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# A Relevance Theory Approach to the Pragmatic Interpretation of Surah Al-Mulk

[PENDEKATAN TEORI RELEVAN TERHADAP INTERPRETASI PRAGMATIK SURAH AL-MULK]

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## Abstract

The Qurʾān employs a wide range of rhetorical strategies in conveying its message to humanity, referred to in Arabic as *uslūb* (plural: *asālib*). Among these strategies is the use of interrogative constructions. A considerable number of interrogative verses in the Qurʾān are not intended to function as literal questions; rather, they convey layered and implicit meanings. Inaccurate interpretation of such interrogatives may therefore lead to a distorted understanding of the Qurʾānic message. This study aims to identify interrogative verses in Sūrah al-Mulk and to elucidate both their explicit and implicit meanings within their respective textual contexts. Data analysis is conducted through a pragmatic framework grounded in Relevance Theory as proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986), adapted to Qurʾānic textual analysis through reference to authoritative classical exegetical works (*tafsīr muʿtabar*). A total of twelve interrogative verses were identified in Sūrah al-Mulk and selected as the corpus of analysis. The findings reveal that interrogative constructions in Sūrah al-Mulk serve a range of rhetorical functions, including admonition, warning, threat, reproach, and the evocation of fear in the audience. Such usage underscores the aesthetic refinement, semantic depth, and expressive richness of Qurʾānic discourse in guiding human reflection and moral awareness. Accordingly, the ability to discern both the explicit and implicit meanings of Qurʾānic interrogatives is essential for Muslims, in order to avoid misinterpretation of the divine message. © 2025 Centre of Quranic Research (CQR), University of Malaya, Malaysia.

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