

An Intertextuality Perspective on Noah's Story in the Quran

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse verses from the Quran in relation to Noah's story from an intertextuality perspective. The analysis focuses on three main aspects, namely, unravelling the discourses meaning of *ʔard* 'land' in comparison with *ʔalʔard* 'the earth', describing the size of Noah's Ark, and identifying the types of animals which Noah took with him on the Ark. Based on the discourses meaning of *ʔard* 'land', several implications arise in relation to Noah's story in the Quran. Adopting intertextuality as a linguistic-analysis technique provides evidence that Noah's story could have been misinterpreted by Islamic scholars.

Keywords: Intertextuality; Discourse analysis; Discourses meaning; The Quran; Text linguistics.



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1. Introduction

The idea that when we read a text, we aim to find a meaning that lies inside that text appears to be totally commonsensical. In fact, the reader's job is to extract such meaning from the text, leading to the comprehension of the text as a whole (Zibin and Altakhaineh, 2014). The process through which readers extract meaning from texts is referred to as interpretation (Allen 2011). Whether we are dealing with literary texts or non-literary texts, independent meaning is non-existent. In other words, these texts are called intertextual (Allen, 2011). Thus, when we read, we find ourselves interacting with a network of textual relations. Hence, interpreting texts or unveiling their meaning involves understanding those relations. In this context, meaning is transferred into something that is shared between a text and all other related texts. The reader, in this sense, moves from the independent text to arrive at a network of textual relations (Allen, 2011). The process of reading a non-literary or a religious text, such as the Quran, involves movement between verses in order to interpret the intended meaning. Comparing the meaning in one verse to that of another one which is related to it helps the reader extract the discourses meaning, and thus, understand the text as a whole. This study aims to analyse Noah's story in the Quran from an intertextuality perspective (Al-Jarrah, 2011; Altakhaineh *et al.*, 2014) to arrive at potentially correct interpretation of the place of the flood, the built Ark, and the animals carried on the Ark. I argue that the story could have been misinterpreted in the traditional Quranic interpretations (Al-Tabari, 1968; Al-Zamakhshari, 1998; Ibn Ashour, 1984; Ibn Kathir, 2013; Qurtubi, 2003). The ultimate goal of this study is to analyse the Quran as a text in which meanings are not independent, but rather closely tied together.

2. General Background

2.1. Intertextuality

The term intertextuality was first used by Julia Kristeva in *Word, Dialogue and Novel* published in 1966 and then in *The Bounded Text* in 1966-1967. The term itself suggests that the text is a dynamic site where the main focus of analysis is on relational processes and practices, rather than on static structures and products (Alfaro, 1996). Kristeva (1980) suggests that each text is an intersection of other texts in which one other text can be read. The notion of intertextuality, hence, requires the comprehension of texts not as self-contained systems, rather as traces of other texts. This is due to the fact that texts are shaped through transformation and repetition of other texts or textual structures (Alfaro, 1996). That is, intertextuality is the relationship every text has to the texts which surround it Bazerman (2003). An analysis which is based on intertextuality investigates the relation between a statement and a sea of words, i.e. how it employs those words and how it positions itself pertaining to those other words (Bazerman, 2003). Therefore, in this respect, meaning can be extracted from potential relationships existing between a text and other texts which are related to it in one way or the other (Altakhaineh *et al.*, 2014). Drawing on the application of intertextuality in the investigation of textual phenomena, one may conceive of intertextuality as a linguistic technique which emphasises the intersections between textual entities, where the extraction of meaning is dependent on such intersections (Waaajman, 2010). Several researchers adopt an intertextuality perspective in analysing both literary texts (Allen, 2011; Clayton and Rothstein, 1991) and other non-literary texts, such as the Quran (Altakhaineh *et al.*, 2014). This study focuses on intertextuality as a textual phenomenon and, in turn, analyses the Quran as a text in which verses are related and meaning is extracted from the intertext as a whole. In particular, this study aims to provide an interpretation of Noah's story in the Quran through focusing on: (1) the meaning of *ʔard* 'land' vs. *ʔalʔard* 'the earth', explaining their different denotations and pinpointing their referents (Gregg, 2010); (2) the type of Ark which was built; and (3) the type of animals which Noah carried on the Ark. It should be noted that even though the story of Noah was mentioned in religious texts such as the Bible and the Quran, there is a mythical

element at play here, which may suggest that the whole story of Noah could be just a historical story and Noah could just be a historical character and nothing more. It should also be noted that this study analyses the Quran as a linguistic text rather than a religious one. The next section provides an account of Noah's story in the Bible and in the Quran.

2.2. Noah's Story in the Bible and the Quran

2.2.1. The Bible's Account

The account of Noah's life and story in the Bible was discussed in the book of Genesis (6:9-9:17). Noah was described as a righteous man who was sent to corrupt people of his time. Due to their wicked and violent ways, God warned Noah that He is going to put an end to these people, destroying the earth along with them. Thus, God asked Noah to build an ark of cypress wood; three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high (Genesis 6:9-16). God said to Noah that He is going to destroy all life on earth, but He will establish a covenant with Noah. Specifically, God asked Noah to enter the Ark with his wife, sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth), and sons' wives, and to bring two of all living creatures (male and female) to keep them alive on the Ark (Genesis 6:17-20). Noah was also asked to bring all kinds of food to be stored in the Ark for the survival of his family and the animals which he will carry on the Ark (Genesis 6:21). Noah complied with what he was asked to do by God, who then warned that after seven days, He will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, wiping every living creature from the face of the earth (Genesis 7:4). The flood came when Noah was six hundred years old; he entered the Ark with his family to escape the water of the flood (Genesis 7:7-8). Then, pairs of clean and unclean animals of all creatures (male and female) that move on the ground according to its kind, every bird according to its kind and everything with wings came to Noah and entered the Ark and God shut them in. Then, the flood came (Genesis 7:9-10). All springs of the earth burst forth and rain started pouring from the heavens for forty days and forty nights (Genesis 7:11-12). Water covered the face of the earth and all animals, including birds, livestock, wild animals and all mankind perished (Genesis 7:17-23). The flood covered the earth for a hundred and fifty days. Yet, God did not forget Noah and those who carried with him on the Ark, so He sent wind over the earth, making the water recede (Genesis 8: 1-2). At the end of the hundred and fifty days, the water had gone down and the Ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (Genesis 8:3-5). The aim of presenting the Bible's account of Noah's story was to acknowledge the fact that Noah's story was mentioned prior to the account provided in the Quran. However, this study only aims to analyse the Quran's account of Noah's story from an intertextuality perspective, since "intertextual" means principally to study the Quran with the Quran.

2.2.2. The Quran's Account of Noah's Story

In Islam, prophets are the messengers of God who were sent in various time periods to guide humans to the right path. Below is a verse from *surat Al-baqarah* (The Cow) (2: 213), which provides an account of the prophets mission in the Quran:¹

"Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed..."-*Al-baqarah* (2: 213)²

Among the several prophets who were sent as guides and warners to mankind is Prophet Nuh (henceforth Noah). God sent Noah to his people to show them the righteous path and help them abandon their evil deeds. The story of Noah is mentioned in the Quran in a number of *suras* (henceforth Chapters), i.e. Chapter 57 (*nūh*), Chapter 23 (*l-mu'minūn*), Chapter 11 (*hūd*) and several verses therein. These chapters tell us that Noah had complete faith in God to bring destruction on those who refused to be guided to the correct path:

"Indeed, We sent Noah to his people, [saying], "Warn your people before there comes to them a painful punishment."- *nūh* (71:1)

Noah obeyed the command of God and spoke to his people, saying:

"O my people, indeed I am to you a clear warner (2) worship Allah, fear Him and obey me (3) Allah will forgive you of your sins and delay you for a specified term (4) Indeed, the time [set by] Allah , when it comes, will not be delayed, if you only knew." - *nūh* (71:2-4)

However, the chiefs feared that Noah will take away their authority if people started listening to him; thus, they sought to discourage people from following Noah:

"So the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, "We do not see you but as a man like ourselves, and we do not see you followed except by those who are the lowest of us [and] at first suggestion. And we do not see in you over us any merit; rather, we think you are liars."-*hūd* (11: 27)

Noah continued to ask his people to follow the righteous path of God despite their insults and offenses. He also warned them of the consequences and penalty that would befall them if they refused to listen to him and to continue worshipping false Gods. Yet, the chiefs continued their defamation of Noah and his message:

¹ The English translations of the Quran were taken from <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=213>. See section 3.

² The verses of the Quran were cited as follows: the name of the Chapter, the number of the Chapter in the Quran, and the number of the verse, e.g. *Al-baqarah* (2: 213).

“But the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, “This is not but a man like yourselves who wishes to take precedence over you; and if Allah had willed [to send a messenger], He would have sent down angels. We have not heard of this among our forefathers”- *l-mu'minūn* (23: 24)

After all these attempts to discourage people from following Noah, many of them continued to be pagans, worshipping stones and only few people accepted the guidance of Noah and followed him. Eventually, Noah cried out to God, saying:

“My Lord, indeed I invited my people [to truth] night and day (6) But my invitation increased them not except in flight (7) And indeed, every time I invited them that You may forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted, and were arrogant with [great] arrogance (8) Then I invited them publicly (9) Then I announced to them and [also] confided to them secretly (10) And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver”- *nūh* (71: 5-9)

Because his people refused to listen to his message, Noah's God decided to bring down severe punishment on them, God commanded Noah to:

“Construct the ship under Our observation, and Our inspiration, and when Our command comes and the oven overflows, put into the ship from each [creature] two mates and your family, except those for whom the decree [of destruction] has proceeded. And do not address Me concerning those who have wronged; indeed, they are to be drowned”- *l-mu'minūn* (23: 27)

Following the command of God, Noah started building the Ark with a small group of believers. Those who disdained his message found it amusing to mock Noah and his followers when they saw the building the Ark:

“And he constructed the ship, and whenever an assembly of the eminent of his people passed by him, they ridiculed him. He said, "If you ridicule us, then we will ridicule you just as you ridicule us” – *hūd* (11: 38)

When Noah and his followers finished building the Ark, Noah followed his God's command and took his family, those who believed in him, and a pair of each creature to the Ark. Then, God's warning of punishment was fulfilled:

“[So it was], until when Our command came and the oven overflowed, We said, "Load upon the ship of each [creature] two mates and your family, except those about whom the word has preceded, and [include] whoever has believed.” But none had believed with him, except a few (41) And [Noah] said, "Embark therein; in the name of Allah is its course and its anchorage. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful”- *hūd* (11: 40-41)

While the believers who followed Noah were saved from the flood, the unbelievers ran for their lives, endeavoring to reach the tops of the mountains thinking that the water will not reach them. Among the unbelievers was Noah's son, who was also trying to run for safety and take shelter on a mountain's top, Noah saw his son:

“Noah called to his son who was apart [from them], “O my son, come aboard with us and be not with the disbelievers (42) [But] he said, “I will take refuge on a mountain to protect me from the water.” [Noah] said, “There is no protector today from the decree of Allah, except for whom He gives mercy.” And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned”- *hūd* (11:41-42)

After all the unbelievers were drowned, God commanded:

“O earth, swallow your water, and O sky, withhold [your rain].” And the water subsided, and the matter was accomplished, and the ship came to rest on the [mountain of] Judiyy. And it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people”- *hūd* (11: 44)

After the Ark rested upon the mountain, Noah prayed:

“My Lord, let me land at a blessed landing place, and You are the best to accommodate [us]”- *l-mu'minūn* (23: 29)

Now that the Quran's account of Noah's story has been presented, the next section sheds light on the methodology adopted in the current study.

3. Methodology

The sample of this study is taken from the Quran and the translation was taken from *the Quranic Arabic Corpus*, an annotated linguistic corpus, showing the Arabic morphology, syntax and semantics of each word in the Quran, accompanied by their English translation. I will deal with the Chapters and verses that provide an account of Noah's story in the Quran (see section 2.2). The interpretation of Noah's story in the Quran has been influenced by the Bible's account, leading, as I argue in the current paper, to a misinterpretation of the story in the traditional Quranic interpretations (Al-Tabari, 1968; Al-Zamakhshari, 1998; Ibn Ashour, 1984; Ibn Kathir, 2013; Qurtubi, 2003). From an intertextuality perspective (see section 2.1), the meaning of *ʔard* 'land' vs. *ʔalʔard* 'the earth', the type of Ark which was built, and the type of animals which Noah carried on the Ark will be extracted from the relationships existing between a verse and other verses in the Quran which are related to it in one way or the other (Altakhaineh *et al.*, 2014). The intersections between textual entities related to Noah's story in the Quran will be employed to extract the correct meaning of words whose interpretation is reliant on these intersections. Through adopting an intertextuality approach, I attempt to provide a new account of Noah's story which differs from that provided by the traditional Quranic interpretations.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1. ʔard 'Land' vs. ʔalʔard 'the Earth'

In order to provide a new account of Noah's story in the Quran, the distinction between *ʔard* 'land' vs. *ʔalʔard* 'the earth' should be made. This is due to the fact that the traditional Quranic interpretations explain that the flood

God brought down as a punishment to Noah’s people flooded all the earth, i.e. the planet itself (Al-Tabari, 1968; Al-Zamakhshari, 1998); which explains why Noah had to carry a pair of all creatures to preserve the species after the flood (Ibn Kathir, 2013; Qurtubi, 2003). In this paper, I argue that the flood only covered a specific piece of land, rather than the whole earth. Such an interpretation could be arrived at by comparing the meaning of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ in the Quran to *ʔardʕ* ‘land’, making a distinction between their referents relying on intertextuality, which treats a text not as a self-contained system, rather as traces of other texts. A linguistic analysis of the Quran showed that *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ was mentioned 287 times in the Quran, whereas *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ without the definite article *ʔal* ‘the’ was mentioned 18 times. Below is a table which compares some instances of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ to *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ in the Quran.

Table-1. Some instances of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ to *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ in the Quran

No.	<i>ʔalʔardʕ</i> ‘the earth’	<i>ʔardʕ</i> ‘land’
1.	“And the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, not having any stability” – <i>ibrahim</i> (14:26)	“O earth, swallow your water, and O sky, withhold [your rain]” – <i>hūd</i> (11: 44)
2.	“Then We broke open the earth, splitting [it with sprouts]” – <i>abasa</i> (80: 26)	“Indeed, Allah [alone] has knowledge of the Hour and sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted”- <i>luq'mān</i> (31: 34)
3.	“And when the earth has been extended”- <i>l-inshiqāq</i> (84: 3)	“Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves - [the angels] will say, “In what [condition] were you?” They will say, “We were oppressed in the land.” The angels will say, “Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?” For those, their refuge is Hell - and evil it is as a destination”- <i>l-nisāa</i> (4: 97)
4.	“And [by] the earth and He who spread it”- <i>l-shams</i> (91:6)	“They said: These are most surely two magicians who wish to turn you out from your land by their magic and to take away your best traditions”- <i>ʔā hā</i> (20: 63)

Out of the 287 times *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ was mentioned in the Quran, I provided 4 instances since all of them share the same referent. In Table 1, examples (1-4) of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ from different Chapters in the Quran clearly refer to the earth in general. That is, it is a unique referent which points to the planet itself, see *ibrahim* (14:26), *abasa* (80: 26) and *l-inshiqāq* (84: 3) in Table 1. Thus, this establishes the discursual meaning of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ in the Quran as a whole as referring to planet *earth*. Adopting an intertextuality perspective, through emphasising the intersections between textual entities (i.e. the Chapters of the Quran being perceived as a part of one text), the meaning of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ is extracted based on the intersections between the verses, which evidently refers to a unique referent in all cases (see Waaijman, 2010). On the other hand, *ʔardʕ* ‘land’, which is not marked by the definite article *ʔal* ‘the’, is only mentioned eighteen times in the Quran. These 18 occurrences represent 4 different cases (see Table 1), as follows:

- 1) *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ preceded by the vocative particle *yā* (*hūd* (11: 44)).
- 2) *ʔardʕ* ‘land’, an occurrence that may refer to a specific piece of land (*luq'mān* (31: 34)).
- 3) *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ as the first element of a Construct State (CS) in which the second element is a proper noun, namely, Allah (*l-nisāa* (4: 97)).
- 4) *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ as the first element of a Construct State (CS) in which the second element is a pronoun, i.e. *ʔardʕikum* ‘your land’ (*ʔā hā* (20: 63)).

The first instance is in *hūd* (11: 44), where God commands *earth*, the indefinite counterpart, to swallow the water. The noun *ʔardʕ* is preceded by the vocative particle *yā*, which means that the noun *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ cannot grammatically be marked with the definite article *ʔal* ‘the’. However, if the noun that follows this particle is marked with nominative case, it is referred to as *nakirah maqsʕu:da* ‘a noun referring to a specific entity’ (Attayyeb, 2006). This noun marked with the nominative case is different from another one marked with the accusative case, referred to as *nakirah yayr maqsʕu:da* ‘a noun not referring to a specific noun’ (Attayyeb, 2006). The first instance of *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ in *hūd* (11: 44) represents the former case where the noun referred to is specific. Therefore, linguistically, and based on the discursual meaning of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ established above, one can suggest that *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ here does not refer to planet earth, since it is not marked with the definite article, but it may refer to a specific piece of land.

The second instance is in *luq'mān* (31: 34), where God says that no soul has knowledge of the land *ʔardʕ* in which it would die. Since the discursual meaning of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ which refers to planet earth has been established previously based on 287 verses in the Quran, this suggests that it is not possible for its indefinite counterpart to denote the same referent. In English, there are two separate words, i.e. *earth* and *land*, which helps in making a distinction between their referents. However, in Arabic, one word is used, i.e. *ʔardʕ*, to denote both planet earth and a specific piece of land. Back to the first two instances of *ʔardʕ*, it can be argued that in both cases, the

referent of *ʔard^s* could not possibly refer to the whole planet, but to a specific piece of land. This argument can be supported by the fact that if God commanded the whole earth to swallow its water, this would mean that no ocean, sea, river or lake will be left on earth. Yet, we do have seas, oceans, rivers and lakes at present, which means that the earth (i.e. the planet) may not have swallowed all its water.³ It possibly means that a specific piece of land was asked to swallow its water, leaving all other water sources on earth intact. This argument suggests that the flood which God brought down on Noah's people who refused to believe in Him may have only covered a specific piece of land, rather than the whole earth. The second instance of *ʔard^s* mentioned in *luq'mān* (31: 34) supports the argument that the indefinite use of *ʔard^s* refers to a specific piece of land. This verse is intended to show that only God knows what is going to happen in the future, so no human will be able to tell in which piece of land on earth he/she will die.

With regard to the third and fourth instances, at first glance, *ʔard^s* appears to be indefinite. However, the construct used in these verses is known in Arabic as Construct State (CS) or the Synthetic Genitive Construction (SGC). This construct (referred to in Arabic as *Idʔaafah*) is defined as a construct that normally consists of two nouns or an adjective and a noun where the first element can be nominative, accusative or genitive based on the function of the whole construct in the sentence, whereas the second element is always genitive (Altakhaineh, 2016a;2016b). (Another important characteristic of SGCs is that the first element obligatorily lacks a definite article, whereas the second can be definite or indefinite (Fassi, 2012). What makes this construct unique distinguishing it from other structures in Arabic is that the definiteness of the second element spreads to the first element in SGCs, yielding a definite construction as a whole (Fassi, 2012). This implies that *ʔard^s ʔalla:h* 'the earth of Allah or Allah's earth' and *ʔard^s ikum* 'your land' are in fact definite by virtue of being the first element of SGC, in which definiteness spreads from the second element, i.e. Allah (a proper noun which is inherently definite) and the pronoun *kum* 'you' to the first element *ʔard^s*, yielding a definite construction as a whole. The referent denoted by *ʔard^s ʔalla:h* 'the earth of Allah or Allah's earth' is clearly the whole planet, while the referent of *ʔard^s ikum* 'your land' is that which belongs to the entity denoted by the pronoun.

The linguistic analysis of both cases *ʔard^s* 'land' vs. *ʔalʔard^s* 'the earth' from an intertextuality perspective may have shown that the referent of *ʔalʔard^s* 'the earth' could be planet earth, whereas that of *ʔard^s* 'land', excluding the CSs cases, most likely refers to a specific piece of land (see *hūd* (11: 44)). In the next section, I move on to discuss the type of Ark Noah built.

4.2. The Type of Ark Which Was Built

The Bible's provides a clear description of the Ark Noah was commanded to build, i.e. three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high (Genesis 6:9-16). This makes the Ark huge, enabling Noah to carry a pair (male and female) of all creatures on earth (Genesis 6:17-20). Such a specific description of Noah's Ark is not mentioned in the Quran (see *hūd* (11:38), *l-shu'arā* (26: 119), *l-a rāf* (7: 64), *hūd* (11: 37), *l-ʔankabūt* (29: 65), *l-mu'minūn* (23: 27-28), *yūnus* (10: 73)):

"Construct the ship under Our observation, and Our inspiration..."- *l-mu'minūn* (23: 27)

In the instances related to Noah's story in the Quran, *ʔalfulk* 'the ship' has a consistent meaning, referring to a means of transportation via water. Since the Quran does not provide a detailed description of the Ark and given the fact that only few people believed Noah's message, it may be suggested that these people may not be able to build a huge ship that can accommodate a huge number of animals which live on earth. One can also suggest that Noah and his people lived in place that has no water. The evidence to support this argument is mentioned in *hūd* (11: 38):

"And he constructed the ship, and whenever an assembly of the eminent of his people passed by him, they ridiculed him. He said, "If you ridicule us, then we will ridicule you just as you ridicule us."

The only logical reason that the disbelievers in Noah's message would mock and ridicule him whenever they saw him building a ship is that Noah was building a ship in an area that lacks any water. Thus, there would be no point of building a ship if you cannot use it. Additionally, the piece of land covered by the flood could also have been a valley surrounded by mountains. This could be accounted for by the fact that when Noah called out to his son to join him on the Ark, his son said: "I will take refuge on a mountain to protect me from the water." *hūd* (11: 42). All in all, this may suggest that the ability of Noah's people to build a huge ship that can carry a large number of animals, given the fact that they live in a waterless land, may be called into question.

Here, one may argue that in *yūnus* (10: 73), God promised to make those who believed in Noah and were saved from the flood *xala:ʔif* 'successors'. This may indicate that they were the only people on earth, which in turn suggests that the flood did indeed cover the whole earth:

"And they denied him, so We saved him and those with him in the ship and made them successors, and We drowned those who denied Our signs. Then see how was the end of those who were warned."- *yūnus* (10: 73)

However, adopting an intertextuality perspective to analyse the Quran as a text in which intersections between textual entities exist, other instances of *xala:ʔif* 'successors' should be examined as well:

"Then we made you successors in the earth after them so that We may observe how you will do."- *yūnus* (10: 14)

³ It should be noted, here, that Qurtubi (2003). *Al-Gami'li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an [the Compiler for the Judgments of the Quran]. Riyadh: Dar Alim Al-Kutub.* may have alluded to the fact that the earth was ordered to only swallow the water that came out of it, leaving the rest of oceans, seas, rivers, etc. intact. However, this interpretation till assumes that the flood covered the whole earth.

“And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.”- *l-an ‘ām* (6: 165)

“It is He who has made you successors upon the earth. And whoever disbelieves - upon him will be [the consequence of] his disbelief. And the disbelief of the disbelievers does not increase them in the sight of their Lord except in hatred; and the disbelief of the disbelievers does not increase them except in loss.”- *fāṭir* (35-39)

A careful examination of the word *xala:ʔif* ‘successors’ in the above verses reveals that in all three instances, *xala:ʔif* ‘successors’ is followed by *fi: ʔalʔardʕ* ‘in/upon the earth’ with the exception of *yūnus* (10: 14), in which God is talking about Noah’s group of believers. That is, in the latter instance, *xala:ʔif* ‘successors’ is not followed by *fi: ʔalʔardʕ* ‘in/upon the earth’. Based on this, one may argue that in the three verses above, God is addressing all humans, saying that you are the ones who will rule the earth, you are the successors on earth. However, Noah’s group of believers are not *xala:ʔif* ‘successors’ in the sense that they are the ones who are going to rule mankind because all other humans perished in the flood. Indeed, they were, possibly, only *xala:ʔif* ‘successors’ of their own people, since *xala:ʔif* ‘successors’ is not followed by *fi: ʔalʔardʕ* ‘in/upon the earth’ in *yūnus* (10: 14). Now that the first two pieces of evidence supporting the argument that the flood mentioned in Noah’s story in the Quran may not have covered the whole earth have been presented and discussed, the next section sheds light on the animals which Noah carried on the Ark.

4.3. The Type of Animals Noah Carried on the Ark

The last piece of evidence to support the account presented in this study on Noah’s story in the Quran is the type of animals Noah carried on the Ark. Now that I suggested that the flood that killed Noah’s disbelievers as a punishment for their misdeeds may not have covered the whole earth (see section 4.1), as believed in the traditional Quranic interpretations (Al-Tabari, 1968; Al-Zamakhshari, 1998; Ibn Ashour, 1984; Ibn Kathir, 2013; Qurtubi, 2003); and that the Ark built may not have been a huge one able to carry a pair of all creatures on earth (see section 4.2), I move on to discuss the types of animals Noah carried on the Ark. Based on *hūd* (11: 40), God commanded Noah to load on the Ark two mates of each creature:

“[So it was], until when Our command came and the oven overflowed, We said, "Load upon the ship of each [creature] two mates and your family, except those about whom the word has preceded, and [include] whoever has believed.” But none had believed with him, except a few” -*hūd* (11: 40)

One may wonder here, assuming that Noah did not take two mates of every creature which lived on earth at that time, then the following question arises: which animals did he load on the Ark? Taking an intertextuality perspective into account, every Chapter in the Quran has a relationship with other Chapters that surround it (Bazerman, 2003). This indicates that the intended meaning of two mates of each creature in *hūd* (11: 40) should be extracted from potential relationships existing between *hūd* and other Chapters in the Quran that are related to it in one way or the other (Altakhaineh et al., 2014). Thus, if we consider the Chapters of the Quran as having relationships and intersections that connect them together, then one should search the Quran for the word *zawdz* ‘pair/mate’ in relation to animals to arrive at the intended meaning. This search yields the following verses:

“[They are] eight mates - of the sheep, two and of the goats, two. Say, "Is it the two males He has forbidden or the two females or that which the wombs of the two females contain? Inform me with knowledge, if you should be truthful (144) And of the camels, two and of the cattle, two. Say, "Is it the two males He has forbidden or the two females or that which the wombs of the two females contain? ...”- *l-an ‘ām* (6: 143-144)

From an intertextuality perspective, the Chapter entitled *l-an ‘ām* (The Cattle) in the Quran may provide an answer to the question above which is related to the types of animals Noah carried on the Ark. Drawing on the argument that the flood may not have covered the whole earth, rather a specific piece of land and that the Ark may have been only capable of carrying a small number of people (i.e. Noah’s followers) and a small number of animals which were needed to help Noah and his followers survive the aftermath of the flood, eight pairs of animals could be a reasonable number to carry on a small ship. These eight pairs include a pair of sheep, a pair of goats, a pair of camels and a pair of cattle. Probably, the camels would be used for transportation and the other animals would be used for food.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has analysed verses from the Quran pertaining to Noah’s story from an intertextuality perspective. The analysis focused on three main aspects, i.e. uncovering the discursive meaning of *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ in comparison with *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’, speculating on the size of Noah’s Ark, and identifying the types of animals which Noah took with him on the Ark. Based on the discursive meaning of *ʔalʔardʕ* ‘the earth’ vs. *ʔardʕ* ‘land’ in the Quran, I argued that the flood Noah’s God brought down upon his disbelievers may have only covered a specific piece of land, rather than the whole earth. Implications of various verses in the Quran also reveal that the Ark built by Noah may not have been capable of carrying a large number of animals, rather it was only built to carry Noah’s small group of followers and eight pairs of animals, which were necessary for the survival of Noah’s followers. Thus, adopting intertextuality as a linguistic-analysis technique, I suggested that Noah’s story could have been misinterpreted by Islamic scholars. Based on these results, it is recommended that more studies which adopt an intertextuality perspective are needed to shed more light on the discursive meanings of words in the Quran and the means by which the extracted meanings can be used to interpret various verses.

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