

**AN ANALYSIS OF *KINAYAH* VERSES IN THE QURAN  
AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR *BALAGHAH* TEACHING**

**Yayan Nurbayan**

**Indonesia University of Education**

**Abstract**

Quran contains numerous verses which use *kinayah* literary style. This type of verses tempted to investigate because of its idiosyncrasy and uniqueness. In addition, it has caused controversy among scholars of *mufassir* (Quran exegesis). The number of *kinayah* verses in the Quran varies according to different observations and analysis of many *mufassir*.

To uncover the differences of those observations and their implications, the present study analyzes *kinayah* literary style in the Quran and its usage in actual language practice.

The result of the study suggests that the number of *kinayah* verses according to Wahbah Zuhaili is 65, Shabuni 64, Qurtubi 999, and Thabari 899. This discrepancy is because *kinayah* means differently for them. The study also suggests that *kinayah* verses in the Quran should be understood as having *majazi* (connotative meanings).

The implication of the study is that first, different observations of a verse, whether it is considered *kinayah* or not, are significant for hermeneutic interpretation of its meaning. Second, *kinayah* verses have pedagogical impacts on *balaghah* teaching, particularly in *bayan* subject.

**Keywords:** *kinayah*, implication, *balaghah*

**Introduction**

The Quran is God's revelation which has miraculous aspects, one of which lies in language aspect. Scholars recognize the beauty of the language of the Quran, as shown by the harmony of word choices in the Quran, both with respect to numbers and the precision of meaning.

One aspect of language tempting to investigate is *kinayah*. The Quran contains numerous *kinayah* verses which vary in number according to different observations and analysis of *mufassir* (scholars of Quran exegesis). Wahbah Zuhaili (Al Munir, 1991:10) states that the Quran contains 71 *kinayah* verses, while Ash Shabuni (Shafwatut Tafsir, 1986:25) claims that it contains 64 of such verses.

*Kinayah* verses are problematic and crucial for many scholars. Therefore, they often understand its meaning differently. This difference is because *kinayah* discourse can be

interpreted theoretically as having *hakiki* (denotative meanings) and *majazi* (connotative meanings) (Bakry Syaikh Amin, 1982:153).

*Kinayah* verses related to jurisprudence or faith are problematic to interpret. It causes those verses interesting and difficult discourse among major schools of jurisprudence and theology.

One major difficulty faced by *mufassir* is the fact that both denotative and connotative perspectives are supported by the Quran and Hadith. Each perspective sometimes can have similarly valid arguments.

This prompts a need for another observation that can give a clear interpretation of the verses. This observation which the study makes is from the field of *balaghah* (rhetoric), which studies the hermeneutic context of the verses. In addition, it also studies the interpretation of the verses based on language practice in order to decide whether they should be considered as having denotative or connotative meanings.

Understanding the general tendency in the meaning of *kinayah* verses will contribute to our more in-depth understanding. The study hopes to serve an alternative method of interpreting *kinayah* verses, which have prompted numerous schools of jurisprudence and theology to emerge.

The research question is then, what is the nature of *kinayah* in the Quran? This question can be further elaborated as follows:

- a. How many *kinayah* verses are there in the Quran?
- b. How has the interpretation of *kinayah* verses in exegesis texts developed over time?
- c. Which *kinayah* verses have become the major disputes among scholars?
- d. What are the causes of the differences among scholars in interpreting *kinayah* verses?
- e. What is the implication of this study for *balaghah* teaching?

## **Literature Review**

### **The Nature of *Kinayah***

The science of *balaghah* (Arabic rhetoric) deals primarily with the study of *maani* (pragmatic),  *bayan* (literary style) and  *badi* (stylistic).  *Kinayah* is one subject of  *bayan*. Two others are  *tasybih* and  *majaz*.

There are three modes of utterance in the study of  *bayan*. The first is  *tasybih* (comparison), or comparing something to another because of their similarity. In this mode  *thorofain* (the things compared), namely  *musyabbah* (the subject of the comparison) and  *musyabbah bih* (the object of the comparison) are both stated. The second is  *majaz* (metaphor), which is similar to  *tasybih* except one of its  *thorofain* is not stated. The third is  *kinayah*, which is similar to  *majaz* except for one difference. While  *majaz* cannot be understood as having denotative meaning,  *kinayah* can be interpreted both in denotative and connotative manner.

According to Hasyimi (345), the literal meaning of  *kinayah* is implicit, while in technical sense it means an utterance which can be understood as having either denotative or connotative meaning.

The term  *kinayah* in the science of  *balaghah* was coined by Abu Ubaidah in the year 209H in his work,  *Majazul Quran*. He asserts that from  *nahwu* (Arabic grammar) perspective,  *kinayah* means  *dhamir* (pronouns).

On the other hand, Al Jahidz (255 H) defines  *kinayah* as “implied”. In his view, it is the opposite of  *fasahah* and  *sarih* (both mean “unambiguous”). What Al Jahidz did was to give a broad definition of  *kinayah* without distinguishing  *tasybih*,  *majaz* and  *kinayah*.

Another linguist who attempts to go into detail of  *kinayah* is Muhammad bin Yazid Al Mubarrid (285 H). In his work,  *Al Kamil*, he suggests three definitions of  *kinayah*, namely  *Al Satr* (concealing the actual meaning), praising and avoiding indecent expressions.

Quddamah bin Jafar also defined  *kinayah* in his book,  *Naqd Al Syi’ri*, he elucidated that  *kinayah* is any utterance which has  *irdaf* (synonymous) meaning (Quddamah 113).

## **Methodology**

Based on the characteristics of its subject, the study is qualitative in nature. It aims to uncover in detail issues regarding  *kinayah* verses in the Quran.

In accordance to its title, the study begins with describing  *kinayah* verses in the Quran. It then proceeds to present interpretations from many scholars as shown by their popular and

representative exegeses. Next, the interpretations from the previous stage are classified in line with the categories in the science of *balaghah*.

In the next stage the study analyzes the verses by comparing them to *kinayah* meaning in the actual practice of Arabic speaking people.

## Findings and Discussion

### Findings

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

**Table 1**  
**The Concept of *Kinayah* in various exegeses**

No	Scholars	Number of Verses	Concept(s) applied
1.	Tabary	899	<i>Dhamir</i> (pronoun), <i>irdaf</i> (synonym) and terminology
2.	Ibnu Mandhur	999	<i>Dhamir</i> (pronoun), <i>irdaf</i> (synonym) and terminology
3.	Qurthuby	778	<i>Dhamir</i> (pronoun), <i>irdaf</i> (synonym), <i>majaz</i> , <i>badal</i> (relative pronoun), implied meaning and terminology
4.	Wahbah Zuhaili	65	Terminology
5.	Shabuny	64	

Based on their themes, *kinayah* verses are classified as follows:

**Table 2**  
**Themes of *Kinayah* Verses and Scholars' Observation**

No	Categories	Number of verses	Scholars' observations
1.	Faith	9	No disagreement
2.	Jurisprudence	6	No disagreement
3.	Manner	11	No disagreement
4.	Social interaction	18	No disagreement
5.	Motivation and admonition	20	No disagreement

### Discussion

Table 1 indicates that scholars disagree in identifying the number of *kinayah* verses. The discrepancy in the number is due to the different concepts of *kinayah* employed by those scholars. In the exegeses of Zuhaili and Shabuny, *kinayah* is defined in the same manner as used by scholars of *balaghah*, namely "an utterance which have connotative meaning, but can also have denotative meaning".

On the other hand, Ibnu Mandhur points out in his work, *Lisan Al Arab*, that *kinayah* can mean *irdaf* (synonym), *dhamir* (pronouns), and the above definition.

In his exegesis Al Qurthubi uses the term *kinayah* for any word or phrase which is in the form of *dhamir* (pronouns), *irdaf* (synonym), *majaz* and *badal* (relative pronoun). In addition, he also defines *kinayah* as the opposite of the unambiguous and as understood by *balaghah* terminology. This difference in perceiving the concept of *kinayah* is the major factor of their disagreement in determining the number of *kinayah* verses in the Quran.

Table 2 demonstrates that the themes of *kinayah* verses revolve around faith, jurisprudence, manner as well as motivation and admonition. Of 64 *kinayah* verses, 6 deal with jurisprudence, 18 with social interaction, 11 with manner, 21 with *waad* (motivation) and *waid* (admonition), and 9 with faith.

Almost all scholars agree on the interpretation of those themes. In general, they understand *kinayah* verses in accordance with the definition of the science of *balaghah*. Thus, the verses are taken as having connotative meanings, but denotative meanings are still possible. More problematic and debatable theme is *kinayah* verses which are related to jurisprudence, particularly in the issue of *muasyarah ahliyyah* (sexual intercourse). Various words used to express sexual intercourse in the Quran are *mubasyarah*, *mass*, *mulasamah*, *dukhul*, *taghsya*, *itizal*, *qarb*, *aat* and *ifdha*.

Scholars agree that the words used to express sexual intercourse should be understood as having connotative meaning. However, a disagreement occurs in interpreting the word *mulasamah* in Chapter 4:43 and Chapter 6:6 of the Quran. The majority of scholars from Hanafi School regard it as having connotative meaning, while Shafii scholars understand it as having denotative meaning.

### **Implications for *Balaghah* Teaching**

The result of the study is beneficial for the teaching of *balaghah*, namely in the subject development aspect. The study employed long examples of *syiir* (poems) and *amtsal* (proverbs). The fact is that the Quran is rich with examples which have high literary values. In addition, students are already familiar with them because they read them on a regular basis.

The use of verses in the Quran as major component of the study is expected to expand students' knowledge and to enrich the course. Students who are accustomed to reading them as religious tasks can also appreciate their beauty and artistic values. This method is in fact able to improve the quality of students' reading and in accordance with the objectives of *balaghah* course.

Indonesia University of Education curriculum states that Balaghah I and II courses are designed to equip the students with knowledge of *bayan*, *maani* and *badi*, which are essential for understanding the semantics of Arabic language and appreciating Arabic literature.

The Quran is not a work of literature, yet its verses are admitted to have high literary values. There are numerous examples of its beauty, such as in the aspect of *tasybih*, *majaz* and *kinayah*.

## Conclusions and Suggestions

Studying *kinayah* verses in the Quran yields several conclusions. First, there is no agreement among scholars in determining the number of *kinayah* verses. This is because scholars differ in understanding the concept of *kinayah*. The concept *Kinayah* has been through several stages of development, from *dhamir*, *irdaf*, *majaz*, *badal*, *ghair sarih*, to the present definition. Second, scholars differ in interpreting *kinayah* verses, particularly those which are related to jurisprudence.

From hermeneutic perspective, the study suggests that the necessity of understanding *kinayah* verses as having connotative meaning and the possibility of denotative meaning contribute to the disagreement in interpreting the verses. From pedagogical perspective, the study indicates the importance of using verses of the Quran as major component of *balaghah* teaching.

## Author's biodata

**Dr. Yayan Nurbayan, M.Ag** is a lecturer at the Department of Arabic Education, Indonesia University of Education.

## Bibliography

Abdul Aziz Atiq. (1985). *Ilmul Bayan*. Beirut: Darun Nahdhah Arabiyyah.

Aly Al Jarim, Mustafa Amin. (1987). *Al Balaghah Al Wadihah*. Mesir: Darul Maarif.

Bakry Syaikh Amin. (1982). *Al Balaghah fi Tsaubihal Jadid: Ilmul Bayan*. Beirut: Daruts Tsaqafah Al Islamiyah.

Hasyimy, Ahmad. (1960). *Jawahirul Balaghah*. Indonesia: Maktabah Dar Ihya Kutubil Arabiyyah.

Zuhaily. (1986). *Al Munir*. Beirut: Darul Fikr.