

Jinas As *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* in the Qur'an: Sound Structure, Meaning, And Linguistic Inimitability

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Abstract

This article examines *jinās* as a form of *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* in the Qur'an by focusing on the relationship between sound structure, semantic differentiation, and linguistic inimitability. The study responds to a recurring limitation in Qur'anic rhetorical studies, namely the tendency to treat *jinās* merely as verbal ornamentation rather than as a meaningful linguistic mechanism embedded in Qur'anic discourse. Using a qualitative textual-rhetorical method, the research analyses selected Qur'anic passages through an integrated framework combining classical Arabic *balāghah*, al-Jurjānī's theory of *naẓm*, semantic analysis, and modern Qur'anic stylistics. The analysis shows that Qur'anic *jinās* operates through varied structural patterns, including near-identical lexical forms, partial phonetic resemblance, and morphologically proximate expressions. These patterns do not function as isolated aesthetic devices; rather, they intensify meaning, sharpen contrast, support ethical instruction, and reinforce thematic coherence. The findings further demonstrate that *jinās* participates in the Qur'an's linguistic force by placing sound resemblance within precise syntactic and semantic contexts. This article contributes theoretically by repositioning *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* from a secondary ornamental category to a central rhetorical-semantic structure in Qur'anic interpretation. It argues that the study of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* can be enriched through close attention to micro-level sound patterns, where auditory beauty, semantic precision, and contextual coherence converge.

Keywords: *jinās*, *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah*, Qur'anic rhetoric, *naẓm*, linguistic inimitability

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji *jinās* sebagai salah satu bentuk *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* dalam Al-Qur'an dengan menitikberatkan pada hubungan antara struktur bunyi, perbedaan makna, dan kemukjizatan linguistik. Kajian ini berangkat dari keterbatasan dalam studi retorika Al-Qur'an yang masih cenderung memosisikan *jinās* sebagai ornamen verbal, bukan sebagai mekanisme linguistik yang bermakna dalam wacana Al-Qur'an. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif tekstual-retoris, penelitian ini menganalisis sejumlah ayat Al-Qur'an terpilih melalui kerangka terpadu yang menggabungkan *balāghah* Arab klasik, teori *naẓm* al-Jurjānī, analisis semantik, dan stilistika Al-Qur'an modern. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa *jinās* dalam Al-Qur'an hadir melalui beberapa pola struktural, seperti kemiripan bentuk leksikal yang hampir identik, kedekatan fonetik parsial, dan hubungan morfologis antarkata. Pola-pola tersebut tidak berfungsi sebagai hiasan estetis yang terpisah dari makna, melainkan memperkuat pesan, menajamkan kontras, menopang instruksi etis, dan membangun koherensi tematik ayat. Temuan ini juga menunjukkan bahwa *jinās* berperan dalam kekuatan linguistik Al-Qur'an karena kemiripan bunyi ditempatkan dalam konteks sintaksis dan semantik yang presisi. Secara teoretis, artikel ini berkontribusi dengan mereposisi *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* dari kategori ornamen sekunder menjadi struktur retorik-semantik yang penting dalam penafsiran Al-Qur'an. Kajian ini menegaskan bahwa pembahasan *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* dapat diperkaya melalui perhatian terhadap pola bunyi mikro, tempat keindahan auditoris, ketepatan makna, dan koherensi kontekstual saling bertemu.

Kata kunci: *jinās*, *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah*, retorika al-qur'an, *naẓm*, kemukjizatan linguistik



Introduction

The Qur'an continues to occupy a central position in global Islamic intellectual life, not only as scripture but also as a linguistic event whose aesthetic, semantic, and theological force has shaped Muslim exegetical, devotional, and literary traditions for more than fourteen centuries. In contemporary Islamic Studies, renewed attention to the Qur'an as discourse has emerged alongside broader developments in literary hermeneutics, Arabic linguistics, corpus studies, and digital humanities. This development is not merely academic. For a global Muslim population exceeding two billion, the Qur'an remains encountered through recitation, memorization, interpretation, and scholarly analysis; its sound patterns are therefore not peripheral to its meaning but form part of the lived reception of revelation. Modern Qur'anic resources, such as the Quranic Arabic Corpus, identify the text as consisting of 114 chapters and 6,236 numbered verses, with annotated linguistic analysis across its Arabic vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and semantic structures.¹ More recent computational projects have further expanded the empirical possibilities of Qur'anic study by producing morphologically annotated corpora and multimodal datasets that connect text, transliteration, translation, and audio recitation.² Yet the sophisticated sonic architecture of the Qur'an, especially at the level of rhetorical figures such as *jinās*, has not received proportionate theoretical and methodological attention within contemporary *Ushuluddin* and Qur'anic Studies.

Within the classical Arabic rhetorical tradition, *jinās* belongs to *muḥassināt lafziyyah*, the verbal embellishments studied under *'ilm al-badī'*. It refers to the recurrence of formally similar or near-similar expressions that differ in meaning, producing a patterned tension between sound resemblance and semantic divergence. In ordinary rhetorical manuals, *jinās* is often treated as an ornament of eloquence, an aesthetic device that beautifies speech through phonetic symmetry. However, when examined within the Qur'an, this definition becomes insufficient. Qur'anic *jinās* is not simply a decorative play of sound; rather, it frequently intensifies contrast, sharpens semantic association, creates mnemonic density, and contributes to the affective force of divine address. This raises a central theoretical problem: how can a device conventionally classified as verbal ornament be understood as a carrier of meaning and as part of the Qur'an's linguistic inimitability? The problem becomes more acute because classical discussions of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* often privilege *naẓm*, semantic coherence, syntactic precision, and discursive arrangement, while modern literary approaches tend to emphasise structure, narrative, intertextuality, or historical context more than the micro-level interaction between phonology and semantics.³

Previous scholarship may be grouped into three broad tendencies. The first consists of classical and neo-classical studies of *balāghah*, especially those shaped by *al-Jurjānī's* theory of *naẓm*, where eloquence is located in the ordered relation

¹ Kais Dukes, "The Qur'anic Arabic Corpus: Annotated Linguistic Resource for the Holy Qur'an," *Language Resources and Evaluation* 47 (2013): 123–55.

² Diyam Akra, Tymaa Hammouda, and Mustafa Jarrar, "QuranMorph: Morphologically Annotated Quranic Corpus" (arXiv, 2025), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2506.18148>; Muhammad Umar Salman, Muhammad Ammar Qazi, and Muhammad Taimoor Alam, "Quran-MD: A Fine-Grained Multilingual Multimodal Dataset of the Quran" (arXiv, 2026), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2601.17880>.

³ Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis* (Amsterdam University Press., 2003); M Shah and M A Haleem, *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies, The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.001.0001>.

between expression, syntax, and meaning rather than in isolated vocabulary.⁴ This tradition provides an indispensable conceptual foundation but does not always offer a systematic account of *jīnās* as a phonological-semantic mechanism in selected Qur'anic passages. The second tendency is represented by modern literary and rhetorical studies of the Qur'an, which have demonstrated the relevance of coherence, ring composition, oral-auditory texture, and surah-level design for interpretation.⁵ These studies have helped move Qur'anic interpretation beyond atomistic readings, yet their focus is often macro-structural rather than concentrated on specific *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah*. The third tendency appears in contemporary corpus-based and computational approaches, which have made Qur'anic vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and recitation more accessible to empirical analysis.⁶ Although such projects provide valuable tools, they rarely integrate classical *balāghah* categories with close semantic interpretation and the doctrine of *i'jāz*.

This study therefore identifies a conceptual, methodological, and interpretive gap. Conceptually, *jīnās* is still frequently reduced to verbal embellishment, whereas its Qur'anic function may be better understood as a patterned relation between sound, semantic tension, and theological signification. Methodologically, existing research often separates traditional rhetorical classification from close linguistic analysis; as a result, *jīnās* is either catalogued as a stylistic feature or mentioned as evidence of eloquence without being examined through a coherent analytical model. Empirically, there remains a need for focused studies that examine concrete Qur'anic instances of *jīnās* by tracing their phonetic structure, lexical relation, immediate co-text, and interpretive effect. Interpretively, the connection between *jīnās* and linguistic inimitability is often asserted but not adequately demonstrated through sustained textual analysis.

Against this background, the present study asks three interrelated questions: how is *jīnās* structurally formed in selected Qur'anic passages as a type of *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah*; how does its sound resemblance interact with semantic difference to produce interpretive force; and in what sense can *jīnās* contribute to a more precise understanding of Qur'anic linguistic inimitability? Correspondingly, the objectives of this study are to identify and analyse selected patterns of Qur'anic *jīnās*, to explain their semantic and rhetorical functions within their immediate textual contexts, and to propose a theoretically grounded account of *jīnās* as more than ornamental sound-play.

⁴ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis* (Routledge, 2006), [https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Arabic Rhetoric A Pragmatic Analysis Abdul-Raof](https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Arabic+Rhetoric+A+Pragmatic+Analysis+Abdul-Raof); 'Abd al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il Al-I'jāz Fī Al-Qur'ān*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr (Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2004), <https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=Dalail+al-Ijaz+al-Jurjani+Mahmud+Muhammad+Shakir>.

⁵ Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003); Salwa M S El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure* (Routledge, 2006), <https://www.routledge.com/Textual-Relations-in-the-Quran-Relevance-Coherence-and-Structure/El-Awa/p/book/9780415379502>; Michel Cuypers, *The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Raymond Farrin, *Structure and Qur'anic Interpretation: A Study of Symmetry and Coherence in Islam's Holy Text* (White Cloud Press, 2014), <https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=Structure+and+Quranic+Interpretation+Raymond+Farrin>; Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an: Text and Commentary: Vol. 1. Early Meccan Surahs: Poetic Prophecy* (Oxford University Press, 2022), [https://academic.oup.com/search-results?q=The Qur%27an Text and Commentary Volume 1 Early Meccan Surahs](https://academic.oup.com/search-results?q=The+Qur%27an+Text+and+Commentary+Volume+1+Early+Meccan+Surahs).

⁶ Dukes, "The Qur'anic Arabic Corpus: Annotated Linguistic Resource for the Holy Qur'an"; Akra, Hammouda, and Jarrar, "QuranMorph: Morphologically Annotated Quranic Corpus"; Salman, Qazi, and Alam, "Quran-MD: A Fine-Grained Multilingual Multimodal Dataset of the Quran."

The study is framed by an integrated model combining classical *balāghah*, especially *‘ilm al-badī* and al-Jurjānī’s theory of *naẓm*, with modern linguistic stylistics and semantic-pragmatic analysis. This framework allows *jīnās* to be read not as an isolated phonetic coincidence but as a deliberate textual configuration in which sound resemblance, lexical contrast, syntactic placement, and contextual meaning operate together. Such an approach also responds to a wider debate in Qur’anic Studies: whether the literary analysis of the Qur’an can remain academically rigorous while still recognising the internal theological claim of *i’jāz*. By analysing *jīnās* through sound structure and meaning, this article contributes to that debate from within the disciplines of *Ushuluddin*, tafsir studies, and Arabic rhetoric.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to reposition *jīnās* from the margins of rhetorical ornamentation to the centre of Qur’anic linguistic analysis. Rather than treating *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* as decorative residue within classical manuals, the article argues that *jīnās* can function as a semantic and theological intensifier in Qur’anic discourse. Its academic contribution is twofold: it offers a refined analytical model for studying sound-based rhetoric in the Qur’an, and it demonstrates how micro-level phonological structures may illuminate broader discussions of meaning, reception, and linguistic inimitability. In doing so, the study aims to strengthen contemporary *balāghah*-based Qur’anic interpretation and to show that the Qur’an’s verbal artistry is inseparable from its semantic depth.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative textual-rhetorical research design, combining classical Arabic *balāghah* analysis with modern linguistic stylistics and semantic interpretation. The choice of this design is based on the nature of the research object: *jīnās* in the Qur’an is not primarily a measurable linguistic frequency but a textual phenomenon in which phonetic resemblance, lexical form, semantic distinction, and rhetorical function interact within a specific revelatory discourse.⁷ The study is therefore positioned as a textual and interpretive inquiry rather than as an empirical field study. Its purpose is not to quantify all occurrences of *jīnās* in the Qur’an, but to examine selected instances in sufficient depth in order to explain how sound structure contributes to meaning and how such interaction may illuminate the Qur’an’s linguistic inimitability (*i’jāz al-Qur’ān*).⁸

The primary source of this research is the Arabic text of the Qur’an. The study treats the Qur’anic Arabic text as the central object of analysis, while translations are used only as supporting tools and not as primary evidence. This distinction is methodologically important because *jīnās* operates through Arabic phonology, morphology, lexical form, and semantic nuance; these features are

⁷ Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 6th ed. (SAGE Publications, 2018), <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/an-introduction-to-qualitative-research/book261109>; John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (Sage Publications, 2018); Sarah J Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*, 2nd ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Qualitative+Research+Methods%3A+Collecting+Evidence%2C+Crafting+Analysis%2C+Communicating+Impact%2C+2nd+Edition-p-9781119390787>.

⁸ Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Isa al-Rummani, “Al-Nukat Fi i’jaz Al-Qur’an,” in *Thalath Rasa’il Fi i’jaz Al-Qur’an*, ed. Muhammad Khalaf Allah Ahmad and Muhammad Zaghlu Sallam, 3rd ed. (Dar al-Ma’arif, 1976); Abu Sulayman Hamd ibn Muhammad al-Khattabi, “Bayan i’jaz Al-Qur’an,” in *Thalath Rasa’il Fi i’jaz Al-Qur’an*, ed. Muhammad Khalaf Allah Ahmad and Muhammad Zaghlu Sallam, 3rd ed. (Dar al-Ma’arif, 1976); Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Tayyib al-Baqillani, *I’jāz Al-Qur’ān*, n.d.

often weakened, altered, or lost in translation. To support textual accuracy, the study also consults established Qur'anic linguistic resources, including annotated Qur'anic corpora and standard Arabic lexical references, especially when identifying word roots, morphological patterns, and syntactic relations.⁹ Classical works of *balāghah* and *tafsīr* are used as secondary sources, particularly to clarify how Muslim scholars have historically understood *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah*, *jinās*, *naẓm*, and *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*.¹⁰ Modern studies in Qur'anic linguistics, stylistics, and literary-rhetorical interpretation are used to strengthen the analytical framework and to situate the discussion within contemporary scholarship.

The selection of Qur'anic data follows a purposive textual sampling strategy. Verses are selected on the basis of their relevance to the phenomenon of *jinās* rather than through random sampling, since qualitative textual inquiry prioritizes conceptual relevance, interpretive depth, and analytical adequacy over statistical representation.¹¹ A verse or phrase is included in the corpus of analysis when it meets four criteria. First, it contains two or more lexical items that show a significant degree of phonetic, orthographic, or morphological resemblance. Second, the similar forms carry distinct meanings or perform different semantic functions in the verse. Third, the relation between the similar forms contributes to the rhetorical, interpretive, or affective force of the passage. Fourth, the instance can be examined within its immediate Qur'anic co-text rather than as an isolated wordplay. Conversely, cases of ordinary repetition, rhyme, *saj'*-like cadence, or shared root morphology are excluded when they do not involve meaningful semantic differentiation. This distinction is necessary to prevent *jinās* from being confused with other sound-based features of Qur'anic style.¹²

The analytical framework of the study consists of three interrelated layers. The first layer is classical Arabic rhetoric, especially *'ilm al-badī'* and the classification of *jinās* as one of the *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah*. This layer provides the technical vocabulary for distinguishing between complete and incomplete forms of *jinās*, as well as for examining the aesthetic function of sound resemblance. The second layer is al-Jurjānī's theory of *naẓm*, which allows the study to move beyond the view of *jinās* as an isolated ornament. From this perspective, eloquence is not located merely in the beauty of individual words, but in the relational arrangement of expression and meaning within a larger syntactic and semantic order.¹³ The

⁹ Karin C Ryding, *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486975>; Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-the-arabic-language.html>.

¹⁰ al-Rummani, "Al-Nukat Fi i'jaz Al-Qur'an"; al-Khattabi, "Bayan i'jaz Al-Qur'an"; Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Tayyib al-Baqillani, *I'jaz Al-Qur'an*, ed. al-Sayyid Ahmad Saqr (Dar al-Ma'arif, 1997); Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il Al-I'jāz Fī Al-Qur'ān*; Yūsuf ibn Abī Bakr Al-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ Al-'ulūm* (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000), <https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=Miftah+al-Ulum+al-Sakkaki+Dar+al-Kutub+al-Ilmiyah>; Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Qazwīnī, *Al-Idāh Fī 'ulūm Al-Balāgha: Al-Ma'ānī, Al-Bayān, Wa-Al-Badī'*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2023), <https://www.al-ilmiah.com/search?search=الإيضاح في علوم البلاغة>.

¹¹ Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*; Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*; Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*.

¹² Stewart M Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age* (London: Routledge, 2006); Shawkat M Toorawa, "The Inimitable Rose, Being Qur'anic Saj' from Surat Al-Duha to Surat Al-Nas (Q. 93-114) in English Rhyming Prose," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2006): 143–55, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25728187>.

¹³ Kamal Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjani's Theory of Poetic Imagery* (Aris & Phillips, 1979), <https://search.worldcat.org/title/6015515>; Margaret Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning: Abd Al-Qahir Al-Jurjani's Theory of Discourse* (American Oriental Society, 1995), <https://search.worldcat.org/title/33468291>.

third layer is modern linguistic stylistics, particularly the analysis of phonological patterning, lexical contrast, semantic association, and pragmatic effect.¹⁴ These three layers are integrated because *jinās* in the Qur'an cannot be adequately explained by formal classification alone; it must be interpreted as a textual mechanism in which sound, structure, and meaning operate together.

The procedure of analysis consists of five stages. The first stage is identification. Candidate examples of *jinās* are collected from the Qur'anic text through close reading, consultation of classical rhetorical discussions, and cross-checking with linguistic resources where necessary. At this stage, the study records the relevant verse, the Arabic expressions involved, their transliteration, root structure, morphological form, and preliminary meaning. The second stage is formal analysis. Each selected instance is examined in terms of sound correspondence, consonantal and vocalic patterning, morphological proximity, and degree of similarity. This stage determines whether the case represents complete *jinās*, partial *jinās*, derivational resemblance, or another closely related rhetorical feature. The aim is not merely to label the figure but to describe precisely how the verbal resemblance is constructed.

The third stage is semantic analysis. The study examines the meanings of the paired or related expressions by considering lexical definitions, contextual usage, semantic opposition, semantic extension, or conceptual association. Particular attention is given to the tension between similarity of form and difference of meaning, since this tension is the defining feature that makes *jinās* rhetorically productive.¹⁵ The fourth stage is contextual interpretation. The selected instance is read within its immediate verse, surrounding verses, and broader thematic context. This stage asks how the sound pattern reinforces the argument, warning, promise, contrast, moral instruction, or theological message of the passage. Relevant *tafsīr* literature is consulted not as a substitute for linguistic analysis, but as a means of testing whether the proposed interpretation remains consistent with established exegetical understandings.

The fifth stage is rhetorical-theological synthesis. At this stage, the study evaluates how each instance of *jinās* contributes to the Qur'an's linguistic force. The analysis considers whether the sound structure intensifies memorability, sharpens semantic contrast, strengthens emotional impact, or creates a compact relation between verbal form and theological meaning.¹⁶ This stage is especially important because the study is concerned not only with identifying *jinās* but also with explaining its relevance to *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*. The concept of *i'jāz* is approached here as a linguistic and rhetorical claim concerning the inseparability of form and meaning in Qur'anic discourse. The study does not attempt to prove *i'jāz* in a dogmatic manner; rather, it examines how a specific rhetorical device may help

¹⁴ Geoffrey N Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*, 2nd ed. (Pearson Longman, 2007), <https://www.routledge.com/Style-in-Fiction-A-Linguistic-Introduction-to-English-Fictional-Prose/Leech-Short/p/book/9780582784093>; Paul Simpson, *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2014), <https://www.routledge.com/Stylistics-A-resource-book-for-students/Simpson/p/book/9780415644971>; Lesley Jeffries and Dan McIntyre, *Stylistics* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511841749>.

¹⁵ T Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ Navid A4 - Crawford Kermani Tony, *God Is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Qur'an* (Polity Press, 2015), <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/God+is+Beautiful%3A+The+Aesthetic+Experience+of+the+Quran-p-9780745645267>; Michael A Sells, "Approaching the Qur'an: Sound, Spirit, and Gender in Surat Al-Qadr," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 141–60, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521831601.008>; Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*.

explain why Qur'anic expression has historically been perceived as linguistically distinctive and interpretively dense.

To ensure methodological transparency, each selected example is analysed through the same sequence of categories: Qur'anic location, Arabic expression, type of formal resemblance, semantic distinction, immediate context, rhetorical function, and contribution to meaning. This procedure allows the analysis to remain systematic while preserving the interpretive sensitivity required in Qur'anic textual studies. The study also recognises the limitations of the method. Because it is qualitative and purposive, it does not claim to provide a complete statistical inventory of all possible forms of *jinās* in the Qur'an. Its contribution lies instead in developing a rigorous interpretive model for analysing *jinās* as a meaningful sound-based rhetorical structure. The method is therefore appropriate for the research objectives because it enables the study to connect the micro-level structure of Qur'anic language with broader questions of meaning, rhetoric, and linguistic inimitability.

Results and Discussion

Structural Patterns of *Jinās* in Qur'anic Discourse: Between Phonetic Resemblance and Lexical Difference

The analysis shows that *jinās* in Qur'anic discourse operates through a deliberate tension between formal resemblance and semantic differentiation. Its rhetorical value does not arise merely from acoustic beauty, but from the way similar sounds are placed within a precise syntactic and semantic environment. This finding supports the classical *balāghah* view that *jinās* belongs to *muḥassināt lafziyyah*, yet it also refines that view by showing that Qur'anic *jinās* cannot be reduced to verbal ornamentation. In the Qur'an, phonetic likeness frequently functions as a semantic trigger: the reader or listener is drawn first by resemblance in sound, then directed toward a difference in meaning that sharpens the interpretive force of the verse. This relation between sound and meaning is consistent with al-Jurjānī's theory of *naẓm*, in which eloquence emerges not from isolated words but from the arrangement of linguistic elements within a meaningful order.¹⁷ Modern Qur'anic linguistic studies also affirm that the Qur'an's rhetorical force depends on the interaction of phonology, syntax, semantic selection, and discourse context rather than on single stylistic devices viewed in isolation.¹⁸

A clear example appears in Q. 30:55: *wa-yawma taqūmu al-sā'atu yuqsimu al-mujrimūna mā labithū ghayra sā'ah*—"On the Day when the Hour will arise, the guilty will swear that they remained only an hour." The two expressions *al-sā'ah* and *sā'ah* display a form of *jinās* based on almost identical phonetic and orthographic structure, yet they carry different semantic loads. The first refers to the eschatological "Hour," the decisive moment of resurrection and judgment, while the second denotes a short temporal duration. The effect is not playful repetition; it compresses a theological contrast between cosmic time and human misperception. The same sound pattern binds together two unequal realities: the absolute event of divine judgment and the fragile human estimation of worldly duration. This instance corresponds to what classical rhetoric would classify as a

¹⁷ Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il Al-I'jāz Fī Al-Qur'ān*.

¹⁸ Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*; Hussein Abdul-Raof, *New Horizons in Qur'anic Linguistics: A Syntactic, Semantic and Stylistic Analysis* (Routledge, 2017), [https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=New Horizons in Qur'anic Linguistics](https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=New+Horizons+in+Qur%27anic+Linguistics) Abdul-Raof; H Abdul-Raof, *Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis*, *Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315670942>.

strong form of *jinās* because of the high degree of formal resemblance, but its Qur'anic function exceeds taxonomy. It dramatizes the collapse of worldly time before eschatological truth. Lexical resources on Qur'anic Arabic confirm that *sā'ah* may refer both to an ordinary unit of time and to the apocalyptic Hour, depending on contextual specification.¹⁹

Another pattern appears in Q. 6:26: *wa-hum yanhawna 'anhu wa-yan'awna 'anhu*—"They prevent others from it and keep themselves away from it." Here, the two verbal forms *yanhawna* and *yan'awna* display partial phonetic resemblance while remaining semantically distinct. The difference between the consonantal structures, especially the contrast between *h* and hamzah, prevents the pair from being classified as complete *jinās*, but their proximity in sound creates a strong rhetorical echo. The verse condemns a double movement: obstructing others from the Qur'an while distancing oneself from it. The sound pattern reinforces the moral contradiction. The near repetition makes the two actions appear connected, while the semantic distinction exposes their cumulative severity. This is precisely where *jinās* *ghayr tāmm* becomes rhetorically productive: incomplete similarity allows the verse to join related actions without collapsing them into a single meaning. Such usage supports Abdul-Raof's argument that Qur'anic style often relies on subtle formal variation to produce semantic precision and pragmatic force.²⁰

These examples also show that the structural patterns of *jinās* should be read within Qur'anic coherence, not as detachable embellishments. The placement of similar sounds within compact clauses creates auditory cohesion, while semantic divergence advances the message of the passage. In this respect, the findings expand studies of Qur'anic textual relations and coherence, which have generally focused on thematic continuity, syntactic relation, and surah structure.²¹ The present analysis adds that micro-level sound resemblance also participates in coherence by binding adjacent expressions into a dense rhetorical unit. Corpus-based Qur'anic studies are useful here because they enable researchers to verify forms, roots, and morphological patterns across the text, yet such tools remain insufficient unless combined with close rhetorical interpretation.²²

Theoretically, this finding suggests that *jinās* in the Qur'an should be understood as a phonological-semantic structure rather than a decorative feature. Methodologically, it demonstrates the need to combine classical *balāghah* classification with contextual linguistic analysis. Academically, the discussion contributes to the study of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* by showing that linguistic inimitability may be approached not only through macro-level coherence or thematic architecture, but also through the precise organization of sound and meaning at the level of individual expressions.

Semantic Function of *Jinās*: From Verbal Ornamentation to Meaning Intensification

The principal finding of this subsection is that *jinās* in the Qur'an functions as a semantic intensifier rather than as a merely decorative verbal figure. Its force

¹⁹ Elsaid M Badawi and M A S Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage* (Brill, 2008), <https://brill.com/display/title/12559>.

²⁰ Abdul-Raof, *New Horizons in Qur'anic Linguistics: A Syntactic, Semantic and Stylistic Analysis*; Abdul-Raof, *Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis*.

²¹ Salwa M S El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure* (Routledge, 2005), [https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Textual Relations in the Qur'an](https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Textual+Relations+in+the+Qur'an) El-Awa; Cuypers, *The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis*; Farrin, *Structure and Qur'anic Interpretation: A Study of Symmetry and Coherence in Islam's Holy Text*.

²² Dukes, "The Qur'anic Arabic Corpus: Annotated Linguistic Resource for the Holy Qur'an"; Akra, Hammouda, and Jarrar, "QuranMorph: Morphologically Annotated Quranic Corpus."

lies in the way formal resemblance invites the reader or listener to notice semantic difference, moral contrast, or conceptual expansion within a compact expression. This finding challenges a narrow understanding of *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* as embellishment added to meaning from the outside. In Qur'anic discourse, the similar sound of two expressions often becomes the very medium through which meaning is sharpened. Such a reading agrees with al-Jurjānī's argument that eloquence is produced through the relational ordering of *lafẓ* and *ma'nā*, not through isolated lexical beauty.²³ It also supports modern Qur'anic stylistic studies that treat sound, syntax, and semantic choice as mutually dependent components of textual effect.²⁴

A representative example appears in Q. 104:1: *waylun li-kulli humazatin lumazah* "Woe to every slanderer and backbiter." The paired expressions *humazah* and *lumazah* are close in phonetic pattern, rhythm, and morphological form, yet they are not semantically identical. Both words denote forms of social injury, but their proximity does not create redundancy. Rather, it produces cumulative moral emphasis. Classical lexicographical and Qur'anic usage studies distinguish the semantic range of such terms by showing how roots associated with derision, fault-finding, and verbal or gestural injury can overlap while preserving contextual nuance.²⁵ The *jinās*-like pairing in this verse compresses a social pathology into a memorable sonic unit: the listener hears near-repetition, but the meaning expands from one mode of harm to another. The rhetorical effect is therefore ethical as well as aesthetic. The verse does not simply condemn an individual act of insult; it portrays a habitus of destructive speech and gesture.

A second example may be observed in Q. 75:29–30: *wa-ltaffati al-sāqu bi-l-sāq / ilā rabbika yawma'idhin al-masāq* "and one leg is intertwined with the other; to your Lord, that Day, is the driving." The relation between *al-sāq* and *al-masāq* presents a dense semantic movement. The first expression evokes the bodily image of extremity, weakness, or deathly constriction, while the second moves the scene toward eschatological destination and divine return. The sound resemblance links physical crisis with metaphysical transition. What begins as an embodied image becomes an account of final movement toward God. The semantic force of the passage depends on this shift: the body is failing, but the human being is not simply disappearing; he is being driven toward accountability. This illustrates how *jinās* may operate through semantic escalation, where phonetic resemblance carries the reader from one level of meaning to another.

These examples refine previous scholarship on Qur'anic coherence by showing that semantic cohesion is not always produced by thematic continuity alone. It may also arise from tightly arranged sound relations at the level of adjacent lexical items. El-Awa's work on textual relations rightly emphasizes relevance, coherence, and discourse structure in Qur'anic interpretation,²⁶ while Abdul-Raof foregrounds the role of linguistic texture in Qur'anic discourse. The present analysis extends these arguments by showing that *jinās* contributes to coherence through semantic intensification: similar forms bind meanings together, but their differences prevent the passage from becoming flat repetition. In this sense, *jinās* is not a marginal aesthetic device; it is a micro-structural means of producing interpretive density.

²³ Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il Al-I'jāz Fī Al-Qur'ān*.

²⁴ Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*; Abdul-Raof, *Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis*.

²⁵ Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1–8 (Williams and Norgate, 1863), <https://archive.org/details/ArabicEnglishLexicon.CopiousEasternSources.EnlargedSuppl.Kamoos.Lane.Poole.1863>.

²⁶ El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*, 2006.

Methodologically, this finding demonstrates the need to combine classical *balāghah* categories with lexical, morphological, and contextual analysis. A purely formal classification would identify resemblance but fail to explain why the resemblance matters. Conversely, a purely semantic reading might miss the auditory mechanism through which the meaning is reinforced. Digital resources such as the Quranic Arabic Corpus and Quran Morph can assist the identification of roots, lemmas, and morphological patterns, but they must be integrated with close rhetorical interpretation.²⁷ The theoretical implication is that Qur'anic *jinās* should be understood as a site where phonetic form and semantic intention converge. Its academic contribution lies in repositioning *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* from ornamental rhetoric to meaning-producing structure, thereby offering a more precise account of how verbal beauty participates in Qur'anic signification and in broader discussions of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*.

Jinās, Naẓm, and Qur'anic Coherence: The Interaction of Sound, Syntax, and Context

The main finding of this subsection is that *jinās* in the Qur'an becomes rhetorically significant when it is embedded within *naẓm*, that is, within an ordered structure in which sound, syntax, and contextual meaning work as an integrated textual system. Rather than appearing as an isolated phonetic embellishment, *jinās* participates in the internal coherence of Qur'anic discourse by linking words, clauses, and thematic movements through carefully arranged verbal relations. This finding supports al-Jurjānī's central claim that eloquence is not located in individual words alone, but in the relational arrangement through which words acquire force within syntactic and semantic order.²⁸ It also extends modern studies of Qur'anic coherence, which have shown that the Qur'an's rhetoric depends on textual relations, structural balance, and discourse-level organization.²⁹

A clear example can be observed in Q. 93:9–10: *fa-ammā al-yatīma fa-lā taqhar / wa-ammā al-sā'ila fa-lā tanhar* "So as for the orphan, do not oppress; and as for the petitioner, do not repel." The two imperative prohibitions, *taqhar* and *tanhar*, display partial phonetic resemblance through their final consonantal and rhythmic proximity. They are not identical in root or meaning, but their closeness in sound creates an audible bond between two ethical commands. The first concerns the treatment of the orphan, while the second concerns the response to the petitioner or one who asks. Their semantic distinction is preserved, yet the syntactic parallelism—*fa-ammā... fa-lā* followed by a second *wa-ammā... fa-lā*—places both commands within a unified moral structure. Here, *jinās* works through *naẓm*: the phonetic relation between *taqhar* and *tanhar* gains rhetorical power because it is supported by parallel syntax and thematic continuity.

This example demonstrates that Qur'anic *jinās* cannot be adequately understood through formal resemblance alone. If examined merely as a sound pattern, the relation between *taqhar* and *tanhar* may appear to be a minor instance of verbal beauty. However, when read through *naẓm*, the pair reveals a more complex ethical design. The similar cadence joins two vulnerable social figures—the orphan and the petitioner—under a shared divine command against domination, harshness, and rejection. The verse does not simply list two social

²⁷ Dukes, "The Qur'anic Arabic Corpus: Annotated Linguistic Resource for the Holy Qur'an"; Akra, Hammouda, and Jarrar, "QuranMorph: Morphologically Annotated Quranic Corpus."

²⁸ Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il Al-I'jāz Fī Al-Qur'ān*.

²⁹ Cuypers, *The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis: Farrin, Structure and Qur'anic Interpretation: A Study of Symmetry and Coherence in Islam's Holy Text*.

obligations; it binds them into one moral horizon. This confirms Abdul-Raof's view that Qur'anic rhetoric often operates by making formal texture serve semantic and pragmatic force. It also corresponds with Badawi and Abdel Haleem's lexical observation that Qur'anic meanings must be read according to contextual usage rather than through abstract dictionary equivalence alone.

The coherence of this passage is strengthened further by its position within Sūrat al-Duḥā. The earlier verses remind the Prophet of divine care, protection, and enrichment after vulnerability, while the later verses transform that remembered grace into ethical responsibility. The command not to oppress the orphan and not to repel the petitioner is therefore not detached moral instruction; it emerges from the surah's broader movement from divine consolation to social obligation. In this context, the sound relation between *taqhar* and *tanhar* helps mark the transition from received mercy to enacted mercy. This supports studies that view Qur'anic coherence as a dynamic relationship between local expression and larger textual architecture.³⁰ Yet the present analysis adds a more specific point: coherence is not only produced by thematic structure or ring composition, but also by micro-level sound correspondences that guide interpretation at the level of adjacent clauses.

The theoretical implication of this finding is that *jīnās* should be treated as a relational feature of Qur'anic discourse, not as a detachable category of *badī'*. Its function emerges from the interaction between phonetic resemblance, syntactic placement, and contextual meaning. Methodologically, this requires a combined approach: classical *balāghah* identifies the rhetorical form, *naẓm* explains its structural placement, and modern discourse analysis clarifies its contribution to coherence. Such an approach refines previous scholarship by showing that Qur'anic sound patterns are not secondary ornaments but integral elements of textual organization. Academically, this subsection contributes to the study of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* by demonstrating that linguistic inimitability may be approached through the subtle coordination of sound and syntax within meaningful context, where even a brief phonetic resemblance can carry ethical, rhetorical, and theological significance.

Jīnās* and Linguistic Inimitability: Rethinking *Muḥassināt Lafẓiyyah* in the Theory of *I'jāz al-Qur'ān

The central finding of this subsection is that *jīnās* contributes to the theory of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* when it is understood as a rhetorical-semantic structure rather than as a secondary verbal ornament. The preceding analyses have shown that Qur'anic *jīnās* does not function as decorative sound-play detached from meaning. In Q. 30:55, the relation between *al-sā'ah* and *sā'ah* condenses an eschatological contrast between the Hour of judgment and the human perception of temporal brevity. In Q. 6:26, the near resemblance between *yanhawna* and *yan'awna* binds together two morally related actions: preventing others from approaching revelation and withdrawing from it oneself. In Q. 93:9–10, the echo between *taqhar* and *tanhar* contributes to the ethical coherence of the passage by linking two commands concerning vulnerable social subjects. These examples indicate that *jīnās* becomes meaningful because sound resemblance is placed within a carefully organized semantic and syntactic environment. This supports al-Jurjānī's view that eloquence emerges from the ordered relation between expression and meaning, not from verbal beauty considered in isolation.³¹

³⁰ El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*, 2006.

³¹ Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-I'jāz Fī al-Qur'ān*.

This finding refines the traditional classification of *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* in Arabic rhetoric. Classical manuals often categorize *jinās* under the verbal embellishments of *badī'*, a classification that remains useful for identifying its formal properties. Yet Qur'anic usage suggests that the term "embellishment" should not be interpreted as indicating rhetorical marginality. In the Qur'an, the beauty of sound often operates as an instrument of semantic concentration. The similar form attracts auditory attention, while the difference in meaning forces the reader to recognize contrast, escalation, irony, or theological gravity. This is why *jinās* may contribute to inimitability: it reveals a high degree of economy, where a small phonetic variation can generate a disproportionate interpretive effect. Such an understanding is compatible with Abdul-Raof's argument that Qur'anic style cannot be explained through form alone, since its rhetorical power lies in the interaction of phonological patterning, syntactic arrangement, and semantic precision.³²

The contribution of *jinās* to *i'jāz* should therefore be approached neither as a purely devotional assertion nor as a purely aesthetic claim. Rather, it may be studied as a linguistic phenomenon in which form and meaning display an unusually dense relation. Abu Zayd's discussion of the literary approach to the Qur'an is useful here because it shows the importance—and difficulty—of analysing the Qur'an as a literary and linguistic text without reducing it to ordinary literature.³³ Similarly, modern Qur'anic Studies has increasingly emphasized the need to examine the Qur'an within its historical, rhetorical, and textual complexity.³⁴ The present analysis extends that discussion by focusing on a smaller unit of discourse: the micro-rhetorical interaction between phonetic likeness and semantic difference. This scale of analysis is significant because theories of *i'jāz* often privilege macro-features such as coherence, composition, thematic architecture, or historical context, while giving less systematic attention to how verbal microstructures participate in Qur'anic distinctiveness.

The methodological implication is that the study of *i'jāz* requires a layered analytical model. Classical *balāghah* identifies the rhetorical category; *naẓm* explains the placement of expressions within syntactic and semantic order; lexical analysis clarifies the range of meaning; and discourse analysis shows how the device contributes to the argument, warning, consolation, or ethical command of the passage. This combined approach prevents two common reductions: treating *jinās* as a technical label without interpretive depth or discussing Qur'anic inimitability in broad theological terms without close textual evidence. Digital resources such as the Quranic Arabic Corpus and recent annotated corpora can assist the verification of forms, roots, and morphological relations, but the interpretation of *jinās* still requires human judgment grounded in *balāghah*, *tafsīr*, and linguistic theory.

The theoretical contribution of this subsection is the repositioning of *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* as a meaningful component of Qur'anic discourse. *Jinās* is not proposed here as the sole basis of *i'jāz*, nor should it be exaggerated into an independent proof of inimitability. Its significance lies in demonstrating how even

³² Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*; Abdul-Raof, *New Horizons in Qur'anic Linguistics: A Syntactic, Semantic and Stylistic Analysis*; Abdul-Raof, *Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis*.

³³ Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*.

³⁴ Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); N Sinai, *The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction, The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction: The Qur'an*, 2017, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85212730983&partnerID=40&md5=a21fde1ceb5ab73c4440175a64fcdac>; Shah and Haleem, *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*.

minute sound relations can carry semantic, ethical, and theological force. The novelty of this article, therefore, is its argument that *jinās* should be read as a micro-level manifestation of Qur'anic linguistic inimitability: a structure in which auditory beauty, semantic precision, and contextual coherence converge. By shifting *jinās* from the margins of ornamentation to the centre of rhetorical-semantic analysis, this study contributes to contemporary discussions on Qur'anic eloquence, Arabic rhetoric, and the linguistic foundations of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*.

Conclusion

This study concludes that *jinās* in the Qur'an should not be understood merely as a verbal ornament within the category of *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah*, but as a rhetorical-semantic structure that participates directly in the production of meaning. The analysis of selected Qur'anic passages shows that phonetic resemblance is consistently linked to semantic differentiation, contextual force, and theological density. In this sense, *jinās* works through a productive tension: similar sounds attract attention, while different meanings guide interpretation toward contrast, emphasis, ethical instruction, or eschatological reflection.

The research objectives have been addressed in three interconnected ways. First, the study identifies that Qur'anic *jinās* appears through varied structural patterns, including near-identical lexical forms, partial phonetic resemblance, and morphologically proximate expressions. These patterns show that sound correspondence in the Qur'an is not random but is positioned within precise syntactic and semantic environments. Second, the study demonstrates that *jinās* functions as a mechanism of meaning intensification. Its rhetorical effect emerges from the interaction between lexical nuance, root meaning, immediate co-text, and thematic context. Third, the study argues that *jinās* contributes to the discussion of linguistic inimitability by revealing how micro-level sound structures can carry semantic, ethical, and theological significance.

Theoretically, this article contributes to Qur'anic rhetoric by repositioning *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah* from a secondary aesthetic category to a meaningful component of Qur'anic discourse. By integrating classical *balāghah*, al-Jurjānī's theory of *naẓm*, semantic analysis, and modern discourse-oriented Qur'anic studies, the article offers a more precise framework for examining how verbal beauty operates within meaning rather than outside it. Its academic significance lies in showing that the study of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* can be strengthened through close analysis of small linguistic units, not only through macro-level discussions of coherence, composition, or thematic structure.

The broader implication of this study is that Qur'anic stylistics requires an approach that is at once philological, rhetorical, semantic, and contextual. Future research may expand this inquiry by mapping a wider range of *jinās* across the Qur'an, comparing its function with other forms of *muḥassināt lafẓiyyah*, or developing a corpus-assisted model that combines digital identification with close *balāghah*-based interpretation.

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