
RESEARCH ARTICLE

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

Prof. Reima Al-Jarf

King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Corresponding Author: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf, **E-mail:** reima.al.jarf@gmail.com

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 *أن* /?an/ (if), *حتى* /Hatta:/ (until), *لولا* /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, equivoque, 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 readers¹. The Quran utilizes rhythmic prose in Arabic known (Sajj' سجع). 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

¹ www.whyislam.org/the-miracles-of-the-qurans-literature-unveiling-divine-eloquence/

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 Qur'an and its ability to defy imitability and hence translatability (El Mallah, 2022); appraisal of the use of metaphors in the Holy Qur'an (Msoke, & Msuya, 2023); a pragmatic study of irony in some selected Quranic verses (Al-Nasrawi & Dawood, 2022); the discourse of Qur'anic metaphors and comprehension of the Holy Qur'an (Atabik, 2021); the rhetoric of ironic discourse of the Qur'an (Abuisaac, Sapar & Wolf, 2020); pragmatic meaning of questions in verses about stories in the Holy Qur'an (Santosa, Nurkamto, 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 Sapar, 2021); interpretation and translation of figures of speech in the Holy Qur'an (Rshaid, & Abuisaac, 2021); analysis of figurative language translation in the Quran (Alasbli, 2020); analysis of four English translations of Kināyah as a figure of speech in the Qur'an (Naseef, 2018); explicitation in the translation of Qur'anic binomials (Al-Otaibi, 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 Qur'anic discourse (Saloomi, 2022); discourse analysis and the rhetorical function of deixis in the Holy Qur'an (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 (iltifÉt) 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 in four major exegesis books (Al-Kashaf by Zamakhshari, Al-Bahr Al-Muhit by Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azhim by Ibn Kathir, Ruhul Ma'ani by Al-Alusi) and compared them with modern scientific findings.

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 Enna, أن Anna, لام الابتداء Lam for starting, السين seen, سوف Sawfa, نون التوكيد noon for emphasis, لام القسم Lam that fall into the answer to the oath, and قد qad in some Qur'anic verses². 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, metonyms, 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

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 (الرماد ينفخ في الرماح *blowing in ashes*; بارد يضرب في حديد بارد *beat cold iron*); challenge (لو يروح في سابع سما *if he goes to the seventh sky*; لو يطير *if he flies*); stubbornness: (عنزة ولو طارت) *it is a goat even if it flies*); incongruity (البيضة ما تكسر حجر) *an egg does not break a stone*); things that are impossible to fix or cannot be done (سم الخياط في الجمل حتى يلج) *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 nomological. 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 nomologically 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 sentence⁴ (الجملة الشرطية) in Arabic consists of three parts: (i) the condition or possible situation (الشرط) 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 (جواب الشرط) 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 شرطية) 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 (شرط) includes the requirement of an action/event (حدث) leading to whatever result.

In Arabic, many particles are used in conditional statements as *إنّ* /?inna/ if; *منّ* /man/ who *أيّ* /??ayy/ what ; *أتىّ* /?anna/ whence; *أيّما* /?aynamaa/ wherever; *أيّان* /?ayyana/ in what time; even if; *حيثما* /Hayθumaa/ wherever; *كيفما* /kayfamaa/ in whatever way; *لو* /laulaa/ if; *لولا* /laulaa/ if; *ما* /maa/ that which; *مهما* /mahmaa/ whatever; *متى* /mataa/ when; *إدما* /?iðmaa/ whenever *لما* /lammaa/ when. The construction *لو أنّ* is usually used instead of *لو* alone if a nominal sentence is involved, because *أنّ* 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* after *لو* (Al-Jurf, 1996; Al-Jarf, 1995; Al-Jarf, 1995; Al-Jarf, 1990).

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_idioms_of_improbability

⁴ <https://arabic-for-nerds.com/grammar/conditional-sentence-in-arabic/>

2.3 Negation in Arabic⁵

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: لا, لم, لا, ما, /*laa, lam, lan, maa*/. Verbal sentences are simply negated by just adding a negative particle before the verb. When لَمْ (*lam*) is used before a present verb, it makes it a past action (لَمْ تَأْكُلْ مَهَا الْعِشَاءَ *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 لَنْ /*lan*/ is added before a present verb, it negates an action in the future as in لَنْ تَأْكُلْ سَارَةَ الْعِشَاءَ *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 negation particle لَنْ /*lan*/.

When the negative particle لا /*la*:/ is added before a present verb, it will negate an action in the present tense, or a habitual action. لا أَشْرَبُ الْحَلِيبَ /*lā 'ašrabu al-ḥaliyb*/ *I don't drink the milk*.

To negate an imperative verb, which is used to give instructions and commands, we use the particle لا (*lā*). 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 تَذْهَبِ إِلَى الْجَامِعَةِ الْيَوْمَ *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 (مَا لَمْ يَذْهَبِ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ بِالْأَمْسِ *I did not go to school yesterday*).

To negate nominal sentences (إِسْمِيَّةٌ [*ismiyyah*]) that start with a noun/subject, ليس (*laysa*) is insert at the beginning of the sentence before the subject as in: لَيْسَ الْوَلَدُ طَوِيلًا *(the boy is not tall)*.

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Further particles that make sentences negative are: لا مَكَانَ /*lā maka:n*/ *nowhere/not anywhere*, لا أَحَدَ (*lā ?aHad*) *no one/nobody*; لا شَيْءَ (*la: shay?*) *nothing/not anything*, لا... ولا /*la: ... wala/ neither...nor*. Other commonly used particles are قَطُّ /*qaTT*/ (ever, at all) as in لَمْ أَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ قَطُّ /*lam ?af'al ḍalika qaTT*/ *I have never done that*; أَبَدًا /*abadan*/ as in لَنْ أَزُورَهُ أَبَدًا /*lan ?azu:rahu ?abadan*/ *I will never visit him*. قَطُّ (*qaṭṭ*) and أَبَدًا /*abadan*/ can only be used for negation (Al-Jarf, 1996; Al-Jurf, 1995; Al-Jarf, 1995; Al-Jarf, 1990).

2.4 Emphasis in Arabic

Emphasis⁶ 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 (وَإِذَا دَكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا "When the earth has been leveled - pounded and crushed"; وجاء ربك والملك صفاً وجاه ربك والملك صفاً "And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank.") (ii) Emphasis by fronting التقديم والتأخير which involves transposing a constituent from the middle or end of a string of discourse to the initial position (والرجز فاهجر "and uncleanliness avoid"; ، إِيَّاكَ "and on Allah let all men of faith put their trust"; "It is You we worship and You we ask for help"; تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ تَسْتَعِينُ "and We made his descendants those remaining [on the earth]"). (iii) Copulative Pronoun of separation' ضمير الفصل 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 وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ "and We made his descendants those remaining [on the earth]". (iv) Copulative Pronoun of Significance as in قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ "Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One." (v) By using certain emphatic words such as: كُلٌّ عَيْنٌ & نَفْسٌ /*nafs*/ Reflexive Pronouns (إِنَّمَا يَبْلُغُنَّ عِنْدَ الْكِبَرِ أَحَدَهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهِمَا) /*kilaa*/, /*kilta*/ both (كِلَاكُمْ أجمعون: *all*, as in: فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ "o the angels prostrated - all of them entirely"; "Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], uff, and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word"; and as in: كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ "Every soul will taste death."

In addition, Arabic has several emphatic particles⁷ that have a variety of functions and meanings as in: إِنَّ /*inna*/ & أِنَّ /*anna*/ verily; introductory لَأَمْ الْإِتِّمَاءِ /*laam?* of oath; لَأَمْ الْقَسَمِ /*la:m?* of oath; نون التوكيد الخفيفة /*nu:n*/; نون التوكيد الثقيلة⁸ /*nu:n*/ as إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلُونَ سَعِيرًا "Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly

⁵ <https://www.arabicpod101.com/blog/2021/08/10/arabic-negation/#:~:text=In%20order%20to%20perform%20Arabic,%C4%81%2C%20lam%2C%20lan.>

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; Qudissy, 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:
 - الله نور السموات والأرض مثل نوره كمشكاة فيها مصباح المصباح في زجاجة الزجاج كأنها كوكب دري يوقد من شجرة مباركة زيتونة لا شرقية ولا غربية يكاد زيتها يضيء ولو لم تمسسه نار نور على نور يهدي الله لنوره من يشاء ويضرب الله الأمثال للناس والله بكل شيء عليم *"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 nor of the west, 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".*
 - وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا حَرَّمَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخَطَّفَهُ الطُّيُورُ أَوْ تَهْوَى بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ. *"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 *السَّمَاءُ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ* *"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 *إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا* *"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.
 - وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ *"Not a thing, fresh or dry, but it is in a Manifest Book."*
 - إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ *"He created the heavens and the earth in six days."*
 - وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ *"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.
 - وَلَا تَخْرُقِ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طَوْلًا *"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."*
 - قُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ *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'eel (فعيل)', and 'Fa'aal' (فعال). These patterns enhance the impact of the message, invite deeper reflection, serve to emphasize truths and provoke contemplation as in:
 - إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ مِّن قَوْفِكُمْ وَمِنَ اسْفَلِ مِنْكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونًا *"[Remember] when they came at you from above you and from below you, and when eyes shifted [in fear], and hearts reached the throats and you assumed about Allah [various] assumptions."*
 - مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سَنَابِلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ *"The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a grain of corn that sprouts seven ears, and in every ear there are a hundred grains."*
- **Counterfactuals** as in: *قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلْمٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا* *"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:

- وما يستوي الاعمى والبصير ولا الظلمات ولا النور وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْخَزْوَرُ “Not equal are the blind and the seeing. Nor are the darknesses and the light. Nor are the shade and the heat”.
- فمن يعمل مثقال ذرة خيرا يره ومن يعمل مثقال ذرة شرا يره “So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”
- Pun as in: **السَّاعَةُ** يُفْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ “And the Day the Hour appears the criminals will swear they had remained but an hour. Thus they were deluded.”

3. Sample of Verses of Impossibility

A sample of 50 verses containing 62 impossibilities was collected from the Holy Quran. The English meanings (translation) of those verses were taken from quran.com by Mustafa Khattab and <https://equran.me> which is based on the Al-Madina Quran issued by King Fahad Complex for Printing the Holy Quran. <https://equran.me> is a comprehensive website that offers various kinds of information related to each verse in the Quran, including recitation, listening, parsing of the verses, and Arabic explication according to five notable explication books. The meaning of the Quran is translated into several languages including English.

In 29 examples, God or His prophets challenge the disbelievers and in the other 13 examples, the disbelievers ask God and His Prophets for tasks, actions, or things that are difficult or impossible to perform or obtain (as perceived by the disbelievers).

In analyzing the verses of impossibility, all conditional, negation and 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 (**وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِّنَ آلِهِ** + **وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمَلَكُوتِ** + **وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ** (الذِّكْرِ ١٧). Verbs in the imperative mood (وادعوا) or present tense verbs attached to imperative particles such as lam (فليأتوا) 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 **أَوْ يَكُونُ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ رُّحْرُفٍ أَوْ تَرْفَى فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُفَيْكَ حَتَّى تُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا تُعَرِّفُهُ قُلْ** (الاسراء 90-93) **سَيَحْتَجِنَ رَبِّي هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا نَشْرًا مِّنْ سَبِيلِ** (الاسراء 90-93) as (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 **لَنْ** 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 are 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) **يُمَجِّتِ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِذَا اسْتَجْتَمَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطٰنٍ (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 **إِن** /?in/ (if) + the condition (**أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا**) + the apodosis expressed with an imperative verb (**فَانفُذُوا**) 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) **قُلْ لِّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْءٰنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا (الاسراء 88)**

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) قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمَا أَتَّبِعُهُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (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 افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَادْعُوا مَن اسْتَضَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (هود 13)

Or do they say, "He1 has fabricated this 'Quran'!"? Say, 'O Prophet, 'Produce ten fabricated sūrahs like it and seek help from whoever you can—other than Allah—if what you say is true!"

(5) أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَن اسْتَضَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (يونس 38)

Or do they claim, "He made it up!"? Tell them 'O Prophet, 'Produce one sūrah like it then, and seek help from whoever you can—other than Allah—if what you say is true!"

(6) وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا عَلَىٰ فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (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.

(7) (الطور 33-34) فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِن كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقْوَلُهُ لَآ لَا نُؤْمِنُ

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 *لن* /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 *لا* /laa/ + a present tense verb (*يأتون*) which confirms that they will never be able to produce a book similar to the Quran.

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 *فأتوا* (produce) & *وادعوا* (call upon) that demand the production of a similar book, 10 Suras, then even one Sura⁹. Verses (2) to (7) express a permanent impossibility.

(8) أَمَّنْ يَبْدُوْا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهُ وَمَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَلَيْهَ مَعِ اللَّهُ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (النمل 64)

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."

(9) **لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا ءِالِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (الأنبياء 22)**

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 **لام** (la:m/ + verb **لَفَسَدَتَا** (would spoil) in the apodosis to show the consequence of claiming that there are other gods with Allah. Here, the impossibility is eternal.

(10) **إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّىٰ تَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ (الأعراف 40)**

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.

(11) **وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ (فاطر22)**

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 **لا** /maa/ + **أنت** /ant/ you + **بمسمع** (make those in the graves hear) now and in the future. This impossibility is permanent and logical.

(12) **فَأِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمِعُ الْأَصْمَىٰ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ (الروم 52)**

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.

(13) **إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمِعُ الْأَصْمَىٰ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ (النمل 80)**

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 **لا** /laa/ + present tense verb **تسمع** (hear) + **الموتى** (the dead) and **الصم** (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.

وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَن تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَن تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا (الاسراء 37) (14)

And do not walk on the earth arrogantly. Surely you can neither crack the earth nor stretch to the height of the mountains.

In (14), the Quran dissuades people from walking on earth arrogantly by using a negative present verb referring to the present time 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 لن /lan/ + present verb expressing the future (لَن تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ) and negative particle لن /lan/ + present verb in (وَلَن تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا) 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.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضَرْبٌ مِّثْلُ مَا فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَن يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِن يَسْلُبْنَهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبِ وَالْمَطْلُوبِ (الحج 73) (15)

O humanity! A lesson is set forth, so listen to it 'carefully': those 'idols' you invoke besides Allah can never create 'so much as' a fly, even if they 'all' were to come together for that. And if a fly were to snatch anything away from them, they cannot 'even' retrieve it from the fly. How powerless are those who invoke and those invoked!

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 إن /?inna/ (verily) + إن clause (*the idols that the disbelievers worship*) + لن يخلقوا /lan/?/ (*will not create*). 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 إن /?in/ (if) in the subordinate clause (condition) and the main clause beginning with a negative particle. The impossibility herein is logical and permanent.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (البقرة 258) (16)

Are you 'O Prophet' not aware of the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord because Allah had granted him kingship? 'Remember' when Abraham said, "My Lord is the One Who has power to give life and cause death." He argued, I too have the power to give life and cause death." Abraham challenged 'him', "Allah causes the sun to rise from the east. So make it rise from the west." And so the disbeliever was dumbstruck. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

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 إن /?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.

مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ أَنْ لَن يَنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ لْيَقْطَعْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ نُذِهُنَّ كَنُذُهَا مَا تَغِيبُ (الحج 15) (17)

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 /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 فَلْتَنْظُرْ & ثُمَّ تَقْطَعْ, فَلْتَمَدِّدْ, each of which consists of the imperative particle ل /l/ + a present tense verb referring to the future (consequence). The imperative ل + 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.

(18) بَدِيعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اَنۢىۤ يَكُوۡنُ لَهٗ وَلَدٌ وَّلِمۡ يَكُنۡ لَهٗ صَحۡبَةٌۭ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَیْءٍ وَهُوَ یَكۡلُمُ السَّیِّءِ عَلَیۡمِ (الانعام 101)

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.

(19) مَا كَانَ لِلّٰهِ اَنۡ یَّتَّخِذَ مِنۡ وَلَدٍۭ سُبْحٰنَهٗۙ اِذَا قَضٰۤی اَمْرًاۙ قٰیۡمًا یَقُوۡلُ لَهٗ كُنۡ فَیَكُوۡنُ (مریم 35)

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.

(20) وَقُلۡ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیۡ لَمۡ یَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَّلِمۡ یَكُنۡ لَهٗ شَرِیۡكٌ فِی الْمُلۡكِ وَّلِمۡ یَكُنۡ لَهٗ وَّلِیٌّ مِّنۡ الدُّنۡیَا وَكَثِیۡرَةٌ تَكۡذِبُوۡنَ (الاسراء 111)

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.

(21) تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ یَتَفَطَّرٰنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْاَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًا اَنۡ دَعَوٰا لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَّلَدًا وَّمَا یَنۡبَغِیۡ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ اَنۡ یَّتَّخِذَ وَّلَدًاۙ اِنۡ كُلُّۭ مِنْ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِلَّا عٰتِی الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبۡدًا (مریم 90-93)

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).

(22) وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗۙ بَلۡ لَهٗ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ كُلُّۭ لَهٗ فٰیۡنُوۡنَ بَدِیۡعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاِذَا قَضٰۤی اَمْرًاۙ قٰیۡمًا یَقُوۡلُ لَهٗ كُنۡ فَیَكُوۡنُ (البقرة 116-117)

And they (Jews, Christians and pagans) say: Allah has begotten a son (children or offspring). Glory 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.

(23) قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗۙ هُوَ الْغَنِیُّ لَهٗ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ اِنۡ عِنۡدَكُمۡ مِّنۡ سُلۡطٰنٍۭ بِهٰذَاۙ اَتَّقُوۡلُوۡنَ عَلٰی اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ (یونس 68)

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.

(24) وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗۙ بَلۡ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُوۡنَ (الانبیاء 26)

And they say, "The Most Merciful has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, they are [but] honored servants.

(25) قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ (الزخرف 81) (81)

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

(26) لَوْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ لَهُوَ لَاتَّخَذْتُهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا إِنْ كُنَّا فَعَالِينَ (الأنبياء 17) (17)

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

(27) لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَأَصْطَفَىٰ مِمَّا تَخْلُقُ مَا تَشَاءُ سُبْحٰنَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَجْدُ الْقَهَّارُ (الزمر 4) (4)

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 لم /lam/ + a present verb (وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةً) are used to negate having a partner in the past. In (18) the negative particle ما /maa/ + a past verb (مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ) are used to negate having a child in the past, present, or future. In (20), three conjoined impossibilities are mentioned: The negative particle لم /lam/ (not) + a present verb (وَلَمْ يَكُنْ & لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ) 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 وَمَا يَنْبَغِي (should not a son).

In (22), the impossibility of having a son is confirmed by glorifying Allah (سُبْحٰنَهُ) 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 سُبْحٰنَهُ and giving several reasons for not having a son. First by using a Copulative Pronoun of separation هو ضمير الفصل in an emphatic purpose; secondly, fronting the PP in الأرض وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ; thirdly, a conditional clause beginning with إِنْ /in/ (if) (إِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ بِهٰذَا) and fourthly, a rhetorical question in أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ.

In (24), the claim that Allah has a son/child is semantically refuted by saying سُبْحٰنَهُ (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 إِنْ /in/ (if) in the condition and the Copulative Pronoun of separation فَاِنَّا in the apodosis showing the consequence.

In (26), the impossibility of having a son is shown by a conditional sentence beginning with لو /lau/ (if) in the condition and a past tense verb لَاتَّخَذْتُهُ 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 لو /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 لَأَصْطَفَىٰ which is a past tense verb + particle لَ /la/. 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 سُبْحٰنَهُ to glorify Allah.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ خَلَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ الظُّلُمَ اللَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَىٰ تَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ تَأْتِكُمْ بَضَائِعُ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ (القصص 71) (28)

Say, "Have you considered: if Allah should make for you the night continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than Allah could bring you light? Then will you not hear

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ خَلَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ الظُّلُمَ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَىٰ تَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ تَأْتِيكُمْ يَلَيْلٌ تَسْكُنُونَ فِيهَا أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ (القصص 72) (29)

Say, "Have you considered: if Allah should make for you the day continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than Allah could bring you a night in which you may rest? Then will you not see

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 (*مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ*) that 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 fulfil certain demands in order for them to believe in Him, in the Prophet or in the Quran.

قال عيسى ابن مريم اللهم ربنا أنزل علينا مائدة من السماء تكون لنا عيدا لأولنا وآخرنا وآية منك وارزقنا وأنت خير الرازقين (المائدة 114) (30)

Jesus, son of Mary, prayed, "O Allah, our Lord! Send us from heaven a table spread with food as a feast for us—the first and last of us—and as a sign from You. Provide for us! You are indeed the Best Provider."

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.

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حَجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ أُنزِلْ عَلَيْنَا آيَةً فَتَذَكَّرَ بَعْضُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ (الأنفال 32) (31)

And 'remember' when they prayed, "O Allah! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down stones upon us from the sky or overcome us with a painful punishment."

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* & *أُنزِلْ*. The two apodoses contain two impossibilities by human standards: raining stones and giving them a severe punishment. Here, the impossibility is logical.

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا (32)

أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّجِيلٍ وَعَنْبٌ فَتَقْجِرَ الْأَنْهَارُ خِلْفَهَا تَفْجِيرًا

أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا رَعِمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَنَا بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا

أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرٍ أَوْ تَرْفَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِذَوِّكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا تُفَرِّقُ فِيهِ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي هَلْ كُنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا

(الاسراء 90-93)

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.

(33) وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُقَيْبِكَ حَتَّى تُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَقْرُوهُ (الإسراء 93)

and even then we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book that we can read." Say, "Glory be to my Lord! Am I not only a human messenger?"(93)

(34) وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ (الأنعام 124)

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

(35) وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يُمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَرَىٰ اللَّهَ بِنُورٍ خَلْقَهُ فَخَذَرْتَهُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تُنظَرُونَ (البقرة 55)

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 *نؤمن* (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, having 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.

(36) وَلَوْ أَنَّا أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَّذَلَّ وَنَخْزَىٰ (طه 134)

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.

(37) مَا لِهَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَهُ مَلَكَ فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا أَوْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ حَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا (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.

(38) وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا (الفرقان ٣٢)

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.

قَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَ لَفَضِي الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يَنْظُرُونَ (الأنعام 8) (39)

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.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا لَوْلَا أُوتِيَ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ أُولِمُ تَكْفُرُهُمْ إِمَّا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَالُوا سِحْرَانِ تَظَاهَرَا وَقَالُوا إِنَّا بِكُمْ لَوْمَةٌ (القصص 48) (40)

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.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَبَهتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ آلَاتِنَا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ (البقرة 118) (41)

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 (36), (37), (38), (39), (40)& (41) several impossible acts are demanded by the disbelievers each of which in the form of a conditional sentence that begins with the conditional particle لولا /laula:/ (if not) + the condition + the apodosis (consequence). In (36), there are two embedded impossibilities: The first begins with the ولو أنا /wa + lau + ?anna/ (and if we) destroyed them with torture + the apodosis رَتْنَا لَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا (they would have said oh Our Lord) and the second conditional sentence begins with the conditional particle لولا /laula:/ (if) + the condition in the subordinate clause (إِنَّا رَسُوْلًا) If only You had sent us a messenger + the apodosis (فَتَتَّبِعُ أَتَيْنَا) we would have followed Your revelations).

In (37), the disbelievers demanded sending down an angel with the Prophet. A conditional sentence beginning with لولا /laula:/ (if) is used +the condition (أَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ) + a present modal indicating the present and the future (فَيَكُونُ) + three conjoined apodoses (reasons) فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا أَوْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْهِ كَنزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا

In (38), the disbelievers are demanding the revelation of the whole Quran all at once using a conditional sentence comprised of the conditional particle لولا + the condition وَجَدَةَ جُمْلَةً أَلْفَرَّانُ (sending down the whole Quran) + the apodosis is not stated but can be inferred. The same applies to example (39) that is comprised of two conditional sentences: the first containing the particle لولا + the condition أَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ. Here again the apodosis is not stated but implied (in order to believe). The second begins with ولو /wa + lau/ (if) + the condition أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَ + the apodosis لَا يَنْظُرُونَ (the matter would have been decided and they would not be reprieved). Similarly, in (40), the disbelievers are asking God that they be given what Moses was given. The conditional sentence herein begins with the particle لولا (if not) + the condition أُوتِيَ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ but the apodosis (they would believe) is not stated and can be inferred from the following part. The same structure of the conditional sentence is applied in (42): particle لولا (if not) + two conjoined conditions يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ + but the apodosis (they would believe) is not stated but can be inferred from the following part. The disbelievers' demand in these verses confirm that it is impossible for them to believe and that disbelievers in the previous epochs made the same demands but they never changed their stance.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ (المؤمنون 99-100) (42)

When death approaches any of them, they cry, "My Lord! Let me go back, o I may do good in what I left behind."
Never! It is only a 'useless' appeal they make. And there is a barrier behind them until the Day they are resurrected.

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 إذا /?itha/ (if) + the condition (death comes to one of them) + the apodosis contains an imperative verb (a request (قَالَ رَبِّ أَرْجِعُونِ) + a modal لَعَلِّي (I might).

4.2 Negation in Verses of Impossibility in the Quran

Several verses of impossibility in the sample contain the negative particles (لم، لن، لا، ما) to show that the acts demanded by the disbelievers cannot be performed or achieved at all. Verses in examples 12, 13, 15 & 18-21 contain لن + a present verb which affirm that the actions expressed in those verses can never happen or achieved as they are counterfactual (ولن تبلغ الجبال) (example 14). The verses that contain negative particles and that were mentioned in the previous examples are as follows:

- (example 32) وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا
- (example 33) وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُؤْيَاكَ حَتَّى تَنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا مَكِئَاتًا تَقْرُوءُ
- (example 34) وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ
- (example 35) وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يُمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى تَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً
- (example 14) إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرُقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طَوْلًا
- (example 15) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ
- (example 17) مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

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

- (example 20) وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمَلِكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وِليٌّ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا
- (example 18) أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةً

In examples 2, 10, 12, 13, & 15, the negative particle لا negates the present tense verbs يدخلون يأتون to denote all-the-time impossibility:

- (example 2) قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْإِنْسُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ
- (example 10) لَا تَفْتَحْ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ
- (example 12) فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمِعُ الْأَعْمَىٰ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ
- (example 13) إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمِعُ الْأَعْمَىٰ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ
- (example 15) وَإِنْ يَسْتَلِئِهِمُ الدُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَفِيدُونَ مِنْهُ

In example 11, the negative particle ما /maa/ (not) precedes the pronoun which implies an impossible action. In examples 11, 19 & 21, ما is followed by a present verb يستوي mad modal verbs كان (be) and ينبغي (should not have). In all the examples below, ما is negating present tense verbs to denote permanent impossibilities:

- (example 11) وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَنْ فِي الْقُبُورِ
- (example 19) مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ
- (example 21) وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا. إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا

4.3 Use of Imperatives in Verses of Impossibility

Several verses of impossibility in the sample utilize commands or imperative verbs as (هَاتُوا - فَاتُوا - أَرْجِعُونِ) (فَانفُذُوا) 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:

- (example 42) قَالَ رَبِّ أَرْجِعُونِ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ
- (example 16) فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالسَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ
- (example 8) قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ
- (example 6) وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
- (example 5) أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
- (example 4) أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُورٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرَاتٍ وَادْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
- (example 3) قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمَا أَتَّبِعُهُ
- (example 33) فَأَنْفِذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنٍ
- (example 31) وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ أُنزِلْ عَلَيْنَا آيَاتٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ

In addition, some commands are present verbs + imperative particles ف /f/ (فأمر - فأتوا) or ل /l/ (لِيُفْطَعْ) or both as in - فليتمدّد - فليتنظر in the above examples.

- (example 7). أم يقولون تقوله بل لا يؤمنون فليأتوا بحديث مثله
- (example 17). من كان يظن أن لن ينصره الله في الدنيا والآخرة فليمدد بسبب إلى السماء ثم ليُفْطَعْ فليتنظر هل يذهبن كيده ما يعيظ

4.4 Use of Modals in Verses of Impossibility

The use of modals in verses of impossibility is very limited. Only 3 examples were found: *should not*, وما ينبغي *I might* لعلني

(*will be*) whether affirmative or negative, as in the following verses:

- (example 42). حتى إذا جاء أحدهم الموت قال رب ارجعون لعلي أعمل صالحا
- (example 21). وما ينبغي للرحمن أن يتخذ ولدا.
- (example 37). فيكون معه نذيرا أو يلقى إليه كثر أو تكون له جنة يأكل منها
- (example 30). أنزل علينا مائدة من السماء تكون لنا عيدا لأولنا وآخرنا وآية منك
- (example 32). أو تكون لك جنة من نخيل وعنب
- (example 32). أو يكون لك بيت من زخرف
- (example 20). ولم يكن له شريك في الملك ولم يكن له ولي من الدل
- (example 18). ولم تكن له صجته
- (example 19). ما كان لله أن يتخذ من ولد سبحانه

4.5 Use of Questions in Verses of Impossibility

Data analysis showed few rhetorical questions found in the verses of impossibility in the sample as *صحيته* لم يكن له *صحيته* لم يكن له *صحيته* لم يكن له. Example 18 starts with the question word *أنى* (how) and the question in example 8 begins with *ومن* (who) and example 28 begins with *من* (which deity). However, the questions in examples 8, 28, 23 & 29 are polar questions using the interrogative particle *أ* *الهمزة* *ا/?* and polar questions in examples 32 and 17 use the interrogative particle *هل*:

- (example 8). أم ينبدؤا الخلق ثم يعيده ومن يرزقكم من السماء والأرض أله مع الله
- (example 28). من إله غير الله يأتيكم بضياء أفا لا تسمعون
- (example 29). من إله غير الله يأتيكم بليل تسكنون فيه أفا لا تبصرون
- (example 23). أتقولون على الله ما لا تعلمون
- in verse 32. هل كنت إلا بترا رسولا
- (example 17). ثم ليُفْطَعْ فليتنظر هل يذهبن كيده ما يعيظ

4.6 Emphasis in Verses of Impossibility in the Quran

The most common emphatic particle found in the sample of verses is *إن* *inna/ verily* & *أناك/ innaka/* as in examples 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 *فأنتك لا تسمع الموتى* - *فأنتك لا تسمع الموتى* - *فأنتك لا تسمع الموتى* - *فأنتك لا تسمع الموتى*. In each of these verses, the emphatic particle *إن* is followed by another emphatic/negation particle *لن* that is always followed by a present continuous verb. In example 16, *فإن* is used in the subordinate clause (*فإن الله يأتي بالشمس من المشرق*) and the imperative verb *فأت* in the main clause *فأتها من المغرب*.

Moreover, in some verses of impossibility, the emphasized phrase/idea is moved to the front of the verse and the less emphatic is at the end as in verse 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7 where the conditional clause *إن كنتم صدقين* is moved to the end of the verse and the part containing the imperative verbs *فأتوا فليأتوا فأتوا* are moved to the beginning of the verses as they are the focus of the verse:

- (example 3). فأتوا يكتب من عند الله هو اهدي منهما أتبعه إن كنتم صدقين
- (example 4). أم يقولون اقتراه فأتوا يعثر سور مثله مفتريات وأدعوا من استنظعتم من دون الله إن كنتم صادقين
- (example 5). أم يقولون اقتراه فأتوا يسورة مثله وأدعوا من استنظعتم من دون الله إن كنتم صادقين
- (example 6). وإن كنتم في ريب مما نزلنا على عبدنا فأتوا يسورة من مثله وأدعوا شهداءكم من دون الله إن كنتم صادقين
- (example 7). فليأتوا بحديث مثله إن كانوا صدقين

In the examples below, the prepositional phrases *علينا* (upon us) & *لنا* (for us) in example 30, *لك* (for you) & *علينا* (upon us) in example 32, *له* (for him) in example 18 & 20, and *للرحمن* (for Allah the most Gracious) in 25 & 22 have been moved before the object of the verb, or the object of *كان* /kaana/ in the following:

- (example 30). قال عيسى ابن مريم اللهم ربنا أنزل علينا مائدة من السماء تكون لنا عيدا لأولنا وآخرنا وآية منك وارزقنا وأنت خير الرازقين
- (example 32). أو تكون لك جنة من نخيل وعنب فتفجر الأنهار جليلها تفجيرا. أو تسقط السماء كما رعمت علينا كسفا أو تأتي باله والملتكة قبلا. أو يكون لك بيت من زخرف أو ترعى في السماء ولن نؤمن لرقيك حتى تنزل علينا كتابا نقرؤه. فل سبحان ربى هل كنت إلا بترا رسولا (example 32).
- (example 18). يدع السموت والأرض أتى يكون له ولد ولم تكن له صجته وخلق كل شيء وهو بكل شيء عليم
- (example 20). وقيل الحمد لله الذي لم يتخذ ولدا ولم يكن له شريك في الملك ولم يكن له ولي من الدل وكبره تكبرا
- (example 25). فل إن كان للرحمن ولد فآنا أول العبدین

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, stubbornness 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, synecdoche 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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ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6255-1305>

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