Verses of Impossibility in the Holy Quran: A Grammatical and Rhetorical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Verses of impossibility are those that refer to events that can never or rarely happen, tasks that are difficult or impossible to perform, people or things that are of no use, things that are impossible to find or futile efforts. Impossibilities can be classified into logical, physical, causal, nomological, temporary, permanent, partial, total, objective or subjective impossibility. This study sought to analyze verses of impossibility in the Holy Quran, their grammatical structure, rhetorical features, types of questions and conditional, emphatic, and/or negative particles used. Results of the analysis showed two kinds of impossibility (i) those in which Allah challenges the disbelievers and those in which the disbelievers ask the Prophets for what they consider impossible demands. In addition, verses of impossibility in the current study use a combination of grammatical structures and rhetorical devices that mainly contain conditional sentences beginning with conditional particles /?an/ (if), /Hat̲ata:/ (until), /laula:/ (if), negative, imperative, interrogative, and emphatic structures, few modals and rhetorical questions, some metaphors, hyperbole, antitheses and counterfactuals to describe challenges, futile efforts, stubbornness of the disbelievers and their incongruous behavior. They also focus on logical, temporary and permanent impossibilities. Other rhetorical features of the Holy Quran, such as antiphrasis, asyndeton, cadence, chiasmus, epizeuxis, isocolon, palindrome, polyptoton, and synecdoche are still open for further investigation by future researchers.

KEYWORDS

Holy Quran, Quranic impossibilities, verses of impossibility, rhetorical features, grammatical structures, emphatic structures, imperatives, conditional sentences, negative structures, figures of speech

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1. Introduction

The Holy Quran is the miraculous book of Islam. It was revealed by God Almighty to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Arabic language of the Holy Quran is characterized by its unparalleled linguistic excellence, eloquence, thematic unity and vivid imagery. Its Arabic words and phrases are carefully chosen, creating a profound impact on readers. The Quran utilizes rhythmic prose in Arabic known (Sajj). Its style features balanced sentence structures, repetition, and the use of rhetorical devices such as metaphor, metonyms, similes, synecdoche, euphemisms, puns, foregrounding, deferment, overstatements, antithesis, metathesis, assonance, repetition, and others. Its vivid metaphors and powerful imagery to convey its messages. It introduces lexical, semantic, and pragmatic elements unique to the Arabic language. By describing spiritual concepts, human

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experiences, and natural phenomena, it invites readers to reflect deeply upon the purpose of their existence. The divine eloquence of the Holy Quran continues to inspire, offering guidance and solace to those who seek the truth. Its poetic beauty is remarkable and serves as a testament to the greatness of Allah, the Creator.

The unique linguistic characteristics of the Quranic discourse have been the focus of a plethora of research studies in the literature such as the miraculous nature of the Quran and its ability to defy imitability and hence translatability (El Mallah, 2022); appraisal of the use of metaphors in the Holy Quran (Msoke, & Msuya, 2023); a pragmatic study of irony in some selected Quranic verses (Al-Nasrawi & Dawood, 2022); the discourse of Quranic metaphors and comprehension of the Holy Quran (Atabik, 2021); the rhetoric of ironic discourse of the Quran (Abuisaac, Saper & Wolf, 2020); pragmatic meaning of questions in verses about stories in the Holy Quran (Santosa, Nurrkanto, Baidan & Sumarlam, 2017); the figurative language of metaphors in the Holy Quran (Mutammam, 2016); emotiveness and translational equivalence of irony and their interface with other figures of speech in the Quranic discourse (Abuisaac, Zaidan, Alshater & Bin Saper, 2021); interpretation and translation of figures of speech in the Holy Quran (Rshaid, & Abuisaac, 2021); analysis of figurative language translation in the Quran (Alasbli, 2020); analysis of four English translations of Kinayah as a figure of speech in the Qur’an (Naseef, 2018); explicitation in the translation of Qur’anic binomials (Al-Otaib, 2023); examples of Arabic binomials in the Holy Quran (Al-Jarf, 2016); aesthetics of artistic expression in the Qur’an (Aram, 2016); rhetorical functions of topos in Quranic discourse (Saloomi, 2022); discourse analysis and the rhetorical function of deixis in the Holy Quran (Al Ali & El Sharif, 2016); a rhetorical study of selected verses in the Glorious Quran (Mayuuf, 2017); a pragmatic perspective of figurative language used in Surat Al-Baqarah (Cahyaningsih, Maryadi, & Ariatmi, 2014); itineraries in the translation history of the Quran (Al-Jarf, 2014) and others.

In addition, Tabassum (2021) analyzed the grammatical shift (ilitīfāt) between the first and third person and the communicated subject matter with a focus on surah Al Baqarah as an example. Akzam & Yaacob (2024) analyzed grammatical issues related to the creation of humans as described in the Holy Qur’an based on the interpretations of verses about human creation and others.

Other studies such as Al-Abdali (2014) and Al-Amin (2018) collected and analyzed verses of challenge in the Holy Quran. Few more studies focused on the rhetorical meaning of conditional verses with reference to the conjunctions that are commonly used in English especially “if” showing the differences and similarities between the two languages (Wadi, Dawood & Mahmood (2014); the conditional particle /?in/ in Surah Al-Baqara as a model (Hussain, 2012); and conditionals in Surah Al-Baqarah as an example (Khalifa, 2012). Both Mohammad (2015) and Nour and Abdul-Qader (2022) described conditional particles and gave examples of verses from the Holy Quran that contain conditional statements and particle and Abid (2015) described the use of lewla (if not) in the Holy Quran-with no special focus on verses of impossibility.

Regarding studies that focus on verses of impossibility in the Holy Quran, a single study by Aksoy (2020) examined conditional statements as a Quranic style used in expressing possibility, as a way of expressing impossibility through examples from the verses of the Quran. However, most of the verses cited in the article express possibility and only six verses that express impossibility were cited.

In another study, Bakhit (2022) described emphatic particles in Arabic, in general, and in the Holy Quran, in particular such as إن (Enn, Anna, لام لام the answer to the oath, and قد Lam that fall into the noon for emphasis, الاسم sawfa نون التوكيد لم القسم unequivocal. She defined emphatic particles linguistically and idiomatically, categorized particles, their specialization and positions, defined emphasis linguistically and idiomatically, the benefit of emphasis, emphatic indicators in nominal and verbal sentences, gave 16 examples of verses from the Holy Quran in which particles of emphasis are mentioned, in general, without any special focus on verses of impossibility.

As for figures of speech and tropes, Mayuuf (2017) gave examples of selected Quranic verses that use simile, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemisms, metaphors, irony, pun, rhetorical questions, disjoining, conjoining, foregrounding and deferment, overstatement, understatement, paraphrases, antithesis, metathesis, assonance, and repetition, without any special focus on verses of impossibility. The examples given are general and do not include any verses of impossibility.

It is clear from the above literature review that prior studies that investigated a specific grammatical structure, such as conditional sentences and rhetorical devices used in the Holy Quran or those exploring impossibility in the Holy Quran are very few. However, Aksoy (2020) gave 6 verses of impossibility containing conditional sentences. The author did not find any comprehensive studies that examine all grammatical and emphatic structures and rhetorical devices used in verses of impossibility per se in the Holy

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2 The emphatic particles are transcribed the way Bakhit transcribed them.
Quran. Therefore, this study aims to fill a gap by seeking to explore all the grammatical structures and rhetorical devices used in all the verses of impossibility in the Holy Quran. It aims to find out which grammatical structures are more common (conditional sentences, negative, emphatic and imperatives structures, and/or questions; which conditional, negation and emphatic particles, and which figures of speech are more common in verses of impossibility, in particular. It also aims to identify the types of impossibilities used and whether they are logical, physical, causal, temporary, permanent and so on.

This study will analyze syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, lexical and rhetorical aspects of verses of impossibility in the Qur’an. The descriptive analysis herein is based on the operational definitions of impossibility, conditional sentences and particles, interrogative, negation, and emphatic structures and particles, and types of figures of speech (metaphor, paradoxes, antithesis, hyperbole, counterfactuals, oxymoron) and so on.

This study is significant as it fills a gap in the literature by investigating different aspects of Quranic discourse with a special focus on verses of impossibility. Understanding the structural, lexical, semantic, and rhetorical aspects of verses of impossibility plays an important role in communicating the message effectively and providing a deeper understanding of the selected verses. It will help language and translation students understand conditional, negative, emphatic, and rhetorical aspects used to express impossibility as a Quranic style. Understanding the different styles of expressing Quranic impossibilities will help student-translators convey the meaning of verses in other languages accurately.

2. Definition of Terms
2.1 Definition of Impossibility
Expressions of impossibility refer to events that can never or rarely happen (when hell freezes over, once in a blue moon); tasks that are difficult or impossible to perform (a snowball’s chance in hell; like finding a needle in a haystack); people or things that are of no use (as much use as a one-legged man at an arse-kicking contest); and things that are impossible to find (as rare as hen’s teeth)\(^3\); and statements that cannot be true under any circumstances. In addition, expressions of impossibility convey the following meanings: futile efforts (blowing in ashes; if he goes to the seventh sky; he is a goat even if it flies); stubbornness (it is a goat even if it flies); incongruity (an egg does not break a stone); things that are impossible to fix or cannot be done (when the ship rope goes through the needle’s eye) (Al-Jarf, 2024).

Prior research has identified different types of impossibility. For instance, Levy (1971) classified types of impossibility into logical, physical and, causal or nominalological. Logical impossibility implies contradiction or something against the laws of logic as in a round square; physical impossibility arises when an alleged illegal act cannot be physically achieved due to real-world constraints as in pick an empty pocket; whereas causal or nominologically impossibility is empirically impossible as in dissolve gold in water. In addition, Aksoy (2014) classified expressions of impossibility as perceived by civil lawyers into temporary—permanent impossibility (when performance is temporarily impossible vs when performance remains permanently impossible), partial—total impossibility (when only part of the obligation becomes impossible to perform vs when the entire obligation cannot be performed at all), and objective—subjective impossibility (when performance of an obligation is impossible for everyone vs when performance is impossible for the debtor, but someone else can still perform it).

2.2 Conditional Statements in Arabic
A conditional sentence\(^4\) (الشروط) that must be fulfilled before a specified time or event occurs. The condition is the subordinate clause or the if-clause; (ii) the main/final clause (apodosis or consequent shows the complement or the consequent to the condition. It is also called الجزاء which literally means reward; (iii) a conditional particle or word (كلمة ترطبة) that connects the main clause and the subordinated clause. The relationship between the two parts of the conditional sentence may show a real condition or a hypothetical situation (scenario) that is possible or impossible. The idea of a condition (شروط) includes the requirement of an action/event (حدث) leading to whatever result.

In Arabic, many particles are used in conditional statements as: إن /?inna/ if; من /man/ who; أنّى /?ayy/ what; من /man/ who; أينما /aynana/ wherever; أيّان /?ayana/ in what time; إِنُّ /?anna/ whence; أيّما /aynmaa/ wherever; أَيْ /?ayyana/ in what time; إِنِّ /?anna/ whence; كِيْفُما /kayfamaa/ in whatever way; لَوْ /laulaa/ if; لَوْ /laulaa/ if; ما /maa/ that which; مَهْ /mahmaa/ whatever; كَيْفُ /kayfaa/ in whatever way; كِيْفُ /kayfamaa/ in whatever way; كِيْفُ /kayfamaa/ in whatever way; كِيْفُ /kayfamaa/ in whatever way; كِيْفُ /kayfamaa/ in whatever way; كِيْفُ /kayfamaa/ in whatever way.

The construction لَوْ أَنْ أُنْ (to be used instead of لَوْ أَنْ alone if a nominal sentence is involved, because لَوْ أَنْ itself has some verbal force. This often happens when dealing with “inverted verbal sentences” in which there is a construction consisting of a subject + a verb. Another fine option would be to use كان /kann/ after لَوْ (Al-Jarf, 1996; Al-Jarf, 1995; Al-Jarf, 1995; Al-Jarf, 1990).

\(^3\) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ids_of_improbability
\(^4\) https://arabic-for-nerds.com/grammar/conditional-sentence-in-arabic/
2.3 Negation in Arabic

A negative sentence says that something is false or that it has not happened. Unlike English, Standard Arabic (SA) has a variety of negation particles that are used to negate verbs in the past, present, or future. The most commonly used negation particles are: 

- لَمْ (lam) is used before a present verb, it makes it a past action (مَهَا لَمْ تَأُكِلْ مِنْهَا اللَّيْلَةُ Maha did not eat dinner). Here the meaning changes from present to past, even though the verb form is present. The verb gained the past meaning after adding the negative particle لَمْ (lam).

When لَمْ (/lan/) is added before a present verb, it negates an action in the future as in لَمْ تَأُكِلْ سَارَةَ اللَّيْلَةُ Sara will not eat dinner). This means that although the verb has a present form, it gains a future meaning as result of adding the negative particle لَمْ (/lan/).

When the negative particle لا is added before a present verb, it will negate an action in the present tense, or a habitual action. لا أَشرِبُ الخَلَبَ /lā ʿasrabu al-hālyb/ I don’t drink the milk).

To negate an imperative verb, which is used to give instructions and commands, we use the particle لا (ла). Here, the verb form changes from the imperative form to the present form and is conjugated according to the gender and number of the people to whom it is directed (لا تَذْهَبْ إِلَى الْجَامِعَةِ الْبَيْنَاءِ Don’t go to the university today).

ما /ma:/ is used before a past tense verb to negate a past action. Both the verb form and the meaning are in the past as in (ما ذُهِبْتِ إِلَى الْمَدرَسةِ بالأَمَسِ I did not go to school yesterday).

To negate nominal sentences (إسبيئة (ismiyyah)) that start with a noun/subject, ليس (laysa) is insert at the beginning of the sentence before the subject as in: ليسون الولد طوالاً (the boy is not tall).

Further particles that make sentences negative are: لا لَا مَكَا:ن/ nowhere/not anywhere; لا لَا أَحَد (la ?aHad) no one/nobody; لا لَا تَشْيَء (la: shy?) nothing/not anything. ولما لا: ... wala/ neither...nor. Other commonly used particles are مَعَ /qaTT/ (ever, at all) as in مَعَ /al ?af balika qaTT/ I have never done that; أَيُّذِي أَيْدَى /?aBen Al /lan ?azruRah ?abadaN/ I will never visit him. فَقَطُ /qatt/) and أَيْدَى /?abadaN/ can only be used for negation (Al-Jarf, 1996; Al-Jurf, 1995; Al-Jarf, 1995; Al-Jarf, 1990).

2.4 Emphasis in Arabic

Emphasis refers to the intentional use of linguistic and stylistic techniques to highlight specific words, phrases, or ideas within a sentence or discourse. In Arabic, emphasis can be lexical through the following: (i) Emphasis by repetition: i.e., the repetition of the same word within a sentence “إِذَا دُكَّتِ الأرْضُ دَكّا  دَكّا When the earth has been leveled - pounded and crushed”; (ii) Emphasis by fronting the predicative and the verb which involves transposing a constituent from the middle or end of a string of discourse to the initial position (and uncleanliness avoid): “إِنَّا نَعۡبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسۡتَعِينُ – We worship You and ask for help; (iii) Copulative Pronoun of separation (ةَضْرِيْلِقُ the boy is not tall)” used for an emphatic purpose in Arabic. Wright (1981) defines a ‘pronoun of separation’ as a type of Arabic pronoun appended to the subject to give it a special prominence and to contrast it with another topic as in اللَّيْلَةُ وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ “And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank.” (iv) Emphasis by fronting the predicative and the verb which involves transposing a constituent from the middle or end of a string of discourse to the initial position (and uncleanliness avoid): “إِنَّا نَعۡبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسۡتَعِينُ – We worship You and ask for help; (iv) Copulative Pronoun of Separation “إِنَّا نَعۡبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسۡتَعِينُ “Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly...

6 www.thoughtco.com/emphasis-speech-and-composition-1690646
7 أدوات التوكيد
8 https://www.sacredlearning.org/classroom/arabic/lesson_08.pdf
are only consuming into their bellies fire. And they will be burned in a Blaze” (Mohammed & Al-Marsumi, 2022; Bakhit, 2022; Mohammad & Al-Marsumi, 2022; Qudissya, 2019; Sabri, 2019; Wright; 1981; Al-Jarf, 1998).

2.5 Rhetorical Devices Conveying Impossibility

In pragmatics, the concept of impossibility can be conveyed through some figures of speech such as:

- **Metaphors** as in the following verses:
  - Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things”.
  - “and he who associates with Allah - it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down into a remote place”.

- **Similes** as in the following verses: “Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky.”

- **Metonyms** as in the following verses: “Indeed, as-Safa and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever makes Hajj to the House or performs ‘umrah - there is no blame upon him for walking between them.”

- **Paradoxes** that contain contradictory elements that seem to defy logic or common sense. They also refer to a person, situation, action or a statement that has seemingly contradictory qualities or that oppose common sense and yet is perhaps true. It can be an argument that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deduction from acceptable premises. It can be a tenet contrary to received opinion.
  - “Not a thing, fresh or dry, but it is in a Manifest Book.”
  - “He created the heavens and the earth in six days.”
  - “The affair of the Hour is but as a twinkling of the eye.”

- **Antithesis** is a rhetorical or literary device that refers to a contrasting or opposing relationship between two ideas, concepts, or elements. It represents the juxtaposition of opposing qualities or concepts for rhetorical effect.
  - “And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], and you will never reach the mountains in height.”
  - “And say, “The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve.”

- **Hyperbole**: Exaggeration for emphasis. The Quran often employs hyperbolic patterns such as ‘Fa’uul (فعول), ‘Fa’eeel (فعيل), and ‘Fa’aal’ (فعلاء). These patterns enhance the impact of the message, invite deeper reflection, serve to emphasize truths and provoke contemplation as in:
  - “[Remember] when they came at you from you and from below you, and when eyes shifted [in fear], and hearts reached the throats and you assumed about Allah [various] assumptions.”
  - “The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a grain of wheat that sprouts seven ears, and in every ear there are a hundred grains.”

- **Counterfactuals** as in: “She said, How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste.”

- **Oxymoron**: It is a figure of speech in which two contradictory terms or ideas are intentionally paired in order to make a point—particularly to reveal a deeper or hidden truth. The most recognizable oxymorons are adjective-noun pairs, as in the phrase “proud humility.” But oxymorons can also occur in a clause or sentence, as in “That silence after your joke was deafening.” In both examples, the oxymoron joins opposite ideas to make a point (such as that an awkward silence can have a presence comparable to a loud sound). Other examples are virtual reality, friendly fire, only choice, controlled chaos, same difference. Examples from the Quran are:
In analyzing the verses of impossibility, all conditional, negative, emphatic particles in all the verses were highlighted. For conditional sentences, the type of particle, the condition (subordinate clause) and the apodosis (main clause) were marked. Sometimes several conjoined impossibilities are found in one verse. Verbs in the imperative mood or present tense verbs attached to imperative particles such as lam (وادعوا) were highlighted. Questions such as rhetorical questions were marked. Some verses are long and the impossibility is in part of the verse. So only conditional, negative, emphatic structure or questions withing the impossibility were analyzed and counted. Those outside the impossibility were not counted as in (example 32).

4. Results

4.1 Grammatical Structures in Verses of Impossibility

In the Holy Quran, the notion of impossibility is conveyed through a variety of linguistic structures as conditional statements with certain conditional particles. Other common structures involve utilization of negative particles such as لن to signify the absence of capability; negation techniques to underscore the absolute impossibility or unlikelihood of a given event or outcome to occur whether in the present time or in the future, i.e., negative statements emphasize the lack of feasibility or probability. Other structures noted are interrogative sentences particularly rhetorical questions that imply impossibility.

Results of the analysis of the conditional statements, imperative, negative and interrogative structures in all the verses in the data presented below. Examples (1) to (30) show impossible tasks/actions that Allah or any of His prophets defied human beings or disbelievers to perform. The verse(s) in each example are translated. The impossibility in each example is explained, each conditional sentence is analyzed into a conditional particle, the condition and the apodosis.

1. يُعَفِّرُ الْجَنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِنْ أَسْتَطِعْتُمْ أَنْ أَتَفْقَدُواْ مِنْ أَفَضْلَاءِ ٱلْخَبَرَةِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ فَأَتَفْقَدُواْ لَا تَفْقَدُوهُ بَلْ يَهْدِيُ ٱلۡحَقَّ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ (الرحمن 33)

O assembly of jinn and humans! If you can penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then do so. ‘But’ you cannot do that without Our authority.

In (1), Allah challenges all human beings and the jinn with the impossible act of getting away (escaping) from the realms of heaven and earth. A conditional sentence is used which begins with the conditional particle إن (if) + the condition (أَسْتَطِعْتُمْ أَنْ أَتَفْقَدُواْ مِنْ أَفَضْلَاءِ ٱلْخَبَرَةِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ) + the apodosis expressed with an imperative verb فَأَتَفْقَدُواْ (عَلَى) in the main clause affirming their inability to get way from the realm of heaven and earth unless they are authorized by Allah. Example (1) expresses a permanent impossibility.

2. قَلْ لََيْنَ أَخْتَمَتْ ٱلۡجَنَّ وَالْإِنسَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ أَيَّوْمَ أَنْ يَقُومُ ٱلْيَوْمُ ٱلۡقَرۡبَةُ لَيْسَ لَهُمُ ٱلۡمَدْرَسَةُ مَثْلُهُمْ يَطُورُونَ بِهِمْ ٓأَضْحَىَ هُمْ أَشَٰهِرًا (الإسراء 88)

And the Day the Hour appears the criminals will swear they had remained but an hour. Thus they were deluded.
Say, ˹O Prophet,˺ “If all humans and jinn were to come together to produce the equivalent of this Quran, they could not produce its equal, no matter how they supported each other.”

(3)

فَلَوْنَفَّلَأُوا يَكْتُبُونَ مِنْ عَنْدِ ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمَا أَليْلَةَٰٓ إِنْ كُنْتُم صَدِيقِينَ (القصص 49)

Say, “Then bring a scripture from Allah which is more guiding than either of them that I may follow it, if you should be truthful.

(4)

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ أَفْتَرَاهُ ۚ بل لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ كَانُواْ صَادِقِينَ إِن بِحَدِيثٖ مِّثۡلِهِۦٓ فَلۡيَأۡتِواْ (الطور 34-33)

Or do they claim, “He made this ˹Quran˺ up!”? Tell them ˹O Prophet˺, “Produce one surah like it then, and seek help from whoever you can—other than Allah—if what you say is true!”

(5)

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي زَيْنٍ مَّا تَرَّبِّلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَأۡتُواْ بِسُورَةٍ مِّثۡلِهِ وَادۡعُوا مُفْتَرَيَاتٍ (البقرة 23)

And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like it and call upon your witnesses/helpers other than Allah, if what you say is true.

(6)

أَمِ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُۥُۚ بل لَّا يُؤۡمِنُونَ كَانُواْ صَٰدِقِينَ إِن بِحَدِيثٖ مِّثۡلِهِۦٓ فَلۡيَأۡتِواْ (النمل 64)

Or do they say, “He made this ˹Quran˺ up!”? In fact, they have no faith. Let them then produce something like it, if what they say is true!

In examples (2) to (7), Allah is challenging the disbelievers to imitate the whole Quran, 10 Surahs, and then 1 Surah. In (2), Allah is challenging all mankind and the Jinn together to produce something comparable and similar to the Quran. Allah affirms the futility of any efforts to produce a text comparable to the Quran by using a conditional sentence beginning with the conditional particle لئن/la?in/ (if) in the subordinate clause. The futility of the efforts of human being and jinn and the impossibility of producing a similar text was confirmed by using the negative particle لَلَّا/laa/ + a present tense verb (ياَتُون) (produce) & (وَادۡعُوا) (call upon) that demand the production of a similar book, 10 Suras, then even one Sura in examples (3), (4), (5), (6) & (7). The impossible act is coming up with a book that is better than the Quran and Torah by the disbelievers and coming up with 10 Suras and even one Sura like those of the Quran. In those verses, Allah is further challenging them to seek the assistance of whoever they want. In all of these verses, the Quran is repeatedly using the imperative verbs فَأۡتُوا (produce) & وَادۡعُوا (call upon) that demand the production of a similar book, 10 Suras, then even one Sura. Verses (2) to (7) express a permanent impossibility.

9 knowingallah.com/en/articles/the-challenge-of-the-quran/
Or ask them, “Who originates the creation then resurrects it, and gives you provisions from the heavens and the earth? Is there a deity with Allah?” O Prophet Say “Show me your proof, if what you say is true.”

Or talk to them and ask, “Who creates then resuscitates it, and gives you provision from the heavens and the earth? Is there another deity besides Allah?” O Prophet say “Bring them your evidence, if what you say is true.”

Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.

In (8), the impossible act for the disbelievers is to bring evidence/proof that there is another god (deity) with Allah. Allah is giving them proof that He is the only God by asking rhetorical questions beginning with من /man/ (who), showing the impossible acts of beginning creation and providing sustenance from the heavens and earth which only Allah is capable of. The Quran challenges the disbelievers using an imperative verb هاتوا برهانكم (bring your evidence) that there is another god with Allah.

In (9), a conditional sentence beginning with the particle لو /lau/ (if) in the condition and the particle لفسدنا /laam/ (would spoil) in the apodosis to show the consequence of claiming that there are other gods with Allah. Here, the impossibility is eternal.

Surely those who receive our revelations with denial and arrogance, the gates of Heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter Paradise until a thick rope of a ship is passes through the eye of the needle.

In (10), it is impossible for the gates of heaven to open for those who deny God’s verses. It is also impossible for those disbelievers to enter paradise until the rope of the ship goes through the eye of the needle which is a logical impossibility. Two negative present verbs لَا تُفَتَّحُ & لَا يَدْخُلُونَ are used to show the impossibility of going to heaven in the present time and in the future, i.e., they will never go to heaven. This means that the possibility of going to heaven is non-existent. Here, the analogy reflects a logical impossibility.

Nor are the dead and the living equal. Indeed, Allah alone makes whoever He wills hear, but you O Prophet can never make those in the graves hear your call.

In (11), the impossibility of the dead in the grave hearing the call of Prophet Mohammad is expressed by the negative particle لَا /laa/ + present tense verb يَسۡمِعُ /ysm’/ (make those in the graves hear) now and in the future. This impossibility is permanent and logical.

So you O Prophet certainly cannot make the dead hear the truth. Nor can you make the deaf hear the call when they turn their backs and walk away.

You certainly cannot make the dead hear the truth. Nor can you make the deaf hear the call when they turn their backs and walk away.

The same impossibility is referred to in examples (12) and (13) using the same conditional sentence in both, each of which consisting of emphatic إن /inna-ka) + negative particle لَا /laa/ + present tense verb يَسۡمِعُ /ysm’/ (the dead) and الصم /alsam/ (the deaf), implying that the dead and the deaf will never hear, if they turn their backs and walk away. These impossibilities are permanent and logical.
In (14), the Quran dissuades people from walking on earth arrogantly by using a negative present verb referring to the present and the future. The Quran is telling those who walk arrogantly that there is no benefit from doing so, as it is impossible for them to penetrate into the earth and to rise up and be as tall as the mountains. The impossibility of these two apodoses (consequences) is shown by emphatic /?inna/ + negative particle /lan/ + present verb expressing the future (إِنَّكَ لَن تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ) and negative particle /lan/ + present verb in (وَلَن تَبْل غَوَلَ) to affirm the impossibility of the two actions (penetrating the earth and rising up to reach the mountain heights). The impossibilities expressed from both analogies are permanent and logical.

In (15), it is impossible for the idols, that the disbelievers worship, to create a fly and it is impossible for the idols to save something that was taken by the flies. The impossible acts are shown by emphatic /?inna/ (verily) + clause (the idols that the disbelievers worship) + will not create (لَن يَخْلُقُوا لَن). In the main clause, the apodosis shows another impossibility which is the idol’s inability to save anything stolen from them by the flies. The conditional particle /in/ (if) in the subordinate clause (condition) and the main clause beginning with a negative particle. The impossibility herein is logical and permanent.

In (16), Abraham is challenging the disbelieving Ruler/Monarch who claimed that he can bring the dead back to life by saying that Allah can bring up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west if you can. The disbeliever was stunned. Here, the Quran uses the emphatic particle /?inna/ (verily) to affirm that Allah brings up the sun from the east. An imperative verb (فأت) is used to demand the impossible action (bringing up the sun from the west by the disbeliever) which is counterfactual. The impossibility in this verse is logical.
Whoever thinks that Allah will not help His Prophet in this world and the Hereafter, let them stretch out a rope to the ceiling and strangle themselves, then let them see if this plan will do away with the cause of their rage.

In (17), the impossible act lies in the conditional statement beginning with من/من/man/ (whoever) which expresses the conditional act (if someone thinks that God will not support him in this life and in the hereafter) followed by a challenging answer expressed by three verbs فَلۡيَمۡدُدۡ ، ثم يَقۡطَعۡ & فليَنظُر ، each of which consists of the imperative particle لـ/لـ/l/ + a present tense verb referring to the future (consequence). The imperative l + present verb show the impossibility of extending a rope to the sky, stopping his breath, and waiting to see if such efforts will kick off what enrages him. This impossibility is logical.

He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have children when He has no wife? He created all things and He is the All-Knower of everything.

It is not [befitting] for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.

And say, "Praise to Allah, who has not taken a son and has had no partner in [His] dominion and has no [need of a] protector out of weakness; and glorify Him with [great] glorification.

Whereby the heavens are almost torn, and the earth is split asunder, and the mountains fall in ruins, That they ascribe a son (or offspring or children) to the Most Beneficent (Allah). But it is not suitable for (the Majesty of) the Most Beneficent (Allah) that He should beget a son (or offspring or children).

They have said, "Allah has taken a son." Exalted is He; He is the [one] Free of need. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. You have no authority for this [claim]. Do you say about Allah that which you do not know.

And they (Jews, Christians and pagans) say: Allah has begotten a son. Exalted be to Him (Exalted be He above all that they associate with Him). Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and all surrender with obedience (in worship) to Him.

They have said, "Allah has taken a son." Exalted is He; He is the [one] Free of need. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. You have no authority for this [claim]. Do you say about Allah that which you do not know.
And they say, "The Most Merciful has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, they are [but] honored servants.

Say, [O Muhammad], "If the Most Merciful had a son, then I would be the first of [his] worshippers.

Had We intended to take a diversion, We could have taken it from [what is] with Us - if [indeed] We were to do so.

Had Allah willed to take a son (or offspring or children), He could have chosen whom He pleased out of those whom He created. But glory be to Him! (He is above such things). He is Allah, the One, the Irresistible.

In examples (18), (19), (20), four impossibilities are mentioned: God may not have a child/son, a companion, partner or a wife in controlling the universe and there is no one to protect Him from humiliation, because Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Creator of everything, and He is omniscient. In (19) the negative particle لَمْ (not) + a present verb وَلَا تَكُن لَّهُۥ صَٰحِبَة are used to negate having a partner in the past. In (18) the negative particle لَمْ + a past verb مَا كَانَ لِلَّه أَن يَتَّخِذَ مِن وَلَدٖ are used to negate having a child in the past, present, or future. In (20), three conjoined impossibilities are mentioned: The negative particle لَمْ /lam/ (not) + a present verb لَّمۡ يَتَّخِذۡ & لَمۡ يَكُن to negate having a child and a partner in ruling the universe.

The impossibility of Allah having a son is further confirmed in examples (21) to (28). Here, the impossibility is permanent and logical.

In (21), the impossibility of Allah having a son is expressed using a negative modal (should not a son).

In (22), the impossibility of having a son is confirmed by glorifying Allah (سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥ and justifying it by saying that Allah owns everything in the heavens and earth and that He is the originator of the heavens and earth.

In (23), the claim that Allah has a son is semantically denied by glorifying Allah using سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥ and giving several reasons for not having a son. First by using a Copulative Pronoun of separation هو for an emphatic purpose; secondly, fronting the PP in لَهُۥ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ and thirdly, a conditional clause beginning with إِن (if); and fourthly, a rhetorical question in أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ.

In (24), the claim that Allah has a son/child is semantically refuted by saying سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥ (Glory be to Allah) and that the angels are honored servants.

In (25), the impossibility of having a son is confirmed by asking the Prophet to say that if Allah has a son, the Prophet would be the first to worship this son. A conditional sentence is used beginning with the particle إِن /if/ in the condition and the Copulative Pronoun of separation فَأَنَا in the apodosis showing the consequence.

In (26), the impossibility of having a son is shown by a conditional sentence beginning with لَوِ /lau/ (if) in the condition and a past tense verb لَّٱتَّخَذۡنََٰه مِن لَّدُنَّآ إِن كُنَّا فَٰعِلِينَ denoting a past consequence in the apodosis as a justification for not having a son.

In (27), a conditional sentence beginning with the conditional particle لَوِ /lau/ in the subordinate clause (condition) is used to show the impossibility of having a son and why Allah does not want and cannot have a son. The main clause (apodosis) is shown by سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥ which is a past tense verb + particle لَّا. The claim that Allah has a son is refuted by a reason (that Allah can select whatever He pleases from among His creatures) followed by سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥ to glorify Allah.
In examples (28) & (29), two impossibilities are emphasized: which deity can bring light if God turns it into continuous darkness, and which deity can bring nighttime if God makes it a continuous daylight. In both verses, a conditional sentence beginning with the conditional particle إن /in/ (if) is used in the subordinate clause (condition) and a rhetorical question emphasizes the impossibility of such an action (bringing nighttime in the first and daylight in the second) whether now or in the future by using a present verb. In (28) & (29) a logical impossibility is used.

In examples (30) to (42), the disbelievers are demanding that Allah or the Prophets do certain actions or fulfill certain demands in order for them to believe in Him, in the Prophet or in the Quran.

In (30), after finishing their fast, Jesus’ disciples asked him for a banquet to be sent from heaven. So, he (Jesus) asked God for a big banquet as a feast, to be sufficient for them and for those who come after them. The impossibility in (30) is temporary.

In (31), the disbelievers are defying God by a conditional clause (if this is the truth from you) that begins with the conditional particle إن /in/ (if) followed by two conjoined subordinate clauses, two apodoses for believing each of which begins with the imperative verbs فَأَمْطِرْ /fayamitr/ and إِئۡتِنَا /ayatin/. The two apodoses contain two impossibilities by human standards: raining stones and giving them a severe punishment. Here, the impossibility is logical.
They challenge “the Prophet”, “We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us (90) or until you have a garden of palm trees and vineyards, and cause rivers to flow abundantly in it (91) or cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed, or bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face (92) or until you have a house of gold, or you ascend into heaven.

وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى لِنَؤۡتَىٰ مِثۡلَ مَآ أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ ٱللَّهِ (الأنعام 124)

Whenever a sign comes to them, they say, “We will never believe until we receive what Allah’s messengers received.

وَإِذۡ قُلۡتُمۡ يَٰمُوسَىٰ كُونُ لَهُۥ جَنَّةٍ يَأۡكُلُ مِنۡهَا تَأَوَّلَهُۡ أَوۡ يُلۡقَىٰ إِلَيۡهِ كَنزٌ أَوَۡ مَعَهُۥ نَذِيرٌ أَوۡ مَلَكٌ أَنَّا وَلَوۡ عَامَ وَيَمۡشِي فِي ٱلۡأَسۡوَاقِ مَالِ هَٰذَا ٱلرَّسُولِ يَأۡكُلُ ٱلطَّ (الفرقان 7-8)

And they say mockingly, “What kind of messenger is this who eats food and goes about in market-places ‘for a living’? If only an angel had been sent down with him to be his co-warner, or a treasure had been cast down to him, or he had had a garden from which he may eat!” And the wrongdoers say ‘to the believers’, “You are only following a bewitched man.

وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَوۡلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيۡهِ ٱلۡقُرۡءَانُ جُمۡلَةٌ وٰحِيدَةٌۖ كَذَٰلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِۦ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلۡنَٰهُ تَرۡتِيلّٗا (الفرقان 23)

Had We destroyed them with a torment before this ‘Prophet came’, they would have surely argued, “Our Lord! If only You had sent us a messenger, we would have followed Your revelations before being humiliated and put to shame.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ يَأۡكُلُوٓنَ ٱلۡحِمَامَ وَيَضُحُّونَ فِي ٱلۡأَسۡوَاقِ لَوۡلَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ مَلَكٌ أَوۡ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ ٱلۡقُرۡءَانُ أَوۡ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ رَبُّهُۥ مُتنَّشِئٌ ۢۡ(الفرقان 7-8)

And ‘remember’ when you said, “O Moses! We will never believe you until we see Allah with our own eyes,” so a thunderbolt struck you while you were looking on.

Examples (32), (33) (34) & (35) consist of conditional sentences, each of which begins with the negative particle لن/lan/ + a present verb (believe) followed by the conditional particle حتى/Hattaa/ (unless), followed by the impossible acts put forth as conditions that have to be fulfilled in order for them to believe. Each condition constitutes an impossible act that cannot be performed - by human standards - as breaking open a spring from the ground, making a garden of palm trees and grapes, making rivers gush through it, making heaven fall upon us in fragments, bringing Allah and the angels before them, having a house of gold or ascending into the heavens, giving them what the messengers of Allah were given, bringing down to them a book that they can read, and seeing Allah with their own eyes. The impossibilities in these examples are temporary.
The disbelievers say, “If only the Quran had been sent down to him all at once!” “We have sent it” as such “in stages” so We may reassure your heart with it. And We have revealed it at a deliberate pace.

And they say, “Why was there not sent down to him an angel?” But if We had sent down an angel, the matter would have been decided; then they would not be reprieved.

But when the truth came to them from Us, they said, “Why was he not given like that which was given to Moses?” Did they not disbelieve in that which was given to Moses before? They said, “[They are but] two works of magic supporting each other, and indeed we are, in both, disbelievers.

Those who do not know say, “Why does Allah not speak to us or there come to us a sign?” Thus spoke those before them like their words. Their hearts resemble each other. We have shown clearly the signs to a people who are certain [in faith]
In (42), the impossible act is coming back to life after death in order to do good deeds in what he left behind. This impossible act is shown by a conditional sentence that begins with لَيْتَهَا (if) + the condition (فَإِذَا death comes to one of them) + the apodosis contains an imperative verb (a request) (كُنْتُمْ بالكُفّار) + a modal (مُثَّلَّصَ) (I might).

4.2 Negation in Verses of Impossibility in the Quran

Several verses of impossibility in the sample contain the negative particles (لا) to show that the acts demanded by the disbelievers cannot be performed or achieved at all. Verses in examples 12, 13, 15 & 18 contain + a present verb which affirm that the actions expressed in those verses can never happen or achieved as they are counterfactual. 

The negative particle لا is used before present-tense verbs to negate past actions whether the verb is a main verb (يَبْنُ) or an auxiliary (يَبْنُ) to denote impossibilities that started in the past and are still going on:

The negative particle لا does not negate the present tense verbs to denote all-the-moment impossibility:

In examples 2, 10, 12, 15, the negative particle لا does not negate the present tense verbs to denote all-the-moment impossibility:

In example 11, the negative particle لا is followed by a present verb that is negated (should not have). In all the examples below, لا is negating present tense verbs to denote permanent impossibilities:

4.3 Use of Imperatives in Verses of Impossibility

Several verses of impossibility in the sample utilize commands or imperative verbs as (فَأَطْعُوا) as shown in the examples below which challenge the disbelievers to perform some acts that are impossible in the present and the future as well:

Finally, the impossible act's (فَأَطْعُوا) is followed by another verse (فَأَطْعُوا) (example 24).

- If Allah orders something or suggests doing something, then it is obligatory for the believer (example 16).
- If a verse is revealed to the Prophet, then the Prophet (example 8).
- And if you believe, then do not listen to a group of people (example 5).
- And if you believe, then you must believe in Allah’s Books (example 6).
- And if you believe, then believe in Allah’s Books (example 4).
- And if you believe, then believe in Allah’s Books (example 3).
- If I were to obey you, then I would be one of the Fadžlîs (example 33).
- If I were to obey you, then I would be one of the Fadžlîs (example 34).
In addition, some commands are present verbs + imperative particles /فَأَمَّنَ (or /لَى فَأَمَّنَ (لِبَيْطَعُ) or both as in /فَأَمَّمَ (لِلَّيطُعُ).  
- أَمْ يَقُولُونَ قَالَهُۥُۚ بَلْ لَّا يُؤۡمِنُونَ (example 7).  
- كَانَ يَكُونُ لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (example 18).  
- قُلۡ (فَأَمَّكَنْ صَدِيقٍ حَيٍّ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ) مُّنَٰفِكًا (example 32).

4.4 Use of Modals in Verses of Possibility

The use of modals in verses of possibility is very limited. Only 3 examples were found: I might, should not, and could.

- You can also use مَمۡتَزَجَّ (will be) whether affirmative or negative, as in the following verses:
  - يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ (example 17).

4.5 Use of Questions in Verses of Possibility

Data analysis showed few rhetorical questions found in the verses of possibility in the sample as أَيُّكُونُ لَهُ وَلۡمَ ۡنَكُنَّ لِهِ مُّضَحَّةً (example 18). However, the questions in examples 8, 28, 23 & 29 are polar questions using the interrogative particle /أَي/.

- Polar questions in examples 32 & 17 use the interrogative particle /لَي/.
  - فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأۡتِي بِٱلشَّمۡسِ مِنَ (example 8).

4.6 Emphasis in Verses of Possibility in the Quran

The most common emphatic particle found in the sample verses is ضَامِنًا (example 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 30, 31, and 32). However, In each of these verses, the emphatic particle /لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (example 18) is followed by another emphatic/affirmation particle /لَكَ/ that is always followed by a present continuous verb. In example 16, لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ is used in the subordinate clause /فَأَلۡهِمَكَ أَنَّهُ بَيۡتٌِۭ مِّن زُخْرُفٍ (and the imperative verb /قُلۡ (فَأَلۡهِمَكَ أَنَّهُ بَيۡتٌِۭ مِّن زُخْرُفٍ) that the differentia of the main clause /فَأَلۡهِمَكَ أَنَّهُ بَيۡتٌِۭ مِّن زُخْرُفٍ (example 16).

Moreover, in some verses of emphasis, the emphasized phrase/idea is moved to the front of the verse and the less emphatic is at the end as in ضَامِنًا (example 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7 where the conditional clause ضَامِنًا is moved to the end of the verse and the part containing the imperative verbs ضَامِنًا are moved to the beginning of the verses as they are the focus of the verse:

- ضَامِنًا (example 3).
- ضَامِنًا (example 4).
- ضَامِنًا (example 5).
- ضَامِنًا (example 6).
- ضَامِنًا (example 7).

In the examples below, the prepositional phrases (upon us) & لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ /لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (for you) & لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (upon us) in example 30, لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (for him) in example 18 & 20, and لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (for Allah the most Gracious) in 25 & 22 have been moved before the object of the verb, or the object of the /لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (example 30).

- لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (example 30).
- لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (example 32).
- لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (example 18).
- لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (example 20).
- لِلرَّحۡمََٰنِ (example 25).
In examples 22 and 24, the adversative particle \textit{rather}/(yet) emphasizes the oneness of Allah who created the heavens and earth and the impossibility of Allah having a child/son. The part after \textit{rather}/(yet), refutes the part before it.

- حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ (example 21).
- وَإِذَا قَالُواْ ٱللَّهُمَّ ۚ أَن تَسۡتَنۡقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۚ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ (example 24).

The oneness of Allah and impossibility of Allah having a son are semantically emphasized by \\textit{glory be to Allah} as in examples 19 & 23 below:

- ما أَنْفُذُواْ إِلَّا بِسُلۡطَٰنِ بِهَٰذَآٖ (Example 19).
- وَإِذَا قَالُواْ ٱللَّهُمَّ ۚ أَن تَسۡتَنۡقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۚ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ (Example 23).

In few more verses, the copulative pronoun of separation \textit{is} inserted for emphasis especially after \\textit{glory be to Allah} as in examples 18 above and examples 23 and 27 & 31 below:

- لَا تَنفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلۡطَٰنِ بِهَٰذَآٖ (Example 23).
- وَإِذَا قَالُواْ ٱللَّهُمَّ ۚ أَن تَسۡتَنۡقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۚ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ (example 27).
- وَإِذَا قَالُواْ ٱللَّهُمَّ ۚ أَن تَسۡتَنۡقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۚ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ (example 31).

4.7. \\textit{Rhetorical Devices Conveying Impossibility in The Holy Quran}

Verses of impossibility in the current study use few metaphors as in the following verses:

- حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ (example 8).
- إنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ تَدۡعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ لَن يَخْلُقُواْ ذُبَابٗا (example 13).

The analogy in "until the rope of the ship enters the eye of the needle" confirms the impossibility of entering paradise by those who denied God’s verses.

The verses in which God challenges mankind, the jinn and the disbelievers to come up with a book, 10 surahs or even one surah similar to the Quran use familiar examples and small things to make the challenge/impossibility even harder as in:

- فَإِلَّا قَالُواْ ٱللَّهُ وَلَدّٗاٖۗ سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥ (example 10).
- فَأَمۡطِر عَلَيۡنَا حِجَارَةّٗ مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ (example 15).
- There is a paradox in example 14.

On the contrary, when the disbelievers defy Allah or the Prophets, they ask for what they perceive as impossible acts such as raining stones, bringing down torture, sending an angel with the prophet, sending the prophet a treasure or a huge orchard to eat from:

- فَأَمۡضِيُّواْ فِي ٱلۡأَسۡوَاقِ لَوۡلَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ (example 17).
- وَلَا ٱسۡتَنۡقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ (example 21).

In addition, the hyperbole (all mankind \& jinn) is used to confirm the impossibility of getting away from the realms of heaven and earth and the impossibility of the task of coming up with even one surah like the Quran and the futility of their efforts as in:

- وَإِن يُسۡتَنۡقِذُوهُمُ ٱللَّهُ شَيۡـ ّٗا لَّا يَسۡتَنۡقِدُوهُ مِثَّا ۚ أَيَدَّهُ يَذۡهَبُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ تَدۡعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ لَبۡلِنَّا ذۡهَبُواْ ذُبَابٗا (example 13).

The impossibility in some other verses is counterfactual and paradoxical as making those in the graves hear (example 12) or when the dying disbelievers ask Allah to be returned to life so that they do good. Bringing back those who have died to life again is a counterfactual and paradoxical act.

- حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ (example 26).

There is an antithesis in example 12 as there is a contrasting or opposing relationship between penetrating the earth and rising up and be as tall as mountains.

5. Conclusion
This study sought to explore the grammatical and rhetorical structures of verses of impossibility in the Holy Quran. Analysis of a sample of verses of impossibility showed that such verses use a complex grammatical structures and rhetorical devices that contain conditional sentences, negative, imperative, interrogative, and emphatic structures, few modals, metaphors, hyperbole, antitheses and counterfactuals to describe events that can never or rarely happen, tasks that are difficult or impossible to perform by the disbelievers, futile efforts, challenges, stubborness of the disbelievers, in addition to incongruous behaviors. The verses of impossibility in the sample focus on logical, temporary and permanent impossibilities. Other rhetorical features of the Holy Quran such as antiphrasis, asyndeton, cadence, chiasmus, epizeuxis, equivoque, isocolon, palindrome, polyptoton, synedcoche and others are whether in the whole Quran or in specific verses are still open for further investigation by future researchers.

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