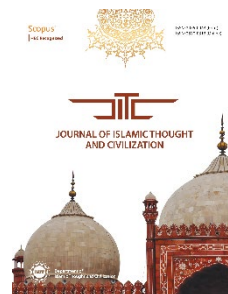
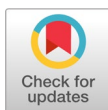


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Revisiting the Linguistic Inimitability of the Qur'ān: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

This study critically and systematically analyzes the linguistic inimitability of the Qur'ān through a cross-disciplinary examination of modern literature on the topic. In this work, 39 pieces of scholarly literature published between the years 2000 and 2025 on the linguistic inimitability of the Qur'ān are systematically reviewed. The major need that this study fulfills is the lack of a comprehensive synthesis of the research on *i'jāz* (the inimitability of the Qur'ān) in the theological, linguistic, computational, and hermeneutical directions, which makes the available studies so fragmented and methodologically inconsistent. This review aims to do this by systematically categorizing the different methodological approaches and theoretical contributions available in the literature. We locate six thematic organizations: structural and stylistic aspects, semantic novelty, computational validation, hermeneutical enrichment, translation issues, and contextual/political interpretations. The results showed that the persuasive qualities of the Qur'ān are its syntactic clarity, rhythmic qualities, and cognitive richness, qualities that, as the reviewed literature indicates, cannot be imitated or translated. Moreover, it is linguistically unique in a significant way, its value overlapping with the theological in such a way that it is not only an excellent work of literature but a word from God. Based on the research results, the conceptualization of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* is multidimensional, and it is proposed that integrated research be done on the linguistics, religio-spiritual, and sociopolitical aspects of it in the future.

Keywords: I'jāz al-Qur'ān, Qur'ānic linguistics, linguistic inimitability, rhetorical analysis, systematic review

Highlights

- Reviewing current studies addressing linguistic inimitability (*i'jāz of the Qur'ān*) in a systematic fashion
- Recognizing main approaches incorporating linguistic, rhetorical, and translation strategies

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within contemporary Qur'ānic studies.

- Synthesizing results based on (39) studies showing contemporary research directions and methodological trends.
- Recommending interdisciplinary approach in expanding research scope on Qur'ānic linguistic inimitability

Introduction

The concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, the linguistic inimitability or miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, has been a cornerstone of Islamic epistemology and civilizational identity in the Islamic tradition of theology and thought. It is a literary fact, but also a theological necessity, which bears witness to the divine origin of the Qur'ān in its peerlessly superior rhetorical setting and semantic density. Traditional history claims that the doctrine was the foundation for the belief in the 'Uncreated Word of God' (*kalām Allāh ghayr makhluq*), but also gave a drive to the codification and establishment of grammar, philology, rhetoric and the other sciences of exegesis and theology.¹

The perceived inimitability of the Qur'ān extends beyond the message and content; it is embedded in its formal qualities, its syntactical structure, the emphasis it places on the rhythmic accent, its semantic density, and its unusual stylistic structure. The characteristics are known to be unsurpassed in human language production, both by classical and modern scholars.² The challenge contained in the Qur'ān, "produce a surah like it."³ was understood not only as a rhetorical but also as an epistemological challenge in a word-oriented society deeply rooted in oral poetry and tradition, pre-Islamic Arabia (before the rise of Islam in the seventh century CE). Classical scholars, such as al-Bāqillānī (c. 950–1013 CE) and al-Khaṭṭābī (931–998 CE), developed intricate rhetorical and theological schemes to explain such inimitability, stating that the eloquence (*balāgha*), the structure of the text that is syntactically unpredictable, and the semantic unity and cohesion of the Qur'ān violate all regularities of the familiar Arabic speech.

In recent decades, there has been a tremendous amount of development in the theories of *i'jāz*. Modern scholarship to the Qur'ān today has taken on many forms of classical exegesis, as well as of modern literary theory, discourse analysis, hermeneutics, and computational linguistics.⁴ In this way, the discourse has been linked to new ways of knowing it, with traditional Islamic knowledge and with the new ways of linguistic, semiotic, and computational analysis of texts. Despite the

¹Ayman A. El-Desouky, "Discussions of Qur'anic Inimitability: The Theological Nexus," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 374–387, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.013.50>; Todd Lawson, "The Qur'an as Matrix of Islamic Civilization and Society," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 25, no. 3 (2008): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.35632/AJIS.V25I3.1452>.

²Dildar Ahmed, "The Inimitable Language of the Qur'an," *The Islamic Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (2005): 175–182; Mustafa Shah, "The Word of God: The Epistemology of Language in Classical Islamic Theological Thought," in *Language and Religion*, ed. Robert A. Yelle, Courtney Handman, and Christopher I. Leirich (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2019), 158–192, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614514329-008>.

³Al-Baqarah 2:23.

⁴Solehah Yaacob, "Written Evidence of the Inimitability of the Quran on Comprehending the Concept of Arabic Linguistic History and Theology," *Arts and Humanities Open Access Journal* 4, no. 2 (2020): 64–69, <https://doi.org/10.15406/ahoj.2020.04.00155>; Muhammad Erdy, "The Origins, Theories, and Linguistic Development of the Qur'an," *Jurnal Kajian Islam* 2, no. 1 (2025): 13–22, <https://doi.org/10.56566/jki.v2i1.300>.

methodological variety. Some taste it in its beauty, some taste it in its craftsmanship, some taste it in its morality, some taste it in its legality, some taste it in its metaphysical depth. Others say that the miracle is the change wrought in people's hearts, not only in language but also in the existential and spiritual lives.⁵

This fragmentation of scholarship is indicative of a wider issue: *i'jāz* scholarship has been spread across disciplinary bubbles, and, when it occurs across disciplines, it is not always systematic. This has resulted in the ambiguity of what is truly inimitable: is it the form or the content of the theology, the psychological effect or a combination of these?⁶

RQ: What are the prominent ideas, approaches and perspectives in the scholarly discourse of the linguistic inimitability of the Qur'ān in the Islamic context and civilizational environment?

2. Methodology

The review protocol outlines a systematic procedure employed when carrying out this systematic literature review of the linguistic inimitability (*i'jāz*) of the Qur'ān. This approach follows the principles of research transparency and reproducibility, which aim to reduce researcher bias and draw conclusions based on previous expectations.⁷ The method consists of a number of components: identification of the background information and research question, development of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, choice of databases, development of a search strategy, quality assessment of relevant studies, and synthesis of results.

2.1. Sources Searched and Databases Utilized

The search method used was both automated and manual method which aimed to find and assess appropriate academic literature related to the inimitability of the Qur'ān in Islamic linguistic and theological tradition. The high-grade multidisciplinary coverage and indexing of social sciences and humanities scholarship is recognized in Scopus and WoS, while JSTOR and Project MUSE offer deep access to historical and classical Islamic scholarship in archival journal volumes.

Boolean operators “AND” and “OR” were used several different times. Key search terms manually selected were: “*i'jāz al-Qur'ān*,” “Qur'ānic inimitability,” “linguistic miracle of the Qur'ān,” “Qur'ānic rhetoric,” “eloquence of the Qur'ān,” “Qur'ānic stylistics,” and “Qur'ān literary structure.” The latter were followed by more general terms, such as ‘Islamic theology,’ ‘classical Arabic linguistics,’ and ‘miraculous discourse’. English and Arabic publications were used because they aimed to encompass the breadth of scholarship.

For this reason, a conceptual model was developed to help to systematically structure and synthesize the findings according to the thematic objectives of a review based on these search terms. The critical stages and elements that affected the literature search, analysis, and synthesis are

⁵Zoheir Ali Esmail, “The Role of Eloquence in the Inimitability of the Qur'an,” *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 16, nos. 3–4 (2023): 227–239; Valerie Gonzalez, “Phenomenology of Quranic Corporeality and Affect: A Concrete Sense of Being Muslim in the World,” *Religions* 14, no. 7 (2023): 827, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14070827>.

⁶Gokhan Bacik, “Hermeneutics in Contemporary Turkey: An Analysis of Turkish Historicists,” *Religions* 12, no. 11 (2021): 1027, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12111027>; Ana Belén Soage, “Evolving Identity in the Face of Imperialism and Colonialism: The Emergence and Development of Political Islam,” *Critical Journal of Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2025): 37–61, <https://criticaljournalofsocialsciences.com/index.php/CJSS/article/view/v1n1-article3>.

⁷Barbara A. Kitchenham et al., “Preliminary Guidelines for Empirical Research in Software Engineering,” *IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering* 28, no. 8 (2002): 721–734, <https://doi.org/10.1109/TSE.2002.1027796>.

presented in Table 1.

Table 1 explains the conceptual model for the review process. The model is broken down into five stages, each of which corresponds to an analytical dimension. The first, Input Factors, consists of the personal and institutional characteristics that help shape the scholarly expression of *i'jāz* (classical exegetical methods, linguistic skill, theological models) that defined early and medieval discourse. The second, Mediating Mechanisms, refers to the tools and methodologies that Arabic grammar, semantics, rhetoric (*balāgha*), and hermeneutics scholars use to intervene in the process of understanding and disputing *i'jāz*.

The third stage, Outcome Variables, collects the variations of definitions and linguistic inimitability expressions from multiple traditions and histories: claims of divine authorship, claims of stylistic distinctiveness, and claims of persuasiveness. The fourth stage, “Moderating Factors,” covers intellectual, historical, and institutional elements which have affected *i'jāz* discussion, such as colonial domination, modernity, and religious polemic. The last stage is Contextual Factors, which include the wider cultural and civilisational processes like the role of the Qur’ān in the building of Islamic identities and the history of the Arabic language and its literary impact.

This model enables a total thematic arrangement of selected works and helps to uncover the interdisciplinary nature of literature on the inimitability of the Qur’ān. This table is not only an analytical tool, but it also represents repeatable contextual factors, process for the theological, linguistic and literary aspects of the synthesis as well.

Table 1. Conceptual Model for Reviewing the Linguistic Inimitability of the Qur’ān

Number	Phase Title	Phase Description
1	Input Factors	Classical exegetical traditions, individual scholarly backgrounds, theological orientations, linguistic training, and interpretive paradigms shaping <i>i'jāz</i> thought
2	Mediating Mechanisms	Application of Arabic grammar, rhetoric (<i>balāgha</i>), literary criticism, semantic theory, and hermeneutics for the organization of argumentation with regard to linguistic inimitability
3	Outcome Variables	Definitions and expressions of <i>i'jāz</i> , including syntactic uniqueness, rhythmic eloquence, divine authorship, literary excellence and stylistic singularity
4	Moderating Factors	The influence of history, contemporary intellectual currents, orientalist thought, reformist organizations and structures that redefine the understanding of <i>i'jāz</i>
5	Contextual Factors	General civilizational contribution of the Qur’ān to the Arabic language, Islamic theology, cultural identity and artistic traditions

The manual searching, conducted in the second phase of the search process, was done in order to complement the information provided by the electronic database. The “snowballing” method was used, which means forward and backward tracking of citations, or references, to the studies found in order to get more relevant studies that can't be found from the automated search with keywords. This process resulted in a more comprehensive and systematized review, especially important because *i'jāz al-Qur’ān* encompasses an interdisciplinary field of theology, Arabic linguistics, literary criticism, and Islamic intellectual history. All the materials of the primary bibliography have been scanned in a retrospective manner to obtain the missing classical and modern literature on Qur’ānic inimitability. In the same manner, the key works in the area were also subjected to “forward citation analysis,” which helped to pinpoint newer works that have extended the works of the key works.

The review process was based on the systematic review protocol detailed which comprised three phases: planning, conducting, and documenting. Selected literature was open coded and inductive

content analysis resulted in the identification of main themes and frameworks. These were classical *balāgha* theory, structural syntax, semantic density, allegations of divine authorship, and stylistic uniqueness. Thematic synthesis was cataloged using the coding, aligned to the analytical structure explained in Table 1.

The flow of articles, as selected in the selection process, is shown in Figure 1. The results of the initial automated and manual search in four databases (Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, Project MUSE) were 1,084 distinct records. Then, 51 duplicates were removed, leaving 1,033 records for abstract-level screening. A total of 879 articles were removed because of the non-inclusiveness. The remaining 154 articles were subjected to full-text evaluation and were discarded if they were not suitable for the relevant methods or were not relevant. After final inclusion criteria, the investigators narrowed down to a total of 39 studies for final synthesis. The PRISMA Flow chart for SLR is shown in Figure 1.

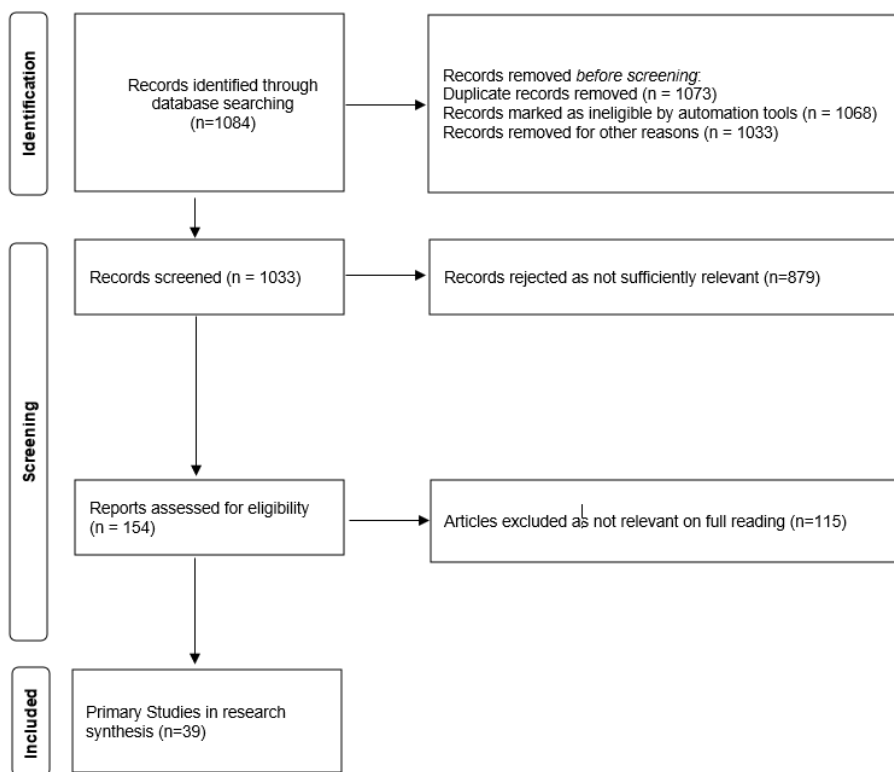


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Chart for SLR, Which Included Searches of Databases and Registers Only

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to make sure that all the sources selected are academically sound, methodologically strong, and practically relevant to the goals of this systematic review, which is to examine the explanation and development of the theory of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* in Islamic thought and intellectual history. The criteria are utilized to narrow down the scope of the review and to give a clear and concentrated group of literature.

Studies published between 2000 and 2024 to be included in this list must have appeared in peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books. The literature so chosen should address the linguistic, rhetorical, literary, and theological aspects of Qur'ānic inimitability clearly. Both empirical and non-empirical works were accepted as long as they seriously discussed *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, including historical works, works of textual criticism, rhetorical theory, and theological discourse. Eligible studies could be in an academically acceptable methodology or framework, such as *balāgha* (Arabic rhetoric), Qur'ānic stylistics, hermeneutics, and Islamic theology. English and Arabic studies were represented as languages that provided language access and pertinence to primary texts.

2.3. Screening Process

Studies were screened according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the process conducted in an unbiased and consistent manner throughout the screening of studies. Predefined criteria were used to minimize biases, and only studies that were specifically relevant to the linguistic inimitability of the Qur'ān were included. In every instance, a study was reviewed in the automated search and manual search phases separately. Titles and abstracts were first scanned for anything clearly out of the scope of this review, such as studies that had no relation to Qur'ānic linguistics, or studies that dealt with other than linguistic expressions of miracle. Then the full texts of the remaining articles were carefully examined to make sure they adhered to the main topics of the study (*i'jāz*, the rhetorical tradition of the Arabs, the stylistics of the Qur'ān, and the theological aspect of the inimitability of the language).

All screening decisions were recorded in a reproducible manner to help clarify and replicate the process; studies were included or excluded based on the direct matching with the criteria documented.

2.4. Study Quality Assessment (QA)

To attain methodological rigor and scholarly integrity, a structured quality assessment was carried out. The process enabled assessment of the quality, reliability and scholarly contribution of shortlisted primary studies. Appropriate weighting of each study was facilitated during the quality assessment procedure.⁸ The research team used a *standardized* questionnaire developed specifically for the purpose of separating out the different contributions to *i'jāz* of the studies in the linguistic, rhetorical and theological dimensions. To evaluate the methodological and conceptual rigor, the five quality assessment criteria (QAC) were developed and are tabulated.

The excluded and short-listed studies were read and rated on the five criteria. The quality review helped the research team to identify the research that most effectively met certain criteria of reliability, originality, and analysis.

The sample analysis structure is listed. The citation column includes complete bibliographic information. Major Findings complements the theoretical research on inimitability of the Qur'ān in the language. The tabulated information and the tabulated information provided in the accompanying table (Appendix A) allows for cross-study comparison and thematic synthesis. It is used to develop a broad and in-depth knowledge of the breadth and variety of scholarly works concerned with *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* in terms of disciplines and traditions.

3. Results

The temporal trend of research articles related to linguistic inimitability of the Qur'ān from 2002 to 2025 is presented in Figure 2 through a systematic search of 39 studies. The data show that the scholarly interest has increased over the years, with some years in between having a single or double

⁸Barbara Kitchenham, *Procedures for Performing Systematic Reviews*, Keele University Technical Report TR/SE-0401 (Keele, UK: Keele University, 2004).

output from 2002 to 2016, with most of the years having fewer than two outputs. There were also periods of the research timeline that were of lesser interest, such as in 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2013, and 2017.

There is a clear turning point from 2019 onwards, showing a dramatic rise, which we interpret as an uptick in scholarly interest. The overwhelming number of publications was seven studies in 2020, followed by 6 studies in 2021 and 2022. This increase indicates the rise of a more academically oriented discourse and practice of research within the given period, which could be the use of more interdisciplinary approaches and computational humanities tools. Although 2021 saw a slight interruption with only four studies, successive years (2023-2025) indicate persistent scholarly output, with 2023 printing five studies and 2024 and 2025 printing four studies each. The general picture which emerges from the chart is one of continuity, of a field of research that is increasingly being explored by scholars, especially in recent years, in this linguistic miracle, the Qur'ān. The pattern indicates that the theme is becoming popular across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines, including Theology, Linguistics, Translation Studies, and the Digital Humanities.

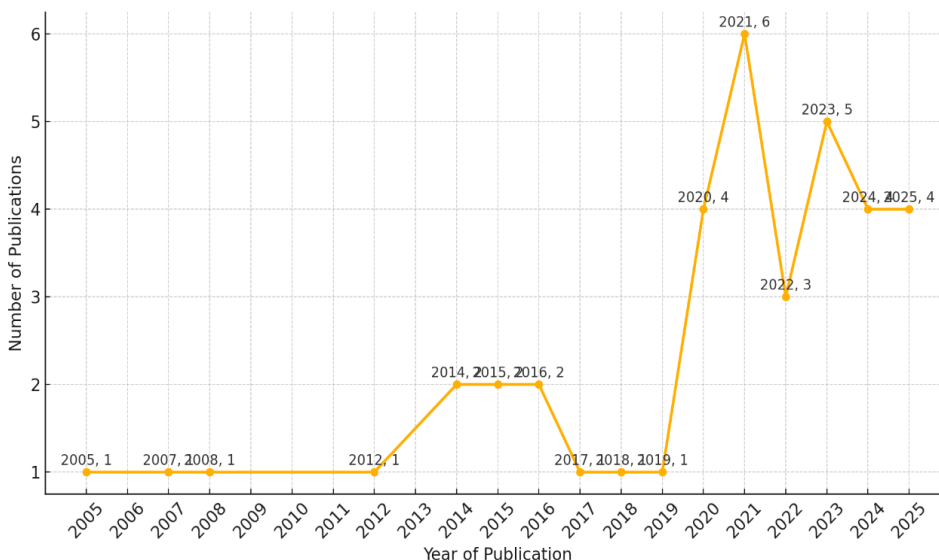


Figure 2. Distribution of the Key Studies Chronologically

3.1. Structural and Stylistic Inimitability of the Qur'ān

One of the most commented-about features of *i'jāz*, for a long time, has been its inimitability in terms of structure and style, with scholars discussing the super-artful structure of the Qur'ān's discourse. The theme is primarily concerned with the special composition, rhythm, coherence and rhetorical features of Qur'ānic discourse, and often suggests that this is beyond human literary ability. Ahmed (2005) thinks inimitability is not found in the individualistic aspects of style, but in the self-referencing system through the combination of rhythm, syntax and semantic concord. In such unity of structure, Ahmed claims that there can be no reproduction because reproduction is impossible due to the divinely designed and structurally cohesive nature of the structure.

This structural approach has been developed, and recent studies have taken analysis one step further to modern linguistic approaches. Kamorudeen and Darwish et al. demonstrate that each of these three characteristics—rhythmic recurrence, syntactic invention, and thematic unity—points to

the divine origin of the Qur'ān.⁹ The qualitative and computational methods used in these studies have led to the discovery of certain identifiable stylistic features and configurations far removed from classical Arabic prose. In their study, Jasim et al¹⁰ use phonological analysis, which shows that the acoustic clusters that are consonant with meaning are correlated to more memorization and strengthening of devotional experiences through hearing.

Others have worked on the theme of structural inimitability in rhetorical and exegetical models. Haddad¹¹ and Divlekci¹² focus on the institutionalization in ancient tafsīr (Qur'ānic exegesis) like in the writings of classical exegete al-Baydāwī (d. c. 1286 CE), highlighting how rhetorical flair and semantic inscription maintained and built Qur'ānic eloquence over centuries. Likewise, Divlekci¹³ discusses how syntactic parallelism and the rhetorical symmetry of the Qur'ān's effect are achieved without repetition. He finds that there is no repetition for ornamental purposes in the Qur'ān, and that the repetition in the Qur'ān is done for divine highlight.

Further, researchers such as Sadiq¹⁴ and Khajehei and Shakarami¹⁵ examine the irregularity and anomaly in the Qur'ān, finding that these are rhetorical and not linguistic in nature. In their opinion, effects that include ellipsis, subject inversion, and implicit coherence convey subtler semantic intentionality that makes the text both fluid and dense. In summary, the structural and stylistic features of the Qur'ān, such as rhythm, repetition, ellipsis, and syntactical innovations, are good evidence of the inimitability of the Qur'ān: its level of linguistic artistry exceeds human capacity, they argue.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of Structural and Stylistic Inimitability of the Qur'ān

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Ahmed ¹⁶	Self-referential rhetorical unity, semantic coherence, rhythm	Qualitative	Demonstrates inimitability through integrated linguistic architecture

⁹Busari Kehinde Kamorudeen, "An Examination of the Linguistic and Literary Miracles of the Quran," *Al-Aijaz Research Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 8, no. 3 (2024): 24–30; Aly Reda Aly Darwish et al., "Linguistic Miracles in the Noble Qur'an," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 11, no. 9 (2021): 1248–1258, <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i9/11137>.

¹⁰Anwar Abdulwahab Jasim, and Zainab Fahmi Ahmed, "Translating Proverb-Like Rhetorical Qur'anic Structures into English," *Journal of Language Studies* 5, no. 1 (2021): 90, <https://doi.org/10.25130/jls.5.1.7>.

¹¹Gibril Fouad Haddad, "Ijtihād, Synthesis, Modernity and Renewal: al-Baydāwī's *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār al-Ta'wīl* in Hermeneutical Tradition," *Quranica* 8, no. 2 (2016): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.22452/quranica.vol8no2.1>.

¹²Celalettin Divlekci, "Hattābī'nin (Ö. 388) İ'cāz Anlayışı ve Kur'an'ın İfade Biçimine Yönelik Tenkitlere Yaklaşımı [Hattabi's Understanding of I'jāz and His Approach to Criticisms]," *EKEV Academy Journal*, no. 60 (2014): 97–124, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/sosekev/article/1151536>.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Madiha Sadiq, "The Difference in the Case Factor and Its Semantic Effect in the Holy Qur'an: A Semantic Grammatical Study," *Al-Idah* 39, no. 2 (2021): 89–121, <https://doi.org/10.37556/al-idah.039.02.0243>.

¹⁵Hassan Khajehei, and Alireza Shakarami, "An In-Depth Linguistic Analysis of the Thematic Connectivity in the Holy Quran," *Academic Research International* 2, no. 2 (2012): 682–695, <https://www.europub.co.uk/articles/86993>.

¹⁶Ahmed, "The Inimitable Language of the Qur'an," 58

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Kamorudeen ¹⁷	Narrative coherence and rhythmic recurrence	Qualitative	Affirms divine origin via thematic and emotional unity
Haddad ¹⁸	Classical exegesis and rhetorical preservation	Qualitative	Shows continuity of rhetorical inimitability through tafsīr tradition
Divlekci ¹⁹	Syntactic parallelism and rhythmic symmetry	Qualitative	Argues repetition serves divine rhetorical function, not redundancy
Jasim et al. ²⁰	Phonological patterns in Meccan surahs	Quantitative	Links sound patterns to meaning and memorability
Sadiq ²¹	Syntactic anomalies as semantic strategies	Qualitative	Shows irregularities are deliberate tools of emphasis and coherence
Darwish et al. ²²	Rhetorical interplay of rhythm, conciseness, semantic layering	Qualitative	Frames rhetorical harmony as evidence of divine design
Khajehei and Shakarami ²³	Implicit coherence and relevance theory	Qualitative	Demonstrates hidden unity through contextual and cognitive inference

3.2. Semantic Innovation and Cognitive Depth in the Qur'ān

The theme of inimitability and semantic re-creation and cognitive richness explain why the Qur'ān does not fit into the literary conventions of its time, as it reinvents pre-Islamic images and experiences through the introduction of new theological and metaphysical ideas. The Qur'ān's discourse, according to Yazar and Batur²⁴ and Elieba,²⁵ carries profound metaphysical meanings of metaphysics derived from the themes of nature and poetry, which is a unique structure of the Islamic worldview in terms of epigrammatic and epistemic structure.

This thesis is supported by the works of Shah²⁶ and Setiawan,²⁷ which state that the Qur'ān is

¹⁷Kamorudeen, "An Examination of the Linguistic and Literary Miracles of the Quran," 28.

¹⁸Haddad, "Ijtihād, Synthesis, Modernity and Renewal," 11.

¹⁹Divlekci, "Hattabi's Understanding of I'jāz," 108.

²⁰Jasim and Ahmed, "Translating Proverb-Like Rhetorical Qur'anic Structures into English," 103.

²¹Sadiq, "The Difference in the Case Factor," 350.

²²Darwish et al., "Linguistic Miracles in the Noble Qur'an," 1252.

²³Khajehei and Shakarami, "An In-Depth Linguistic Analysis of the Thematic Connectivity in the Holy Quran," 689.

²⁴Samed Yazar and İslam Batur, "Rhetorical Transformation in the Qur'ān and Pre-Islamic Poetry: A Comparative Analysis of Space, Animal, and Natural Figures," *Religions* 16, no. 9 (2025): 1186, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16091186>.

²⁵Fakhry Muhammad Al-Sayed Elieba, "Linguistic Challenges of Translating the Holy Qur'an into English: A Comparative Analysis," *Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Fayoum University* 13, no. 1 (2021): 2303–2356, <https://doi.org/10.21608/jfafu.2021.48136.1238>.

²⁶Shah, "The Word of God," 167.

²⁷M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, "Liberal Thought in Qur'anic Studies: Tracing Humanistic Approach to Sacred Text in Islamic Scholarship," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 45, no. 1 (2007): 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2007.451.1-28>.

semantically fluid and cognitively tradable in time and culture. Shah²⁸ traces its universal motifs and variable semantic configurations to a means by which it can cross temporal and cultural boundaries and be relevant. The two works both show that semantic innovativeness is not limited to the level of the text but reaches the ontological, thereby leading to divine knowledge through the rearrangement of language and concepts.

Moreover, this theme includes, as a central aspect, cognitive linguistics. Yaacob²⁹ and Al-Mogami³⁰ use cognitive theory of metaphors to explain that individuals in the pre-Islamic era used familiar symbols as divine referents that are reproduced in the Qur'ān. Against the backdrop of similar natural phenomena, Yaacob's research shows how a system of linguistic creativity is developed from the natural phenomena into characteristics of God, as spiritual cognition. Along that vein, Al-Mogami argues that "a good translation" of the Qur'ān should not merely convey its literal meaning but "also the affective and cognitive power characteristic of the metaphors in the Qur'ān" that enriches its meaning with layers and expressiveness.

Other studies like those of Al-Jallad³¹ and Sabella et al.³² have studied deviations from the "rules" of poetry during the *Jāhiliyyah* (pre-Islamic) period in the Qur'ān. In his chapter, Al-Jallad demonstrates the shift in poetic conventions from the past to the new monotheistic style in the Qur'ān, and in their chapter Sabella et al. trace the Qur'ān's metaphors to the broader theological themes, such as the transcendence of space and time in the stories of the *isrā'* and *mi'rā'* (the Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey and Ascension)—a voluntary theological shift in language. Lastly, Soage³³ and Divlekci³⁴ provide sociocultural perspectives unveiling ways in which Qur'ānic semantics are reengineered into resistance mechanisms, identity making, and audience attraction over the course of history.

In brief, in the light of these experiments, the inimitability of the Qur'ān can be said to go beyond conceptual to stylistic depth as well. The Qur'ān uses cognitive redefinition and lexical invention to recode linguistic conventions as divine revelation, thus affirming the authorial claim of the divine and the rhetorical power of the Qur'ān in the course of history.

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of Semantic Innovation and Cognitive Depth

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Yazar et al. ³⁵	Transformation of pre-Islamic imagery into metaphysical symbolism	Qualitative	Highlights Qur'ān's semantic originality through theological reinterpretation

²⁸Shah, "The Word of God," 167.

²⁹Yaacob, "Written Evidence of the Inimitability of the Quran," 4.

³⁰Azzam Ahmed Al Mogami, "Linguistic Features of the Semantic Translation of the Holy Qur'an from Arabic into Russian," *Al-Adab Journal* 1, no. 141 (2022): 47–52, <https://doi.org/10.31973/aj.v1i141.1426>.

³¹Ahmad Al-Jallad, "The Linguistic Landscape of Pre-Islamic Arabia: Context for the Qur'an," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed., Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 111–127, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.013.44>.

³²Dina Sabella, Fauzan Saleh, and Emma Rahmawati, "Time and Space Structure of Isra' Mi'raj in the Perspective of Tafsir, Relativity Theory and Annihilation Theory," *LISAN AL-HAL* 18, no. 2 (2024): 183–195, <https://doi.org/10.35316/lisanalhal.v18i2.183-195>.

³³Soage, "Evolving Identity in the Face of Imperialism and Colonialism," 37.

³⁴Divlekci, "Hattabi's Understanding of I'jāz," 108.

³⁵Yazar and Batur, "Rhetorical Transformation in the Qur'ān and Pre-Islamic Poetry," 1186.

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Yaacob et al. ³⁶	Cognitive metaphors and divine attributes	Qualitative	Shows how metaphoric mapping supports inimitability via spiritual cognition
Elieba ³⁷	Integration of spiritual cognition with linguistic form	Qualitative	Connects rhetorical style to ethical and cognitive transformation
Shah ³⁸	Semantic universality and historical relevance	Qualitative	Demonstrates Qur'ān's continuous rhetorical power across time and cultures
Al-Jallad ³⁹	Lexical innovation and departure from poetic conventions	Qualitative	Establishes Qur'ānic language as a break from pre-Islamic norms
Setiawan ⁴⁰	Epistemological foundations of Qur'ānic language	Conceptual	Argues for revelation as method of knowledge through linguistic uniqueness
Al-Mogami ⁴¹	Pragmatic equivalence in translation of cognitive metaphors	Qualitative	Emphasizes preserving metaphorical resonance in translation for rhetorical fidelity
Sabella et al. ⁴²	Metaphysical semantics in the Isrā' and Mi'rāj narratives	Qualitative	Connects divine events to theological concepts beyond empirical time-space
Divlekci ⁴³	Thematic precision and musical balance	Qualitative	Links rhetorical symmetry to cognitive and emotional impact
Soage ⁴⁴	Qur'ānic language as a tool for political identity and resistance	Qualitative	Explores Qur'ānic discourse as evolving sociopolitical and rhetorical framework

3.3. Computational and Quantitative Validation of Qur'ānic Inimitability

The computational and quantitative validation theme is a distinctive methodological approach to Qur'ānic studies, as it brings empirical approaches of linguistics and digital humanities together to examine Qur'ānic inimitability. In this strand of research, researchers employ statistical modelling, corpus linguistics and machine learning-based methods to offer objective evidence of the structural and rhetorical distinctiveness of the Qur'ān.

Both Darwish et al.,⁴⁵ and Hassanein and Moustafa⁴⁶ are among the studies that use quantitative

³⁶Yaacob, "Written Evidence of the Inimitability of the Quran," 4.

³⁷Elieba, "Linguistic Challenges of Translating the Holy Qur'an into English," 2303.

³⁸Shah, "The Word of God," 167.

³⁹Al-Jallad, "The Linguistic Landscape of Pre-Islamic Arabia," 3.

⁴⁰Setiawan, "Liberal Thought in Qur'anic Studies," 15.

⁴¹Al Mogami, "Linguistic Features of the Semantic Translation," 49.

⁴²Sabella, Saleh, and Rahmawati, "Time and Space Structure of Isra' Mi'raj," 183.

⁴³Divlekci, "Hattabi's Understanding of I'jāz," 108.

⁴⁴Soage, "Evolving Identity in the Face of Imperialism and Colonialism," 37

⁴⁵Darwish et al., "Linguistic Miracles in the Noble Qur'an," 1256.

⁴⁶Hamada S. A. Hassanein and Basant S. M. Moustafa, "Translatability of Ancillary Antonymy in the Qur'an: A Lexicosyntactic Approach," *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies* 24, no. 1 (2024): 419–446, <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes.v24i1.638>.

and corpus-driven analysis to uncover the patterns of syntactic differences, as well as lexical frequencies and semantic relationships between Qur'ānic and classical Arabic prose. Their results show statistically significant regularities in structure and cohesion, which lend credence to the view that the Qur'ān is a linguistic phenomenon of its own kind and that it is impossible to find anything like it in the production of human language. This is because the linguistic structuring and semantic innovation have contributed to the development of a distinguishable and non-random linguistic system, as noted by Yaacob,⁴⁷ while Erdy⁴⁸ has highlighted the broader aspects of language and civilization that are derived from these patterns.

Finally, Jamil & Khaled⁴⁹ use the meta-analytical approach, which is carried out through the bibliometric mapping of the trends in Qur'ānic linguistic studies.

Table 4. Thematic Analysis of Computational and Quantitative Validation

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Darwish et al. ⁵⁰	Linguistic features of Qur'ānic discourse and rhetorical structure	Quantitative/Analytical	Demonstrates structured linguistic patterns supporting <i>i'jāz</i>
Hassanein & Moustafa ⁵¹	Lexicosyntactic structures and antonymy in the Qur'ān	Quantitative/Corpus-based	Highlights complex semantic relations and translation challenges, reinforcing linguistic depth
Yaacob ⁵²	Linguistic and theological dimensions of Qur'ānic inimitability	Qualitative/Conceptual	Connects linguistic structure with theological interpretation of <i>i'jāz</i>
Erdy ⁵³	Linguistic development and structural characteristics of the Qur'ān	Analytical	Explores linguistic uniqueness and broader intellectual and civilizational impact
Jamil & Khaled ⁵⁴	Bibliometric mapping of Qur'ānic research trends	Quantitative	Identifies rise of digital methodologies and need for interdisciplinary integration

3.4. Hermeneutics and Theological Dimensions of Inimitability

Hermeneutical and theological dimensions are the repeatable contextual process's linguistically unique features are discussed, but not so much with respect to literary perfection but with respect to divine encounter. In this context, inimitability (*i'jāz*) is a synthesis of aesthetic formulation and religious epistemology, the rhetorical performance working towards the creation of not only a feeling

⁴⁷ Yaacob, "Written Evidence of the Inimitability of the Quran," 4.

⁴⁸ Erdy, "The Origins, Theories, and Linguistic Development of the Qur'an," 13.

⁴⁹ Ahmad Jamil, and Nashwan Abdo Khaled, "Qur'anic Studies in the Global Academic Sphere: Bibliometric Mapping of Research Themes, Collaborations, and Emerging Directions," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 36, no. 2 (2025): 385–400, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v36i2.7155>.

⁵⁰ Darwish et al., "Linguistic Miracles in the Noble Qur'an," 1256.

⁵¹ Hassanein and Moustafa, "Translatability of Ancillary Antonymy in the Qur'an," 425.

⁵² Yaacob, "Written Evidence of the Inimitability of the Quran," 4.

⁵³ Erdy, "The Origins, Theories, and Linguistic Development of the Qur'an," 13.

⁵⁴ Jamil and Khaled, "Qur'anic Studies in the Global Academic Sphere," 385.

of aesthetic appreciation, but also a spiritual experience of redemption.

For Esmail,⁵⁵ the eloquence of the Qur'ān is a form of intentional disclosure wherein the form and meaning are inseparable and serve to guide and elevate the Muslim. He maintains that the inimitability of the Qur'ān is more in its teleological structure, which always brings about a kind of religious awakening and rational illumination. Similarly, Lawson⁵⁶ sees inimitability from a mystical perspective, suggesting that linguistically exceptional (*i'jāz*) does not stay confined to the realm of stylistic exceptionalism but extends to the field of experiential cognition.

El-Desouky⁵⁷ follows up with the placement of the Qur'ān as a hybrid revelation-art. The structure of affect in the Qur'ān, "the capacity to impart awe, reverence and certainty," is one aspect of its inimitability, his text argues. Gonzalez⁵⁸ builds on the idea by arguing that the sensory (acoustic, rhythmic and affective) effect of the language of the Qur'ān, whether or not the text can be accessed at the level of textual analysis, is the central aspect of its impact. Both agree with Friedman's point⁵⁹ that the theologies of Qur'ān aesthetics cannot be captured by Western literary forms, as the beauty of the Qur'ān is moderated with rhetorical skills.

Moreover, Erdy⁶⁰ suggests how the Qur'ān's innovations in language shaped advances in civilizations, which transformed literary expressions, pedagogy, and religious imagery of the Arabs. Fani,⁶¹ on the other hand, points to the recognition of Qur'ān's eloquence even in religio-polemics and confirms the universal acceptance of this discourse as a strange form of speech not within the repertoire of common human speech.

Table 5. Thematic Analysis of Hermeneutics and Theological Dimensions

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Esmail ⁶²	Linguistic mastery as purposeful revelation	Qualitative	Emphasizes inimitability as transformative spiritual and intellectual process
Lawson ⁶³	Mystical interpretation and experiential knowledge	Qualitative	Proposes esoteric reading of <i>i'jāz</i> as spiritual insight beyond stylistic features
El-Desouky ⁶⁴	Fusion of aesthetics and theology	Qualitative	Highlights affective structure linking divine speech to emotional experience
Gonzalez ⁶⁵	Sensory immersion and rhetorical soundscape	Qualitative	Shows auditory features contribute to spiritual and persuasive impact

⁵⁵Esmail, "The Role of Eloquence in the Inimitability of the Qur'an".

⁵⁶Lawson, "The Qur'an as Matrix of Islamic Civilization and Society," 1.

⁵⁷El-Desouky, "Discussions of Qur'anic Inimitability: The Theological Nexus," 381.

⁵⁸Gonzalez, "Phenomenology of Quranic Corporeality and Affect," 827.

⁵⁹Rachel Anne Friedman, "Clarity, Communication, and Understandability: Theorizing Language in al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* and *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* Texts," (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2015), 18, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3k82r14q>.

⁶⁰Erdy, "The Origins, Theories, and Linguistic Development of the Qur'an," 13.

⁶¹Sara Fani, "The Echoes of a Dispute over the Inimitability of the Qur'an in MS Riccardiano 217 (Florence)," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2023): 68–92, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2023.0544>.

⁶²Esmail, "The Role of Eloquence in the Inimitability of the Qur'an," 231.

⁶³Lawson, "The Qur'an as Matrix of Islamic Civilization and Society," 1-4.

⁶⁴El-Desouky, "Discussions of Qur'anic Inimitability: The Theological Nexus," 374–387

⁶⁵Gonzalez, "Phenomenology of Quranic Corporeality and Affect," 827.

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Friedman ⁶⁶	Theological aesthetics vs. Western literary theory	Qualitative	Argues Qur'ānic eloquence exceeds secular literary frameworks
Erdy ⁶⁷	Civilizational impact of Qur'ānic linguistic innovation	Qualitative	Demonstrates inimitability's role in shaping Arabic-Islamic cultural identity
Fani ⁶⁸	Early recognition of Qur'ānic eloquence in interreligious debate	Qualitative	Validates inimitability through historical polemical acknowledgment

3.5. Cross-Linguistic and Translation Challenges

The fifth theme dimension is on the related crosslinguistic and translational problems that are found in translating its inimitability from the source language into target languages. They mention that some features are being lost or have been completely lost in their other-language translations, including features like rhythm, antonymy, fine grammar, and semantic density. The argument for the inimitability of the Qur'ān is supported, but translation is understood not only as linguistic but also theological and interpretive as well.

Debbas and Haider⁶⁹ argued that the translation of the Qur'ān into Russian cannot be limited to the literal translation of the text but should also be based on the pragmatic meaning. Likewise, Hassanein and Moustafa⁷⁰ refer to the lack of parallelism in the syntax and balance in the meaning of English translations of the Qur'ān. Their results show that the persuasive effect of the Qur'ān greatly benefits from the use of paired and antonymic structures, and their removal weakens the persuasive effect.

On the other hand, Dollah and Salisu⁷¹ provide a more technical linguistic analysis and discuss antonymous homonyms in the Qur'ānic Arabic (lexical forms that are structurally similar but are given different meanings in different contexts).

Jasim et al.⁷² have also conducted research on phonological regularity and have provided some examples of translation, showing how the acoustic harmony of the *sūrah*s (chapters of the Qur'ān) of the Meccan era contributed to memorization and emotion. Their findings lead them to believe that the sonic dimension of inimitability is very rarely passed on so that the affective aspect is

⁶⁶Friedman, "Clarity, Communication, and Understandability," 18.

⁶⁷Erdy, "The Origins, Theories, and Linguistic Development of the Qur'an," 13.

⁶⁸Fani, "The Echoes of a Dispute Over the Inimitability of the Qur'an in Ms Riccardiano 217 (Florence)," 7

⁶⁹Manar Debbas and Ahmad S. Haider, "Overcoming Cultural Constraints in Translating English Series: A Case Study of Subtitling *Family Guy* into Arabic," *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature* 26, no. 1 (2020): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2020-2601-01>.

⁷⁰Hassanein and Moustafa, "Translatability of Ancillary Antonymy in the Qur'an," 425.

⁷¹Hanafi Dollah, and Alfa Muhammed Salisu, "Linguistic Complexity of Arabic Language: A Semantic Analysis of Antonymous Homonyms in the Holy Qur'an" (paper presented at the 3rd International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture and Education, Kuala Lumpur, October 17–18, 2015), <https://irep.iium.edu.my/48184/>.

⁷²Jasim and Ahmed, "Translating Proverb-Like Rhetorical Qur'anic Structures into English," 103.

diminished.⁷³

The two studies collectively show that while the surface meaning can be retained during translation processes, the rhetorical and aesthetic details of the Qur'ān might not be. Thus, inimitability is a part of the Arabic language system, and one can ask about its translatability, whether it has a semantic or aesthetic value.

Table 6. Thematic Analysis of Cross-Linguistic and Translation Challenges

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Al-Mogami ⁷⁴	Russian translation and pragmatic equivalence	Qualitative	Emphasizes preservation of emotive rhythm and divine tone over literal translation
Hassanein & Moustafa ⁷⁵	Syntactic parallelism and antonymy in English translations	Qualitative	Advocates for maintaining rhetorical symmetry to preserve persuasive effect
Dollah & Salisu ⁷⁶	Antonymous homonyms and semantic loss in translation	Qualitative	Proposes context-sensitive classification to retain rhetorical integrity
Jasim et al. ⁷⁷	Phonological features and translation loss of auditory rhetoric	Quantitative	Demonstrates acoustic harmony central to inimitability and lost in translation

3.6. Contextual, Political, and Interdisciplinary Approaches

The sixth thematic grouping investigates the inimitability (*i'jāz*) neither as a theological or literary concept alone, but as a dynamic interaction with politics, history and culture.

In recent Turkish readings of the Qur'ān, Bacik⁷⁸ notes that inimitability is recontextualized in the context of a secularizing society. The classical theological sense of understanding is not the only one that can be obtained from the concept of *i'jāz*; in recent times, scholars in Turkey have copiously discussed its potential for modernity, evidence for the possibility of legitimate authority based on religious convictions in linguistic miracle, and contextualization of history. This means that, even in politically fluid contexts, there is an ongoing possibility of *i'jāz* in the context of legitimate authority in terms of religiosity.

Soage⁷⁹ traces the postcolonial history through an analysis of the process of reinterpretation of Qur'ānic discourse as a discourse of opposition and politics. She demonstrates the use of the Qur'ānic discourse in two interconnected ways: popular mobilization for a common action and in the mode of divine writing to constitute Islamic identity in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Inimitability in the Qur'ān is translated into a symbol of language sovereignty and cultural continuity in the face of foreign domination. Inimitability in the Qur'ān is interpreted as a symbol for language sovereignty

⁷³Mohammed Farghal, and Ahmad S. Haider, "A Cogno-Prosodic Approach to Translating Arabic Poetry into English: Human vs. Machine," *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature* 31, no. 1 (2025): 255–271, <https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2025-3101-17>.

⁷⁴Al Mogami, "Linguistic Features of the Semantic Translation," 50.

⁷⁵Hassanein and Moustafa, "Translatability of Ancillary Antonymy in the Qur'an," 419–446.

⁷⁶Dollah and Salisu, "Linguistic Complexity of Arabic Language," 6.

⁷⁷Jasim and Ahmed, "Translating Proverb-Like Rhetorical Qur'anic Structures into English," 103.

⁷⁸Bacik, "Hermeneutics in Contemporary Turkey," 5.

⁷⁹Soage, "Evolving Identity in the Face of Imperialism and Colonialism," 37.

and cultural continuity in the face of foreign domination.

Mårtensson⁸⁰ describes how the early Abbasid-era commentators, particularly al-Ṭabarī (839–923 CE), integrated notions of rhetoric and juridical authority in their comprehension of the eloquence of the Qur’ān.

Table 7. Thematic Analysis of Contextual, Political, and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Contribution
Bacik ⁸¹	Turkish hermeneutics and modernity	Qualitative	Shows how <i>i’jāz</i> adapts to secular and modern intellectual frameworks
Soage ⁸²	Postcolonial identity and resistance through Qur’ānic discourse	Qualitative	Frames <i>i’jāz</i> as political and cultural language of agency and resilience
Mårtensson ⁸³	Early Islamic intellectual tradition and legal-rhetorical synthesis	Qualitative	Demonstrates how linguistic eloquence underpinned theological and legal authority

4. Discussion

For this systematic analysis, we selected 39 scholarly articles that are available in the literature between 2000 and 2025 on the linguistic inimitability (*i’jāz*) of the Qur’ān. We used a thematic analysis to identify six core areas of research focus which reflected classical tradition in the research domain as well as recent trends.

Through texts like those of Ahmed,⁸⁴ Haddad,⁸⁵ and Kamorudeen,⁸⁶ the persuasive and aesthetic authority of the Qur’ān is carried forward in two ways: ellipsis, parallelism, and structural symmetry. These analyses illustrate the Qur’ān’s self-reference and the intricacy of its linguistic weave, which further strengthens the ancient argument for the form of the Qur’ān, to which no human writing can match.⁸⁷

The second theme, semantic innovativeness and cognitive richness, switches the eye from shape to content. The Qur’ān’s rhetorical innovativeness is thought to result in the re-definition of pre-Islamic images in a metaphysical sense by scholars like Yazar et al.,⁸⁸ Elieba⁸⁹, and Shah⁹⁰. Its semantic innovativeness is due to the way it configures poetic and natural scenes to theological

⁸⁰Ulrika Mårtensson, “Al-Ṭabarī’s Concept of the Qur’an: A Systemic Analysis,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2016): 9–57, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2016.0238>.

⁸¹Bacik, “Hermeneutics in Contemporary Turkey,” 5.

⁸²Soage, “Evolving Identity in the Face of Imperialism and Colonialism,” 37.

⁸³Mårtensson, “Al-Ṭabarī’s Concept of the Qur’an,” 9.

⁸⁴Ahmed, “The Inimitable Language of the Qur’an,” 175–181.

⁸⁵Haddad, “Ijtihād, Synthesis, Modernity and Renewal,” 11.

⁸⁶Kamorudeen, “An Examination of the Linguistic and Literary Miracles of the Quran,” 28.

⁸⁷Maria Dadene, and Firdaous Ayachi Amor, “Subtitling Selected Fragments from the TV Program “Lamassat Bayaniyya” from Arabic into English,” (Master’s Thesis, Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla, 2023), 1–81, <https://dspace.univ-ouargla.dz/jspui/handle/123456789/34469>; Davood Mohammadyani and Seyed Majid Abdellahi, “The Influence of Qur’anic Teaching on Famous Muslim Philosophers,” *Religious Studies and Theology* 34, no. 1 (2015): 5–18, <https://doi.org/10.1558/rsth.v34i1.24545>.

⁸⁸Yazar and Batur, “Rhetorical Transformation in the Qur’ān and Pre-Islamic Poetry,” 1186.

⁸⁹Elieba, “Linguistic Challenges of Translating the Holy Qur’an into English,” 2321.

⁹⁰Shah, *The Word of God*, 167.

imagery, frequently in the form of what I have called a “cognitive framing device.”⁹¹ However, the innovation in its referent history is layered by Al-Jallad,⁹² who shows the breaking of linguistic norms that were present at the time of the Qur’ān. In this layering of the theme, we can see that *i’jāz* does not lie in blindly ornamented eloquence but in innovativeness of themes and ideas—a rationale shared also by Sabella et al.⁹³ The hermeneutical and theological aspects reveal and express a deep religious aspect of linguistic inimitability. Many scholars, including Esmail⁹⁴, Lawson,⁹⁵ and El-Desouky,⁹⁶ have suggested that the language of the Qur’ān is a text process and revelation from God.

Cross-linguistic and translation issues remain a problem for scholars. The loss of the delicate rhythm and semantic nuances in the translation of the Qur’ān can be illustrated by al-Mogami⁹⁷, Hassanein and Moustafa,⁹⁸ and Dollah and Salisu.⁹⁹

Understanding of *i’jāz* is wider in terms of intellectual and civilizational context in the last theme, contextual, political, and interdisciplinary explanations. In re-explanations by Muslim scholars, one can see the eloquence of the Qur’ān in the context of modernity and secularity as discussed by Bacik¹⁰⁰ and Mårtensson.¹⁰¹ In a semiotic redefinition of inimitability as a relational sign system, Soage¹⁰² outlines *i’jāz* as a postcolonial and politically resisting rhetorical force. The linguistic uniqueness of the Qur’ān is not only theological or literary but also cultural and philosophical in the building and incorporation of the Muslim way of thinking and thinking about himself.

The conclusion that is present in each theme is the same: *i’jāz* is a stable and dynamic concept. Schematic analysis of rhythm, syntax, and metaphor continues to be important, but modern tools from other disciplines have been added to the understanding of the mechanisms of the Qur’ānic language. The blend of classical rhetoric with modern science is obvious, and the cognitive and digital methods are increasingly substantiating ancient statements of inimitability.

4.1. Theoretical Implications

The findings of this review show the theoretical implications of the study of Inimitability of the Qur’ān (*i’jāz*), particularly in its changing conception. Classical Arab theology and rhetoric are the most common sources of bases for *i’jāz*. This study, however, shows that the theoretical glint of *i’jāz* is changing, incorporating computational analysis, hermeneutics and semiotics as well as cognitive linguistics.

Thus, the theoretical applications invite a wider, more syncretic model of *i’jāz*—a model which combines classical liberal rhetorical analysis with current interpretive and empirical models. A model

⁹¹Hossein Sayyadi Tooranloo and Pedram Azizi, “An Analysis of Causal Relationships of Ethical Values in Auditing from Islam’s Perspective: Using Fuzzy DEMATEL Approach,” *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 34, no. 3 (2018): 393–422, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-02-2018-0035>.

⁹²Al-Jallad, *The Linguistic Landscape of Pre-Islamic Arabia*, 3.

⁹³Sabella, Saleh, and Rahmawati, “Time and Space Structure of Isra’ Mi’raj,” 188.

⁹⁴Esmail, “The Role of Eloquence in the Inimitability of the Qur’an,” 231.

⁹⁵Lawson, “The Qur’an as Matrix of Islamic Civilization and Society,” 1–4.

⁹⁶El-Desouky, “Discussions of Qur’anic Inimitability: The Theological Nexus,” 374–387

⁹⁷Al Mogami, “Linguistic Features of the Semantic Translation,” 47.

⁹⁸Hassanein and Moustafa, “Translatability of Ancillary Antonymy in the Qur’an,” 419–446.

⁹⁹Dollah and Salisu, “Linguistic Complexity of Arabic Language,” 1–10.

¹⁰⁰Bacik, “Hermeneutics in Contemporary Turkey,” 5.

¹⁰¹Mårtensson, “Al-Ṭabarī’s Concept of the Qur’an,” 9.

¹⁰²Soage, “Evolving Identity in the Face of Imperialism and Colonialism,” 37.

like this can explain the Qur'ān's purportedly "unlike" linguistic, cross-cultural, and cross-disciplinary nature to a greater degree.

4.2. Linguistic Implications

Linguistically, the works discussed highlight that the Qur'ān has never been used in such a way to manipulate language as it is—the most important feature of its inimitability. The unique style structure and characteristics of syntactic deviation, rhythmic complexity, semantic densification, and rhetorical symmetry show it to be a communicative matrix that is unlike that of Arabic and all other languages, and are confirmed by several contributions. Studies by more scholars, such as Kamorudeen,¹⁰³ Jasim and Ahmed,¹⁰⁴ and Haddad,¹⁰⁵ make detailed studies of syntax and phonology that testify to ways the Qur'ān's linguistic structure avoids inimitability and submits to laws of divine intentional determinateness.

Furthermore, this criticism is one of the major inputs that the Qur'ān received in the field of language. Yazar et al.,¹⁰⁶ Yaacob et al.,¹⁰⁷ and Shah¹⁰⁸ provide support to these findings through their studies that demonstrate how basic Arabic expressions and pre-Islamic images are transformed into metaphysical, theistic, and theological objects in the form of new cognitive metaphors.

Lastly, Translation Fidelity challenges remind us that the Qur'ānic linguistic splendor and rhetorical effect are inherently ingrained in its native original version in Arabic. According to the study of translation, one of the most important features of loss is that the Qur'ānic inimitability is a characteristic that occurs repeatedly in the translation process, at the level of semantics and is semantically balanced, in addition to affective force loss.

4.3. Conclusion

The researchers had done a synthesis of the results of 39 scientific articles, which they used to examine the inimitability (*i'jāz*) of the Qur'ān in terms of structure, meaning, theology, and computation. The evidence shows that the inimitability of the Qur'ān is in its well-composed form, rhythm, rhetorical cohesion, and originality of meaning, which culminates in the language's elegance and its profound message. The analysis both quantitative and qualitative shows that such qualities are unparalleled in human writing and hard to imitate or impart without change. There are, however, some limitations of the study that need to be recognized. First, the review was limited to articles published since 2000, in English and Arabic, and included only peer-reviewed articles, excluding scholarship in other languages, and non-peer-reviewed book-length monographs that may be very valuable. Second, although it is systematic, it inevitably means an interpretation of the work, and this may not reflect the full range of the individual contributions of the studies. Third, the primary consideration of the review was linguistic, theological, and computational aspects of *i'jāz*, while pedagogical, psychological, and artistic aspects that might add to the understanding of *i'jāz* of the Qur'ān were not considered in as much detail.

Based on this review, there are several avenues that could be pursued as future research. First, there is a lack of interdisciplinary integration, in particular, the integration of classical rhetorical analysis with computational, cognitive, and sociolinguistic approaches to build more complete

¹⁰³Kamorudeen, "An Examination of the Linguistic and Literary Miracles of the Quran," 28.

¹⁰⁴Jasim and Ahmed, "Translating Proverb-Like Rhetorical Qur'anic Structures," 103.

¹⁰⁵Haddad, "Ijtihād, Synthesis, Modernity and Renewal," 11.

¹⁰⁶Samed Yazar, and İslam Batur, "Rhetorical Transformation in the Qur'ān and Pre-Islamic Poetry: A Comparative Analysis of Space, Animal, and Natural Figures," *Religions* 16, no. 9 (2025): 1186, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16091186>.

¹⁰⁷Yaacob, "Written Evidence of the Inimitability of the Quran," 4.

¹⁰⁸Shah, "The Word of God," 166.

models of the inimitability of the Qur'ān. Second, research with empirical studies into the psychological and neurological impact on listeners of the language of the Qur'ān would yield new information on the persuasive and transformative power of the Qur'ān. Third, comparative studies of parallels and differences between the inimitability of the Qur'ān. Fourth, translation studies which aimed to create systematic methodologies to preserve rhetorical features in Qur'ānic translation would tackle the recurring issues revealed in this review. Fifth, the longitudinal studies that would look at how the interpretations of *i'jāz* have changed over the years, in differing intellectual and cultural settings, would contribute to the understanding of the evolution of the

Author Contribution

Radwan Muhammad-Said Eazolli: conceptualization, methodology, supervision. **Mohammed O. Abu-Rahme:** investigation, validation, resources. **Majdi Shahadat:** data curation, writing - review & editing. **Abeer Al-Shbeil:** writing – original draft, formal analysis.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the findings of this study will be made available by the corresponding author upon request.

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