر أ (q-r-') in various forms of Quranic Arabic associated with reading and recitation, with interpretations depending on the word form and its use (Corpus, 2026). This information demonstrates the importance of examining the source-language form before developing equivalents in the target language. In this study, "read" is treated as the primary lexical equivalent of *Iqra'*. Meanwhile, "recite aloud," "read aloud to someone," "study," and "understand" are used as interpretations that emphasize different aspects associated with reading. These five equivalents are therefore not automatically treated as synonyms or equivalent literal translations.

The phenomenon examined in this study concerns the expansion of interpretations of *Iqra'* from the act of reading to functions associated with recitation, information delivery, knowledge acquisition, and the development of understanding. Reading can be performed to identify textual content, vocalize written language, read a text aloud to another person, study a particular concept, or understand a conveyed message. These activities are related to reading but are not semantically identical. Reading as an action differs from understanding as a mental process, whereas reading a text aloud to another person involves the communicative dimension of message delivery. These distinctions indicate the need to differentiate linguistic actions, communicative functions, and possible cognitive outcomes before formulating conceptual relationships.

These differences in semantic focus can be examined through five Indonesian equivalents used as the initial data in this study: "*bacalah*," "*lafalkanlah*," "*bacakanlah*," "*pelajarilah*," and "*pahamilah*." The equivalent "*bacalah*" emphasizes the act of reading, whereas "*lafalkanlah*" highlights pronunciation or oral recitation. "*Bacakanlah*" refers to reading a text aloud to another person. Meanwhile, "*pelajarilah*" emphasizes knowledge

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acquisition, and "*pahamilah*" highlights the process of understanding textual content. These differences indicate that each equivalent has a distinct semantic focus. In this study, the four equivalents other than "*bacalah*" are treated as contextual interpretations whose underlying rationale requires explanation, rather than as direct lexical meanings of *Iqra'*.

This semantic issue becomes important when *Iqra'* is examined through Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Rahmah, 2025). The relationship between reading and knowledge acquisition, for example, can be formulated as the conceptual hypothesis READING IS ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE. In this formulation, the activity of reading is proposed as the source domain, while knowledge acquisition constitutes the target domain. The reading can function as a means of learning and obtaining information, meaning that this relationship can be explained functionally. The word, reading can serve as a means of communication without necessarily involving metaphorical mapping. The analysis must distinguish functional or causal relationships from metaphorical mappings supported by linguistic patterns (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993).

Another issue concerns the distinction between knowledge acquisition and the development of understanding. Knowledge acquisition emphasizes an increase in the information a person knows, whereas the development of understanding involves organizing, connecting, and interpreting information. A person may acquire new information through reading without fully understanding the relationships between the ideas contained in a text. Conversely, understanding may develop when information is connected to prior knowledge, resulting in a more comprehensive interpretation. Based on this distinction, the hypotheses READING IS ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE and READING IS BUILDING UNDERSTANDING have different emphases. Both formulations can be used to explore the relationship between reading and cognitive processes, but neither can be established as a verified conceptual metaphor solely on the basis of a functional relationship.

Previous studies have applied Conceptual Metaphor Theory to examine the relationship between language and conceptualization in the Quran. Al-Saggaf, Mohd Yasin, and Abdullah (2013) investigated cognitive metaphors in two English translations of the Quran and identified several conceptual patterns associated with life, faith, the heart, and the soul. Rafkahanun, Nur, and Wagiati (2022) examined metaphor conceptualization in Juz 30 of the Quran through a cognitive semantic approach. Tantowi et al. (2025) discussed the relationship between kinayah in classical Arabic rhetoric and Conceptual Metaphor Theory through a systematic review. These studies demonstrate that cognitive approaches have been applied to Quranic meaning analysis, although their respective research objects, analytical focuses, and procedures differ.

The present research does not assume that conceptual metaphor studies of the Quran have not been conducted. It focuses specifically on five Indonesian equivalents associated with *Iqra',* with particular attention to distinguishing lexical equivalents, contextual interpretations, and conceptual mapping hypotheses(Zhirkova, 2024). The proposed novelty lies in the research object and the analytical approach, rather than in claiming that Conceptual Metaphor Theory has recently been applied to Quranic studies(Nath, 2023). Rafkahanun et al. (2022) identify conceptual meanings, metaphor types, and image schemas in metaphorical expressions across Juz 30.

At the lexical level, the Quranic Arabic Corpus catalogues forms derived from the root q-r-ʾ across the Qur'an. Amin et al. (2026) focus on Iqra' in Al-'Alaq 96:1 and use thematic exegesis to examine its linguistic, theological, and epistemological meanings. The present study focuses on the two occurrences of the imperative Iqra' in Al-'Alaq (96:1 and 96:3) and examines the evidential status of five proposed Indonesian glosses.

The analysis asks which Indonesian gloss is attested as a translation of Iqra' in these verses and what aspect of reading each proposed interpretation foregrounds. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' translation provides evidence for bacalah ("*read*") in both verses. The analysis then examines four proposed contextual readings that foreground oral recitation (*lafalkanlah*), reading aloud to someone (*bacakanlah*), studying (*pelajarilah*), and understanding (*pahamilah*). The study applies the distinction between translation and interpretation to each gloss and uses that distinction to frame five conceptual mapping hypotheses for testing against attested language use. Since this study uses a mini-corpus consisting of five equivalents, its contribution is exploratory and methodological rather than a definitive account of all possible meanings or metaphors associated with *Iqra'*.

This study aims to identify the semantic differences among five Indonesian equivalents associated with *Iqra'* and explore possible conceptual metaphor mappings related to reading, information, communication, knowledge, and understanding. It addresses two research questions: how do the equivalents differ in meaning and interpretive focus, and how can possible conceptual mappings be formulated based on the available data? This study is expected to contribute to cognitive linguistic research by examining the relationship between lexical meaning and conceptual interpretation. Methodologically, it emphasizes the importance of distinguishing functional relationships from metaphorical mappings and examining the semantic status of the data before classifying a formulation as a conceptual metaphor(Masthuroh, 2020). The findings are expected to provide an initial foundation for further studies using verified translation sources and a broader range of authentic linguistic data.

2. Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach and conceptual analysis to explore possible conceptual metaphor mappings associated with the Arabic word *Iqra'* (اقرأ) in Indonesian. The research data consist of five Indonesian equivalents: "*bacalah*" (read), "*lafalkanlah*" (recite aloud), "*bacakanlah*" (read aloud to someone), "*pelajarilah*" (study), and "*pahamilah*" (understand), together with descriptions of their contextual meanings. These data are treated as a limited collection for preliminary exploration, or a mini-corpus, rather than an authentic linguistic corpus compiled through systematic data collection and annotation procedures. In this analysis, "*bacalah*" is treated as the primary lexical equivalent, whereas the other four equivalents are regarded as contextual interpretations that require source verification. The approach draws on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which explains how one concept can be understood through mappings between a source domain and a target domain.

The analysis was conducted in four stages: identifying and classifying the equivalents, describing the meaning of each data item, formulating conceptual metaphor hypotheses, and mapping the source and target domains while taking interpretive limitations into account. The analysis used the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' rendering of Iqra' as bacalah in Al-'Alaq 96:1 and 96:3 to establish the attested translation

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in the edition consulted. It then examined four proposed contextual readings: lafalkanlah, bacakanlah, pelajarilah, and pahamilah. The five conceptual mappings were formulated as hypotheses.

The Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) proposed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) provides a framework for testing these hypotheses in future research. Such testing would identify a lexical unit in an attested passage, establish its meaning, and use a suitable lexical source to document a more basic meaning. A metaphorical classification would require a contrast between the two meanings and a plausible comparison that connects them.

The analysis would also record literal and uncertain cases. The findings are presented in tables and descriptive discussions that distinguish lexical meaning, contextual interpretation, and metaphorical mapping hypotheses. Given the limited number of data items and the fact that some equivalents have not yet been verified authentic sources, the findings are positioned as preliminary exploratory results rather than as a basis for drawing conclusions about the frequency or distribution of metaphors in Indonesian in general (McEnery & Hardie, 2012).

3. Result

This is the Way You Write the Subheadings

The mini-corpus in this study consists of five Indonesian equivalents used to explore the meaning of *Iqra'* (اقرأ): "*bacalah*" (read), "*lafalkanlah*" (recite aloud), "*bacakanlah*" (read aloud to someone), "*pelajarilah*" (study), and "*pahamilah*" (understand). These five data items exhibit different semantic emphases, ranging from the act of reading to interpretations associated with information delivery and cognitive processes. This classification serves as an initial step toward identifying possible conceptual relationships between reading and other related concepts. However, in semantic analysis, similarity or relatedness of meaning does not necessarily indicate lexical equivalence. Therefore, each equivalent must be examined in terms of its basic meaning and usage before being used as a basis for formulating conceptual metaphor hypotheses (Evans & Green, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Table 2. the Meanings and Translations of Iqra'

Indonesian item	Source and locator	Status and rationale
bacalah ("read")	Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, Qur'an Kemenag, online edition, Al-'Alaq 96:1 and 96:3.(Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2026)	Attested Indonesian translation. The Ministry uses bacalah for Iqra' in both verses. This item provides the lexical starting point for the analysis.
lafalkanlah ("recite aloud")	Authors' proposed paraphrase. Al-'Alaq 96:1 provides a contextual cue through bi-smi rabbika, which the Ministry renders as "dengan (menyebut) nama Tuhanmu."(Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2026)	The reference to uttering the Lord's name motivates an exploration of oral articulation. An English rendering with recite provides evidence about the English translator's choice only.
bacakanlah ("read aloud to someone")	Authors' proposed paraphrase. The imperative Iqra' in 96:1 and 96:3 provides the starting point. The	The authors introduce a listener to examine the communicative function of reading aloud. The

	paraphrase adds a listener to the reading event. ((The Quranic Arabic Corpus, n.d.)	person addressed by the command is the reader. The proposed listener is a separate participant.
pelajarilah ("study")	Authors' proposed paraphrase. Al-'Alaq 96:4–5 refers to teaching by the pen and teaching people what they previously did not know. (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2026)	The theme of teaching motivates the interpretation of reading as an activity that can support learning.
pahamilah ("understand")	Authors' proposed paraphrase. Al-'Alaq 96:5 refers to people coming to know what they previously did not know. (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2026)	The authors use the passage's theme of gaining knowledge to explore comprehension as a possible outcome of reading.

Based on Table 2, "*bacalah*" occupies the position of the primary lexical equivalent of *Iqra'*. This is consistent with the morphological analysis provided by The Quranic Arabic Corpus, which identifies *Iqra'* in Surah *Al-'Alaq*, verse 1, as a masculine singular second-person imperative verb corresponding to the English word read. The same form also appears in Surah *Al-'Alaq*, verse 3, as a command to read (Corpus, 2026). These findings provide a linguistic basis for establishing "*bacalah*" as the primary equivalent in this study. Accordingly, the subsequent analysis should begin with the meaning of reading rather than immediately treating all the equivalents listed in the table as lexically equivalent meanings.

The equivalent "*lafalkanlah*" emphasizes the aspect of oral pronunciation or articulation. This interpretation is related to the use of the English word recite in some translations of Surah *Al-'Alaq*, verse 1. However, recitation and reading are not entirely identical. Reading can occur silently, whereas recitation emphasizes the oral production of linguistic sounds. Therefore, "*lafalkanlah*" is treated in this study as an interpretation highlighting the oral dimension of reading rather than as an equivalent that automatically applies to every use of *Iqra'*. This distinction in semantic focus is important for maintaining accuracy in semantic analysis and avoiding the conflation of meanings based solely on their relatedness (Evans & Green, 2006).

The equivalent "*bacakanlah*" emphasizes the activity of reading a text that may be directed toward another person. Unlike "*lafalkanlah*," which focuses on pronunciation, "*bacakanlah*" implies the possible presence of a message recipient, such as a listener who listens to the text being read. Therefore, this interpretation can be used to explore the relationship between reading and information delivery. Nevertheless, this relationship indicates only a communicative function that may accompany reading, rather than direct evidence of a conceptual metaphor. Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, such a relationship requires further analysis to determine whether one experiential domain serves as the basis for understanding another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The equivalent "*pelajarilah*" shifts the focus from the act of reading to the process of acquiring knowledge. In learning, reading can serve as a means of identifying concepts, obtaining new information, and developing existing knowledge. This relationship allows for the formulation of the conceptual hypothesis READING IS ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE. However, it is important to emphasize that the relationship between reading and learning does not inherently constitute a metaphor. Reading can function as a means of learning without necessarily being understood metaphorically. Accordingly, "*pelajarilah*" is

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treated in this study as a contextual interpretation that represents one possible function of reading, rather than as a literal translation of *Iqra'* (Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The equivalent "*pahamilah*" emphasizes the cognitive process involved in interpreting textual content. Understanding may develop when individuals connect information in a text with prior knowledge, identify relationships between ideas, and interpret the message being conveyed. This relationship provides a basis for developing the conceptual hypothesis READING IS BUILDING UNDERSTANDING. Nevertheless, reading and understanding remain distinct processes: an individual may read a text without fully comprehending its content. Therefore, "*pahamilah*" is more appropriately treated as an interpretation emphasizing a cognitive goal or outcome that may be associated with reading. This distinction is consistent with the metaphor identification principles requiring researchers to compare contextual and basic meanings before classifying a particular usage as metaphorical (Group, 2007).

The data items demonstrate that reading can be discussed through several semantic emphases: the act of reading, recitation, text delivery, knowledge acquisition, and the development of understanding. These distinctions provide a basis for developing conceptual mapping hypotheses in the subsequent stages of analysis. Nevertheless, the five equivalents cannot yet be regarded as five equivalent lexical meanings or as evidence of five established conceptual metaphors. Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, identifying a metaphor requires evidence of mapping between domains rather than merely a functional relationship or semantic association (Group, 2007; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The data in Table 1 should be understood as an initial collection of equivalents used for conceptual exploration.

Because authentic sources for all the equivalents have not yet been fully documented, the classification cannot be used to establish the frequency or distribution of the meanings of *Iqra'* in Indonesian. More systematic corpus-based research requires clearly identified textual sources, explicit data selection criteria, and reproducible analytical procedures (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). Accordingly, the findings presented in this section serve as a foundation for exploring possible conceptual mappings, while stronger claims regarding metaphor identification require verification the source language and authentic usage data.

4. Discussion

Reading as Access to Information

The equivalent "*bacalah*" (read) represents the act of reading as the primary activity and the starting point for the conceptual analysis of *Iqra'*. Through reading, individuals interact with texts to obtain information, identify ideas, and develop an understanding of textual content. Reading serves an informational function because it enables readers to access messages conveyed through written language. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, meaning is associated with how humans conceptualize experiences and establish connections between concepts (Evans & Green, 2006). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also explain that conceptual metaphors enable humans to understand one experiential domain in terms of another. Within this framework, the relationship between reading and information acquisition provides a starting point for exploring possible conceptual mappings.

Based on this relationship, the present study proposes the conceptual hypothesis READING IS ACCESSING INFORMATION. In the proposed mapping, The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs renders *Iqra'* as *bacala*h ("read") in Al-'Alaq 96:1 and 96:3. The study uses this attested rendering as the lexical basis for examining four proposed contextual readings. The five formulations describe possible functions or outcomes associated with reading. For example, reading can provide access to information, while reading aloud can convey textual content to a listener.

A conceptual metaphor analysis would require attested wording that shows how a distinct source domain structures the target domain. The proposed readings therefore serve as starting points for formulating and testing cross-domain hypotheses. Reading is understood as a process that enables individuals to reach textual content and obtain previously unknown information. However, identifying these elements as the source and target domains requires further examination. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize that conceptual metaphor involves mappings between domains that shape human understanding; therefore, a relationship between two concepts alone is insufficient to establish the existence of a metaphor. Reading can serve as a means of acquiring information without necessarily involving metaphorical mapping.

To examine this hypothesis, the analysis must distinguish the basic meaning of "*bacalah*" from its possible conceptual interpretations. The Pragglejaz Group (2007), through the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), proposes examining the contextual and basic meanings of a linguistic unit before determining whether its use is metaphorical. Applying this principle, "*bacalah*" in the present dataset directly denotes a command to perform the act of reading. The data do not yet reveal an explicit linguistic expression that depicts information as something that can be entered, reached, or opened through metaphorical mapping. Accordingly, the relationship between reading and access to information is more appropriately understood at this stage as a functional relationship rather than an identified conceptual metaphor. The relationship remains relevant as a basis for conceptual exploration because it highlights the role of reading in information acquisition. To determine whether the relationship is genuinely realized through a conceptual metaphor, further research should examine authentic linguistic data illustrating how information is conceptualized through expressions associated with reading.

If linguistic patterns are found that represent information as a space, an object, or something that can be reached through reading, these patterns can be analyzed further to identify the source domain, target domain, and underlying mapping. Such examination must be conducted systematically because identifying metaphors in discourse requires consideration of the meanings of individual expressions (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). Therefore, the analysis of "*bacalah*" provides an initial basis for understanding the relationship between reading and information, while the identification of a conceptual metaphor still requires sufficient linguistic evidence.

Reading as Information Delivery and Communication

The equivalents "*lafalkanlah*" (recite aloud) and "*bacakanlah*" (read aloud to someone) emphasize the oral dimensions associated with reading. "*Lafalkanlah*" focuses on the act of pronouncing or realizing linguistic forms through speech, whereas "*bacakanlah*" emphasizes reading a text that may be directed toward another person. This

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distinction suggests that reading can be examined not only as an individual's interaction with a text but also as an activity that enables messages to be conveyed to recipients. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, the meaning of an expression can be analyzed through its use and the conceptual relationships associated with it (Evans & Green, 2006). Nevertheless, these two equivalents are contextual interpretations in the present dataset rather than two lexical translations that are automatically equivalent to *Iqra'*.

Based on these equivalents, this study proposes the conceptual hypothesis READING IS CONVEYING INFORMATION. This hypothesis arises from the possibility that reading is understood as a means of communicating textual content to another party. In the proposed mapping, the act of reading or reciting a text constitutes the source domain, whereas the process of conveying information represents the target domain. The textual content functions as the material being conveyed, the reader acts as the sender, and the recipient is the party receiving the information. This relationship is relevant to Reddy's (1979) discussion of the conduit metaphor, which describes how communication can be conceptualized through the image of ideas being placed into language and transmitted to recipients. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) subsequently discussed how such conceptual patterns shape human understanding of communication.

Nevertheless, the relationship between reading and information delivery must be examined carefully. Reading a text can serve as a means of conveying information, but this relationship does not in itself demonstrate the existence of a conceptual metaphor. During reading, a message may be conveyed directly through oral reading or indirectly through a text read by an individual. Therefore, READING IS CONVEYING INFORMATION remains an analytical hypothesis in this study, describing a possible conceptual relationship between reading and its informational function. Establishing it as a conceptual metaphor requires linguistic evidence demonstrating that information delivery is understood through a mapping from the activity of reading, rather than merely through a functional relationship between the two (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Pragglejaz Group, 2007).

In addition, the equivalent "*bacakanlah*" can be used to explore the conceptual hypothesis READING IS COMMUNICATION. This hypothesis emphasizes the possible relationship among the reader, the text, and the listener in the process of conveying a message. The proposed source domain is the act of reading a text aloud, whereas the target domain is the communicative process involving a sender and a recipient. Reading can function as a means of interaction because textual content is conveyed through speech and can subsequently be interpreted by the listener. However, communication does not necessarily occur simply because someone reads aloud. The presence of a recipient, the purpose of the message, and the possibility of interaction must also be considered to establish a sufficient basis for a communicative interpretation. Accordingly, the relationship between reading and communication should be treated as a possible conceptual relationship that requires further examination.

These two hypotheses have different emphases. Oral reading can involve vocalization, delivery to a recipient, or reciprocal interaction. Vocalization involves producing the words aloud. Delivery requires evidence that the reading is directed to someone. Reciprocal interaction requires evidence that the recipient responds and that the reader engages with that response. The proposed gloss *lafalkanlah* foregrounds articulation, while *bacakanlah* introduces a potential listener. The available data leave open whether anyone received the message or whether an exchange occurred. The

analysis therefore groups these possibilities under the functions of oral reading. This distinction is important because information can be conveyed without direct interaction, such as when someone records a reading for others to listen to later. Conversely, communication may involve responses, interpretation, and exchanges of messages that are not necessarily limited to reading activities. Reddy (1979) demonstrates that conceptualizing communication as the transmission of ideas through language represents one particular way of understanding the communication process. However, this model should be treated as a specific conceptual pattern rather than a comprehensive account of all forms of human communication.

In the analysis of *Iqra'*, these two hypotheses cannot yet be regarded as established conceptual metaphor findings because the available data consist only of the equivalents "*lafalkanlah*" and "*bacakanlah*," together with descriptions of their meanings. According to the Pragglejaz Group (2007), identifying metaphorical uses requires consideration of the contextual and basic meanings of a linguistic unit and an assessment of whether they can be understood through cross-domain comparison. Based on this principle, the semantic proximity among reading, recitation, and message delivery is insufficient to demonstrate metaphorical mapping. Further research should therefore examine authentic language examples to determine whether the concept of reading is genuinely used as a source domain for understanding information delivery or communication. With these limitations in mind (Safitri et al., 2023), both conceptual formulations are retained as exploratory hypotheses that can be tested using a broader dataset.

Reading as Knowledge Acquisition

The equivalent "*pelajarilah*" (study) directs attention toward the process of acquiring knowledge. Reading can help individuals identify concepts, obtain new information, and expand their existing knowledge. It can also support learning through readers' interaction with information presented in texts. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, the relationship between language and knowledge can be examined through the ways humans organize and interpret experience (Evans & Green, 2006). However, the function of reading as a means of learning must be distinguished from the lexical meaning of *Iqra'*, because the relationship between reading and knowledge acquisition does not automatically indicate the presence of a conceptual metaphor(Nasrullah & Budiman, 2022).

Based on this relationship, the conceptual metaphor hypothesis READING IS ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE can be proposed. In the suggested mapping, the activity of reading constitutes the source domain, whereas knowledge acquisition represents the target domain. Reading is understood as a process that enables individuals to obtain information and develop their understanding. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain that conceptual metaphor involves mappings between domains through which one experience can be understood in terms of another. The relationship between reading and knowledge in the present dataset can still be explained functionally (Rahmah, 2022). Consequently, this formulation should be treated as a conceptual hypothesis requiring further examination rather than as an established metaphor.

This formulation demonstrates that reading can be examined in terms of its cognitive function. However, "*pelajarilah*" is not a lexical equivalent of "*bacalah*." Instead, it represents a contextual interpretation that shifts attention from the act of reading

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toward its purpose, namely acquiring or developing knowledge. Distinguishing basic meaning from contextual meaning is important for metaphor identification. Through the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), the Pragglejaz Group (2007) emphasizes the need to compare the contextual meaning of an expression with its basic meaning before determining whether the expression is used metaphorically. Therefore, "*pelajarilah*" is more appropriately treated in this study as a contextual interpretation rather than a literal translation of *Iqra'*.

In Surah *Al-'Alaq*, verses 1–5, the relationship between reading and knowledge can be examined through references to the pen and the teaching of human beings what they previously did not know. Verse 4 contains the phrase alladzi 'allama bil-qalam, commonly translated as "Who taught by the pen," whereas verse 5 states 'allama al-insana ma lam ya'lam, meaning that God taught human beings what they did not know (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2026). These verses are relevant to exploring the relationship among reading, learning, and knowledge acquisition. However, this contextual relationship does not establish that *Iqra'* literally means "study." Accordingly, the verses provide interpretive for discussing reading and knowledge rather than direct evidence that the proposed conceptual metaphor has been identified.

Reading as the Development of Understanding

The equivalent "*pahamilah*" (understand) emphasizes the cognitive processes involved in processing information and interpreting messages obtained through reading. Reading in this involves not only word recognition and an understanding of linguistic structures but also the ability to connect information, identify relationships between ideas, and interpret messages . These processes enable readers to develop a more comprehensive understanding of textual content. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, meaning construction is associated with conceptualization, which involves relationships among language, knowledge, and human experience (Evans & Green, 2006). Therefore, reading can be regarded as an activity that supports the development of understanding, although the two do not refer to identical processes.

The conceptual hypothesis READING IS BUILDING UNDERSTANDING can be proposed as an initial interpretation. This formulation suggests a relationship between reading and the development of understanding through the conceptual image of building something. In the proposed mapping, The proposed of gloss *pahamilah* "understand" foregrounds comprehension as a possible goal of reading. The gloss contains no construction vocabulary.

In the proposed analogy, physical construction would be the source domain, and the development of understanding would be the target domain. To test this analogy, future research would need an attested expression in which a construction feature, such as a foundation, corresponds to a feature of understanding, such as prior knowledge that supports subsequent comprehension. The present analysis therefore treats the construction analogy as a proposal for future testing. The word building evokes a process that unfolds gradually through the organization of interconnected elements. This image can be used to explain how information obtained through reading may be connected and interpreted to produce a more comprehensive understanding (Anonymous, 2025).

Nevertheless, this mapping remains an analytical hypothesis because the relationship between reading and understanding can also be explained functionally rather than metaphorically.

The development of understanding does not always occur automatically after an individual reads a text. Readers may recognize words and follow sentence structures without fully comprehending the intended message. The level of understanding may be influenced by prior knowledge, language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, reading objectives, and the text (Safnil Arsyad & Ira Maisarah, 2020). Information contained in a text must be connected with existing knowledge so that relationships between ideas can be recognized and interpreted appropriately. Thus, reading is one means through which understanding may develop, whereas understanding itself is a cognitive process that requires further information processing. This distinction is important to avoid oversimplifying the relationship between reading and its cognitive outcomes as one that invariably produces the same consequences.

Knowledge acquisition must also be distinguished from the development of understanding. Knowledge acquisition emphasizes an increase in the information or knowledge a person possesses, whereas the development of understanding involves organizing, connecting, and interpreting information to identify meaning and relationships between ideas. An individual may acquire new information through reading without being able to explain how that information relates to other concepts. Conversely, understanding may develop when newly acquired information is integrated with prior knowledge, resulting in a deeper interpretation. These processes are related but not identical. Accordingly, the hypotheses READING IS ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE and READING IS BUILDING UNDERSTANDING have different analytical emphases: the former focuses on acquiring information, whereas the latter emphasizes constructing meaning through information processing.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain that one experiential domain can be used to understand another through conceptual mapping. The formulation READING IS BUILDING UNDERSTANDING must be examined to determine whether the concept of building genuinely functions as the source domain for understanding. The relationship between reading and understanding alone is insufficient to establish a metaphor because reading can support understanding without necessarily being conceptualized as an act of building. To identify metaphorical usage, the Pragglejaz Group (2007) proposes comparing the basic and contextual meanings of a linguistic unit. Therefore, identifying a metaphor in this requires linguistic data demonstrating a consistent use of the concept of building to explain the development of understanding.

The equivalent "*pahamilah*" is treated in this study as a contextual interpretation of the cognitive function associated with reading rather than as a literal translation of *Iqra'*. The formulation READING IS BUILDING UNDERSTANDING is retained as an exploratory hypothesis indicating a possible relationship between reading and meaning construction. This hypothesis cannot yet be considered a verified conceptual metaphor because the available data do not provide sufficient linguistic evidence of a mapping between the concept of building and the concept of understanding. Further examination should use authentic language data and consider basic meanings, contextual meanings, and patterns of cross-domain mapping. Such an approach is necessary to distinguish the functional relationship between reading and understanding from a conceptual metaphor supported by linguistic evidence.

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5. Conclusion

This study explores the meaning of *Iqra'* from a cognitive linguistic perspective through five Indonesian equivalents: "*bacalah*" (read), "*lafalkanlah*" (recite aloud), "*bacakanlah*" (read aloud to someone), "*pelajarilah*" (study), and "*pahamilah*" (understand). The analysis indicates that these five equivalents have distinct emphases, ranging from the act of reading to interpretations associated with communication, knowledge acquisition, and the development of understanding. Based on the data, five conceptual mapping hypotheses were formulated: READING IS ACCESSING INFORMATION, READING IS CONVEYING INFORMATION, READING IS COMMUNICATION, READING IS ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE, and READING IS BUILDING UNDERSTANDING.

These five formulations cannot yet be regarded as established conceptual metaphors because the research data remain limited, and some of the relationships may be functional rather than metaphorical. Furthermore, "*bacalah*" represents the primary lexical equivalent of *Iqra'*, whereas the other four equivalents are used as contextual interpretations. This study provides an exploratory foundation for further investigations into the relationships among reading, information, communication, and cognitive processes. The use of an authentic corpus and systematic semantic analysis is necessary to evaluate the validity of the proposed conceptual mappings..

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