



## Linguistic Approach in the Qur'an Al-I'jāz al-Bayānī

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### ABSTRACT

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This study examines al-i'jāz al-bayānī of the Qur'an through a linguistic approach in order to demonstrate how linguistic features function as a core element of Qur'anic inimitability. Employing qualitative library research, the study analyzes primary Qur'anic texts alongside classical and contemporary scholarly works using descriptive-analytical methods. Linguistic analysis is conducted by integrating semantic, syntactic, and discourse-based perspectives to uncover the relationship between form and meaning in Qur'anic language. The findings reveal that Qur'anic al-i'jāz al-bayānī is systematically manifested through three interrelated linguistic dimensions. First, lexical precision (ikhtiyār al-alfāz) produces a high degree of semantic density, enabling the Qur'an to convey complex theological and moral meanings with remarkable brevity and accuracy. Second, syntactic arrangement (nazm) demonstrates a harmonious integration between grammatical structure and intended meaning, confirming that Qur'anic syntax functions as a meaning-driven and rhetorically purposeful system. Third, the rhetorical and discursive function of Qur'anic language highlights its persuasive power and communicative effectiveness, engaging readers cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually across diverse contexts. This study concludes that al-i'jāz al-bayānī is not merely an aesthetic phenomenon, but a comprehensive linguistic system in which lexical choice, syntactic structure, and discourse strategies operate cohesively. By applying linguistic analysis, the study contributes to a more academically rigorous understanding of Qur'anic inimitability and strengthens the integration between classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary linguistic studies.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is the sacred scripture of Islam, revealed in the Arabic language as the medium of divine communication. The choice of Arabic is not merely functional, but also constitutes an essential aspect of the Qur'an's miraculous nature (i'jāz). (Ilmu & Tafsir, 2023) Among the various dimensions of Qur'anic miracle, al-i'jāz al-bayānī—the rhetorical and linguistic inimitability of the Qur'an—stands out as one of the most prominent. This aspect has attracted the

attention of Muslim scholars, linguists, and literary critics since the earliest period of Islamic intellectual history.

Studies on al-*ījāz al-bayānī* demonstrate that the uniqueness of Qur'anic language lies not only in its theological meanings, but also in its linguistic structure, including precise lexical choice (*ikhtiyār al-alfāz*), syntactic arrangement, and rhetorical style. These linguistic features enable the Qur'an to convey complex meanings with remarkable conciseness, depth, and persuasive power. Consequently, understanding the Qur'an requires not only normative or theological approaches, but also analytical tools derived from linguistic sciences. (M. Rivani Febriansyah Harahap,\*1 M. Habib AlHabsyi, 2024)

The linguistic approach to Qur'anic studies offers a systematic framework for analyzing the revelation through the principles of Arabic linguistics, encompassing phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and rhetoric (*balāghah*) (Ashani, n.d.). This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the relationship between linguistic form and meaning, while also explaining how the Qur'an's linguistic structure contributes to its inimitability. In this sense, linguistics functions as a crucial instrument for uncovering the aesthetic, rhetorical, and communicative dimensions of the Qur'anic text (Islam & Alauddin, 2025).

Despite the extensive scholarship on al-*ījāz al-bayānī*, many studies remain descriptive and insufficiently integrated with comprehensive linguistic analysis. This condition indicates the need for further research that systematically connects the concept of al-*ījāz al-bayānī* with linguistic methodologies. Such integration is expected to provide a more coherent and academically rigorous understanding of the Qur'an's linguistic miracle, both within classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary Qur'anic studies.

Modern academic discourse has increasingly emphasized the importance of linguistic analysis in the study of the Qur'an. Scholars argue that the Qur'anic text cannot be fully appreciated without careful attention to its linguistic construction, as language plays a central role in shaping meaning and conveying divine intent. Linguistic approaches enable objective and methodical engagement with the Qur'an, reducing subjective interpretation and enhancing analytical precision (Ashani, n.d.).

Within this framework, al-*ījāz al-bayānī* may be understood as a linguistic phenomenon characterized by the harmony between form and meaning at multiple levels of the text. The Qur'an's rhetorical beauty is not merely aesthetic, but also functional, serving persuasive, emotive, and communicative purposes. This observation supports the view that the Qur'an's linguistic miracle can be examined and articulated through scientific linguistic analysis (Neuwirth, 2011). Furthermore, linguistic approaches play a significant role in bridging classical and contemporary perspectives on Qur'anic inimitability. While classical scholars such as 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī emphasized the theory of *naẓm* (textual arrangement) as the core of *ījāz*, modern linguistics expands this framework through discourse analysis, pragmatics, and semiotics. This integration enriches

the study of al-i'jāz al-bayānī while preserving its roots in Islamic intellectual tradition (Wild, 2000).

In contemporary Qur'anic studies, linguistic analysis is increasingly recognized for its capacity to explain the dynamic relationship between text, context, and audience. The Qur'an is not merely a static text, but a living discourse that engages its audience through sophisticated linguistic strategies. Through linguistic analysis, the miraculous nature of Qur'anic language can be traced in the way the text constructs meaning, reinforces messages, and elicits psychological and spiritual responses from its readers (Abdul-Raof, 2004).

Therefore, examining al-i'jāz al-bayānī through a linguistic approach not only strengthens theological claims regarding the Qur'an's miraculous nature, but also contributes significantly to the academic development of Qur'anic studies. This approach fosters dialogue between Islamic sciences and modern linguistics, allowing the Qur'an to be understood as a divine text distinguished by unparalleled linguistic precision, rhetorical beauty, and semantic depth that can be critically and academically explored (Abdel Haleem, 2005).

Moreover, the linguistic approach to the Qur'an enables scholars to move beyond apologetic discourse toward a more critical and academically grounded examination of Qur'anic inimitability. By employing established linguistic theories and analytical frameworks, researchers can articulate al-i'jāz al-bayānī in terms that are intelligible within the broader field of humanities and language studies. This not only enhances the credibility of Qur'anic studies in interdisciplinary academic settings, but also positions the Qur'an as a text worthy of rigorous linguistic inquiry comparable to other canonical literary works.

In light of these considerations, this article seeks to explore al-i'jāz al-bayānī through the lens of linguistic analysis as a means of deepening scholarly engagement with the Qur'anic text. By examining the conceptual foundations and analytical potential of linguistic approaches, the study aims to demonstrate how linguistic features function as a core element of the Qur'an's inimitability. Ultimately, this research aspires to contribute to the ongoing development of Qur'anic studies by offering a linguistically informed perspective on the miraculous nature of Qur'anic discourse that remains relevant to contemporary academic inquiry.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research design with a library-based (desk research) approach, focusing on conceptual and textual analysis. The research is non-empirical in nature, as it does not rely on field data or statistical measurement, but instead examines authoritative texts and scholarly works related to Qur'anic linguistics and al-i'jāz al-bayānī. This approach is considered appropriate due to the normative, textual, and theoretical character of the subject matter.

The primary sources of this study consist of the Qur'anic text itself as the main object of analysis. The Qur'an is examined from a linguistic perspective to identify and explain features associated with al-i'jāz al-bayānī, such as lexical

precision, syntactic structure, semantic depth, and rhetorical devices. In addition, classical works on Qur'anic rhetoric and inimitability – particularly those rooted in the tradition of *balāghah* and the theory of *naẓm* – are utilized to provide a foundational theoretical framework.

Secondary sources include scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles from reputable academic publishers and journals in the fields of Qur'anic studies, Arabic linguistics, and Islamic studies. These sources are used to contextualize classical theories within contemporary linguistic discourse, as well as to support analytical arguments developed in this study. Emphasis is placed on works published in internationally recognized journals to ensure academic rigor and scholarly reliability.

The analytical method applied in this research is descriptive-analytical, combined with thematic analysis. Relevant linguistic concepts and themes related to *al-ī'jāz al-bayānī* are first identified from the literature, after which they are systematically analyzed to explain their function within the Qur'anic text. The study also employs comparative analysis to relate classical rhetorical insights with modern linguistic approaches, such as discourse analysis and pragmatics, in order to demonstrate points of convergence and continuity.

To ensure the validity and coherence of the analysis, data triangulation is conducted through cross-referencing classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary academic studies. This method allows the research to maintain fidelity to the Islamic intellectual tradition while simultaneously engaging with modern linguistic scholarship. The findings are presented in a logical and argumentative manner, emphasizing conceptual clarity and analytical consistency.

Through this methodological framework, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and academically grounded examination of *al-ī'jāz al-bayānī* using linguistic analysis. The methodology is designed to contribute to the development of Qur'anic studies by offering a structured and theoretically informed approach that bridges classical Islamic thought and contemporary linguistic inquiry.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

Based on the linguistic analysis conducted in this study, the findings indicate that *al-ī'jāz al-bayānī* of the Qur'an can be systematically explained through three main linguistic dimensions: lexical precision, syntactic arrangement, and rhetorical-discursive function. These three aspects demonstrate how linguistic features operate as a core element of Qur'anic inimitability.

#### **Lexical Precision (*Ikhtiyār al-Alfāz*) and Semantic Density**

The analysis reveals that one of the most prominent manifestations of *al-ī'jāz al-bayānī* lies in the Qur'an's remarkably precise selection of vocabulary. Qur'anic diction consistently reflects semantic accuracy, contextual appropriateness, and expressive economy. Words are not employed arbitrarily or interchangeably, even when they appear synonymous at a surface level.

Instead, each lexical item is carefully selected to correspond with a particular situational, rhetorical, and semantic context within the verse.

From a linguistic standpoint, this phenomenon demonstrates that Qur'anic vocabulary operates within a highly controlled semantic system. Lexical items function not only as carriers of dictionary meaning, but also as vehicles of connotative, pragmatic, and rhetorical significance. The Qur'an frequently distinguishes between near-synonyms by assigning them different contexts, collocational patterns, and syntactic environments, thereby ensuring that each word conveys a distinct nuance of meaning. This level of precision exceeds common literary usage and reflects a deliberate linguistic strategy that contributes to the text's inimitability.

This lexical precision results in a high degree of semantic density, whereby a single word encapsulates multiple layers of meaning simultaneously. Through compact linguistic forms, the Qur'an is able to communicate theological principles, ethical guidance, and legal implications within minimal textual space. Such density allows verses to remain open to reflection and interpretation across time, without compromising semantic coherence or clarity. From a semantic perspective, this feature illustrates how meaning in the Qur'an is not exhausted by literal interpretation, but unfolds through contextual and intertextual engagement.

Moreover, the Qur'an's economy of expression highlights an intrinsic relationship between brevity and depth. Linguistic analysis shows that concise lexical choices often replace longer explanatory constructions, yet successfully convey complex conceptual frameworks. This economy is not a reduction of meaning, but rather an intensification of it, whereby linguistic compression enhances rhetorical force. Consequently, the Qur'anic text achieves maximum semantic output with minimal linguistic input, a characteristic that reinforces claims of *al-i'jāz al-bayānī*.

In addition, lexical precision in the Qur'an plays a crucial role in maintaining thematic and semantic cohesion throughout the text. Recurrent lexical patterns are employed strategically to connect verses and themes across different contexts, creating a unified semantic network. These patterns demonstrate that Qur'anic vocabulary is systematically organized rather than randomly distributed. Such organization strengthens the argument that the Qur'an's linguistic structure reflects intentional design rather than conventional stylistic preference.

From the perspective of linguistic semantics, the Qur'an's careful selection of words challenges the limits of human linguistic creativity. While human authors often rely on approximation or stylistic redundancy, Qur'anic diction consistently avoids superfluity. Every word performs a specific semantic function, contributing to meaning construction at both the micro-level of the verse and the macro-level of the discourse. This functional precision underscores the Qur'an's transcendence over ordinary literary texts.

Therefore, lexical choice emerges as a fundamental indicator of *al-i'jāz al-*

bayānī when examined through linguistic analysis. The interplay between precision, semantic density, and contextual relevance demonstrates that Qur'anic language operates according to principles that surpass conventional linguistic norms. By achieving depth, clarity, and rhetorical effectiveness through meticulously selected vocabulary, the Qur'an exemplifies a form of linguistic excellence that supports its claim to inimitability.

### **Syntactic Arrangement and the Principle of Naẓm**

The findings further indicate that syntactic structure plays a decisive role in establishing the Qur'an's linguistic inimitability. Qur'anic sentences display a distinctive syntactic arrangement (naẓm) in which word order, sentence type, and grammatical construction are intricately coordinated with intended meanings. This arrangement is neither random nor purely ornamental; rather, it is meaning-oriented and rhetorically purposeful, ensuring that form and content function as an inseparable unit.

From a linguistic perspective, naẓm represents a systematic relationship between syntax and semantics. Grammatical structures in the Qur'an are consistently selected to reflect the communicative goals of the discourse, whether to emphasize a theological assertion, reinforce moral guidance, or evoke emotional response. Sentence patterns are thus shaped by meaning, not merely governed by grammatical rules. This principle demonstrates that syntax in the Qur'an operates as a dynamic mechanism for meaning construction rather than a static framework.

Linguistic analysis further reveals that syntactic variation serves as a key rhetorical strategy in Qur'anic discourse. Devices such as ellipsis, inversion, foregrounding, and delayed elements are employed to intensify emphasis and direct interpretive focus. Ellipsis, for example, invites cognitive engagement by requiring the reader to infer omitted elements, while inversion highlights particular semantic components by repositioning them within the sentence structure. These strategies enhance both clarity and impact without compromising grammatical coherence.

The interaction between syntax and meaning also contributes significantly to the Qur'an's communicative effectiveness. Grammatical choices consistently support rhetorical intent, ensuring that syntactic form reinforces semantic content. Declarative, interrogative, and imperative structures are employed strategically to shape discourse dynamics and guide audience response. As a result, syntactic arrangement becomes a powerful tool for persuasion, instruction, and reflection.

This finding aligns closely with classical theories of naẓm, particularly those articulated by 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, who emphasized that meaning emerges from the relational organization of words rather than from isolated lexical items. Modern syntactic and discourse analysis further substantiate this insight by demonstrating how structural relationships within sentences and across discourse units generate layered meaning. The compatibility between

classical *balāghah* theory and contemporary linguistics underscores the enduring analytical value of *naẓm*.

Moreover, syntactic arrangement in the Qur'an contributes to textual cohesion and coherence at both micro- and macro-levels. Patterns of sentence construction recur across verses and thematic units, creating structural harmony throughout the text. These recurring syntactic patterns function as organizing principles that unify discourse while allowing contextual variation. Such coherence reflects intentional design and strengthens the claim that Qur'anic structure transcends conventional literary norms.

Therefore, syntactic arrangement emerges as a central mechanism through which *al-i'jāz al-bayānī* operates at the structural level of the Qur'anic text. The integration of syntax, semantics, and rhetoric demonstrates that the Qur'an's inimitability is embedded not only in what is said, but also in how it is linguistically constructed. Through the principle of *naẓm*, the Qur'an exemplifies a form of syntactic excellence that remains unparalleled in human language.

### **Rhetorical and Discursive Function of Qur'anic Language**

The rhetorical and discursive function of Qur'anic language constitutes one of the most decisive dimensions of *al-i'jāz al-bayānī*. Linguistic analysis reveals that the Qur'an does not merely present information or doctrinal statements, but constructs a sophisticated discourse designed to influence cognition, emotion, and moral consciousness simultaneously. Qur'anic rhetoric functions as an integrated system in which linguistic form, communicative intent, and audience engagement operate in harmony.

From a discourse-analytic perspective, the Qur'an may be understood as an interactive text that continuously negotiates meaning with its audience. Unlike conventional texts that rely on linear exposition, Qur'anic discourse frequently employs dialogical structures, rhetorical questions, and direct address to create immediacy and involvement. These features transform the reader or listener from a passive recipient into an active participant in the communicative process, thereby intensifying the impact of the message.

One of the most prominent rhetorical strategies in Qur'anic discourse is the deliberate use of rhetorical questioning. Such questions are not posed to solicit information, but to provoke reflection, challenge assumptions, and guide moral reasoning. Linguistic analysis demonstrates that rhetorical questions function as persuasive devices, directing the audience toward implicit conclusions while maintaining cognitive engagement. This strategy enhances the discursive authority of the Qur'an without resorting to explicit argumentation.

Repetition in the Qur'an also serves a crucial rhetorical and discursive function. Rather than constituting redundancy, repetition operates as a mechanism of reinforcement, thematic cohesion, and semantic layering. Recurrent expressions and motifs appear in varied linguistic forms across different contexts, allowing meanings to be revisited and deepened. This patterned repetition strengthens message retention while simultaneously

enriching interpretation, illustrating how rhetorical devices contribute to both clarity and depth.

Another significant feature of Qur'anic discourse is its strategic shift in voice, tense, and perspective. Transitions between narrative, exhortation, command, and divine address generate dynamism within the text and sustain audience engagement. These shifts are not stylistic anomalies but deliberate discursive strategies that heighten emotional resonance and emphasize particular themes. By varying modes of address, the Qur'an maintains rhetorical vitality and communicative immediacy.

The persuasive power of Qur'anic language is further reinforced through the use of contrast and parallelism. Linguistic contrasts—such as belief and disbelief, guidance and misguidance, reward and punishment—are constructed through balanced syntactic and semantic patterns that sharpen moral distinctions. Parallel structures enhance rhythm and emphasis, reinforcing the persuasive force of the discourse while maintaining linguistic elegance. These features demonstrate how rhetorical organization functions as a vehicle for moral and theological meaning.

In addition, Qur'anic discourse exhibits a remarkable capacity for contextual adaptability. Linguistic strategies are employed in ways that address diverse audiences, ranging from believers to skeptics, without compromising coherence or authority. This adaptability reflects a discursive flexibility that allows the Qur'an to communicate effectively across temporal, cultural, and social boundaries. From a linguistic perspective, such adaptability represents a key aspect of its inimitability.

Furthermore, the Qur'an's rhetorical discourse integrates aesthetic beauty with communicative efficiency. Imagery, metaphor, and evocative language are utilized not merely for artistic expression, but to facilitate comprehension and emotional engagement. Linguistic analysis shows that aesthetic elements are subordinated to communicative purpose, ensuring that beauty serves meaning rather than obscuring it. This balance between form and function distinguishes Qur'anic rhetoric from conventional literary artistry.

At the macro-discursive level, the Qur'an constructs a coherent worldview through cumulative rhetorical strategies. Individual verses and passages contribute to a broader discursive framework that shapes ethical orientation, spiritual awareness, and social values. Linguistic cohesion across chapters and themes reinforces the unity of Qur'anic discourse, underscoring its intentional design and communicative consistency.

Consequently, the rhetorical and discursive function of Qur'anic language emerges as a central pillar of *al-i'jāz al-bayānī*. Qur'anic inimitability is not confined to isolated linguistic features, but manifests through a comprehensive discourse system that integrates persuasion, engagement, and meaning construction. Through its unparalleled rhetorical depth and discursive sophistication, the Qur'an demonstrates a form of linguistic excellence that transcends human literary capacity and continues to invite scholarly exploration.

## CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that al-i'jāz al-bayānī of the Qur'an can be systematically understood through a linguistic framework that encompasses lexical precision, syntactic arrangement, and rhetorical-discursive function. These three dimensions collectively reveal that the Qur'an's inimitability is deeply embedded within its linguistic structure, rather than being confined to isolated stylistic or aesthetic elements. Through qualitative linguistic analysis, the study affirms that Qur'anic language operates according to principles that surpass conventional norms of human linguistic production.

The findings show that lexical precision (ikhtiyār al-alfāz) constitutes a foundational aspect of Qur'anic inimitability. The Qur'an's meticulous selection of vocabulary results in high semantic density, expressive economy, and contextual accuracy, enabling complex meanings to be conveyed with remarkable clarity and depth. This lexical system demonstrates that Qur'anic diction is neither arbitrary nor redundant, but functions as an integrated semantic network that contributes to coherence at both micro- and macro-discursive levels.

Furthermore, the principle of naẓm highlights the central role of syntactic arrangement in constructing meaning. Qur'anic syntax reflects a dynamic relationship between grammatical form and semantic intent, where sentence structures are deliberately shaped to support rhetorical goals and communicative effectiveness. The compatibility between classical theories of naẓm and modern linguistic analysis confirms that syntactic organization is a key mechanism through which Qur'anic discourse achieves its inimitable character.

In addition, the rhetorical and discursive dimension of Qur'anic language underscores its unparalleled communicative power. The Qur'an employs sophisticated rhetorical strategies—such as persuasion, repetition, contrast, and shifts in address—to engage its audience cognitively, emotionally, and morally. These discursive features enable the Qur'an to function as an interactive and contextually adaptable text, capable of sustaining relevance across diverse audiences and historical settings. As such, rhetorical discourse emerges as a central pillar of al-i'jāz al-bayānī.

Taken together, these findings indicate that Qur'anic inimitability is not a purely theological claim, but a linguistically demonstrable phenomenon that can be examined through systematic analysis. By integrating classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary linguistic approaches, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of al-i'jāz al-bayānī within the field of Qur'anic studies. Future research may expand this inquiry by incorporating empirical linguistic methods or comparative textual analysis, further enriching the academic exploration of the Qur'an's unique linguistic character.

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