

THE SECRET OF DIVINE RHETORIC: INTEGRATING GENERALIZATION AND EXPLICATION IN THE QUR'ANHaritsna Hasanah¹, and Ali Burhan²¹Ma'had Aly Walindo, Pekalongan, Indonesia²K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid State Islamic University, Pekalongan, Indonesia**Corresponding Author:**

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Abstract

The Qur'an, as the divine word of Allah SWT, possesses a rhetorical uniqueness beyond human speech. One of its miraculous aspects lies in its ability to combine generalization and clarity of meaning (explication) within a single verse. Human language, in general, can only convey either a general or a specific meaning separately, whereas the Qur'an is capable of presenting explicit clarity while encompassing interpretative breadth that remains open across contexts. This study employs a qualitative approach through the thematic exegesis (*tafsīr maudhū'ī*) method and rhetorical-linguistic analysis of verses containing this phenomenon, particularly Allah's words: "Allah grants provision to whom He wills without measure" (Āl 'Imrān: 37). The study reveals that the verse not only has a clear and literal meaning but also opens up multi-layered interpretive possibilities. Its explicit sense serves as comfort for the believers and a reminder for the heedless, while its implicit sense allows diverse interpretations relevant to changing times and communal needs. These findings highlight the magnificence of the Qur'an's rhetoric, contribute to the advancement of Qur'anic studies, and strengthen the spiritual dimension of the Muslim community. Thus, the synthesis of generalization and explication may be regarded as one of the rhetorical secrets of divine discourse affirming the universality of the Qur'an.

Keywords: Divine Rhetoric, Explication, Generalization, I'jāz Balāghī, Qur'an.



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INTRODUCTION

Human language is limited in its capacity to convey meaning. Utterances generally express either generalization or explication, rarely both simultaneously. Human statements, therefore, tend to incline toward one side. The Qur'an, however, as the word of Allah SWT, transcends this limitation by presenting both clarity and expansiveness of meaning in a single verse something unattainable by human rhetoric.

For example, Allah's statement "*He grants provision to whom He wills without measure*" demonstrates how a seemingly simple expression can contain layered meanings. On the one hand, it is straightforward and easily understood; on the other, it opens wide interpretive possibilities: provision without limit, without conditions, without calculation, and independent of human constraints. Consequently, the verse invites multi-layered contemplation, both literal and spiritual, adjusted to the context of its readers and their era.

Such phenomena fall within the domain of the Qur'an's *I'jāz* (miraculous inimitability). Imām al-Jurjānī (d. 1078 CE) explained that the uniqueness of the Qur'an lies in *naẓm* the harmony between word arrangement, syntactic structure, and semantic content. The Qur'an's miraculous nature thus does not rest merely on the beauty of its words but on the integration of form and meaning. Unlike other forms of Arabic literary expression, the Qur'an stands alone, neither prose nor poetry, but a unique literary form. Its distinctiveness renders it inimitable, despite numerous attempts throughout history by experts of the Arabic language.

Based on this background, the present study analyzes how the Qur'an unites generalization and explication within a single rhetorical construction. The analysis aims to reveal the linguistic secrets of the Qur'an while offering contributions to the fields of tafsīr, balāghah, and Islamic rhetoric.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the thematic exegesis method (*tafsīr maudhū'ī*), which entails gathering relevant verses under a single theme and analyzing them comprehensively. This model is deemed most appropriate for examining the fusion of general meaning (generalization) and specific clarity (explication) in Qur'anic rhetoric.

The primary source of this study is the Qur'an itself, particularly verses containing the phrase "*Allah grants provision to whom He wills without measure*" as well as other verses with similar linguistic structures. To enrich the analysis, classical tafsīr sources such as those of al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Rāzī, and Ibn Kathīr are utilized, alongside modern commentaries such as *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Qutb and *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* by Ibn 'Āshūr.

Data collection was conducted through literature review, encompassing Qur'anic texts and exegetical interpretations across historical periods. The analysis proceeded in three stages: first, examining the explicit meaning of the verses; second, exploring their broader and more general meanings as offered by exegetes; and third, synthesizing findings to demonstrate how the Qur'an simultaneously conveys clarity and expansiveness within eloquent expression. To ensure validity, triangulation was applied by comparing the perspectives of exegetes from various methodological and theological backgrounds.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Qur'anic Rhetorical Analysis

1. The Uniqueness of the Divine Word

In the discipline of *uṣūl al-fiqh* as well as Arabic linguistics, the term *'ām* (generality) is understood as an expression encompassing all members of a given category without leaving any specific limitation. Every general expression applies to all elements it covers, unless there exists another evidence that excludes part of it. For instance, the statement of Allah in QS. Al-Baqarah (2:282): “*Indeed, Allah is Knowing of all things*” indicates that His knowledge encompasses all realities, both manifest and hidden. In contrast, *bayān* or *khuṣūṣ* denotes explication, namely an utterance that provides particular restrictions or clarification so that the intended message is no longer ambiguous. In other words, generality conveys expansiveness of meaning, while explication presents specificity and definitiveness.

From the perspective of human language, combining these two aspects is nearly impossible. A statement intended to be general cannot simultaneously hold a particular meaning, for this would create logical and linguistic contradiction. However, the situation is different when it comes to the Word of Allah in the Qur'an. As *kalamullah*, the Qur'an possesses a rhetorical uniqueness unattainable by human language. A single verse can simultaneously present a meaning that is clear and easily understood, while at the same time containing an inexhaustible breadth of interpretation. Scholars have regarded this phenomenon as one of the manifestations of *i'jāz balāghī* the inimitable eloquence of the Qur'an.

This reality is evident in many verses of the Qur'an. For example, QS. Āli 'Imrān (3:37) states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

“*Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without measure.*”

Literally, this verse affirms Allah's absolute freedom in bestowing sustenance. Yet upon deeper reflection, its meaning expands into a symbol of His boundless mercy, an affirmation of divine justice and wisdom, and a spiritual promise for the believers. Thus, a single simple verse can present an explicit and definitive meaning while simultaneously offering vast interpretative possibilities.

This uniqueness is closely related to the Qur'an's style, which combines eloquence, structural precision, and depth of meaning. Interdisciplinary research has shown that linguistic features such as repetition, structural balance, and precise word choice not only reinforce the message but also allow for multilayered understandings in accordance with the reader's capacity. Recent stylistic studies likewise emphasize that the beauty of Qur'anic rhetoric rests not only on sound and structure but also on its ability to unite a transparent literal meaning with a breadth of interpretation that remains ever relevant.

This view is also supported by contemporary scholarship. Ma'arif (2019) highlights that the strength of Qur'anic language lies in its flexibility, whereby a single expression can encompass broad meanings while simultaneously allowing for detailed interpretation without losing coherence. Similarly, Taufiq (2020) affirms that Qur'anic rhetoric presents clear and accessible meanings while preserving a depth of interpretation that remains pertinent across time. It can therefore be ascertained that the Qur'an transcends the limitations of human language, for only the Word of Allah can reconcile two elements that appear rationally contradictory: generality and explication.

2. The Phenomenon of Integrating Generality and Explication

a. Explication in the Verse, Generalization through Exegesis

A verse such as “*Allah provides for whom He wills without measure*” conveys an explicative image: Allah grants sustenance without the mechanism of reckoning. Yet at the same time, the verse opens a wide and flexible interpretative space, ranging from the meaning of divine justice, unlimited generosity, to a spiritual promise or admonition for the faithful.

Thematic exegesis reinforces this phenomenon: a single verse can be analyzed literally while also being explored as a general meaning adaptable to diverse contexts of time and audience, without negating its concrete significance.

b. Rhetorical Style as a Facilitator of Semantic Harmony

Studies of Qur’anic stylistics demonstrate that linguistic structures such as parallelism, repetition, *iltifāt* (shifts in subject or pronoun), and metaphor not only embellish the text but also create layers of meaning that deepen upon reflection. These techniques enable a single verse to deliver a clear point while simultaneously opening a broad horizon of meaning to its readers.

Other interdisciplinary studies have also underscored that the language of the Qur’an possesses persuasive power and narrative authority, shaping scholarly, theological, and ethical discourses within Islam.

3. Case Study of QS. Āli ‘Imrān: 37

This verse demonstrates the profound meaning of the Qur’an’s linguistic dimension, as follows:

No.	Aspect	Exsplication (Claity)	Genealization (Univesality)
1.	Fomal	Allah provides sustenance without reckoning direct and unequivocal	Sustenance may reach anyone, at any time, according to His will
2.	Theological	Affirms that sustenance is not merely a right earned through effort	Reflects divine mercy, wisdom, and justice
3.	Spiritual	Consolation for those in financial hardship	Strengthens faith, instilling belief that Allah can multiply blessings
4.	Hemeneutic	Literal exegesis easily grasped by the layperson	Opens the way for contemplative interpretation with broad and profound layers of meaning

B. The Secret of Divine Rhetoric

1. The Superiority of Qur’anic Language

The language of the Qur’an exhibits unparalleled rhetorical power: *fasāḥah* (eloquence) and *balāghah* (rhetorical precision). These two aspects yield sentence structures that are simple yet laden with depth of meaning. For instance, in QS. Āli ‘Imrān: 37 cited above, the expression appears semantically clear while at the same time carrying expansive interpretive possibilities accessible from multiple perspectives.

Studies on *i’jāz lughawī* (linguistic inimitability) affirm that the Qur’an’s choice of vocabulary, syntactic patterns, and rhetorical style not only display aesthetic beauty but also enable multilayered disclosure of meaning. Research by M. Dicky Prayoga in *Mushaf: Jurnal Tafsir Berwawasan Keindonesiaan* highlights that Ibn ‘Āshūr regarded this linguistic dimension as proof of the Qur’an’s miraculous nature, for it balances the clarity of its wording with the vastness of meaning that continuously develops in accordance with its readers’ contexts.

2. The Dimension of Linguistic Miracle

The Qur'an possesses an inherent openness of meaning, allowing a single verse to yield diverse understandings according to the depth of reflection and the intellectual capacity of its readers. It does not merely convey literal meanings but also contains symbolism, allusions, and spiritual values that can be explored from various perspectives.

This constitutes the essence of the concept of *i'jāz Qur'ānī*, which demonstrates that the uniqueness of the Qur'an lies not only in the beauty of its rhetoric but also in the inexhaustibility of its meanings. A study by Ahmad Thonthowi et al., published in *Insyirah: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa Arab dan Studi Islam*, emphasizes that the miraculousness of the Qur'an can be understood through linguistic analysis, namely the balance between its linguistic structures, informational vastness, and expressive style that always remains relevant to its readers.

3. Rhetorical Implications for the Community

The rhetorical effects of Qur'anic verses are not solely linguistic but also emotional and spiritual. A brief verse such as the one cited above provides comfort to believers experiencing hardship, serves as a warning to those who live in excess, and simultaneously conveys a promise of triumph for the God-fearing. All these messages are encapsulated in concise, dense, yet profoundly meaningful wording.

Thus, it becomes evident that Qur'anic rhetoric does not merely transmit information but also cultivates inner awareness, motivates, and strengthens the conviction of Muslims regarding the greatness of Allah Almighty. This is what distinguishes the Qur'an from ordinary human speech: its linguistic power moves not only the intellect but also touches the heart and soul.

C. Scholarly Implications (Reformulation)

1. Impact on the Study of Arabic Language and *Balāghah*

The Qur'an does not merely convey moral and legal messages but also presents a linguistic structure that is meticulously arranged rhetorically, in which generality and clarity of meaning are unified within a single expression demonstrating the uniqueness of its linguistic miracle (*i'jāz balāghī*).

The rhetorical variations, as seen in Surah al-Bayyinah, display diverse techniques, including *ijmāl* (conciseness) followed by *tafsīl* (elaboration), *al-ṭibāq* (antithesis), *muqābalah* (contrast), *isti'ārah tashrīhiyyah* (extended metaphor), and *tawāfiq al-fawāṣil* (rhythmic harmony of verse endings). This combination enriches the delivery of the message and broadens the dimensions of interpretation.

The linguistic miracle lies in both composition and aesthetics; multidisciplinary studies emphasize that the Qur'an employs linguistic structures and patterns that surpass the standards of classical Arabic literature, allowing for a fusion of meaning, style, and structure in a complementary manner.

The integration of clarity and generality, as revealed through cross-textual analysis, shows that a single expression can convey a directly comprehensible meaning while simultaneously opening space for expansive interpretation, thereby producing layers of meaning that complement one another without contradiction.

2. Impact on the Spirituality of the Ummah

The combination of clarity and generality in the Qur'anic verses is not merely a literary feature but also exerts a profound influence on the spiritual life of its readers.

- A text that is always relevant and alive: The meanings of the verses continuously develop through contemplation, offering comfort or warning depending on the reader's condition. In this way, the Qur'an spiritually "interacts" with each individual and situation.
- Harmony between linguistic aesthetics and spiritual function: Clarity provides immediate understanding, while generality opens moral and spiritual horizons, enabling readers to adapt their comprehension in accordance with their temporal and spatial contexts.
- Strengthening faith through depth of meaning: The eloquence and clarity of the Qur'an's wording help believers draw closer to Allah, granting them a deeper awareness of His power and mercy, while providing a broad and structured spiritual experience.

CONCLUSION

The Qur'an demonstrates the uniqueness of divine rhetoric through its ability to integrate generality and explication within a single verse—something unattainable by human speech. Its verses not only exhibit eloquence and linguistic precision but also contain layered depths of meaning, remaining open to multiple interpretations and providing fresh insights for every reader.

In this regard, the Word of Allah offers tranquility and motivation for the believers, admonition for the heedless, and the promise of victory and blessings for the God-fearing. The uniqueness of Qur'anic rhetoric affirms that this revelation is not merely a text but a linguistic miracle that remains relevant across time, enabling each generation to discover new meanings in accordance with their contexts and needs, while reaffirming the Qur'an's position as a comprehensive guidance for all humankind.

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