The Forms of Constructing the Advertising Image in the Qur'anic Parable: Rhetorical Construction as a Choice

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ABSTRACT

This study explores rhetorical construction and its effective role in shaping a vibrant and dynamic advertising image that transforms abstract meanings into tangible sensory representations, thereby increasing appeal and impact on the recipient. Rhetorical techniques such as simile and metaphor, among others, have contributed to making the Qur'anic parable more comprehensible and meaningful. These techniques also enhance the depth and suggestive power of the parable, granting it an advertising communicative force that adds aesthetic dimension and effectiveness to the image aligning it with the objectives of advertising.

Keywords: Advertising, Rhetorical Construction, Qur'an, Link, Persuasion

INTRODUCTION

First: Rhetorical Construction

The rhetorical image is considered one of the most prominent features of Qur'anic style. It is the preferred method of expression in the Qur'an. As such, Qur'anic imagery has multiple horizons and approaches, often coexisting within a single text. The rhetorical devices be they metaphors, metonymies, similes, or analogies are foundational principles derived from the Qur'anic style. The Qur'an itself is the basis for these principles, as its language is rich in meanings and psychological effects that reach the hearts. It externalizes abstract meanings into tangible sensory forms, breathing into them life and movement.

In advertising, rhetorical imagery is a critical linguistic resource used to deliver the intended message and fulfill communicative goals. These images are defined as anything in speech that elevates words or sentences from their literal forms to stimulate emotion and sentiment, moving from static terms to vivid representations of meaning, and from purely intellectual engagement to the combined participation of emotion and cognition in understanding the message.

The Qur'an is rich in advertising-style messages that rely heavily on language, considering it a key tool for influencing and persuading the audience. However, language alone is not solely responsible for the effectiveness of such expressions. Other equally significant mechanisms include visual imagery, gesture, sound, and the phonetic resonance of words. Moreover, Qur'anic advertising expressions possess the capacity to alter the recipient's mindset by prompting active engagement with the proposed linguistic structure, whether through promises of reward or warnings of punishment.

Advertising discourse is a communicative form in which the advertiser (here, the Qur'anic speaker) employs language, its techniques, and rhetorical arts to present a persuasive message aimed at affecting the audience raising interest, shifting perceptions, and motivating reflection. What sets Qur'anic advertising expressions apart is that

they do not achieve their goals by coercing the recipient into agreement. Rather, they invite contemplation, allowing conviction to develop naturally and gradually as the recipient recognizes the inherent value and depth of the message being conveyed.

Rhetorical arts play a central role in forming and constructing the advertising image. Simile, metaphor, and metonymy are considered core pillars of eloquent expression. As scholars have noted, the majority if not all of the beauties of speech branch out from these techniques. They are essential centers around which meanings revolve and axes that frame different dimensions of expression.

Simile, in particular, holds a central place in forming the advertising link due to its complex rhetorical levels. Understanding it requires awareness and insight, as it embodies a renewed and continuous expressive spirit. This can only be grasped through careful cognitive analysis of the shared relation between the *tenor* and the *vehicle* the compared elements in a simile as well as through an understanding of how simile interacts with other rhetorical arts, which sometimes overlap and integrate. All of these contribute to shaping the advertising image.

The Simile Structure

Simile constitutes a foundational pillar in persuasive Qur'anic discourse, functioning as an aesthetic and rhetorical device that crafts visual imagery designed to attract the audience and capture their attention. This is because simile represents a creative linguistic attempt to make abstract concepts more tangible, moving them from the realm of the obscure to the clear, from the rational to the perceptible, and from the unfamiliar to the familiar. In essence, simile aims to affirm an attribute or meaning in the subject (the thing being described) by likening it to another object (the comparator) known for that very attribute, thereby evoking feelings of admiration and emotional resonance in the human psyche. The simile formula plays a significant role in constructing the Qur'anic promotional message, serving as one of the primary means of aesthetic expression and rhetorical depiction in Arabic, with the purpose of rendering the features of the subject whether in form, speech, or action more intelligible, impactful, vivid, and evocative for the recipient's senses and imagination.

The function of simile lies in directing the recipient toward the intended goals of the discourse and affirming the meanings the communicator seeks to convey. As noted by scholars, "the purpose of simile is clarity and impact; the artist perceives connections between things that help articulate their feelings. They highlight brilliance and radiance in one object by placing it beside another that casts its light upon it. The simile becomes a lamp illuminating emotional perception and transferring it to the listener." Through this rhetorical strategy, the Qur'anic message proclaims "the light of Allah, by which the darknesses in the heavens and the earth are illuminated light whose essence and extent we cannot fully comprehend, a radiance praised by the entire cosmos, so that both eyes and insight may behold it."

An example of simile in the Qur'an is Allah's statement:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like that of a niche within which is a lamp; the lamp is in glass, the glass as if it were a brilliant star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things."

[Al-Nur: 35]

This Qur'anic discourse employs simile to publicize the divine light, constructing an image that approximates the incomprehensible essence of Allah's light to human understanding. It proceeds from the general to the specific, thus aiding limited human cognition in grasping the limitless, achieving both eloquence in message and aesthetic beauty in expression. The intended meaning of "light" here is the illumination of divine guidance whether it be the light of the Qur'an or the light of faith akin to a piercing light surrounded by components that amplify its brilliance. The phrase "like a niche" (mishkāt) is the comparator, while the "lamp" (miṣbāḥ) is the object described, the source of the light. The niche an alcove in a wall that does not penetrate gathers and intensifies the lamp's radiance, enhancing its glow.

Notably, the letter of comparison "ka-" (like) is strategically attached to the word "mishkāt" and not to "miṣbāḥ", to align with the mental order of imagining the light as emerging, leading the viewer to perceive first the niche, then the lamp inside the glass. The comparative structure thus effectively fulfills the objective of the persuasive message by guiding perception. The whole descriptive image "like a niche within which is a lamp" is the full comparator, and the linguistic structure is shaped with purpose. This persuasive composition introduces into the mind of the recipient a rich, creative visual of the divine source.

The repetition of key words such as "lamp" and "glass" within the verse is a rhetorical strategy known as "parallelism of the edges" (tashābuh al-aṭrāf) in Arabic rhetoric. The repetition is not redundant; rather, it emphasizes the importance of each component within the illustrative structure. The use of "a brilliant star" (kawkab durrī) as a descriptor for the glass highlights its clarity and intensity. The term "durrī", derived from "durr" (pearl), enhances the visual impact with connotations of luminosity and purity. The choice of a star instead of the sun or moon both subject to eclipse emphasizes uninterrupted brilliance.

This comparative image also serves as a psychological prompt: it elicits emotional responses that motivate the recipient to engage deeply with the meaning of the text. The example draws the recipient into the scene with layers of interpretive symbolism. The blessed olive tree, from which the oil is derived, is "neither of the east nor of the west," emphasizing its universal, timeless essence. The expression subverts expectations: when the tree is described as "not eastern," the listener might expect it to be western but that expectation is swiftly negated. This ambiguity suggests the eternal, source-independent nature of divine light.

The phrase "its oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire" further strengthens the persuasive image. The use of the passive verb form "yuqad" (is lit) without an agent removes any human association with the source of divine light, reinforcing that it emanates purely from Allah. This linguistic construction introduces a kinetic quality, adding movement and energy to the imagery.

In its conclusion, the verse returns from the specific to the universal: "Light upon light," denoting the cumulative brilliance faith layered upon guidance, insight upon clarity. It is a simile of a single element to a composite whole, expressing the merging of the light of faith, Islam, and excellence. Interestingly, in every occurrence in the Qur'an, the word "light" (nūr) is singular, whereas "darkness" (ẓulumāt) is always plural. This is because light has one source Allah while darkness originates from multiple causes: deviance, false idols, desires, or evil companions.

Another unique rhetorical feature in this example is the reversed simile: the divine is compared to the created, despite the clear superiority of the subject over the comparator. This inversion though seemingly contradictory serves to make the abstract accessible by reference to the tangible.

Another Qur'anic example of powerful rhetorical persuasion is Allah's statement:

"The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing."

[Al-Baqarah: 261]

This verse uses simile to encourage charitable giving, comparing it to a single seed that produces seven spikes, each containing a hundred grains. The image is drawn from agricultural life familiar and tangible to express the exponential reward of charity. It is an instance of comparing the abstract (divine reward) to the concrete (crop multiplication), thereby transforming belief into visual imagination.

The use of the plural form "sanābil" (spikes) rather than the singular or dual implies abundance. In contrast, the Qur'an uses "sunbulāt" (a lesser plural) in [Yusuf: 43] because the number in that context is small and doesn't require amplification. Here, the goal is to underscore divine generosity and the persuasive message is enhanced by the selection of specific linguistic forms.

In the same vein, Allah states:

"But the example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey carrying books. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people."

[Al-Jumuʿah: 5]

This example exposes the state of the Jews who were entrusted with the Torah but failed to act upon its guidance. The simile is stark and intentional: comparing their condition to a donkey carrying valuable books it cannot comprehend. The use of "donkey" is deliberately chosen for its connotations of dullness, burden, and lack of comprehension, intensifying the emotional effect on the audience. The simile is both illustrative and critical, reinforcing the idea that knowledge without application is meaningless.

Another striking example is Allah's saying:

"And present to them the example of the life of this world: [its being] like rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and [then] it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds. And Allah is over all things competent." [Al-Kahf: 45]

This verse employs simile to declare the transient, fleeting nature of worldly life. The promotional discourse uses imagery from nature a sudden rainfall that gives life to the earth, only for it to become dried remnants scattered by the wind. This comparison warns the audience not to be deceived by the temporary allure of the world. The term "hashīman" (dry chaff) is loaded with emotive connotations, making the conclusion abrupt and striking.

Thus, the Qur'anic simile operates not only as a rhetorical ornament, but as a critical persuasive device in the architecture of divine discourse. Through simile, abstract meanings are transformed into vivid mental imagery, capable of moving the heart, persuading the mind, and inviting action. It is a discourse that appeals to both cognition and emotion, constructing a vision of reality that is simultaneously beautiful and profound.

The Metaphorical Structure

Metaphor is essentially a simile with one of its components omitted. If the subject (the thing described) is omitted and the image (the thing likened to) is explicitly stated, the figure is termed an explicit metaphor (*istiʿārah taṣrḥiyyah*). Conversely, if the image is omitted but one of its attributes is retained, it is called an implicit metaphor (*istiʿārah makniyyah*). Metaphor offers a mode of representation that unifies two elements into a single conceptual

image as though the subject has been transformed into the image itself. It thus provides a vivid, sensuous rendering of meaning, allowing the recipient to feel and perceive the abstract with immediacy and clarity. Through metaphor, abstract ideas are visualized, sounds are made audible, and intangible concepts are rendered palpable and accessible.

This rhetorical formation has the capacity to create new images through which the speaker unveils a concealed inner meaning that cannot be conveyed explicitly. As such, metaphor is employed as a mechanism of linguistic creation a "language within language" whereby new relationships are forged between words, dissolving and reconstructing elements of reality. This restructuring results in a novel harmony that previously did not exist. Through this, metaphor generates new existence, made possible by reconfiguring linguistic forms to express new symbolic representations.

In this context, Qur'anic discourse particularly when functioning as persuasive or promotional communication aims at a single fundamental goal: influencing and persuading the audience. Metaphor is a powerful tool for transforming the text from verbal rigidity to fluid, expressive dynamism. Al-Jurjānī points to three types of metaphor, describing the highest and purest form as one where the basis of resemblance stems from intellectual imagery. An example is the metaphor of *light* used to signify clear argumentation or evident truth, such as in the verse:

"And followed the light which was sent down with him"

(Al-Aʿrāf 7:157),

or the metaphor of *path* (ṣirāṭ) used to signify religion, as in:

"And indeed, you guide to a straight path" (Al-Shūrā 42:52).

This level of metaphor represents the pinnacle of eloquence and the utmost expansion of its expressive capacity, affording the speaker full freedom in stylistic invention.

Metaphor, then, is a means of likening one thing to another, while deliberately omitting the simile's explicit markers. The speaker "borrows" the name of the image and applies it directly to the subject, creating the illusion that the two are one. A striking Qur'anic example of this appears in the verse:

"Is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him a light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness from which he cannot emerge? Thus it has been made pleasing to the disbelievers that which they were doing." (Al-Anʿām 6:122)

Here, the metaphor functions as a powerful persuasive device, illustrating the contrast between the believer and the disbeliever. The believer is likened to one who was previously dead, then revived, and given a guiding light symbolizing divine guidance and security from peril. The disbeliever, by contrast, is plunged into darkness, lost and incapable of escape, symbolizing ignorance, confusion, and spiritual death.

The metaphorical use of the term "light" for guidance and "darkness" for misguidance becomes the central semantic axis around which the verse revolves. The metaphor of "giving life" to the dead refers to someone who embraced Islam and abandoned disbelief, whereas "one who is in darkness from which he cannot emerge" represents the polytheist who remains lost in error, much like a corpse buried in its grave.

The rhetorical power of this metaphor is enhanced by linguistic devices, such as the interrogative particle (ʾa) and the similitude particle (ka), which serve to negate equivalence and emphasize the superiority of one state over the other namely, belief over disbelief. The structure of the verse comprises two compound similes, portraying the contrasting states in stark relief. The metaphorical "death" here refers to being immersed in darkness, while "life" is equated with clarity and light, walking a straight path among others.

There is notable elliptical brevity in the expression i.e., omission of details made unnecessary by what has already been mentioned. For instance, the clause *(aw man kāna maytan)* implies a transformation: "the condition of one who was dead," with the ellipsis conveying depth and economy simultaneously.

When analyzing the metaphor's structure, we find that the technique of antithesis plays a key role in reinforcing meaning. This is evident in the contrasts between "dead" and "gave life," "light" and "darkness," "walking among people" and "not emerging." The juxtaposition of a bright, positive image with a bleak, negative one intensifies both: the former shines more brilliantly; the latter appears more repugnant and hopeless. Antithesis, thus, amplifies the persuasive force of metaphor, urging the recipient toward truth and away from falsehood.

The Qur'anic expression employs vivid, life-infused language. For example, the verb *kāna* (was) in *(kāna maytan)* indicates an incomplete past state, intentionally avoiding the more final *māta* (died), which would suggest complete cessation. The coordinating conjunction *fa-* (then) implies immediacy of action, signaling that divine revivification occurred swiftly. Additionally, attributing both actions *gave life* and *made light* to the divine "We" confers honor upon the subject (the believer) and reaffirms divine omnipotence in creation and guidance.

Accordingly, metaphor here becomes not merely decorative but constructive, generating fresh life within the boundaries of familiar experience. It reconstitutes the elements of reality and binds them with expressive harmony, infusing new vitality into otherwise routine linguistic patterns.

A point of stylistic and exegetical interest arises in the clause *"like one whose example is in darkness"*, where the similitude particle (ka) appears without explicitly naming the compared entities. This omission has prompted

debate among classical scholars: al-Quṭb al-Rāzī, in his commentary on al-Kashshāf, classified the expression as a compound simile, whereas al-Taftāzānī viewed it as a representational metaphor (*istiʿārah tamthīliyyah*). The latter interpretation is more compelling, as the imagery draws from metaphor rather than straightforward comparison.

Another illustrative metaphor in the Qur'an evokes the image of miserliness:

"And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck nor extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent."

(Al-Isrāʾ 17:29)

This metaphor presents a visual image of the miser: a person whose hand is shackled to their neck, unable to move or give. The expression employs a grotesque, arresting image that evokes aversion. The *chained hand* is borrowed from the practice of binding captives, rendering the limb useless a stark metaphor for the inability to give. The verse contrasts this with *overextension*, warning against extravagance, and underscores the Qur'anic rhetorical aim: balance, moderation, and responsible generosity.

Here, the metaphor of the hand is not arbitrarily chosen but deliberately selected as a persuasive emblem within Qur'anic discourse. The hand serves as a vehicle for charity, power, and influence, making it a potent symbol for human agency. The act of binding it signifies the suppression of generosity, while opening it too widely signals recklessness. Through these layered metaphors, the Qur'an conveys a full visual and moral narrative.

Indeed, imagery is the favored mode of expression in the Qur'an, where sensory representation is used to articulate intellectual concepts and human behaviors. When coupled with dialogue or dramatic context, all elements of figurative imagination are brought into full interplay.

Thus, it is appropriate to assert that the Qur'anic lexicon radiates beauty, eloquence, and profound significance. Every word offers a unique image, and every phrase composes a complete rhetorical picture, rich in harmonious and evocative meaning. The function of metaphor in the Qur'an hinges upon its appropriateness and clarity, ensuring that the borrowed term suits its target. The clarity of Qur'anic metaphor is not incidental it is essential, for the goal is effective communication. Metaphor and simile, therefore, are not mere adornments but critical tools in rendering complex ideas perceptible and relatable.

Ultimately, metaphor stands as one of the primary pillars of Qur'anic persuasive discourse. It is not an overstatement to say that metaphor represents one of the most refined, expressive, and impactful modes of rhetoric a device that bestows elegance, emotion, and cognitive depth. Through metaphor and simile, Qur'anic eloquence reaches its apex, conveying its divine message with unmatched rhetorical force, artistic brilliance, and spiritual resonance.

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