

[IMPLICATURES OF THE IMPERATIVE (*USLUB AL-AMR*) IN THE QURAN: A SYNTHESIS OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES FROM CLASSICAL ISLAMIC SCHOLARS]

IMPLIKATUR GAYA BAHASA PERINTAH (*USLUB AL-AMR*) DALAM AL-QURAN: SUATU SINTESIS PANDANGAN MULTIDISIPLIN DARIPADA SARJANA ISLAM KLASIK

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Abstract

*The imperative mood (*uslub al-amr*) is a fundamental linguistic feature permeating the Quranic discourse. Its function, however, extends far beyond its literal meaning as a command, giving rise to a diverse range of pragmatic implicatures. This article aims to provide an analytical literature review, synthesizing the perspectives of several classical Islamic scholars from various disciplines; linguistics, exegesis (*tafsir*), principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), and rhetoric (*balaghah*), in categorizing and elaborating on the diverse pragmatic implicatures of *uslub al-amr*. This study traces how each discipline contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of the semantic shift from the denotative domain (demand) to the connotative domain (rhetoric). The synthesis of findings reveals that the Islamic scholarly tradition has constructed a rich taxonomy, identifying more than twenty distinct implicatures. Each implicature is analyzed from a unique viewpoint: linguists focus on form and usage, exegetes on context and theological meaning, Islamic jurisprudence theorists on juridical implications, and rhetoricians on stylistic effect and aesthetic beauty. This multidisciplinary analysis demonstrates that the pragmatic richness of *uslub al-amr* is a manifestation of the Quran's linguistic miracle, requiring a holistic approach to be fully appreciated.*

Keywords: *uslub al-amr, pragmatic implicature, Quranic balaghah, multidisciplinary analysis; Quranic rhetoric*

Abstrak

Gaya bahasa perintah (*uslub al-amr*) merupakan ciri linguistik asas yang meresapi wacana al-Quran. Fungsinya, bagaimanapun, melangkaui makna literal sebagai suatu perintah, lalu menghasilkan pelbagai implikatur pragmatik. Artikel ini bertujuan memberikan tinjauan literatur analitis dengan mensintesis pandangan beberapa sarjana Islam klasik daripada pelbagai disiplin; linguistik, tafsir, *usul al-fiqh* dan *balaghah* dalam mengkategorikan serta menghuraikan pelbagai implikatur pragmatik *uslub al-amr*. Kajian ini menelusuri bagaimana setiap disiplin menyumbang kepada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang peralihan semantik daripada domain denotatif (tuntutan) kepada domain konotatif (retorik). Sintesis dapatan

menunjukkan bahawa tradisi keilmuan Islam telah membina taksonomi yang kaya, mengenal pasti lebih daripada dua puluh implikatur yang berbeza. Setiap implikatur dihuraikan daripada sudut tertentu; ahli linguistik menumpukan perhatian pada bentuk dan penggunaan; ahli tafsir pada konteks dan makna teologi; ahli usul al-fiqh pada implikasi hukum; manakala ahli balaghah pada kesan gaya dan keindahan estetika. Analisis multidisiplin ini membuktikan bahawa kekayaan pragmatik *uslub al-amr* merupakan manifestasi keajaiban linguistik al-Quran yang memerlukan pendekatan holistik untuk difahami sepenuhnya.

Kata kunci: *uslub al-amr, implikatur pragmatik, balaghah Qurani, analisis multidisiplin, retorik Qurani.*

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INTRODUCTION

The study of Quranic rhetoric (*Balāghah al-Qur'ān*) is an inexhaustible field, rooted in the foundational doctrine of *i'jāz* (the inimitability of the sacred text), which posits that its meanings are perpetually open to new layers of exploration and interpretation (Mir, 1986). Consequently, translating this sacred text transcends mere linguistic transfer, presenting a formidable hermeneutic challenge (Abdel Haleem, 2004). This difficulty stems from a discourse laden with unique stylistic devices (*asālib*) and rhetorical elements whose meanings are deeply bound to their pragmatic function. A failure to grasp this depth can yield translations that are "semantically sound but pragmatically inaccurate" (Abdul-Raof, 2001), thereby reducing the text to its most superficial, literal understanding. Within this context, one of the most dominant and structurally pivotal linguistic styles is the *uslub al-amr*, or the imperative mood.

From a lexical-semantic perspective, the term *amr* in the Quranic corpus encompasses a dual semantic domain. Its primary denotation is 'command,' a directive to perform an action (*ṭalab al-fi'l*), which positions it as the direct antithesis to prohibition (*al-nahy*), as exemplified in the verse, "إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ" ("Indeed, Allah commands justice and good conduct") (An-Nahl, 16:90). Concurrently, *amr* also signifies a 'matter' or an 'affair' in a more general sense, as illustrated in the passage, "إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ كُلُّهَا" ("To Him all matters will be returned") (Hud, 11:123) (al-Aṣḥānī, 2018). However, while this denotative meaning of 'command' provides a crucial starting point, it is axiomatically insufficient for a comprehensive pragmatic analysis. A purely literal interpretation fails to capture the vast spectrum of illocutionary forces and communicative functions that the imperative form conveys throughout the Quranic discourse (al-Jurjānī, 2004).

This failure of literal interpretation opens the door to a pragmatic framework, where the understanding of meaning is not confined to the external interpretation of an utterance. Often, the message a speaker intends to convey extends beyond the limits of literal meaning, leading to a crucial concept known as implicature. An implicature essentially refers to an implied meaning or additional message that is conveyed without being explicitly stated (Yule, 1996). This concept, pioneered by Grice (1975), explains how a listener is able to make inferences to understand the speaker's true intention based on context, guided by the cooperative principle and its four maxims; quantity, quality, relation, and manner.

Interestingly, this phenomenon of implied meaning discussed within the modern pragmatic framework exhibits a striking conceptual parallel with the study of rhetorical meanings (*al-ma'ani al-balaghiyyah*) in the discipline of Arabic rhetoric (*Ilm al-Balaghah*), particularly in the branch of *Ilm al-Ma'ani*. This discipline examines how to structure sentences in harmony with the context (*muqtada al-hal*) and distinguishes between the primary meaning (*al-ma'na al-asli*) and the secondary meaning (*al-ma'na al-thanawi*) of a linguistic form, which is understood based on context.

The connection between these two frameworks becomes especially clear when examining the *uslub al-amr* in the Quran. Although its primary meaning is a command, the Quran frequently uses it to convey a variety of rhetorical meanings. These secondary meanings function as conversational implicatures, whereby the shift from a literal to a rhetorical meaning can be analyzed using Grice's Cooperative Principle. When the imperative form is used in a context that makes its interpretation as a real command illogical, it seemingly "flouts" one of the conversational maxims, thereby prompting the reader to seek another implied meaning that aligns with the true communicative purpose. Therefore, an investigation must move beyond mere semantics to explore how these imperative utterances function in context.

These rhetorical meanings, which function as pragmatic implicatures, are manifested in the Quranic discourse through four primary linguistic forms (*ṣīghah*) of the imperative:

1. The Imperative Verb (*fi' al-amr*), e.g., أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ("Establish prayer and give zakah") - [Al-Baqarah: 43].
2. The Jussive Verb with the Imperative *Lām* (*al-muḍāri' al-maqrūn bi-lām al-amr*), e.g., فَالْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ ("Then let them worship the Lord of this House") - [Quraysh: 3].
3. The Imperative Noun (*ism fi' al-amr*), e.g., عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ... ("Take care of yourselves...") - [Al-Ma'idah: 105].
4. The Infinitive Acting as an Imperative (*al-maṣḍar al-nā'ib 'an fi' al-amr*), e.g., ...وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا... ("...and to parents, good treatment") - [Al-Isra: 23].

Since the early development of Islamic sciences, scholars have paid special attention to the rhetorical secrets (*asrār al-balāghah*) behind these forms. This deep analysis of what is now termed pragmatic implicature has been the subject of highly sophisticated debate within the Islamic intellectual tradition. Therefore, this study aims to provide an analytical literature review to trace and analyze, from a multidisciplinary perspective, the evolution of discussions on the rhetorical meanings or implicatures of *uslub al-amr* in the great works of classical scholars.

EVOLUTION OF THOUGHT AND DEBATES AMONG CLASSICAL SCHOLARS

The understanding of the diverse meanings of *uslub al-amr* (the imperative mood) is not the product of a single discipline but is the result of cumulative contributions, debates, and refinements that have occurred across centuries and fields. This intellectual journey can be visualized as the construction of a grand edifice, where each scholarly tradition laid a crucial layer of analysis upon the foundations of the one before it. The discourse did not evolve in a vacuum; rather, it was shaped by the specific questions and objectives central to each field. This review will trace this evolution by examining the distinct yet interconnected contributions of four primary groups of scholars: the linguists and grammarians, the Islamic jurisprudence theorists, the rhetoricians, and finally, the Quranic exegetes who synthesized these diverse perspectives.

The Perspective of Linguists and Grammarians (اللغويون والنحاة)

The contributions of linguists and grammarians represent the foundational starting point for the entire discourse on this topic. Their approach was fundamentally descriptive-empirical, with a primary focus on observing, documenting, and categorizing the actual usage of the Arabic language within the corpora available to them, which included the Quran, pre-Islamic poetry, and classical Arabic prose. Their goal was not to derive shariah legal rulings or to analyze rhetorical effects in depth, but to construct a comprehensive map of how the imperative form (*ṣīghah al-amr*) functions in various communicative contexts.

Sibawayh (d. 180 AH), in his magnum opus *Al-Kitab*, laid the groundwork for this discussion. Although he did not dedicate a specific chapter to it, his insights are woven throughout various grammatical analyses. His most critical contribution was the recognition that the function of an utterance is not solely tied to its grammatical form. He was among the first to formally state that when an imperative is directed from a speaker of lower status to one of higher status (such as a servant to God), it must be understood as a supplication (*du'ā*). For Sibawayh, it was pragmatically illogical to conceive of a servant "commanding" his Lord; therefore, the meaning of the utterance automatically shifts to a plea. He also alluded to other meanings, such as threat (*tahdīd*), based on observing imperative usage in contexts of anger, citing the poetry of al-Muhalhil: يَا لَبَكْرٍ انشُرُوا لِي كُنْيَا (O Banu Bakr, bring Kulaib back to life for me!), where this impossible request functions as a potent threat. Furthermore, he identified the meaning of permission/choice (*ibāḥah*) with the common example جَالِسٌ عَمْرًا أَوْ خَالِدًا (Sit with 'Amr or Khalid), implying that the listener is free to choose either or both, as the intent is to permit association with that "type" of person. He also noted equalization (*taswiyah*) in the phrase خُذْهُ بِمَا عَزَّ أَوْ هَانَ (Take it, whether it be dear or cheap), meaning "take it in any case".

The next generation of linguists expanded on these initial observations. Abū Zakariyyā al-Farrā' (d. 207 AH), in his *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, explicitly stated that many imperative forms in the Quran are "not commands in the true sense". He identified several implicatures, including equalization (*taswiyah*) in his analysis of {أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَقَبَلَ مِنْكُمْ} (Al-Tawbah: 53), which he argued functions as a conditional statement ("If you spend... it will not be accepted") rather than an instruction. He also identified supplication (*du'ā*) in Moses's plea {اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي} (Taha: 31), reproach (*tawbīkh*) in the verse {ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ} (Al-Dukhān: 49), and permission (*ibāḥah*) in {فَانتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ} (Al-Jumu'ah: 10).

Similarly, Abū 'Ubaydah (d. 209 AH) noted in *Majāz al-Qur'ān* that the command in {اعْمَلُوا} (Fussilat: 40) is not an order but a threat (*wa'id*), and that {فَذَرَهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا} (Al-Zukhruf: 83) also functions as a threat.

Al-Mubarrid (d. 286 AH), in *Al-Muqtaḍab* provided clearer distinctions. He differentiated between choice (*takhīr*), as in إيت زيدا أو عمرا (Go to Zayd or 'Amr), where one must be chosen, and permission (*ibāḥah*), as in جالس الحسن أو ابن سيرين (Sit with al-Hasan or Ibn Sīrīn), where sitting with both would also be acceptable because the intent is to permit association with a certain "type" of person. He also discussed how a declarative sentence can carry the meaning of a command, as in the supplication غفر الله لزيد (May Allah forgive Zayd), which is understood as a request because the speaker is in no position to declare a divine action.

Abū Ja'far al-Naḥḥās (d. 338 AH), in his *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, further expanded the list of identified meanings with specific Quranic examples. He identified falsification (*takdhīb*) in {قُلْ فَأْتُوا} (Āl 'Imrān: 93), where the command is a challenge meant to expose a lie. He pointed to admonition and consideration (*izāh wa i'tibār*) in {فَانظُرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ} (Āl 'Imrān: 137). He also noted perpetuation/constancy (*dawām wa thabāt*) as the implicature of {يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ} (Al-Nisā': 136), explaining that when a command is given to someone already performing the act, it means "persevere in it" or "remain steadfast".

A more systematic categorization was provided by Ibn Fāris (d. 395 AH) in his seminal work, *al-Ṣāḥibī fī Fiqh al-Lughah*. He dedicated a specific section to the "meanings of speech" and provided a clear list of functions for the imperative form, including request (*mas'alah*), threat (*wa'id*), submission (*taslīm*) as in {فَأَقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ} (Tāhā: 72), formation (*takwīn*) as in {كُونُوا قِرَدَةً} (al-Baqarah: 65), incapacitation (*ta'jīz*), wonder (*ta'ajjub*) as in {أَسْمِعْ بِهِمْ وَأَبْصِرْ} (Maryam: 38), wishing (*tamannī*), causing grief (*talhīf*) as in {قُلْ مُؤْتُوا بِعَيْظِكُمْ} (Āl 'Imrān: 119), and declarative (*khābar*) as in {فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا} (Al-Tawbah: 82), meaning "they will laugh a little and weep much".

Other key figures like Ibn Jinnī (d. 392 AH) also contributed, notably by discussing the interchangeability of imperative and declarative forms. He noted that a declarative sentence like {وَالْمُطَلَقَاتُ يَتَرَبِّصْنَ أَنْفُسَهُنَّ تَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ} (Al-Baqarah: 228) functions as a command (*li-tarabbiṣna*). He also

identified reprimand (*tabkīr*) in the verse {ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ} (Al-Dukhān: 49), by sarcastically juxtaposing the order to 'Taste!' the punishment with the very titles of honor ('the mighty, the noble') the person arrogantly claimed for themselves in the world.

The tradition of comprehensive listing and systematization was notably advanced by Ibn al-Shajāri (d. 542 AH) in his *Amālī*. He provided a structured discussion defining the imperative and its forms before enumerating its implicatures with copious Quranic examples, including obligation (*wājib*), recommendation (*nadb*), permission (*ibāḥah*), threat (*wa'īd*), guidance (*irshād*), submission (*khuḍū'*), incapacitation (*ta'jīz*), and drawing attention to divine power, as in {قُلْ كُونُوا حُجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا} (Al-Isrā': 50), meaning, 'Say, "Be you stones or iron..."'.

In conclusion, the role of these pioneering linguists and grammarians was as observers and recorders of phenomena. They provided the empirical linguistic data that proved *uslub al-amr* naturally possessed a vast semantic potential, thereby furnishing the raw material and grammatical foundation for the deeper analytical work of subsequent scholars.

The Perspective of Exegetes (المفسرون)

While linguists mapped the formal contours of the language, the Quranic exegetes, or *mufasssīrūn*, embarked on a deeper hermeneutic quest. Their primary objective was to uncover the divine intent (*murād Allāh*) behind each utterance, shifting the inquiry from what the language says to why it is said in a particular way within the divine discourse. Consequently, their analysis transcended mere linguistic form, delving deep into the narrative context of the verse (*siyāq*), the historical circumstances of its revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and the overarching theological objectives of the chapter (*sūrah*). This necessitated a methodological approach that transcended mere grammatical form, famously encapsulated by the principle, "Consideration is given to the specificity of the cause, not the generality of the wording" (*al-‘ibrah bi-khuṣūṣ al-sabab, lā bi-‘umūm al-lafz*).

Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276 AH), in his *Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān*, was among the first to explicitly dedicate a section to how the apparent meaning of a word can differ from its intended meaning, listing imperatives that function as threat (*wa'īd*), {اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ} (Fussilat: 40), guidance/discipline (*ta'dīb*), {وَأَشْهَدُوا ذَوِي عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ} (Al-Ṭalāq: 2), and permission (*ibāḥah*), {فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا} (Al-Nūr: 33) and {فَإِذَا فُضِّيتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ} (Al-Jumu'ah: 10).

Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH), though renowned for his narration-based methodology, frequently addressed rhetorical meanings. When interpreting the verses of challenge (*āyāt al-tahaddī*), such as {قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ} (Yūnus: 38), he did not merely label the implicature as incapacitation (*ta'jīz*). Instead, he elaborated on its profound theological implication: this command serves as the ultimate proof of Prophet Muhammad's prophethood and the divine origin of the Qur'an. His analysis connected the linguistic phenomenon to a core creedal message, arguing that if the most eloquent Arabs were collectively unable to meet this challenge, the text could not be of human origin. He also identified threat (*tahdīd*) in the verse {كُلُوا وَتَمَنَعُوا لِقِيلِ الْكُفْرَانِ} (Al-Mursalāt: 46). He importantly noted that the command in {كُلُوا} (Al-Baqarah: 57) implies permission (*ibāḥah*) for that which is lawful. He also interpreted the request in {رَبَّنَا عَجَلْ لَنَا قِطْنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ} (Ṣād: 16) as a form of mockery (*istihzā'*) by the disbelievers towards the divine promise.

The apex of rhetorical analysis in exegesis was arguably achieved by Abū al-Qāsim al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538 AH) in his masterpiece, *Al-Kashshāf*. He systematically employed the science of rhetoric (*balāghah*) as his primary interpretive tool. For every imperative utterance, he would probe for its rhetorical secret (*nuktaḥ balāghiyah*). When interpreting {ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ} (Al-Dukhān: 49), he did not simply state its meaning as humiliation (*iḥānah*); he meticulously dissected its biting irony. He explained this as a form of mockery (*tahakkum*) that sarcastically throws back the arrogant titles (like "the Mighty, the Noble") that figures such as Pharaoh or Abū Jahl had claimed for themselves in the world. The use of these same honorifics during their torment creates a profoundly humiliating effect. Similarly, with {اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ} (Fussilat: 40), al-

Zamakhsharī perceived it not merely as a threat but as an expression of peaking divine anger and a declaration of abandonment (*takhliyah*) from further guidance, as if Allah were saying, “Carry on, for you are beyond hope.” He was also among the first to detail how an imperative form can function as a report or statement (*khobar*), as in {قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدًّا} (Maryam: 75). He explained that the phrase فَلْيَمْدُدْ (“let the Most Merciful extend”) is not a command but an emphatic statement affirming that Allah will extend their time as a divine law (*sunnatullāh*), phrased as a command to emphasize its inevitability.

Other exegetes continued this tradition. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606 AH), in his *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, identified perpetuation (*dawām*) as the meaning of {يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ} (Al-Aḥzāb: 1), explaining that a command to someone already performing the action implies an order to continue and persevere in it.

Abū al-Sa‘ūd (d. 982 AH) offered a nuanced interpretation of {قَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ انْتَبِهْ بَمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ} (Al-A‘rāf: 77). While al-Zamakhsharī saw this as a demand to hasten the punishment, Abū al-Sa‘ūd argued it was intended as incapacitation (*ta‘jīz*), as the people were taunting Ṣāliḥ based on their belief that he was powerless to bring any punishment, a view considered more consistent with their insolent attitude.

Al-Shihāb al-Khafājī (d. 1069 AH), in his supercommentary on al-Bayḍāwī’s *Tafsīr*, identified belittling (*taḥqīr*) in Moses’s command to the sorcerers, {الْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلقُونَ} (Al-A‘rāf: 116), explaining that Moses permitted them to go first to show his disdain for their magic and his confidence in divine support.

Lastly, al-Ṭāhir ibn ‘Ashūr (d. 1973 CE), in his *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, masterfully applied these classical concepts, identifying incitement (*taḥrīd*) in {فَلْيَتَنَفَّسِ الْمُتَنَفِّسُونَ} (Al-Muṭaffifīn: 26) and noting the combination of formation and subjugation (*takwīn wa taskhīr*) in {يَا جِبَالُ أَوْبِي مَعَةَ وَالطَّيْرِ} (Saba’: 10).

For exegetes, correctly identifying an imperative’s implicature was critical, as misinterpretation could lead to fatal errors in understanding religious doctrine.

The Perspective of Islamic Jurisprudence Theorists (الأصوليين)

The contribution of the Islamic jurisprudence theorists, or *uṣūliyyūn*, to this topic is unequivocally the most systematic, analytical, and minutely detailed. Their primary motivation was jurisprudential: to establish a sound methodology for deriving Shariah rulings (*ḥukm sharī*) from the foundational texts of the Quran and Sunnah. Their core working principle was that the imperative form, in its default state (*al-aṣl fī al-amr*), signifies obligation (*wujūb*), unless there is a contextual indicator (*qarīnah*) that diverts its meaning to something else. This critical need to identify and classify every possible *qarīnah* drove them to construct an exhaustive taxonomy of all potential non-obligatory meanings of *uslub al-amr*.

Early theorists like Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436 AH) in his *Al-Mu‘tamad* acknowledged that the imperative form could be used for threat and permission.

Al-Kalwadhānī (d. 510 AH) in *Al-Tamhīd* listed six meanings: command proper, threat, incapacitation, formation, humiliation, and permission, with Quranic examples. However, the full systematization flourished with later scholars.

Fakhrud-dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606 AH), in his *Al-Maḥṣūl*, and Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631 AH), in his *Al-Iḥkām*, systematically listed approximately fifteen distinct meanings each. Al-Rāzī’s significant contribution was his clear distinction between different types of positive implicatures. For instance, he differentiated recommendation by the prophet Muhammad s.a.w (*nadb*), which pertains to actions rewarded in the afterlife (e.g., supererogatory prayers), from guidance (*irshād*), which pertains to actions beneficial for worldly matters like the command {وَأَشْهُدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ} (Al-Baqarah: 282), which aims to prevent future disputes.

The apex of this detailed classification is found in the work of Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756 AH) and his son Tāj al-Dīn in their commentary, *Al-Ibhāj fī Sharḥ al-Minhāj*. They not only

enumerated over twenty meanings but, more importantly, engaged in making subtle distinctions (*furūq daqīqah*) between closely related implicatures:

- Threat (*Tahdīd*) vs. Warning (*Indhār*): They noted that a warning must be accompanied by an explicit statement of the consequence, , as in {فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَإِنَّ مَصِيرَكُمْ {إِلَى النَّارِ} (...so enjoy yourselves, for indeed your destination is the Fire,” (Ibrāhīm 14:30), whereas a threat can be more general and implicit.
- Permission (*Ibāḥah*) vs. Granting a Favor (*Imtinān*): Permission refers merely to the lifting of a prohibition, while granting a favor involves a reminder of God’s bounty and His gracious provision for mankind. An example of *imtinān* is found in the verse: {فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمْ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا} (Al-Naḥl: 114) “So eat from what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good.” In this verse, the imperative "فَكُلُوا" (So eat) does not simply grant permission. Rather, it is coupled with a reminder of divine provision "مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمْ اللَّهُ" (what Allah has provided for you), which transforms it into an expression of *imtinān*; a gracious favor reminding humans of their dependence on God’s sustenance.
- Formation (*Takwīn*) vs. Subjugation (*Taskhīr*): *Formation (takwīn)* refers to the divine act of bringing something into existence from nothing by mere command, such as in: {بِدَبِيعِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ} (Al-Baqarah: 117) “The Originator of the heavens and the earth; when He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.” Here, the imperative "كن" (Be) is not a request or order in the human sense, but an act of instantaneous creation. By contrast, *subjugation (taskhīr)* is a command directed at something that already exists to alter its condition or state in a humiliating or degraded manner. This is seen in: {كُونُوا قِرَدَةً} {خَاسِيِينَ} (Al-Baqarah: 65) “Be apes, despised.” This command does not create them from nothing, but transforms a disobedient community into a state of punishment and degradation as divine retribution.
- Humiliation (*Ihānah*) vs. Belittling (*Iḥtiqār*): Humiliation is enacted through a statement or action that demeans someone, whereas belittling is primarily an internal state of considering something worthless, which may or may not be expressed externally. The command to the sorcerers, {الْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْفُونَ} (al-A’rāf: 116), is seen as belittling their magic.

Drawing upon the works of predecessors like Imām al-Ḥaramayn and Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Hindī, the Subkīs’ list grew to include implicatures such as delegation (*tafwīḍ*), wonder (*ta’ajjub*), falsification (*takdhīb*), consultation (*mashūrah*), and consideration (*i’tibār*), bringing the total count to twenty-two distinct meanings.

This exhaustive approach was continued by later scholars like Ibn Badrān (d. 1346 AH), who in his *Al-Madkhal* listed 22 meanings, including supplication, honoring, threat, belittling, incapacitation, formation, equalization, permission, delegation, consultation, consideration, falsification, and request (*iltimās*), among others.

For Islamic jurisprudence theorists, this meticulous analysis was not a mere academic exercise; it was essential for legal precision. Without this framework, a command intended as a threat could be mistaken for permission, or guidance could be misconstrued as a religious obligation.

The Perspective of the Rhetoricians (البلاغيون)

Whereas the inquiry of Islamic legal theorists (*uṣūliyyūn*) centered on the normative-judicial question, "What is the Sharia legal ruling (*ḥukm*)?", the rhetoricians (*balāghiyūn*) posited a different set of inquiries: "What constitutes its beauty (*jamāl*)? And what is its intended effect

(*ta'thīr*)?". Their analytical focus shifted from the legal implications to the aesthetic and persuasive dimensions of language, treating the Qur'an not just as a source of law but as a profound aesthetic experience (Kermani, 2015). Consequently, they interrogated *uslub al-amr* (the imperative mood) not merely as a legal directive but as a sophisticated rhetorical device within the Qur'an's literary arsenal, employed strategically to persuade, inspire, admonish, and captivate its audience.

The methodology delineated by the *balāghiyyūn* is regarded as a paragon within the Islamic intellectual tradition for its systematic approach to literary analysis (van Gelder, 1982). Its framework commences with a comprehensive definition (*ta'rīf*), proceeds to an identification of the imperative's morphological forms (*ṣīghah*), and culminates in an exploration of the polysemous rhetorical meanings generated from these forms, contingent upon contextual indicators (*qarā'in*) and the communicative situation (*maqām*).

Pioneering scholars such as Abū Ya'qūb al-Sakkākī (d. 626 AH), in his magnum opus *Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm*, analyzed the rationale behind the Qur'ānic selection of an imperative form over alternative linguistic structures that could convey the same literal denotation. Al-Sakkākī articulated that the imperative form generates diverse meanings contingent upon (*qarā'in al-ahwāl*, contextual indicators), outlining several primary functions:

- Supplication (*al-Du'ā'*): When the imperative is used in a context of humility towards a higher authority, particularly God, as in {رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي} ("My Lord, forgive me").
- Request/Petition (*al-Su'āl wa-al-Iltimās*): When employed gently between equals, devoid of an authoritative tone.
- Permissibility (*al-Ibāḥah*): When utilized in a context of granting permission.
- Threat (*al-Tahdīd*): When the context implies displeasure with the commanded act, as in the verse {اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ} ("Do as you will," Fussilat: 40), which functions as a stern warning.

Building upon al-Sakkākī's foundational work, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī (d. 739 AH), in his *Al-Īdāḥ*, elaborated upon this taxonomy. He not only corroborated the categories identified by al-Sakkākī but also appended further rhetorical functions, substantiated with lucid Qur'ānic exemplars:

- Incapacitation (*al-Ta'jīz*): To demonstrate the addressee's inability to comply, as in {فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ} ("Then produce a chapter like it," Al-Baqarah: 23).
- Humiliation (*al-Ihānah*): To debase the addressee, exemplified by {كُونُوا حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا} ("Be you stones or iron," Al-Isra': 50) and {ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ} ("Taste! Indeed, you are the mighty, the noble," Ad-Dukhan: 49).
- Equalization (*al-Taswīyah*): To indicate that all available options lead to the same outcome, as in {اصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا} ("Whether you are patient or impatient," At-Tur: 16).
- Aspiration (*al-Tamannī*): A desiderative expression, often directed towards an inanimate object, as in the famous poetic verse, "O long night, clear away!"

Subsequently, scholars specializing in the literary inimitability of the Qur'ān (*i'jāz al-Qur'ān*), notably Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), undertook the integration and expansion of these rhetorical insights within the broader field of Qur'anic sciences (*'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*).

In his monumental work, *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, al-Zarkashī organized the manifold non-literal functions of the imperative within a broader conceptual framework he termed "*Wujūh al-Khiṭāb*" (Modes of Discourse). His compendium is celebrated for its systematic effort to codify the various disciplines related to Qur'anic study (Saeed, 2008). His distinctions included:

- Discourse of Honor (*Khiṭāb al-Karāmah*): Exemplified by {ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ آمِنِينَ} ("Enter it in peace, secure," Al-Hijr: 46), which conveys divine favor and welcome.

- Discourse of Contempt (*Khiṭāb al-Ihānah*): As in {اِحْسَبُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُون} ("Remain despised therein and do not speak to Me," Al-Mu'minun: 108), signifying absolute rejection.
- Discourse of Contemplation (*Khiṭāb al-I'tibār*): Such as {...قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا} ("Say, 'Travel through the land and observe...'," Al-'Ankabut: 20), which functions as an exhortation for empirical reflection.
- Discourse of Incitement (*Khiṭāb al-Tahyīj*): Illustrated by {وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ} ("And upon Allah rely, if you should be believers," Al-Ma'idah: 23), where the conditional clause serves to motivate and galvanize the believers into action.
- Discourse of Ennoblement (*Khiṭāb al-Tashrīf*): A unique mode referring to every command prefixed with {قُلْ} ("Say"). Al-Zarkashī posits that this is a form of divine ennoblement for the Muslim community, allowing them to be addressed directly, thus conferring upon them the honor of the divine audience.

Al-Suyūṭī, in his compendia *Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* and *Mu'tarak al-Aqrān*, built upon al-Zarkashī's framework. Drawing extensively from his predecessors among both the *uṣūliyyūn* and the *balāghiyūn*, he systematized their disparate observations into comprehensive taxonomies. In *Mu'tarak al-Aqrān*, his list of rhetorical meanings for the imperative exceeds twenty categories, including:

- Reminding of Bounties (*al-Imtīnān*): As in {كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ} ("Eat of its fruit when it yields," Al-An'am: 141).
- Guidance (*al-Irshād*): As in {وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ} ("And take witnesses when you transact a sale," Al-Baqarah: 282).
- Creation/Origination (*al-Takwīn*): The command that brings things into existence, as in {كُنْ فَيَكُونُ} ("Be, and it is," Al-Baqarah: 117).
- Consultation (*al-Mashūrah*): As seen in the narrative of Abraham and Ishmael, {فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى} ("So see what you think," As-Saffat: 102).

In doing so, al-Suyūṭī effectively consolidated centuries of interdisciplinary thought on the functional versatility of the imperative across theology, law, and rhetoric. In essence, the contribution of the *balāghiyūn* and scholars of *ijāz* constituted a critical re-contextualization of *uslub al-amr*—transcending its classification as a mere grammatical or juridical category to recognize it as a deliberate artistic and communicative strategy. Their analysis moved beyond the identification of literal meaning (*ma'nā*) to explore the profound rhetorical rationale (*asrār al-tarkīb*) underpinning the Qur'ān's stylistic choices. This scholarly endeavor reveals the profound artistry that underlies the linguistic science of the Qur'ānic text, affirming its status as a literary miracle (Mir 1986).

DISCUSSION

The preceding review demonstrates that the rich taxonomy of implicatures for *uslub al-amr* was not the product of a linear or singular inquiry. Instead, it was the cumulative result of four distinct, yet overlapping, scholarly traditions, each driven by a different epistemological motivation. The synthesis of their findings reveals an intellectual interplay where each discipline asked a fundamentally different question.

The foundational question for the Linguists and Grammarians (اللغويون والنحاة) was descriptive-empirical: "What *can* this form mean?" Their methodology involved observing the corpus of Arabic language; poetry, prose, and the Quran to map its potential functions beyond the

literal. They acted as the original cartographers, providing the raw data that proved *uslub al-amr* was a polysemous structure, thereby furnishing the raw material for all subsequent analysis.

The Quranic Exegetes (المفسرون) shifted the inquiry from the potential to the specific. Their question was hermeneutic: "What does Allah *intend* it to mean *here*?" Their methodology was context-driven, relying heavily on *siyāq* (narrative context) and *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation). For them, identifying an implicature was not a linguistic exercise but a theological necessity to grasp the divine message. An exegete like al-Zamakhsharī, for instance, did not just identify the implicature in {ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ} as *ihānah* (humiliation); he used it to construct a profound theological image of ironic, divine justice.

In sharp contrast, the Islamic Jurisprudence Theorists (الأصوليون) approached the text with a normative-juridical question: "What sharia legal ruling (*ḥukm*) does this form necessitate?" Their methodology was analytical and systematic, built upon the default presumption that "the original state of the imperative is obligation" (*al-aṣl fī al-amr li-l-wujūb*). This forced them to create the most exhaustive and granular taxonomy of all. Their motivation was precision; a misinterpretation could wrongly classify a *nadb* (recommendation by the Prophet s.a.w) as a *wājib* (obligation) or an *ibāḥah* (permission) as a *tahdīd* (threat). This is why they developed subtle distinctions, such as between *takwīn* (formation) and *taskhīr* (subjugation), which were crucial for sharia legal and creedal accuracy.

Finally, the Rhetoricians (البلاغيون) asked an aesthetic-persuasive question: "What is the *effect* of this form, and why is it beautiful (*jamāl wa ta'thīr*)?" Their methodology was appreciative, analyzing *uslub al-amr* as a deliberate stylistic choice. While the *usūlī* analyzed {اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ} ("Do as you will") to prove it was *not* permission, the *balāghī* analyzed it to explain the profound rhetorical power of expressing ultimate divine anger and abandonment. For them, the implicature was a tool of *i'jāz* (inimitability), demonstrating the Quran's power to persuade, captivate, and challenge its audience.

This analysis reveals a remarkable complementarity. The Linguists provided the forms. The Exegetes tied them to context. The Islamic Jurisprudence Theorists systemized their legal consequences. The Rhetoricians explained their artistic purpose. Together, these four perspectives confirm that *uslub al-amr* in the Quran is a sophisticated pragmatic device, simultaneously functioning on linguistic, theological, sharia legal, and aesthetic levels. A full appreciation of its depth is, therefore, impossible without synthesizing the insights from all four traditions.

The complementary yet distinct nature of these four scholarly approaches, as analyzed in the discussion, is visually synthesized in the following table.

TABLE 1: A Comparative Synthesis of Classical Scholarly Perspectives on *Uslub al-Amr*

Scholarly Discipline	Primary Question	Methodology	Ultimate Goal	Analytical Focus
Linguists & Grammarians (<i>Lughawīyyun</i> & <i>Nuhāf</i>)	"What can this form mean?" (Descriptive-Empirical)	Corpus observation (Quran, poetry, prose)	To map the full functional and linguistic potential	Form & Usage
Quranic Exegetes (<i>Mufassirūn</i>)	"What does Allah <i>intend</i> it to mean <i>here</i> ?" (Hermeneutic)	Context-driven (<i>Siyāq</i> & <i>Asbāb al-Nuzūl</i>)	To uncover the Divine intent (<i>Murād Allāh</i>) & theological message To achieve legal precision in deriving rulings (obligation, prophetic recommendation, permission, etc.)	Meaning & Context
Islamic Jurisprudence Theorists (<i>Uṣūliyyūn</i>)	"What legal ruling (<i>ḥukm</i>) does this form necessitate?" (Normative-Juridical)	Analytical-Systematic (Based on <i>al-aṣl fī al-amr li-l-wujūb</i>)		Islamic Law & Obligation

Rhetoricians (<i>Balāghiyūn</i>)	"What is the <i>effect</i> & <i>beauty</i> of this form?" (Aesthetic-Persuasive)	Appreciative (Analyzing stylistic choice & <i>maqām</i>)	To illuminate the persuasive power, beauty, & <i>ijāz</i> of the Quran	Effect & Aesthetics
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CONCLUSION

This literature review conclusively shows that the understanding of the implicatures of *uslub al-amr* in the Quran is the result of a rich, dynamic, and interconnected intellectual tradition. It is not the exclusive domain of any single field of knowledge. The linguists laid the observational groundwork, the exegetes provided the vital contextual and theological depth, the legal theorists built a framework of unparalleled logical and juridical precision, and the rhetoricians illuminated the aesthetic beauty and persuasive power of these expressions. This synthesis of perspectives proves that every imperative utterance in the Quran is placed with profound pragmatic purpose. It can manifest as a sharp sword of threat, a captivating intellectual challenge, a comforting embrace of permission, or a humble whisper of hope. This functional diversity is a core component of the Quran's inimitability (*ijāz al-Qur'ān*), rendering its text perpetually alive, dynamic, and capable of communicating with unparalleled efficacy across the ages. The implications of this synthesis are profound for contemporary Quranic studies, particularly in the field of translation. It demonstrates that any attempt to render the Quranic message into another language must move beyond simple lexical equivalence. To accurately convey the pragmatic force of *uslub al-amr*, to know when a command is a threat, a granting of favor, or a legal obligation, translators must act as multidisciplinary bridges, consulting the very exegetical, juridical, and rhetorical contexts identified by this classical tradition.

Future research could, therefore, practically apply this synthesized framework. A comparative analysis evaluating the pragmatic accuracy of prominent translations of *uslub al-amr* would be a valuable next step, assessing how successfully they capture the rich spectrum of implicatures elucidated by these scholars. Ultimately, this review affirms that a holistic, multidisciplinary approach is not merely beneficial but essential for any scholar, exegete, or translator who wishes to truly delve into the oceans of meaning and rhetoric contained within the Sacred Book.

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