



Linguistic Research in the Holy Quran.
Vol. 14, No. 2, 2025
pp. 115-130
Research Paper

An Inquiry into Semantic Probability-Generating Structures and Constructions in Three Verses of the Holy Qur'an (A Case Study: The Vocative Style of Knowledge)

Amineh Zargar

PhD student of Arabic language and literature, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran
amineh.zargar@gmail.com

Vesal Meymandi *

Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran
vmeymandi@yazd.ac.ir

Reza Afkhami

Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran
rezaafkhami55@yahoo.com

Sajed Zare

Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran
zare.sajed@gmail.com

Abstract

One of the distinctive expressive features of Arabic texts, particularly the Qur'an, is their structural capacity to open up diverse semantic horizons. The high frequency of this feature in the Qur'an underscores the necessity of a systematic and scientific examination of this phenomenon. The present study adopts an analytical-descriptive approach, relying on morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical structures. It first presents the various types of semantic probabilities (iḥtimālāt) and their relevant classifications. Then, as a case study, it analyzes the vocative construction (uslūb al-nidā') in three Qur'ānic verses, namely, Sūrat al-Mā'ida/110, Sūrat Šād/26, and Sūrat al-Baqara/61, which are among the most frequent verses in terms of semantic multiplicity. This analysis follows the aforementioned classifications and draws on tafsīr works that employ morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical approaches, examining the semantic differences arising from these probabilities. For each probability, the meaning most compatible with the verse's textual fabric, discourse, and situational context (siyāq) is selected. Furthermore, the interrelationship among the morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical probabilities in conveying the intended meaning, as well as the degree of influence each exerts in reinforcing that meaning, will be examined. The findings indicate that the response to the vocative call (jawāb al-nidā') serves as the primary locus for the emergence of polysemy and the production of diverse semantic possibilities in the Qur'ānic verses. Furthermore, the analysis of the selected examples demonstrates that the factors and structures generating iḥtimāl not only create variety at the surface level of meaning but also enable a multilayered understanding and a broader perspective on Qur'ānic concepts. A notable observation is that, despite the presence of multiple possible meanings in each verse, one meaning consistently emerges as dominant. All morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical elements in the three verses are systematically organized to reinforce and highlight this dominant meaning.

Keywords: Holy Qur'an, Semantic Iḥtimāl, Morphological Iḥtimāl, Syntactic Iḥtimāl, Rhetorical Iḥtimāl, Uslūb al-Nidā' (Vocative Construction).



2821-0735 © The Author (s). Published by University of Isfahan

This is an open access article under the CC- BY 4.0 License ([Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)).



<https://doi.org/10.22108/nrgs.2026.147650.2111>

1. Introduction

One of the prominent expressive features in Arabic literature, especially in the Holy Qur'an, is the semantic capacity of words and constructions to convey more than one meaning within a single utterance. This polysemy, which arises from the coherent yet flexible system of the Arabic language, stems from the structural capacities of the language. These include the use of words with various roots and morphological patterns, as well as syntactic and rhetorical arrangements such as advancement and delay (taqdīm and ta'khīr), ambiguity in determining the referent of a pronoun, ambiguity in identifying the type of figurative expression (majāz), simile (tashbīh), and so forth. This phenomenon differs from lexical homonymy (ishtirāk lafẓī), in which multiple meanings arise from the conventional linguistic assignment and the diversity of lexical connotations; in such cases, a polysemous word conveys different meanings across various contexts and sentences, rather than simultaneously indicating several meanings within a single utterance (Abd al-Tawwāb, 1999, p. 334).

Accordingly, this expressive technique of generating multiple meanings within one utterance based on linguistic structures can be termed "iḥtimāl" (Al-Jurjānī, n.d., p. 26), and the linguistic factors that facilitate the formation of such polysemy may be referred to as "probability-generating structures" or "iḥtimāl-creating structures".

An examination of these expressive techniques reveals that, on the one hand, this method is present across various expressive styles in the Holy Qur'an and, on the other hand, it is not confined to the lexical level alone; rather, it encompasses other linguistic units such as sentences and sentence-like constructions. Taking into account the various linguistic sciences and considering the points of similarity and difference among these probability-generating structures, it is possible to arrive at a new classification of them.

The disciplines of lexicology ('ilm al-lughā), morphology (ṣarf), syntax (naḥw), and rhetoric (balāgha) constitute the foundational and most influential sciences for analyzing these structures. Each subtype of polysemy falls within the domain of one of these disciplines. Existing studies in this area indicate that

primary attention has been devoted to lexical polysemy as the central focus. In contrast, other forms of polysemy have been described and examined without being systematically situated within the frameworks of morphology, syntax, or rhetoric. Indeed, one of the principal shortcomings in the study of polysemy lies in the absence of a comprehensive and coherent classificatory system. In the present study, the vocative style (uslūb al-nidā'), one of the most prominent linguistic-rhetorical modes in the Qur'an and encompassing approximately five hundred verses, has been selected as the focal point of analysis. From among these verses, three have been purposefully chosen in which divine prophets are directly addressed: Jesus (peace be upon him) in Sūrat al-Mā'idā/110, David (peace be upon him) in Sūrat Ṣād/26, and Moses (peace be upon him) in Sūrat al-Baqara/61. The selection of these verses is based on the diversity and multiplicity of probability-generating structures and elements within them compared to other verses containing the vocative construction addressed to prophets (uslūb nidā' al-'ālim). Furthermore, the multifaceted lives of these prophets exhibit a strong congruence and compatibility with the main objective of this study, namely, the examination of polysemy in the linguistic style of the vocative. Given that the central focus of this research is the analysis of the morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical dimensions of the three selected verses, effort has been made to draw upon tafsīr works whose primary approach is grounded in these three disciplines. Such commentaries, by concentrating on the lexical structures, syntactic constructions, and rhetorical subtleties of the verses, facilitate the extraction of diverse semantic implications.

The vocative construction consists of four primary constituents: (1) the particle of vocative address (ḥarf al-nidā'), (2) the addressee (munādā), (3) the addresser (munādī), and (4) the response or vocative complement (jawāb al-nidā'). The jawāb al-nidā', which typically follows the particle and the munādā, represents one of the most essential components of this stylistic structure, since the ultimate illocutionary purpose of the act of calling is realised through it (Mūsā, 2020, p. 793). It therefore plays a decisive role in determining the final semantic interpretation and the overall communicative objective of the vocative

construction.

In the present study, among the various categories of the vocative addressee (*munādā*), attention is focused exclusively on the three selected verses in which the *munādā* is a proper noun (*munādā* 'alam). This delimited corpus has been chosen to address the following research questions:

1. What are the linguistic factors that govern the formation and arrangement of ambiguity-generating configurations within the vocative constructions that employ a proper-noun addressee (*munādā* 'alam) in the Qur'ān?
2. How can the principles and analytical frameworks of morphology (*ṣarf*), syntax (*naḥw*), and rhetoric (*balāgha*) be systematically applied to elucidate the multiple layers of meaning (*ta'addud al-ma'ānī*) associated with the vocative style and the proper-noun addressee in these Qur'ānic verses?
3. Among the various meanings suggested for each morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical *iḥtimāl*, which one demonstrates the strongest coherence with the linguistic context (*siyāq*), situational context, and thematic content of the verse?

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies conducted in the field of *iḥtimāl* and polysemy have primarily focused on lexical polysemy. Examples include "Polysemous words and their importance in the translation of the Holy Quran" by Mahmoud Shahbazi and Ali-Asghar Shahbazi (2014) and "Polysemy in the lexicon of the Holy Quran based on cognitive lexical semantic approach" by Ali-Asghar Emdadi et al. (2021). In these two works, the authors, by comparing various tafsīr sources, have demonstrated how polysemous words lead to differences in the meanings of Qur'anic translations.

Some studies have also been published on morphological and syntactic polysemy. Among them are "An investigation into definitive and probable implications in the syntactic structures of the Holy Quran" by Hassan Raḥmānī (2015) and "Investigating lexical and syntactic multi-meaningfulness in the contemporary translations of the Holy Qur'an" by Asiye Zouelm and Ali Haji-Khani (2021). These studies focus on the Holy Qur'an and examine polysemy at both the lexical and syntactic levels.

In foreign research, notable works include "The morphological probability in the Holy Qur'an" by Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Fayṣal Al-Eidani (2014), in which the author identifies and analyses specific morphological patterns in the Qur'ān that carry multiple meanings. Another significant study is "Probability of grammatical significance in the relative clause in the Holy Quran" by Imād Fāḍil 'Abd (2015), in which the author examines the role of syntactic ambiguity in relative clauses (*jumlāt al-ṣila*) and its impact on interpretive diversity in the Qur'ān. In the specific domain of the vocative style (*uslūb al-nidā'*), the study "Structures of the vocative link in the Holy Quran al-mustansiriya" by Diyā' Ni'ma Husayn Mūsā (2020) stands out. Through a detailed analysis of verses employing the vocative construction, the author concludes that the core and foundation of this style lie in the clause that follows the vocative particle and the addressee (*munādā*), as it is this clause that completes and ultimately determines the meaning of the vocative construction.

It is worth noting that very few studies have focused explicitly on a single, well-defined rhetorical style, such as the vocative construction (*uslūb al-nidā'*), to investigate *iḥtimāl* and polysemy. In the domain of polysemy and *iḥtimāl* in the science of *balāgha*, understood here as the multiplicity of connotations that arise within the rhetorical system of the text, no independent study has yet been produced. Although the book *Chand-Ma'nāyi dar Qur'ān* by Tayyib Husaynī (2016) cites certain examples of rhetorical polysemy without explicitly employing the term "balāgha", rhetorical *iḥtimāl* can nevertheless be classified according to the three main branches of *balāgha* (*'ilm al-ma'ānī*, *'ilm al-bayān*, and *'ilm al-badī'*).

Identifying and elucidating the factors that generate probability in each branch can lead to the formulation of a model for the analysis of rhetorical polysemy and clarify the position of this expressive technique within the broader system of rhetorical sciences. The present study seeks to fill these gaps by adopting a novel perspective: it delimits the scope of investigation and simultaneously analyses multiple concurrent layers of *iḥtimāl* and polysemy within three Qur'ānic exemplars, thereby offering an integrated morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical interpretation of the

same vocative constructions in which proper-noun addressees appear.

3. *Iḥtimāl* and Its Types

In the book *al-Ta'rifāt*, under the term “*iḥtimāl*”, the following definition is given: “It is that which the mere conception of its two sides is not sufficient; rather, the mind wavers in determining the relationship between them, and what is intended is mental possibility” هُوَ “مَا لَا يَكُونُ تَصَوُّرُ طَرَفَيْهِ كَافِيًا بَلْ يَتَرَدَّدُ الدَّهْنُ فِي التَّسْبِيَةِ “يَبْنِيهِمَا وَيُرَادُّ بِهِ الْإِمْكَانُ الدَّهْنِيُّ” (Al-Jurjānī, n.d., p. 26). Also, *iḥtimāl* arises when a word or construction, within a single utterance and based on the morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical structures of the text, generates more than one meaning or creates hesitation between several possibilities. For this reason, in an utterance that contains *iḥtimāl*, the meaning and intended sense oscillate among several different aspects within the same utterance (Raḥmānī, 2015, p. 9). At the same time, there exists another type of polysemy in which a single word, based on its original linguistic assignment and its primary designated meaning (*maḍmūm lahu awwalī*) — rather than due to linguistic structures — carries multiple meanings, all of which can simultaneously apply within one text (Nohairat & Mohamadian, 2013, p. 121).

In other words, *iḥtimāl* occurs when a single expression generates more than one meaning or when there is hesitation among several possibilities. For this reason, in an utterance that contains *iḥtimāl*, the intended meaning oscillates among several different interpretations (Raḥmānī, 2015, p. 9). Polysemy sometimes relates to the root and structure of words (morphological *iḥtimāl*), sometimes to the relations among words and their case endings (syntactic *iḥtimāl*), and sometimes to the secondary meanings and rhetorical purposes derived from them (rhetorical *iḥtimāl*). The following sections address each of these types of *iḥtimāl* and their related subcategories.

3.1. Morphological *Iḥtimāl* (*Iḥtimāl Ṣarfī*)

The science of morphology (*‘ilm al-ṣarf*) examines the internal structure and transformational patterns of words. Its two fundamental components are the root consonants (*mādda*) and the morphological

pattern (*hay’a*). The *mādda* refers to the base consonantal root of a word. In contrast, the *hay’a* denotes the specific configuration resulting from the arrangement of both radical and augmentative letters, together with their vocalization and quiescence (Tāhīrī-Niyā, 2013, p. 75). Accordingly, morphological *iḥtimāl* arises either from the *mādda* or from the *hay’a* of the word. When it originates from the *mādda*, more than one possible root may be assigned to the same word form. When it originates from the *hay’a*, the word either belongs to a morphological pattern (*wazn*) that is shared among different derivational categories (e.g., verbal nouns, participles, etc.), or the same consonantal root admits several distinct patterns without alteration of the root itself (Al-Sa’dī, 2010, p. 43).

3.2. Syntactic *Iḥtimāl* (*Iḥtimāl Naḥwī*)

Syntactic structure concerns the arrangement and interrelations of words within the sentence, thereby investigating the rules that determine the grammatical functions and case endings (*i’rāb*) of individual words, complete sentences, or quasi-sentential units. A significant aspect of syntax (*naḥw*) is that, in addition to analysing grammatical roles and case endings, it also examines the semantic contributions of certain particles and constructions, such as prepositions (*ḥurūf al-jarr*), circumstantial qualifiers (*mafḥūl fihi*), and the like. In light of the functions of syntax, the factors that generate *iḥtimāl* and polysemy in this domain may be attributed to several phenomena. These include:

- the capacity of a single word, sentence, or quasi-sentence to bear multiple case endings or grammatical roles (‘Abd Allāh, 2006, pp. 20–40);
- differences in the meanings derived from syntactically identical particles or operators;
- formal resemblances among syntactic operators (Al-Samarra’i, 2000, pp. 12–13);
- And disagreements regarding the arrangement or hierarchical positioning of interdependent constituents, such as verb and subject, topic and predicate, governed noun and governing noun (*muḍāf* and *muḍāf ilayhi*), and similar constructions.

3.3. Rhetorical *iḥtimāl* (*Iḥtimāl Balāghī*)

The Science of *Balāgha* (*‘ilm al-balāgha*) investigates the manner in which language and words are employed to convey ideas, emotions, and concepts. In other words, the effects of

rhetoric on meaning manifest themselves through heightened precision, clarity, and originality in semantic conveyance, emotional impact on the audience, and efficacy in the communication of thoughts and concepts (Great Islamic Encyclopedia, n.d, vol. 12, p. 5009). Based on the well-known classification of the science of balāgha, which comprises three branches — ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī, ‘ilm al-bayān, and ‘ilm al-badī. Rhetorical ihtimāl sometimes occurs within the domain of ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī, sometimes in the field of ‘ilm al-bayān, and sometimes in the realm of ‘ilm al-badī (Ṭayyib Ḥusaynī, 2016, pp. 100-150). For example, in the verse “They said, ‘O Shu‘ayb! Does your prayer command you that we should abandon what our fathers used to worship?’” (Hūd/87), two rhetorical interpretations have been proposed for the interrogative expression “a-ṣalātuka ta’muruka” (Does your prayer command you?). Some scholars have considered it a literal (ḥaqīqī) question, while others have analyzed it in the figurative sense of mockery and sarcasm. When interpreted literally, attributing the “command” to prayer is an instance of rational metaphor (majāz ‘aqlī) based on the relationship of causality, because in this reading prayer, which is the cause and reason for restraint, has been placed in the position of the real agent, namely the one who prays. It can also be viewed as a metaphor of attribution (isti‘āra makniyya), since prayer is imagined as a human being capable of commanding and forbidding. Thus, the possibility of understanding the interrogative in both its literal and figurative senses is the source of rhetorical ihtimāl in the domain of ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī. Likewise, the hesitation between rational metaphor and metaphor of attribution gives rise to rhetorical ihtimāl in the realm of ‘ilm al-bayān (Khafājī, 1996, vol. 5, p. 214).

4. Analysis of the Verses from the Perspectives of Morphological, Syntactic, and Rhetorical Ihtimāl

In light of the theoretical framework presented in the previous sections, this section examines three selected verses containing the vocative construction addressed to prophets (uslūb nidā’ al-‘ālim) as case studies. In the first step, the possible morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical probabilities (ihtimālāt) in these verses are identified and formulated. Then, the origin of each of these probabilities, along with their semantic

implications and the meaning most appropriate to the textual and situational context (siyāq), is explained. Based on this analysis, the linguistic capacities of this structure in generating diverse meanings will be revealed.

2.1. First Verse

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ادْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ
وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ
عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ
طِينٍ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ
الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِن
هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ (al-Mā’ida/110)

The verse depicts Allah's direct address to Jesus (peace be upon him), in which the extraordinary favors and graces bestowed by the Lord upon His prophet are recounted. The instances of ihtimāl in this verse, according to the classification outlined above, are as follows:

4.1.1. Morphological Ihtimāl

In the analysis of the ambiguity-generating layers in the three verses under study, the first level examined is morphological ihtimāl. In the present verse, the words al-kitāb (“the Scripture”) and al-ni‘ma (“the favour”) exemplify morphological ihtimāl. The morphological pattern (wazn) of these nouns, specifically the pattern fi‘l / ni‘ma and kitāb, which is shared by several derivational categories, allows for diverse semantic interpretations. Thus, the morphological ihtimāl in this verse arises from the shared hay’a (morphological form) of the words.

4.1.1.1. Morphological Ihtimāl in the Forms of “al-Kitāb” and “al-Ni‘ma”

The words “al-kitāb” and “al-ni‘ma” share their morphological patterns between non-derived verbal nouns (jamid maṣdarī) and non-derived non-verbal nouns (jamid ghayr maṣdarī). The word “al-kitāb” (pattern fi‘āl):

- If jamid maṣdarī, it means “writing”; this implies that Jesus (peace be upon him) was not unlettered (ummī) (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 691; Al-Zuhaylī, 2001, vol. 4, p. 335).

- If jamid ghayr maṣdarī, it is a generic noun meaning “books/scriptures”, referring to the previous heavenly books (Al-Ṭabarānī, 2008, vol. 2, p. 466).

The word “al-ni‘ma” (pattern fi‘la):

- If jamid maṣdarī, it means “the act of bestowing favour”, used only of human agents

(Al-Rāghib Al-Iṣfahānī, 1983, p. 368).

• If jamid ghayr maṣdarī, it means “favour/blessing”; the singular form is here used collectively for the multiple favours enumerated later in the verse (Al-Ālūsī, 1994, vol. 4, p. 54).

All these instances of morphological ihtimāl belong to the category of shared hay’a (morphological pattern). When the words are interpreted as jamid maṣdarī, their semantic load generally carries emphasis and hyperbole in denoting the root action or state itself. In contrast, when interpreted as jamid ghayr maṣdarī, they refer more directly to external, concrete referents and possess a broader semantic scope. Given that the context and thematic content of the verse consist of enumerating tangible, external favours and miracles, the interpretation of these words as jamid ghayr maṣdarī denoting concrete external entities (heavenly scriptures, actual favours) is more consonant with the verse’s contextual flow, which explicitly cites concrete examples of such external realities, and is therefore semantically preferable.

4.1.2. Syntactic Ihtimāl

Following the examination of morphological ihtimāl, attention turns to syntactic ihtimāl. This verse contains numerous and varied instances of syntactic ihtimāl. Certain words, such as “إِذْ”, admit multiple grammatical functions and case endings. Others, such as the definite article “ال”, maintain a fixed syntactic function yet yield different meanings depending on their type. Additionally, particles such as “كَ” (the kāf of comparison or emphasis) generate diverse roles and case endings owing to ambiguity in their inherent nature. Furthermore, syntactic ihtimāl arises from relations among sentence constituents, including the determination of pronominal reference and the identification of the element to which a conjoined phrase is attached (al-mu’tūf ‘alayhi). These factors collectively produce multiple meanings in the verse.

4.1.2.1. Syntactic Ihtimāl in the Case-Ending and Function of “إِذْ”

In this verse, the particle إِذْ occurs seven times. Only the first two instances lack the coordinating wāw. For the initial إِذْ at the beginning of the verse, two local case endings (i’rāb maḥallī) are possible: raf’ and naṣb.

A) Badal from the word “yawm” in the

preceding verse: (al-Mā’ida/109: يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ).

According to this analysis, the initial إِذْ functions as a badal (substitute/apposition) for the noun يَوْمَ (“the Day”) mentioned in the previous verse, which explicitly refers to the Day of Resurrection when Allah will gather the messengers and question them about their missions. By specifying the particular case of Jesus (peace be upon him) after the general mention of all messengers, إِذْ serves as a badal that clarifies the precise timing of the divine address to Jesus (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 690). The resulting meaning of the verse thus becomes: “On the Day when Allah will say: ‘O Jesus, son of Mary...’”

B) Object (maf’ūl bihi) of an implied verb “udhkur” (remember): In this section, as in several other syntactic structures examined in this study, a portion of the sentence is ellipted. However, considering the effect that the omitted element exerts on meaning construction, an appropriate lexical item is assumed. Here, the implied verb اذْكُر (“remember”) is taken into account, and إِذْ is treated as its direct object (maf’ūl bihi) (Al-Tūsī, n.d., vol. 4, p. 54). The resulting meaning is: “Remember the time when Allah says: ‘O Jesus, son of Mary’”. According to the two aforementioned roles, badal and maf’ūl bihi, إِذْ follows the accusative status of the temporal accusative يَوْمَ in the preceding verse and is therefore in the accusative position locally (maḥallan maṣṣūb). Two further possibilities exist for the nominative (raf’) case of إِذْ:

A) Predicate (khabar) of an omitted subject (mubtada muqaddar): Here, إِذْ serves as the predicate of an elided subject such as ذَلِكَ (Abū Ḥayyān, 1999, vol. 4, p. 404). The meaning becomes: “That is the time when Allah says”.

B) Subject (mubtada) with an omitted predicate: If إِذْ is taken as the subject and its predicate is an elided ذَلِكَ, the sense is: “The time when Allah says that” (Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 1999, vol. 12, p. 458). A comparison of the different roles assigned to “إِذْ” reveals that its polysemy is of the syntactic type based on case endings and grammatical functions. The roles in the first and second categories also differ from each other in their case endings. Given the function of each role, the badal removes the

ambiguity and obscurity in the previous verse; the direct object highlights the instructional and admonitory aspect of the verse; and the predicate and subject with omitted elements emphasise the importance of the time of the event. The roles of direct object, predicate, and subject, because one of their components is omitted while still forming meaningful sentences, semantically convey emphasis and hyperbole. Therefore, the *badal* role, both because it is emphasised by most exegetes (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 690; Ibn ‘Āshūr, 1999, vol. 3, p. 260) and because it eliminates the verse’s ambiguity by linking it to the previous verse and recreating the scene of the Resurrection provides a coherent and harmonious narrative flow in the context of the verses and is the most satisfactory interpretation.

4.1.2.2. Syntactic *Iḥtimāl* Arising from the Definite Article “al-” in “al-Bayyināt”

Another instance of *iḥtimāl* in this verse concerns disagreement over the type of the definite article *ال* in *البينات* (“the clear proofs”). Some exegetes regard this *ال* as generic (*jinsiyya*), in which case *بالبينات* refers to the entire genus of signs and miracles without specifying any particular set; the article thus denotes the essential nature of the noun rather than universality or specific individuals. Others consider it anaphoric/covenantal (*‘ahd dhikrī*), referring specifically to the miracles already mentioned in this verse and the preceding one (Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 1999, vol. 12, p. 460). This polysemy results from syntactic *iḥtimāl* in particles that share a single morphological form but differ in function. The anaphoric *al-* is semantically stronger than the generic *al-*, because it points to a specific, previously established referent, whereas the generic *al-*, despite its definite form, functions semantically like an indefinite, designating a general, shared essence among instances. In light of the verse’s context, the anaphoric/covenantal interpretation is more precise and contextually appropriate, as it refers to concrete, explicitly enumerated miracles within the text itself (Abū Ḥayyān, 1999, vol. 4, p. 407; Al-Ṭabarānī, 2008, vol. 2, p. 466).

4.1.2.3. Syntactic *Iḥtimāl* Concerning the Nature and Function of the Particle “kāf”

Scholars differ as to whether the *كـ* in *كهيئة* is a noun (*ism mabnī*) meaning “like/similarity” that assumes different grammatical roles according to context, or a preposition (*ḥarf jarr*) conveying meanings such as comparison (*tashbīh*), causation (*ta‘līl*), emphasis (*ta‘kīd*), or superiority (*isti‘lā’*) (Ḥasan, n.d., vol. 2, p. 515–516). This disagreement regarding its essential nature and semantic diversity exemplifies *iḥtimāl* arising from formal resemblance among particles that possess distinct functions. Moreover, depending on whether the *كـ* is considered a noun or a preposition, different syntactic roles become possible, constituting a clear case of syntactic *iḥtimāl* based on case-ending and grammatical function. If the *كـ* is taken as a preposition (*ḥarf jarr*), the meaning of comparison is derived, and two roles become possible:

A) Adjective (*ṣifa*) for an omitted direct object: The omitted direct object is taken as *هيئة*, which functions as the qualified term (*mawṣūf*) and the term of comparison (*mushabbah bihi*). The prepositional phrase *كهيئة الطير* (consisting of the particle of comparison and the compared term) serves as its adjective. Both the qualified term and its adjective are locally in the accusative (*maḥallan maṣṣūb*). The restored form is: *إنك تخلق هيئة*. (Abū Ḥayyān, 1999, vol. 4, p. 407; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 1999, vol. 12, p. 459). Meaning: “You create a form similar to the form of a bird”.

B) Adjective for an omitted verbal noun (*maṣḍar muqaddar*): Here, the *كـ* remains a particle of comparison, but the qualified term is the cognate object *خلقًا*. A quasi-sentential adjective replaces the omitted verbal noun. The restored form is: *إنك تخلق خلقًا كهيئة الطير*. Meaning: “You create a creation in the shape of a bird”, whereby the act of creation itself is likened to the bird’s form.

C) If the *كـ* is considered a noun (*ism mabnī*): It functions either as a direct object or as a substitute for the cognate object, directly denoting the shape and type of the bird and emphasising the result of the act and the essential similarity between the created object and the bird’s form (Sāmīn, 1993, vol. 2, p. 104). When the *كـ* is interpreted as a particle of comparison, emphasis falls on the outward resemblance and the visible form of the created object to a bird. When it is taken as a noun, the

semantic focus shifts to the essence and outcome of the creative act. In both cases where the ك functions as an adjective, since an adjective denotes a permanent or prior attribute, the fashioning of the bird's shape is presented as one of the stable, pre-existing characteristics of Jesus (peace be upon him), not a transient or incidental quality. In both adjectival roles, the omission of the qualified term imparts intensification and hyperbole.

Given that at this stage the miracle of Jesus (peace be upon him) has not yet reached actualisation, the role of "adjective for an omitted direct object" is particularly prominent: it portrays the formation of the bird's shape as a gradual, step-by-step process. This gradual depiction facilitates the audience's acceptance of the miracle and renders it more comprehensible as clear evidence of Jesus's prophethood. Moreover, since the majority of exegetes favour this interpretation (Al-Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. 4, p. 55; Al-Ālūsī, 1994, vol. 4, pp. 55), it may be adopted as the preferred and dominant reading in the analysis of the verse.

4.1.2.4. Syntactic Iḥtimāl in the Referent of the Pronoun "hā" in "Fatanfukhu Fīhā"

Scholars disagree on the referent of the pronoun هَا. فَنَفُخْ فِيهَا. Three possibilities are proposed:

A) The pronoun refers to هَيْئَة (understood as "something prepared/formed"): Here, هَيْئَة is treated as a verbal noun functioning as a direct object, for one does not literally "breathe into the form itself", but into the object that has been prepared in the shape of a bird. The meaning becomes: "Then you breathe into that prepared object (shaped like a bird)" (emphasising the preparatory stage).

B) The pronoun refers to طَيْر (bird), which is a generic noun (ism jins): Whose grammatical feminine gender is permissible (Ibn Ḥamūsh, 2002, p. 225). The meaning becomes: "Then you breathe into the bird" (highlighting the instantaneous, miraculous transformation).

C) The pronoun refers to the كِهْيَة in الطير: Where the ك is understood as an adjective of an elided noun هَيْئَة ("a form like the form of a bird"), the whole underlying structure is كِهْيَة الطير; the first هَيْئَة is omitted, and the pronoun refers to it. Since هَيْئَة is feminine, the feminine pronoun هَا is used (Abū Ḥayyān, 1999, vol. 4, p. 405; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 1999,

vol. 12, p. 460). The meaning becomes: "Then you breathe into a form similar to the form of a bird" (introducing a degree of suggestive ambiguity). The first reading emphasises the gradual, staged nature of the miracle. The second stresses the sudden and immediate manifestation of divine power, foregrounding the miraculous element. The third, because it depends on an omitted element, shifts the expression from explicitness toward subtle suggestion (īhām). Given that Jesus (peace be upon him) breathes into an entity that has already been entirely created, the most coherent and contextually appropriate interpretation is the return of the pronoun to طَيْر, which clearly denotes breathing into a complete, fully formed bird. This reading presents the realisation of the miracle in the most transparent and most precise manner consistent with the verse's overall theme and context.

4.1.2.5. Syntactic Iḥtimāl Concerning the Element to Which "Kahlan" is Conjoined (al-Muṭuf 'Alayhi)

The word كَهْلًا is grammatically conjoined (maṭuf), but exegetes disagree on what it is conjoined to. Two possibilities are proposed:

A) Conjunction to the position of تُكَلِّمُ: The present-tense verb تُكَلِّمُ functions as a circumstantial qualifier (hāl) for the accusative pronoun in أَیَّدْتُكَ (Ibn 'Ashūr, 1999, vol. 5, p. 261). When كَهْلًا is conjoined to the position of تُكَلِّمُ, it indirectly acquires a semantic link with إِیَّدْتُكَ because of the close relationship between the two verbs. The resulting meaning is: "I strengthened you (while you spoke to people) in the cradle and in maturity" (Al-Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. 4, p. 54).

B) Conjunction to the position of فِي الْمَهْدِ: The phrase فِي الْمَهْدِ serves as a circumstantial qualifier for the subject pronoun of تُكَلِّمُ (Ibn 'Ashūr, 1999, vol. 5, p. 261). In this case, كَهْلًا is conjoined to فِي الْمَهْدِ and shares the same relation to the subject of تُكَلِّمُ. The meaning becomes: "Jesus (peace be upon him) spoke to people as a prophet both in infancy and in maturity" (Ibn 'Ashūr, 1999, vol. 4, p. 54). The first reading emphasises the semantic continuity between تُكَلِّمُ and إِیَّدْتُكَ, conveying the implicit message of uninterrupted divine support throughout Jesus's life from childhood to adulthood. The second reading presents كَهْلًا as a second circumstantial qualifier for the subject of تُكَلِّمُ, highlighting his

prophethood and communication with people at two distinct life stages. Given the textual evidence and the verse's overall aim of enumerating divine favours in detail, preference is given to the interpretation that conjoins كَهْلًا to the position of تُكَلِّمُ. This analysis aligns more closely with the broader context and underscores the continuity and multiplicity of divine favours and support throughout the life of Jesus (peace be upon him).

4.1.3. Rhetorical Iḥtimāl (Iḥtimāl Balāghī)

In the Qur'ān, rhetorical devices are not employed as mere ornamental figures but as effective instruments for conveying meaning. They therefore constitute genuine instances of rhetorical iḥtimāl. In the verse under discussion, this type of iḥtimāl manifests itself within the domain of 'ilm al-bayān at two levels: metaphor (isti'āra) and metonymy/majaz (majaz mursal).

4.1.3.1. Rhetorical Iḥtimāl in the Type and Meaning of Majāz

One instance of iḥtimāl and polysemy in this verse occurs in the phrase رُوحَ الْقُدُسِ, which falls within the domain of 'ilm al-bayān and arises from a disagreement over its figurative (majāz) meaning. Al-Zamakhsharī presents the following figurative interpretations:

A) It denotes the divine speech (revelation) that revives and sustains faith, thereby demonstrating the power of God's word in guiding people toward faith and spirituality. The attribute الْقُدُسُ (the Holy/Pure) is applied because this spirit purifies human beings from moral impurities and sins. In this case, the majāz relation is one of causality ('alāqat al-sababiyya).

B) رُوحَ الْقُدُسِ refers to the angel Gabriel, who was sent to strengthen and confirm the mission of Jesus (peace is upon him). Here, the majāz relation is part-whole ('alāqat al-'umūmiyya), since Gabriel is one of the referents of the term "Holy Spirit" (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 691).

The first meaning emphasises the spiritual and purifying function of the heavenly message, while the second highlights the executive and confirmatory role of revelation.

Given the Qur'ānic usage particularly Sūrat al-Naḥl/102: قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ where رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ is explicitly identified with Gabriel (Al-Ṭabarānī, 2008, vol. 4, p. 84) and considering its contextual fit with the present

verse, in which Gabriel functions as the intermediary for the bestowal of divine favours upon Jesus (peace be upon him), the second interpretation can be regarded as the more reliable and contextually appropriate reading.

4.1.3.2. Rhetorical Iḥtimāl in Metaphorical Meaning

One of the rhetorical instances of iḥtimāl in this verse lies in the different metaphorical interpretations of the phrase اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ. Two distinct understandings of the imperative verb اذْكُرْ have been proposed, giving rise to iḥtimāl within the domain of 'ilm al-bayān and specifically concerning metaphorical meaning:

A) اذْكُرْ means to acknowledge and confess the divine favours. The sentence then means: "Confess and acknowledge the favour I have bestowed upon you".

B) اذْكُرْ means to proclaim and inform others of these favours, to publicise the message of the verse and highlight the special honour and rank God has granted Jesus (peace be upon him). The sentence then means: "Proclaim the favour I have bestowed upon you" (Abū Ḥayyān, 1999, vol. 4, p. 405).

Both interpretations are explicit subordinate metaphors (isti'āra taṣrīḥiyya tab'iyya), each foregrounding a different aspect of the relationship between man and divine favour. The first (acknowledgement) emphasises internalisation of the favour and its recognition through confession. The second (proclamation) stresses the social dimension of the favour and the transmission of the divine message. Given that God is here recounting favours bestowed upon Jesus in this worldly life, the interpretation of اذْكُرْ as "proclaim/inform others" appears more logical and contextually fitting, as it evokes a public declaration and announcement.

The interpretive possibilities embedded in this verse spanning the three domains of morphology, syntax, and rhetoric maintain a continuous and complementary relationship with one another, such that, when considered together, the semantic layers and the principal intent of the verse become manifest. At the morphological and syntactic levels, these possibilities signify the totality of divine grace and affection bestowed by God upon Jesus through the granting of diverse miracles. However, at the rhetorical level, through the employment of the expression «اذْكُرْ»

(“remember”), the verse moves beyond the mere narration of blessings and emphasizes the responsibility that rests upon Jesus in relation to this divine grace and generosity. Accordingly, the rhetorical possibility may be regarded as articulating the central message of the verse: a message that elucidates the relationship between divine bestowal and prophetic obligation.

4.2. Second Verse

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنْ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ (Sād/26)

In this verse, Allah directly addresses David (peace be upon him), appointing him as vicegerent on earth and commanding him to judge among people with justice. The verse contains several instances of *iḥtimāl*.

4.2.1. Morphological *Iḥtimāl*

The word under consideration with respect to morphological *iḥtimāl* in this verse is *خَلِيفَةً*, which, like the previous verse, exhibits morphological *iḥtimāl* of the type arising from a shared morphological pattern (*ashāraka fī al-hay'a*).

4.2.1.1. Morphological *Iḥtimāl* in the Form of “Khalifa”

The noun *خَلِيفَةً* follows the pattern *فَعِيلَةً*, which is common to both the intensive active participle (*ṣiḡhat mubālāgha*) and the resembling adjective (*ṣifa mushabbaha*). Scholars differ as to whether the word functions in an active (*fā'ilī*) or passive (*maf'ulī*) sense:

A) Active meaning (*fā'ilī*): *خَلِيفَةً* denotes one who succeeds or replaces another in a matter, for example, an heir who inherits the deceased's property or a ruler who succeeds a previous ruler. In this reading, *خَلِيفَةً* means “successor” or “vicegerent” (Maydānī, 1982, vol. 3, p. 542).

B) Passive meaning (*maf'ulī*): The term refers to someone who is replaced or succeeded by another after his death, the expiration of his term, or the termination of his authority. In this case, *خَلِيفَةً* means “the one who is succeeded” or “the one from whom authority is transferred to another” (*mukhlafun 'anhu*).

The pattern *فَعِيل* has specific semantic characteristics that allow it to convey both active and passive meanings. In the divine

address regarding David's role as a vicegerent, this pattern emphasizes and enhances this attribute, portraying vicegerency as an inherent and deeply rooted aspect of his character. The active interpretation highlights the managerial and stewardship responsibilities associated with human vicegerency, while the passive interpretation reflects its relative and situational context. Nevertheless, the active interpretation of *خَلِيفَةً* aligns more closely with the verse's context and the broader Qur'ānic concept of *khilāfa*. It presents David (peace be upon him) as an active, divinely appointed sovereign who bears significant responsibilities toward his people.

4.2.2 Syntactic *Iḥtimāl*

This verse exhibits two principal instances of syntactic *iḥtimāl*:

- the particle *فَ* at the beginning of *فَيُضِلَّكَ*;
- *iḥtimāl* arising from the linkage of sentence constituents at the levels of subject determination and the attachment of quasi-sentential elements.

4.2.2.1. Syntactic *Iḥtimāl* Arising from the Multifunctional Particle *فَ*

The particle *فَ* in *فَيُضِلَّكَ* admits several possible functions (causative, coordinative, resultative, inceptive, etc.). Given the dual form of the verb *يُضِلُّ* (which may be either in the apocopate or the accusative) and its identical surface appearance, two primary readings are proposed:

A) Causative — *فَ* (*fā' al-sababiyya*): The verb *يُضِلُّ* is in the accusative case (*manṣūb*). This *فَ* follows a pure negative command (*نَهْيٌ*), linking two prohibited actions and establishing a direct causal relationship. It means: “Do not follow caprice, for it will surely lead you astray from the path of Allah” (Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, 1999, vol. 6, p. 20).

B) Coordinative — *فَ* (*fā' al-'atf*): The verb *يُضِلُّ* is in the apocopate (*majzūm*) form, and the final fatha serves merely to avoid the meeting of two quiescent consonants. The two actions mentioned are independently prohibited. The meaning conveyed is: “Do not follow caprice, and do not allow it to lead you astray from the path of Allah”. This demonstrates a clear instance of syntactic *iḥtimāl*, stemming from the multifunctional nature of the particle (Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, 1999, vol. 6, p. 20). The causative — *فَ* establishes a strict causal link: following caprice inevitably and directly results

in misguidance. In contrast, the coordinative **فـ** merely places the two prohibitions side by side without necessarily implying a cause-and-effect relationship. Given that the central theme of the verse serves as a serious warning about an inevitable and dangerous outcome, the causative interpretation carries greater semantic weight. It frames following caprice not just as a sin but as the direct cause of deviation. This perspective intensifies the admonition and aligns with other Qur'ānic verses that highlight the deceptive and misleading nature of caprice.

4.2.2.2. Syntactic Ihtimāl in Determining the Subject (Fā'il) of the Verb "Yuḍillaka"

Two interpretations are offered for the subject of **يُضِلُّكَ**:

A) The subject is an implicit pronoun referring to **الْهَوَى** (caprice). In this reading, caprice itself is the direct agent of misguidance. The meaning becomes: "caprice misleads you from the path of Allah", presenting the very presence of capricious desire as the active cause of deviation.

B) The subject is an implicit pronoun **هُوَ** referring to the verbal noun (maṣdar) **اتِّبَاعُ الْهَوَى** ("the act of following caprice"). Here, misguidance is the consequence of the deliberate act of following caprice (Qūnawī, 2001, vol. 7, p. 196). The meaning becomes: "the very act of following caprice misleads you from the path of Allah".

When the subject is taken as **الْهَوَى**, the capricious impulse itself appears as the immediate agent of misguidance. When the subject is the maṣdar **اتِّبَاعُ**, emphasis falls on the voluntary process and human action of following caprice as the true cause of deviation, thereby foregrounding human responsibility and free will. The first reading may suggest that misguidance arises automatically and deterministically from the mere existence of capricious desire. The second reading offers a more precise causal analysis: the existence of desire is natural, but the decisive cause of misguidance is the volitional act of obeying it. This second interpretation is logically stronger, semantically richer, and places greater emphasis on human accountability and moral agency.

4.2.2.3. Syntactic Ihtimāl in the Attachment of the Quasi-Sentential Phrase "Yawm al-Hisāb"

The phrase **يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ** requires a syntactic

governor (muta'alliq) because of its quasi-sentential status. Scholars differ on its attachment:

A) Attached to عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ Meaning: "They will have a severe punishment on the Day of Reckoning because they forgot (in this world) the divine commands and rulings".

B) Attached to نَسُوا: Here **يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ** is the direct object (maf'ul bihi) of **نَسُوا**. Meaning: "They will have a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning itself" (Al-Tabrisī, 1993, vol. 8, p. 737).

When **يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ** is attached to "severe punishment", the Day of Reckoning is presented as the locus of punishment. When connected to **نَسُوا**, forgetting the Day of Reckoning becomes the fundamental cause of punishment—a profound spiritual and psychological neglect that stands at the root of all other transgressions, thereby elevating the analysis from mere description to a deeper religious-psychological explanation.

The analysis of the syntactic possibility in this verse reveals that God presents the issue of following caprice and going astray through diverse syntactic configurations. Beyond merely stating the principle of deviation, the verse—through the expression «يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ» ("the Day of Reckoning") and the interpretive possibility embedded within it—also explicates its underlying grounds and consequences. Accordingly, the structure of the verse's syntactic possibility functions to clarify the relationship between «اتِّبَاعُ الْهَوَى» ("following caprice") and «الضَّلَالَةُ» ("misguidance"), as well as the consequences that ensue from it.

Meanwhile, the morphological possibility inherent in the word «خَلِيفَةً» ("vicegerent/successor") further intensifies the significance of meaning. For although God introduces David as His vicegerent, He does not exempt him from the scope of this warning. Thus, the morphological and syntactic possibilities when are considered together.

4.3. Third Verse

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّنَا يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تَنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصِلَهَا قَالَ أَسْتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَى بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مِمَّا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ (al-

Baqara/61)

In this verse, Allah addresses Moses (peace be upon him), recounting the Children of Israel's craving for variety, their pretext-making, their killing of prophets, and the underlying causes of these traits. The morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical instances of *iḥtimāl* in this verse are as follows:

4.3.1. Morphological *Iḥtimāl*

In contrast to the two previous verses, the morphological *iḥtimāl* in this verse stems from a common root (*mādda*) rather than a shared pattern. The words *أَذْنَى* and *النَّبِيِّينَ* serve as the most notable examples, with *النَّبِيِّينَ* demonstrating *iḥtimāl* in both its root and pattern.

4.3.1.1. Morphological *Iḥtimāl* in the Root of “أَذْنَى”

Three different roots have been proposed for the comparative adjective *أَذْنَى*:

A) Root *ذَنُو* (to be near): Although the literal meaning is “nearer”, it is used figuratively here to denote “lower in value or worth”. Thus, *أَذْنَى* means “of lesser value” (Ibn Manzūr, 1993, vol. 14, pp. 273).

B) Root *ذَنَى* / *ذَنُو* (to be base, vile): The original form is considered *ذَنِيءٌ* (“vile, despicable”), with the hamza lightened to produce *أَذْنَى*. In this view, *أَذْنَى* means “baser, more contemptible” or “more ignoble” (Ibn Manzūr, 1993, vol. 14, p. 273).

C) Root *ذُون* (to be lower, inferior): The original form is held to be *أَذُونٌ*, which underwent metathesis (*qalb makānī*) to become *أَذْنَى*, meaning “lower in rank” (Al-Qurṭubī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 428).

- When derived from the verbal noun *ذَنُو*, the sense of low value is not temporally restricted and carries emphatic force.

- When derived from the resembling adjective *ذَنِيءٌ*, baseness and contemptibility become an inherent, stable quality, shifting the semantic weight toward moral vileness and ignobility.

- When derived from the non-derived noun *ذُون*, the word inherently denotes a lower degree or inferior status.

Given the strongly reproachful and condemnatory tone of the rhetorical question *أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ*, the translation of *أَذْنَى* as “baser” or “more contemptible” best conveys the contemptuous attitude of the Children of Israel. It reveals that they did not

merely request simpler food; instead, with arrogant disdain, they deemed the divine favour contemptible and demanded something even more ignoble in its place.

4.3.1.2. Morphological *Iḥtimāl* in the Root (*Mādda*) and Pattern (*Hay'a*) of “al-Nabiyyīn”

The word *النَّبِيِّينَ* (plural of *نَبِيٌّ*) exhibits two distinct types of morphological *iḥtimāl*:

1. ***Iḥtimāl* in the pattern (*hay'a*):** The form *فَعِيلٌ* is shared by the active participle, passive participle, resembling adjective (*ṣifa mushabbaha*), and intensive form (*ṣīghat mubālāgha*).

2. ***Iḥtimāl* in the root (*mādda*):** Three different roots are proposed for *نَبِيٌّ*:

A) Root *نَبَأ* (important news): *نَبِيٌّ* is the bearer of *نَبَأٌ* (momentous divine news). Thus, a prophet is one who receives and conveys God's messages to mankind.

B) Root *نَبَى* (way, path): The very word *نَبِيٌّ* is taken as the root, meaning “way” or “path”. A prophet is therefore “the guide” or “the one who shows the way to God” (Al-Zubaydī, 2005, vol. 1, p. 255).

C) Root *نُبُوَّة* (elevation, high rank): *نَبِيٌّ* is derived from *نُبُوَّةٌ*, meaning loftiness and exalted status. A prophet is accordingly “one who possesses exalted rank and honour” (Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād, 1993, vol. 1, p. 403).

- The root *نَبَأ* (a non-derived noun) denotes the momentous news itself and its inherent significance, not the act of informing.

- *نُبُوَّةٌ* (verbal noun or noun of kind) refers to the exalted office of prophethood and carries emphatic and intensive force concerning the prophets' lofty rank, without temporal limitation.

- The resembling-adjective pattern *فَعِيلٌ* (as in *نَبِيٌّ*) underscores a permanent, inherent quality of prophets, namely guiding people to Allah—an attribute that is an inseparable part of their being.

Given that the primary and shared function of prophets throughout the Qur'ān is the conveyance of the divine message—as repeatedly affirmed in verses such as *Sūrat al-Mā'idah/99: مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ* (“The Messenger's duty is only to convey”), the derivation from *نَبَأ* places the core prophetic mission of bringing and delivering divine news at the centre of attention and is therefore the most appropriate and contextually dominant

interpretation.

4.3.2. Syntactic Iḥtimāl

The syntactic iḥtimāl in this verse centres on two elements:

- The preposition **مِمَّا** تُنْبِئُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ, which, despite its fixed syntactic function, admits multiple semantic interpretations;
- The particle **مَا**, which varies in its grammatical nature, yielding different roles, case endings, and meanings.

4.3.2.1. Syntactic Iḥtimāl Arising from the Multifunctional Preposition مِنْ

In the phrase **مِمَّا تُنْبِئُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ**, three interpretations of **مِنْ** are proposed:

A) Starting-point of origin (min mubda' al-ghāya/bayāniyya): مِنْ indicates the source or point of emergence. The phrase means “that which comes forth from the earth”. Here, **مِمَّا** is attached to the verb **يُخْرِجُ**, and its original direct object is omitted (Sāmīn, 1993, vol. 1, p. 240).

B) Redundant/emphatic (zā'ida): Despite the affirmative context, مِنْ is extra and serves only for emphasis. **مَا** is the direct object of **يُخْرِجُ**. The phrase means “whatever the earth causes to grow, He brings forth” (Ibn Ḥamūsh, 2002, p. 67).

C) Partitive (tab'iyya): **مِمَّا تُنْبِئُ الْأَرْضُ** denotes “some of what the earth produces”. It functions as an adjective qualifying an omitted direct object. The restored underlying structure is: **مَأْكُولًا كَانِيًا مِمَّا تُنْبِئُ الْأَرْضُ** (“edible things, being some of what the earth produces”) (Abū Ḥayyān, 1999, vol. 1, p. 375). The meaning becomes: “some portion of what the earth grows (for consumption)”.

4.3.2.2. Syntactic Iḥtimāl in the Nature and Meaning of “مَا”

Two principal interpretations are offered for **مَا**:

A) Relative pronoun (mawṣūla ismiyya): **مَا** is taken as a definite relative pronoun. The phrase **مِمَّا تُنْبِئُ الْأَرْضُ** thus means “from that which the earth causes to grow”, a definite, comprehensive reference to all the earth's produce (Al-'Ukbarī, 1998, p. 27).

B) Indefinite described noun (nakira mawṣūfa): **مَا** is an indefinite noun qualified by the following descriptive clause **تُنْبِئُ الْأَرْضُ**. The phrase means “from something (any of the things) that the earth causes to grow”, referring to unspecified, non-particular produce (Sāmīn, 1993, vol. 1, p. 239). **مِنْ**, despite its uniform

syntactic role, exhibits iḥtimāl in single-function particles (*adawāt wāḥidat al-wajh*) due to its varying semantic values. **مَا**, by contrast, exhibits iḥtimāl in multi-function particles (*adawāt kathīrat al-wujūh*) because different grammatical categories are assigned to it, each carrying its own function. Shifting the meaning of **مِنْ** from starting-point of origin → emphatic/redundant → partitive alters the sentence's direction from source of growth → pure emphasis → partial specification. Similarly, the semantic difference between the relative **مَا** and the indefinite described **مَا** lies in the degree of definiteness and scope: the former is more general and tied to definite referents, while the latter points to indefinite, broader instances. The relative **مَا**, which implies comprehensiveness and exhaustiveness, better suits the reproachful context of the verse and the demanding, wide-ranging tone of the Children of Israel's request, as it encompasses a definite and extensive array of the earth's produce.

4.3.3. Rhetorical Iḥtimāl

As in Sūrat **al-Mā'idā/110**, the rhetorical iḥtimāl in this verse belongs to the domain of 'ilm al-bayān. Here, however, the focus lies on the type of metaphor and the manner in which the word oscillates between its literal and figurative senses.

4.3.1. Rhetorical Iḥtimāl in the Type of Metaphor

In the phrase **وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الدِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ**, exegetes differ over the identification of the metaphorical element, giving rise to three distinct metaphorical readings:

A) Allegorical metaphor (isti'āra tamthiliyya): Some scholars regard the figure as an allegorical metaphor: the condition of the Children of Israel is likened to people inside a tent or dome that has been pitched over them so tightly that no exit is possible, rendering escape from humiliation and abasement utterly impossible (Khafājī, 1996, vol. 2, pp. 269).

B) Explicit subordinate metaphor (isti'āra taṣrīḥiyya tab'iyya): The metaphor resides in the verb **ضُرِبَتْ**. It conveys the inevitability, adhesion, and permanence of humiliation, comparable to mud plastered onto a wall or a tent pegged firmly into the ground, inseparable from them (Shaykh-Zādah, 1998, vol. 2, p. 72).

C) Implicit imaginative metaphor (isti'āra makniyya takhyiliyya): The original

image (tent/dome) is suppressed, and only the borrowed term (humiliation) remains. The verb ضَرَبَ is used imaginatively with humiliation as its subject, depicting disgrace and abasement as a tent or structure pitched over them, completely enveloping and dominating them (Qūnawī, 2001, vol. 3, p. 340). These three readings represent rhetorical ihtimāl within ‘ilm al-bayān, stemming from disagreement over the type of figurative device employed:

- The representative metaphor emphasises the intensity of encirclement and the impossibility of escape.
- The secondary explicit metaphor centres on the inevitability, adhesion, and permanence of humiliation.
- The implicit imaginative metaphor underscores the all-encompassing, inescapable dominion of disgrace.

The implicit imaginative metaphor most effectively visualises the divine punishment as an inescapable structure, vividly portraying the dire consequence of the Children of Israel’s arrogance and ingratitude. It therefore exhibits the most excellent semantic harmony with the verse’s overall context and tone.

4.3.3.2. Rhetorical Ihtimāl in Literal vs. Figurative Meaning

The word اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا can be understood in either its literal or its figurative sense:

- **Literal meaning:** the land of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh.
- **Figurative meanings:** Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis), or any city/town whatsoever (Al-Ṭabrisī, 1993, vol. 1, p. 194).

This interpretation falls under the field of ‘ilm al-bayān and involves the distinction between literal (ḥaqīqa) and figurative (majāz) language. The literal meaning refers to a specific geographical location, while the figurative meanings extend to broader concepts. Given the exegetical evidence and the fact that مِصْرًا appears in the indefinite form (with tanwīn), the more contextually appropriate interpretation is the allegorical one, meaning “any city or town”, rather than taking it as a proper noun that specifically refers to Pharaoh’s Egypt (Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 1999, vol. 1, p. 177).

The total of the morphological and syntactic possibilities in this verse generates a semantic structure through which the improper requests and unbecoming conduct of the Children of

Israel are represented. At the same time, the Qur’anic discourse does not confine itself merely to recounting these illegitimate demands; rather, by introducing a rhetorical possibility in the expressions «ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الدَّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ» (“humiliation and destitution were imposed upon them”) and «اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا» (“descend into a town/Egypt”), it also portrays a distinctive punishment proportionate to their deeds and utterances. Accordingly, the rhetorical possibility plays a decisive role in foregrounding the central semantic axis of the verse, an axis grounded in reproach, rebuke, and condemnation of this people, while placing the linguistic structure of the verse in the service of reinforcing this critical orientation.

5. Conclusion

-The findings of this study demonstrate that polysemy, along with the probability-generating constructions and structures in three selected Qur’anic verses all employing the vocative style (uslūb al-nidā’) with a proper noun addressee (munādā’ alam), are well-suited for analysis. The vocative construction is designed to highlight the phenomenon of polysemy and ambiguity primarily in the response to the call (jawāb al-nidā’), while the vocative particle and the addressee serve as an introduction and preparation for the emergence and impact of that response.

-The factors of polysemy and probability-generating constructions and structures examined in this research encompass the domains of morphology, syntax, and rhetoric. They rely on meaning-generating and ambiguity-producing elements, such as the morphological patterns and roots of words, their grammatical roles and case endings, the functions and meanings of particles, as well as figures of metaphor and metonymy. While these elements produce surface meanings at the levels of letters, words, or sentences, they also contain deeper, concealed meanings that contribute to the formation of profound concepts and semantic orientations. Each of these factors enriches and expands the meanings of the Qur’ān in a complex and multi-layered manner.

-Specific surface forms and morphological patterns, such as fa’īl, fā’īl, and others; syntactic markers, including min (specification), initial particles, fā’ (causative or coordinative), or āṭifah (conjunction); and, in the rhetorical

domain, elements such as the possibility of interpreting a word in its literal or figurative sense, or variation in identifying the type of metaphor all constitute linguistic components that, through their functional roles, transcend the apparent meaning. They convey secondary and latent meanings, such as emphasis, exaggeration, semantic reinforcement, highlighting the real cause, and clarifying the nature and temporal extent of punishment.

-The morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical analysis of the three verses under study shows that, despite the presence of polysemy and various interpretive possibilities, one particular meaning in each verse stands out more prominently than the others: a) In Sūrat al-Mā'id/110, the use of concrete, tangible examples highlights the manifestations of divine grace and mercy toward Jesus (peace be upon him), both in his childhood and during his prophetic mission, b) In Sūrat Šād/26, a coherent causal system is depicted that links accountability, submission to caprice, misguidance, and ultimately divine punishment, and c) In Sūrat al-Baqara/61, the reproachful and contemptuous atmosphere created by the demands of the Children of Israel sustains divine chastisement and leads to the realization of punishment. Thus, all morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical elements in these verses work together to reinforce, unify, and highlight these central meanings.

References

The Holy Quran.

Abd, I. F. (2015). Probability of grammatical significance in the relative clause in the Holy Quran. *The Journal of the Islamic University College*, 9, 676-649.

<https://doi.org/10.51837/0827-009-034-022>
[In Arabic]

‘Abd Allāh, W. H. M. (2006). *The theory of Arabic grammar in light of the multiplicity of grammatical analysis* [Doctoral dissertation, Graduate School, The University of Jordan].

<https://ebook.univeyes.com/109254> [In Arabic]

Abd al-Tawwāb, R. (1999). *Fuṣūl fī al-Fiqh al-‘Arabī* (6th Ed.). Al-Khanji Library. [In Arabic]

Abū Ḥayyān, M. Y. (1999). *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ fī al-Taḥṣīn* (vols. 1-4, 1st ed.). Dar al-Fikr. [In Arabic]

Al-Ālūsī, M. A. (1994). *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī fī Taḥṣīn al-Qur‘ān al-‘Aẓīm wa Sab‘ al-Mathānī* (vol. 4, 1st ed.). Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah. [In Arabic]

Al-Eidani, J. Y. F. (2011). *The morphological probability in the Holy Qur'an* [Doctoral dissertation, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Basrah]. <https://ebook.univeyes.com/103730> [In Arabic]

Al-Jurjānī, A. M. (n.d.). *Al-Ta‘rīfāt* (I. Al-Abiyari, Ed.). Dar al-Diyān. [In Arabic]

Al-Qurṭubī, M. A. (1985). *Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān* (vol. 1, 1st ed.). Nasir Khusraw. [In Arabic]

Al-Rāghib Al-Iṣfahānī, H. M. (1983). *Al-Mufradāt fī Ghariḥ al-Qur‘ān* (2nd ed.). n.p.: Nashr al-Kitāb [In Arabic]

Al-Sa‘dī, H. G. (2010). Morphological probability significance. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 1(4), 29–32. College of Education (Safi Al-Din Al-Hilli), University of Babylon, Iraq.

<https://doi.org/10.33855/0905-000-004-003> [In Arabic]

Al-Samarra‘i, F. S. (2000). *Al-Jumla al-‘Arabiyya wa al-Ma‘nā*. Dar Ibn Hazm. [In Arabic]

Al-Ṭabarānī, S. A. (2008). *Al-Taḥṣīn al-Kabīr: Taḥṣīn al-Qur‘ān al-‘Aẓīm* (vols. 2-4, 1st ed.). Dar al-Kitāb al-Thaqāfī. [In Arabic]

Al-Ṭabrisī, F. H. (1993). *Majma‘ al-Bayān fī Taḥṣīn al-Qur‘ān* (vols. 1-8, 3rd ed.). Nasir Khusraw. [In Arabic]

Al-Tūsī, M. H. (n.d.). *Al-Tibyān fī Taḥṣīn al-Qur‘ān* (vol. 4, 1st ed.). Dar Ihya‘ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī. [In Arabic]

Al-‘Ukbarī, A. H. (1998). *Al-Tibyān fī I‘rāb al-Qur‘ān* (2nd ed.). Bayt al-Afkār al-Duwaliyya. [In Arabic]

Al-Zamakhsharī, M. U. (1986). *Al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā‘iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta‘wīl* (vol. 1, 2nd ed.). Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arabī. [In Arabic]

Al-Zubaydī, M. M. (2005). *Tāj al-‘Arūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs* (vol. 1, 1st ed.). Dar al-Hidāya. [In Arabic]

Al-Zuhaylī, W. (2001). *Al-Taḥṣīn al-Wasīṭ* (vol. 4, 1st ed.). Dar al-Fikr. [In Arabic]

Emdadi, A. A., Badakhshan, I., & Dehghan, M. (2021). Polysemy in the lexicon of the Holy Quran based on cognitive lexical semantic approach. *Journal of Comparative Linguistic Researches*, 11, 199-223.

- <https://doi.org/10.22084/rjhl.2019.19952.1970> [In Persian]
- Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, M. U. (1999). *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (vols. 1-12, 3rd ed.). Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī. [In Arabic]
- Great Islamic Encyclopedia. (n.d). Rhetoric. In Great Islamic Encyclopedia (vol. 12). <https://lib.eshia.ir/23022/12/5009> [In Persian]
- Ḥasan, A. (n.d.). *Al-Naḥw al-Wāfī* (vol. 2, 15th ed.). n.p.: Dar al-Ma'ārif. [In Arabic]
- Ibn 'Āshūr, M. T. (1999). *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* (vols. 3-4-5, 1st ed.). Al-Tarikh Al-Arabi Institute. [In Arabic]
- Ibn Ḥamūsh, M. (2002). *Mushkil I'rāb al-Qur'ān* (3rd ed.). Dar al-Yamāma. [In Arabic]
- Ibn Manẓūr, M. M. (1993). *Lisān al-'Arab* (vol.14, 3rd ed.). Dar Ṣādir. [In Arabic]
- Khafājī, A. M. (1996). *Hāshiyat al-Shihāb al-Musammāh 'Ināyat al-Qāḍī wa Kifāyat al-Rāḍī 'alā Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* (vols. 2-5, 1st ed.). Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. [In Arabic]
- Maydānī, A. H. H. (1982). *Ma'ārij al-Tafakkur wa Daqā'iq al-Tadabbur* (vol 3, 1st ed.). Dar al-Qalam. [In Arabic]
- Mūsā, D. N. H. (2020). Structures of the vocative link in the Holy Quran al-Mustansiriya. *Journal of Science and Education*, 18(6), 791–820. <https://edumag.uomustansiriyah.edu.iq/index.php/mjse/article/view/370> [In Arabic]
- Nohairat, A., & Mohamadian, A. (2013). An attitude toward a system of multi meaning in the Holly Quran. *Linguistic Research in the Holy Quran*, 2(2), 119-137. <https://dor.isc.ac/dor/20.1001.1.24233889.1392.2.2.7.3> [In Persian]
- Qūnawī, I. M. (2001). *Hāshiyat al-Qūnawī 'alā Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* (with Hāshiyat Ibn al-Tamjīd, vols. 3-7, 1st ed.). Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. [In Arabic]
- Raḥmānī, H. (2015). *An investigation into definitive and probable implications in the syntactic structures of the Holy Quran* [Master's Dissertation, Faculty of Theology, College of Farabi, University of Tehran]. <https://ut.ac.ir/fa/thesis/18921/> [In Persian]
- Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād, A. (1993). *Al-Muḥīt fī al-Lughā* (vol. 1). 'Ālam al-Kutub. [In Arabic]
- Sāmīn, A. Y. (1993). *Al-Durr al-Maṣūn fī 'Ulūm al-Kitāb al-Maknūn* (vols. 1-2, 1st ed.). Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. [In Arabic]
- Shahbazi, M., & Shahbazi, A. A. (2014). Polysemous words and their importance in the translation of the Holy Quran. *Modares Quranic and Hadith Studies (Formerly Studies in Quran and Hadith Translation)*, (1), 165–186. <https://www.ensani.ir/fa/article/362863> [In Persian]
- Shaykh-Zādah, M. M. (1998). *Hāshiyat Muḥyī al-Dīn Shaykh-Zādah 'alā Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* (vol. 2, 1st ed.). Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. [In Arabic]
- Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, M. S. (1999). *Faṭḥ al-Bayān fī Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* (vol. 6, 1st ed.). Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. [In Arabic]
- Ṭāhirī-Niyā, A. (2013). The role of morphology in the interpretation of the Quran. *Qur'ān-Shenākht*, 6(11), 73–92. <https://quran.isca.ac.ir/fa/Article/Detail/15790/> [In Persian]
- Ṭayyib Ḥusaynī, S. M. (2016). *Chand-Ma'nāyi dar Qur'ān* (2nd ed.). Research Institute of Hawzah and University. [In Persian]
- Zouelm, A., & Haji-Khani, A. (2021). Investigating lexical and syntactic multi-meaningfulness in the contemporary translations of the Holy Qur'an. *Researches on Translation in Arabic Language and Literature*, 11, 93-120. <https://sid.ir/paper/959191/en> [In Persian]