



The semantic Grammatical Study About *How* in The Holy Quran

Asia Younus Abd

University of Baghdad, Iraq

asia.younus@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Abstract

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The Arabic language has served, and continues to serve, as the vessel that preserves these meanings and Quranic connotations. Among the linguistic tools with diverse implications is the interrogative particle "كيف" (how), which carries meanings that go beyond mere inquiry to include nuances such as denial, threat, rebuke, questioning of the manner, and others. This study examines the word "كيف" (How) in the Holy Qur'an from a semantic and grammatical perspective, exploring its various meanings and syntactic roles within different contexts. The study highlights how "كيف" extends beyond its primary function as an interrogative particle to convey rhetorical and semantic nuances such as denial, astonishment, threat, rebuke, improbability, and magnification. By analyzing Quranic verses where "كيف" appears, this research demonstrates the linguistic depth and eloquence of the Qur'an, revealing the role of context in determining meaning. The study employs an inductive and descriptive-analytical approach, compiling occurrences of "كيف" and categorizing them based on their function and rhetorical significance. The findings emphasize the diversity of meanings, illustrating how a single word can contribute to the richness of Quranic expression. Furthermore, this research underscores the necessity of contextual interpretation to fully grasp the nuances embedded within Quranic discourse.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci :
Analisis
Semantik,
Fungsi Tata
Bahasa,
Perangkat

Bahasa Arab telah berfungsi, dan terus berfungsi, sebagai wadah yang melestarikan makna-makna dan konotasi Al-Quran. Di antara alat linguistik yang memiliki implikasi beragam adalah partikel interogatif "كيف" (bagaimana), yang membawa makna lebih dari sekedar penyelidikan tetapi juga mencakup nuansa seperti penolakan, ancaman, teguran, mempertanyakan tata krama, dan lain-lain. Penelitian ini mengkaji kata

Retoris, Sintaks
Bahasa Arab

"كيف" (Bagaimana) dalam Al-Qur'an dari sudut pandang semantik dan gramatikal, mengeksplorasi berbagai makna dan peran sintaksisnya dalam konteks yang berbeda. Studi ini menyoroti bagaimana "كيف" melampaui fungsi utamanya sebagai partikel interogatif untuk menyampaikan nuansa retorik dan semantik seperti penolakan, keheranan, ancaman, teguran, ketidakmungkinan, dan pembesaran. Dengan menganalisis ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang memuat kata "كيف", penelitian ini menunjukkan kedalaman linguistik dan kefasihan bahasa Al-Qur'an, serta mengungkap peran konteks dalam menentukan makna. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan induktif dan deskriptif-analitis, mengumpulkan kemunculan "كيف" dan mengategorikannya berdasarkan fungsi dan signifikansi retoriknya. Temuan ini menekankan keragaman makna, yang menggambarkan bagaimana satu kata dapat berkontribusi pada kekayaan ekspresi Al-Quran. Lebih jauh lagi, penelitian ini menggarisbawahi perlunya penafsiran kontekstual untuk sepenuhnya memahami nuansa yang tertanam dalam wacana Al-Quran.

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@ Asia Younus Abd

Introduction

The Qur'an is the fundamental and comprehensive source of eloquence and rhetoric, embodying the meanings of linguistic and rhetorical miracles. Its verses reflect remarkable precision in grammar and linguistic tools with multifaceted connotations. The Arabic language has served, and continues to serve, as the vessel that preserves these meanings and Quranic connotations. Among the linguistic tools with diverse implications is the interrogative particle "كيف" (how), which carries meanings that go beyond mere inquiry to include nuances such as denial, threat, rebuke, questioning of the manner, and others. These meanings have been discussed in our research according to the interpretations found in the works of scholars of exegesis, semantics, and syntax.

Our study aims to analyze the tool "كيف" (how) from a syntactic and semantic perspective, by cataloging and exploring its meanings based on the context in which it appears, reflecting the linguistic miracle and the eloquence of the Qur'an.

Given the importance of highlighting the significance of linguistic tools, this study seeks to uncover the subtleties of the Quranic text and to clarify the varied meanings of a single word and how they change according to the context. It also explores the influence of syntactic structure in determining these meanings.

The Rhetoric of Interrogation and Its Significance in the Qur'an - (Rujdal Halima, Master's Thesis, University of Oran, Algeria, 2013). In her thesis, the researcher examines the syntactic and rhetorical aspects of interrogation, exploring its function in both language and rhetoric. She provides semantic applications of interrogative tools in the Qur'an, following an analytical-applied approach. The analytical aspect focuses on the diversity of meanings in Quranic verses to highlight the Qur'an's miraculous nature, while the applied aspect involves counting and classifying interrogative structures within the Qur'an.

Interrogative Methods in Rhetorical Studies and Their Secrets in the Qur'an - (Mohammad Ibrahim Mohammad Sharif, PhD Dissertation, International Islamic University, Pakistan, 2007). This study analyzes interrogative methods in rhetorical research and their application in the Qur'an. The researcher systematically identifies different interrogative styles, examines their rhetorical purposes, and explains the meanings they convey. He also discusses the role of context in interpreting interrogative expressions and uncovering their rhetorical significance.

The Interrogative Style and Its Impact on the Interpretation of the Qur'an - (Ali Mohammad Abdul-Hussein Abu Sheba, Literary Article, Al-Wilayah Journal, February 28, 2019). This article explores interrogation in Arabic, its explicit and implicit tools, and how it extends beyond its literal meaning in the Qur'an to convey figurative meanings such as rebuke, warning, and denial. The study highlights how the Qur'an employs this stylistic device as a profound means of rhetorical expression, reinforcing its miraculous nature.

The Rhetorical Purposes of Interrogation: Definitions and Examples - (Mohammad Al-Wayaghli, Published Online, March 30, 2020).

This online study provides a brief overview of the rhetorical functions of interrogation, supplemented by illustrative examples. It mentions "كيف" (how) as part of the broader category of interrogative tools but does not focus specifically on this word.

Although previous studies have analyzed the significance of interrogative tools in general, and particularly in the Qur'an, they have not provided a comprehensive statistical and analytical examination of the word "كيف" (how) in isolation. There is a lack of detailed research that systematically counts its occurrences, explores its rhetorical and grammatical meanings, and classifies its diverse connotations according to context. This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing "كيف" within the Quranic text, highlighting its role in conveying linguistic miracles.

The study adopts both an inductive and a descriptive-analytical approach to achieve a deeper understanding of these meanings, drawing upon works of exegesis, language, and grammar. It examines the impact of different connotations of the tool on the overall meaning of the verses. The research includes a comprehensive list of all the connotations, verses, and surahs where the tool appears, starting from the most frequent meaning – inquiring about the manner or state – and descending to the least frequent, such as admonition, which is found in only three instances. Each grammatical position is detailed in a separate table, ordered from the most to the least frequent occurrences.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative linguistic approach to examine the semantic and grammatical functions of the term "How" in the Holy Quran. The research focuses on understanding its contextual meanings, syntactic structures, and rhetorical implications. Through an in-depth analysis of Quranic verses, this study investigates how "How" functions as an interrogative, exclamatory, or rhetorical device, influencing interpretation and meaning (Wright, W, 1896).

Result and Discussion

Semantic Functions of "كيف" in Grammar and Exegesis

Based on grammatical and exegetical works, the word "كيف" carries multiple meanings, including: Astonishment, Rebuke, Negation, Warning, Prohibition, Emphasis, Sarcasm, Impossibility, Magnification and intimidation, Manner and state.

It is important to note that, regardless of its various interpretations, "كيف" always retains an interrogative undertone, even when it is not used purely as an interrogative tool.

Syntactic Position of "كيف" in the Qur'an "كيف" appears in various grammatical positions in the Qur'an, including: Accusative as a circumstantial adverb (في محل نصب على الحال), Nominative as a predicate for a deficient verb (في محل نصب مفعول مطلق), Accusative as an absolute object (في محل رفع خبر مقدم لفعل ناقص), Nominative as a fronted predicate (في محل رفع خبر مقدم), Accusative as a second object (في محل نصب مفعولاً به ثانئياً).

These syntactic positions are detailed in Table 2, categorizing the occurrences of "كيف" in the Qur'an based on frequency from the most common to the least.

"كيف" Meaning Manner (الكيفية)

The term "كيفية" refers to the state and nature of something. It is a derivative noun formed by adding the yā' of attribution and tā' to the word "كيف", transitioning it from a noun to a verbal noun. The word "كيف" appears with this meaning in twenty instances in the Qur'an.

Example 1: Asking About Resurrection - Surah Al-Baqarah (2:260)

"And [mention] when Abraham said, 'My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.' He (Allah) said, 'Have you not believed?' He said, 'Yes, but [I ask] so that my heart may be reassured.'"

Here, Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) begins his inquiry with "ربِّ" (My Lord)—a word that signifies God's care and guidance for His servants. His question does not stem from doubt in Allah's power but from a desire to

understand the manner of resurrection. Rather than responding verbally, Allah grants him a direct experience of the resurrection process, reinforcing the Qur'an's miraculous nature.

(Shaykh Al-Sha'rawi, 1997) explains that the question about manner ("كيف") carries an element of appreciative astonishment since the revival of the dead is a wondrous phenomenon. Additionally, the phrase "يا ربِّ" reflects humility and reverence, emphasizing Ibrahim's sincerity and devotion. The plural form of "الموتى" (the dead) rather than the singular signifies Allah's universal ability to resurrect, as Ibrahim requests a comprehensive demonstration rather than a singular example.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" here is an interrogative noun in accusative position as a circumstantial adverb (حال), modifying the verb "تحيي" (revive).

Example 2: Demonstrating Divine Signs – Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:75)

"Look how We make the signs clear to them; then look how they are deluded."

This verse contains two instances of "انظر" (look), emphasizing the importance of reflection and contemplation. The first "انظر" directs Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or any reader to observe how Allah clarifies His signs, while the second invites reflection on how disbelievers turn away from the truth despite the clear evidence.

(Ibn Qayrawani, (2008) notes that "كيف" here serves as a connective element that highlights the details and method by which the divine signs are presented. The rhetorical repetition of "انظر" underscores the necessity of deep contemplation and refuting false claims about Jesus (peace be upon him) and his mother Mary. (Sheikh Ibn Uthaymeen, 1418 H) interprets "كيف نبين لهم الآيات" as an **explanatory phrase**, meaning *"observe the manner in which We clarify the signs for them."* Therefore, "كيف" in this context does not function purely as an interrogative noun, but rather as a direct object of "انظر".

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" here is in the **accusative case as a direct object (مفعولاً به ثانياً) of the verb "انظر" (Look at how...)*.

Example 3: Reproaching the Disbelievers - Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:75)

The second use of "كيف" in this verse refers to the **astounding denial of truth** by the disbelievers:

"Then look how they are deluded."

This phrase expresses rhetorical astonishment and rebuke, criticizing the denial of monotheism by those who falsely ascribe divinity to Jesus and Mary. According to (Al-Shafi'i, 2001), the question is rhetorical rather than informational, serving to emphasize the irrationality of their beliefs.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" here is an interrogative noun in accusative position (مفعول مطلق) due to its rhetorical function of astonishment and emphasis.

The term "كيف" in the Qur'an holds diverse syntactic and rhetorical functions. As seen in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:260) and Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:75), it conveys both literal and rhetorical meanings, shaping the Qur'an's linguistic and theological depth. This study systematically classifies its meanings and grammatical positions, demonstrating its contribution to Quranic eloquence and miraculous expression.

Astonishment (التعجب)

Astonishment (التعجب) refers to the expression of wonder or amazement at something unusual or extraordinary. The word "كيف" appears as an interrogative particle expressing astonishment in eighteen instances in the Qur'an.

Example 1: Expressing Astonishment at the Fate of the Criminals - Surah Al-A'raf (7:84)

"And We rained upon them a rain [of stones]. Then see how was the end of the criminals."

In this verse, Allah addresses Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the command "انظر" (look), which here refers to contemplation and reflection rather than physical sight. The phrase "كيف كان عاقبة المجرمين" (how was the end of the criminals) refers specifically to the people of Lot, who denied his message,

engaged in immoral behavior, and committed grave sins. As a consequence of their crimes, Allah rained down stones upon them as a form of divine retribution. However, the intended audience for this command extends beyond the Prophet to include all individuals capable of learning a lesson from the fate of these wrongdoers. According to (Ibn Ashur, 1984), the use of "كيف" in this verse highlights the horrifying fate of the criminals and serves as an admonition and warning for others to take heed.

(Al-Shanqiti, 2019) further explains that the term "عاقبة" (end) indicates the ultimate outcome of their actions, emphasizing that divine punishment is not a temporary event but a direct and inevitable consequence of wrongdoing. Furthermore, the Qur'an explicitly states that these punitive stones still exist and could befall others who engage in similar transgressions.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" is an interrogative noun functioning as a second object (مفعول به ثانٍ) of the verb "انظر".

Some grammarians suggest it acts as a predicate of "كان" (خير كان مقدم).

Example 2: Expressing Astonishment at False Judgments - Surah Yunus (10:35)

"Then is He who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who guides not unless he is guided? Then what is [the matter] with you? How do you judge?"

In the phrase "فما لكم كيف تحكمون", the word "كيف" expresses astonishment at the irrationality of idol worshippers who assign divine authority to false deities. The intended meaning is: "What has happened to you that you make such misguided judgments?"

According to (Ibn Ashur, 1984), "كيف تحكمون" functions as a rhetorical question of amazement directed at those who claim that false gods can act as intermediaries between humans and Allah. The inconsistency in their logic is highlighted:

They follow beings incapable of guiding themselves, yet expect them to provide guidance to others.

They abandon the One who truly guides to the truth and instead place their trust in those who lead them astray.

(Al-Sha'rawi, 1997) elaborates that this verse contains two rhetorical questions:

1. "ما لكم" - expressing disapproval and amazement at their irrational thinking.
2. "كيف تحكمون" - expressing rebuke and astonishment at their flawed logic in choosing false gods over the true source of guidance.

This form of rhetorical interrogation serves as a critique of the idolaters' misguided reasoning, urging them to reevaluate their beliefs and recognize the contradictions in their thought process.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" functions as a **fronted object (مفعولاً مقدماً)* for the verb "تحكمون" (you judge).

The use of "كيف" as an interrogative noun of astonishment in these Quranic verses serves to:

Highlight irrational thinking and flawed judgments, Criticize the disbelief and disobedience of past nations, Encourage reflection and self-examination among the readers.

By employing "كيف" in these contexts, the Qur'an compels its audience to question their own reasoning, leading them toward a deeper understanding of divine truth.

Threat and Warning (التهديد والوعيد)

Threat (التهديد) comes from the verb *هَدَّ*, meaning to intimidate or warn of impending punishment. Warning (الوعيد) refers to a forewarning of destruction or retribution. The word "كيف" conveys this meaning in sixteen instances in the Qur'an.

Example 1: Threatening the Hypocrites - Surah An-Nisa' (4:62)

"So how (will it be) when disaster strikes them because of what their hands have put forth, and then they come to you swearing by Allah, 'We intended nothing but good conduct and accommodation'?"

This verse serves as a severe warning to the hypocrites, specifically regarding an incident in which they sought retaliation for a fellow hypocrite who had been

killed by Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). The hypocrite had refused the judgment of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and instead sought arbitration elsewhere. When confronted, they swore falsely by Allah, claiming their only intention was to promote fairness and reconciliation. (Ibn Kathir, 1997) explains that this verse threatens the hypocrites with impending calamity as a direct consequence of their deceit and treachery. The phrase "فكيف إذا أصابتهم مصيبة" (So how will it be when disaster strikes them?) serves as a rhetorical warning, urging them to reflect on the inevitable consequences of their hypocrisy.

(Ibn Uthaymeen, 1436 H) suggests that "كيف" in this verse can be interpreted in two ways:

1. Accusative case (نصب) - As per Al-Zajjaj, it implies an omitted verb, meaning "How will you see them when disaster strikes?"
2. Nominative case (رفع) - As per Al-Na'mani (1998), "كيف" is a fronted predicate (خبر مقدم), meaning "What will their condition be when disaster strikes?"

Other grammarians consider "كيف" in this verse to function as an interrogative noun in accusative case, used in comparison to a direct object (على التشبيه بالمفعول به) for an omitted verb, meaning "How will they act?"

Example 2: Threatening the Disbelievers - Surah Al-Qamar (54:16, 18, 21)

"So how (terrible) was My punishment and warning!"

These verses are a direct rebuke to disbelievers, warning them of the consequences of rejecting divine guidance. The phrase "فكيف كان عذابي ونذر" appears multiple times in Surah Al-Qamar, each time emphasizing the severity and inevitability of divine punishment:

Verse 16 refers to the punishment of the people of Noah, who were drowned in a great flood.

Verse 18 warns of the fate of the people of 'Ad, who perished due to their arrogance.

Verse 21 reinforces the theme of divine retribution.

(Ibn Ashur, 1984) explains that these repeated warnings serve as a rhetorical intensification. The repetition of "فكيف كان عذابي ونذر" reinforces the dreadful reality of divine punishment, making it inescapable and undeniable.

(Al-Safi'i, 1995) highlights that "كيف" in these verses blends multiple rhetorical functions:

Astonishment (التعجب) - Expressing shock at the severity of the punishment.

Magnification (التعظيم) - Emphasizing that the divine retribution is beyond human comprehension.

Threat (التهديد) - Serving as a forewarning of similar punishments for future transgressors.

Syntactic Analysis:

In these verses, "كيف" functions as a fronted predicate (خبر مقدم) for the verb "كان" (was).

The word "عذابي ونذر" (My punishment and warning) is the subject (اسم كان).

There is an omission (حذف) of the possessive pronoun in "عذابي ونذري", where the yā' is removed to maintain poetic symmetry and phonetic harmony at the end of the verse.

The Qur'anic use of "كيف" in threatening and warning serves several rhetorical and theological functions:

1. Emphasizing divine justice, showing that consequences are inevitable.
2. Highlighting the severity of divine punishment, using repetition and rhetorical questioning.
3. Compelling reflection, urging the audience to reconsider their actions before facing divine retribution.

Thus, "كيف" in these contexts not only signifies a question but also serves as a tool of intimidation, astonishment, and divine admonition, reinforcing the Qur'an's miraculous linguistic depth.

Denial and Rebuke (الإنكار والتوبيخ)

Denial (الإنكار) is the opposite of acknowledgment (الإقرار) and derives from the verb *أنكر*, meaning to negate something entirely or partially. Rebuke (التوبيخ) refers to blame and reprimand. The word "كيف" appears with this meaning in eight instances in the Qur'an.

Example 1: Denouncing the Arrogance of Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira - Surah Al-Muddathir (74:19-20)

"So he was destroyed – how he determined! Then he was destroyed – how he determined!"

In these verses, "قتل" means "cursed", indicating Allah's severe condemnation and exclusion from His mercy for the one who falsely accused the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) of being a sorcerer. The individual in question is Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira, who publicly acknowledged that Muhammad was neither insane, a liar, nor a poet, yet still claimed that his message was sorcery.

1. Interpretation as Denial and Rebuke:

According to (PAkdağcık İÜ et al, 2022) Al-Baghawi (1997), these verses serve as a direct rebuke to Al-Walid's audacity. He knew the truth but still denied and ridiculed the Prophet, showing no fear of divine punishment.

2. Interpretation as Astonishment and Magnification:

Al-Razi interprets "كيف" in these verses as expressing amazement at the enormity of Al-Walid's arrogance and disbelief.

(Shihab Al-Din Al-Shafi'i Al-Hanafi, 2007) explains that the first instance of "كيف" conveys general astonishment, while the second instance intensifies the reproach, as it follows a moment of reflection.

3. The Rhetorical Impact of Repetition:

The phrase "ثم قتل كيف قدر" (Then he was destroyed – how he determined!) amplifies the rebuke and condemnation.

The conjunction "ثم" (then) signifies progression, indicating that the second curse is more severe than the first (Salih, 2016).

This repetition heightens the intensity of the reprimand, reinforcing the deservedness of divine punishment.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" in both verses is in the accusative case as a circumstantial adverb (حال (منصوب), describing the state of Al-Walid's deliberate scheming.

In these verses, "كيف" functions as:

A tool of denial and reprimand, condemning Al-Walid's hypocrisy.

A means of intensifying rebuke, with repetition reinforcing the severity of divine punishment.

A rhetorical device for amazement, highlighting the audacity of those who reject divine truth despite recognizing it.

Thus, "كيف" in this context blends multiple rhetorical functions, making the Qur'anic reprimand both emphatic and inescapable.

Astonishment (التعجب)

Astonishment (التعجب) is the expression of amazement or wonder in response to an event of extreme strangeness or significance. The word "كيف" conveys astonishment in five instances in the Qur'an.

Example 1: Expressing Astonishment at Disbelief - Surah Aal-e-Imran (3:101)

"And how could you disbelieve while the verses of Allah are recited to you, and among you is His Messenger? And whoever holds firmly to Allah has been guided to a straight path."

In this verse, Allah addresses the believers with a rhetorical question that conveys astonishment:

"How could you turn back in disbelief?" despite:

The clear, recited signs of Allah affirming monotheism and prophethood.

The presence of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) guiding them to the truth.

This astonishment emphasizes the impossibility of an excuse for their disbelief.

The verse serves as both a rebuke and a warning, questioning how they could justify rejecting Allah's revelations and the Prophet's guidance.

According to Al-Zajaj (Al-Nisaburi, 1430 H)), the question implies:

"Under what circumstances could disbelief be justified while Allah's signs are being

recited to you?" The phrase "كيف تكفرون" serves as a rhetorical device for emphatic denial, negating any possible justification for disbelief.

(Sheikh Al-Sha'rawi, 1997) interprets "كيف" in this verse as both magnification and astonishment, stating:

"When you hear 'كيف تكفرون' it is something truly astonishing, for it is inconceivable that believers, with the Book of Allah recited among them and the Messenger present, would fall into disbelief."

(Sheikh Ibn Uthaymeen, 2002) adds that "كيف" in this context could indicate both astonishment (التعجب) and improbability (الاستبعاد). Meanwhile, Al-Tahawi argues that the verse serves as a rebuke for those who succumbed to the trials incited by the Jews.

Syntactic Analysis: "كيف" is an interrogative noun in the accusative case (مبني في محل نصب حال).

Example 2: Expressing Astonishment at Divine Punishment – Surah Al-Qamar (54:16)

"So how (terrible) was My punishment and warning!"

This verse does not function as a simple question about punishment but instead emphasizes the severity of divine retribution, inspiring awe and astonishment.

According to (Majallat Kulliyat Al-Tarbiyah lil-Banat, 2018), the interrogative form does not seek an answer but rather highlights the enormity of the punishment, which is beyond full human comprehension. The use of "كيف" serves as a rhetorical device for expressing amazement and horror at the terrifying nature of divine punishment.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" is an interrogative noun in the accusative case (حال منصوب), emphasizing the manner and intensity of divine punishment.

The Qur'anic use of "كيف" in astonishment serves multiple rhetorical and theological purposes:

1. Expressing amazement at irrational behavior, such as disbelief despite overwhelming evidence.

2. Highlighting the severity of divine punishment, making it an unforgettable warning.
3. Emphasizing the improbability of certain actions, reinforcing the logic of faith and obedience.

Thus, "كيف" functions as a tool of emphatic negation, rebuke, and divine admonition, reinforcing the Qur'an's linguistic eloquence and rhetorical depth.

Denial and Improbability (الإنكار والاستبعاد)

Improbability (الاستبعاد) refers to the rejection or negation of something as unlikely, while denial (الإنكار) negates something either partially (ظني) or absolutely (قطعي). The interrogative particle "كيف" conveys this meaning in five instances in the Qur'an.

A key example where "كيف" combines denial, improbability, and astonishment occurs in:

Example 1: Denying and Rejecting the Validity of Treaties with Polytheists – Surah At-Tawbah (9:7)

"How can there be a treaty for the polytheists with Allah and His Messenger, except those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Haram?"

This verse questions the legitimacy of any treaty between Muslims and the polytheists, particularly after the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and subsequent agreements.

Denial (الإنكار):

The idea of a lasting treaty between Muslims and the polytheists is negated, as it is unlikely they would remain loyal to it. According to Ibn Ashur (1984), the verse rejects the possibility of a lasting pact, given the polytheists' history of breaking agreements.

Improbability (الاستبعاد):

The Qur'an emphasizes that polytheists are unlikely to uphold their commitments, given their resentment and hostility toward Islam.

Al-Shirazi Al-Baydawi suggests that Allah and His Messenger cannot honor a treaty when the other party is known for treachery.

Astonishment (التعجب):

The verse expresses amazement at the hypocrisy of the polytheists, questioning "How can they claim to have a treaty while openly violating agreements?"

Some scholars argue that this specifically refers to Quraysh.

Others suggest it applies to Banu Khuzaymah and Banu Bakr, tribes involved in breaking the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah (Ibn Atiyyah Al-Andalusi, 1422 H).

Alternative Interpretations:

Implied negation: "كيف يكون للمشركين عهد", according to As-Sam'ani, functions as an implied negation, meaning "There is no treaty for the polytheists with Allah and His Messenger."

Elision (إضمار): Al-Qurtubi states that the verse contains an implicit phrase, meaning:

"How can there be a treaty while they harbor treachery and deceit?" (Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, 1420 H).

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" is an *interrogative noun serving as a fronted predicate (خبر مقدم)* for "كان" (كان) "لمشركين عهد".

In Surah At-Tawbah (9:7), "كيف" serves as:

1. A rhetorical question negating the existence of valid treaties.
2. A statement of improbability, highlighting the inevitability of betrayal.
3. An expression of astonishment, emphasizing the hypocrisy of the polytheists.

Thus, "كيف" functions as a linguistic tool that reinforces both theological and rhetorical arguments, strengthening the Qur'an's denunciation of treachery and reaffirming divine justice.

Negation (النفى)

Negation (النفى) is the opposite of affirmation (الإثبات) and derives from the verb *نَفَى*, meaning to deny or reject something. The word "كيف" conveys negation blended with denial (الإنتكار) in five instances in the Qur'an.

Example 1: Denying the Possibility of Patience – Surah Al-Kahf (18:68)

"And how can you have patience for what you do not encompass in knowledge?"

In this verse, Allah conveys the words of the wise man (Khidr) to Prophet Musa (peace be upon him), explaining that Musa will struggle to remain patient when witnessing Khidr's actions, as they may appear outwardly incorrect.

The challenge to patience: Khidr warns Musa that patience is impossible when one lacks full comprehension of a matter. Prophets cannot remain silent in the face of apparent wrongdoing, making it difficult for Musa to withhold judgment when he does not yet understand the divine wisdom behind Khidr's actions.

Negation blended with denial: Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari interprets "كيف" as conveying both negation and rhetorical denial. The implicit meaning is: *"You will not be able to remain patient because you do not have full knowledge of the matter."*

Linguistic analysis:

"الخبر" (knowledge) metaphorically represents complete awareness and mastery (Ibn Ashur, 1984).

The word "كيف" functions as an interrogative noun expressing negation (مشوباً) (بالإنتكار), implying:

"You will not have patience."

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" is an interrogative noun in the accusative case (حال منصوب), modifying "تصبر" (be patient).

Example 2: Denying Regret for the Disbelievers – Surah Al-A'raf (7:93)

"So how could I grieve for a disbelieving people?"

This verse conveys the words of Prophet Shu'ayb (peace be upon him) after his people rejected his message and subsequently faced divine punishment.

The internal conflict of the Prophet: Initially, Shu'ayb experiences sadness over his people's fate. However, he quickly negates this grief, recognizing that they brought destruction upon themselves by rejecting guidance.

Negation of sorrow: The phrase "فكيف آسى" means "I do not grieve", with "كيف" acting as a linguistic marker that negates sorrow.

The rhetorical effect: "كيف" emphasizes that Shu'ayb has no reason to grieve over people who chose disbelief and defiance. (Majallat Kulliyat Al-Adab, 2016) explains that "كيف" here serves to dismiss any justification for grief after Shu'ayb fulfilled his duty of guidance.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" is an interrogative noun modifying "آسى" (grieve), functioning as a negation marker.

Example 3: Denying Fear of Polytheism - Surah Al-An'am (6:81)

"And how should I fear what you associate with Allah, while you do not fear associating others with Him?"

This verse presents the words of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), challenging the polytheists' irrational beliefs.

The impossibility of fearing false gods: Ibrahim rebukes the idolaters, emphasizing that he has no reason to fear their deities, as they have no real power. Meanwhile, the idolaters themselves do not fear Allah, despite associating partners with Him.

Negation through rhetorical questioning: The phrase "وكيف أخاف" means "I do not fear", with "كيف" functioning as a denial of fear.

Example 4: Denying the Possibility of Guidance - Surah Aal-e-Imran (3:86)

"How does Allah guide a people who disbelieved after having believed?"

This verse expresses astonishment at the unlikelihood of divine guidance for those who consciously rejected faith after believing.

Negation of divine guidance: The implicit meaning is: "*Allah does not guide those who deliberately abandon faith.*"

The use of "كيف" conveys the impossibility of such guidance due to intentional disbelief.

In these Quranic instances, "كيف" serves as:

1. A marker of negation, emphasizing the impossibility of patience, regret, fear, or divine guidance in certain cases.
2. A rhetorical device reinforcing denial, rejection, and divine justice.
3. A tool of argumentation, compelling reflection on the irrationality of disbelief and misplaced fears.

Thus, "كيف" in these contexts strengthens the Qur'an's persuasive and rhetorical power, making its arguments irrefutable and emphatic.

Rebuke and Incapacitation (التوبيخ والتعجيز)

Rebuke (التوبيخ) refers to blame and reprimand.

Incapacitation (التعجيز) comes from the verb عَجَزَ, meaning weakness and inability to perform an action.

The interrogative particle "كيف" appears with these meanings in five instances in the Qur'an, including:

Example 1: Rebuking and Demonstrating Incapacity - Surah Al-Muzzammil (73:17)

"Then how will you protect yourselves, if you disbelieve, on a Day that will turn children gray?"

In this verse, Allah directly addresses humanity, questioning:

How will you shield yourselves from divine punishment?

What defense will you have on the Day of Judgment?

The intensity of that Day is so severe that it will cause children to turn gray from its horrors. However, if people denied this reality in the world, how can they now expect to escape it?

Impossibility of escape:

(Al-Zajaj, 1988) explains that this verse emphasizes that there is no refuge from divine punishment for those who disbelieve.

The use of "كيف" in this verse conveys a rhetorical question meant to demonstrate incapacity, showing that they have no means of protection.

Warning and Reflection:

(Ibn Ashur, 1984) states that this rhetorical question serves as a severe warning, urging people to reflect on their inability to withstand divine punishment.

It also references the fate of past nations, reminding people that previous disbelievers faced similar warnings and ultimately perished.

Rebuke and Reprimand:

According to (Al-Qurtubi, 1964), this verse contains an implicit restructuring, meaning:

"How will you protect yourselves on the Day that turns children gray, if you disbelieve?"

This restructuring clarifies the severity of the rebuke, reinforcing the inescapable nature of divine punishment.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" - The "ف" (fa') here acts as a causal connector, linking the verse to a conditional clause that is implied.

"كيف" is an interrogative noun in the accusative case (حال منصوب) modifying "تتقون" (protect yourselves).

The verb "تتقون" is in the jussive form (مجزوم) as the answer to an omitted conditional phrase, reinforcing the inescapability of divine retribution.

The Qur'anic use of "كيف" for rebuke and incapacitation serves multiple rhetorical and theological functions:

1. Exposing human vulnerability by questioning their ability to avoid divine punishment.

2. Rebuking disbelief and arrogance, showing that disbelievers have no valid justification.
3. Intensifying the warning of Judgment Day, emphasizing that no escape is possible.

Thus, "كيف" in these contexts blends rebuke, astonishment, and incapacitation, strengthening the Qur'anic argument against disbelief and heedlessness.

Magnification and Exaltation (التفخيم والتعظيم)

Magnification (التفخيم) refers to enhancing the greatness of something.

Exaltation (التعظيم) is revering or glorifying a matter or event.

The word "كيف" appears with this meaning in three instances in the Qur'an, including:

Example 1: Magnifying the Day of Testimony - Surah An-Nisa' (4:41)

"So how (will it be) when We bring a witness from every nation, and We bring you [O Muhammad] as a witness over them?"

This verse describes the gravity of the Day of Judgment, when every nation will have a witness, and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) will serve as a witness over all humanity.

Magnification and Exaltation:

According to (Sheikh Ibn Uthaymeen, 1436 H), "كيف" in this verse serves as an interrogative particle for glorification and astonishment, emphasizing the immense significance of this testimony.

The weight of this moment is so great that the question itself highlights its magnitude.

The role of the Prophet as a witness over all nations reinforces his supreme status and the universality of his message.

Additional Interpretations:

Al-Zajjaj and other scholars interpret "كيف" as conveying rebuke and reprimand, implying "How terrible will their state be on that day?"

(Ibn Al-Jawzi, 1422 H)) lists four interpretations of the testimonies given by the prophets: They will testify that they conveyed their message, They will testify to their nations' faith, They will testify about their nations' deeds, They will testify regarding their nations' rewards and punishments.

Syntactic Analysis:

The "ف" (fa') in "كَيْف" is resumptive (استئنافية), linking the verse to a new statement emphasizing grandeur.

"كَيْف" has two possible grammatical roles:

A fronted predicate (خير مقدم) for an omitted subject, meaning "*How will their condition be?*"

An adverbial circumstantial noun (حال منصوب) for an omitted verb, meaning "*How will they act?*"

(Ibn Atiyyah) Ibn Atiyyah suggests that "كَيْف" functions as a complement to "جئنا" (We brought).

In Surah An-Nisa' (4:41), "كَيْف" serves as:

1. A tool for magnification and exaltation, highlighting the magnitude of divine testimony.
2. A rhetorical device for awe and astonishment, emphasizing the severity of the Day of Judgment.
3. A marker of rebuke and reprimand, warning disbelievers about their dire fate when faced with divine witnesses.

Thus, "كَيْف" in this verse reinforces the grandeur of divine justice, enhancing the Qur'anic rhetorical and theological depth.

Conditional Meaning (بمعنى الشرط)

Condition (الشرط) refers to the requirement or dependency of one action upon another. The use of "كَيْف" as a conditional particle has been debated among grammarians, with three instances in the Qur'an where it has been interpreted in this way.

Example 1: Conditional Meaning in Creation – Surah Aal-e-Imran (3:6)

"He shapes you in the wombs as He wills."

Interpretation of "كيف" as a Conditional Particle:

According to Ibn Hisham Al-Ansari in *Mughni Al-Labib*, "كيف" in this verse is conditional in meaning, with an implied condition preceding it.

The omitted conditional clause is understood as:
"However He wills to shape you, He shapes you."

This highlights the absolute power of Allah in determining human form, lifespan, and provision while still in the darkness of the womb.

Linguistic Debate on "كيف" as a Conditional Tool:

Sibawayh rejected its classification as a true conditional word, stating:
"It is forced into a conditional function but is not originally one."

Basran grammarians denied that "كيف" could govern the jussive case (الجزم), as conditional words typically require the response to align with the condition.

Kufan grammarians, including Qutrub, permitted "كيف" to function as a true conditional tool with jussive verbs.

Some scholars, such as Ibn Ashur, argued that "كيف" becomes fully conditional when paired with "ما" (e.g., كيفما) while still retaining its adverbial meaning of manner.

Additional Examples of "كيف" as a Conditional Tool:

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:245): "He expands provision in the sky as He wills." Surah Al-Baqarah (2:261): "He spends as He wills."

In these verses, "كيف يشاء" implies a hidden conditional structure, where the response mirrors the condition: "However He wills to expand provision, He expands it.", "However He wills to spend, He spends."

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" is a non-jussive conditional noun (اسم شرط غير جازم), It is built in the accusative case (حال منصوب), governed by the verb "يشاء" (He wills).

The object of will (مفعول المشيئة) is omitted, with an implied structure:

"He shapes you in the wombs however He wills to shape you."

"He expands provision however He wills to expand it."

In Surah Aal-e-Imran (3:6) and similar verses, "كيف" serves as:

1. A conditional particle, governing an implied response.
2. A rhetorical tool, emphasizing Allah's unrestricted will.
3. A syntactic point of debate, illustrating the complexities of Arabic conditional structures.

Thus, "كيف" in these cases reinforces divine omnipotence, demonstrating the Qur'an's linguistic depth and grammatical precision.

Affirmation and Confirmation (التقرير)

Affirmation (التقرير) originates from الإقرار, meaning the acknowledgment or clarification of something until it is understood.

Acknowledgment (الإقرار) signifies submission to truth and recognition of its validity.

Interrogative confirmation (الاستفهام التقريري) is a rhetorical question used to reinforce and establish a fact.

The word "كيف" conveys this meaning in three instances in the Qur'an, including:

Example 1: Confirming the Severity of Divine Punishment - Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:32)

"And certainly, messengers before you were mocked, but I granted respite to those who disbelieved; then I seized them, so how [terrible] was My punishment!"

Confirmation of severe punishment:

This verse establishes the reality of divine retribution, using "كيف" as an interrogative to affirm and emphasize the gravity of the punishment inflicted on past disbelievers.

The phrase "فكيف كان عقاب" (So how was My punishment?) is not a genuine question, but rather a confirmation of the severe consequences of disbelief.

Reassurance for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

According to (Ibn Ahnif Al-Yamani, 2018), this verse serves as both a consolation for the Prophet and a warning for the Quraysh polytheists.

The rejection of past prophets is used as precedent to remind Quraysh that they, too, will face divine punishment if they continue their disbelief.

Interrogative for emphasis and warning:

(Ibn Ashur Al-Andalusi, 1984) explains that the entire passage from Surah Ghafir (40:5) to this verse serves as a threat to the Quraysh, making it clear that divine retribution is inevitable for those who reject the truth.

Interrogative for astonishment:

According to (Al-Harari Al-Shafi'i, 2001), "كيف" here also conveys astonishment at the destruction of past nations, particularly for those who pass by the ruins of previous civilizations during their travels.

The implied meaning is:

"How overwhelming and unimaginable was My punishment upon those who mocked My messengers?"

The phrase "فانظر يا محمد كيف صنعت بمن استهزأ بالرسل" (So look, O Muhammad, how I dealt with those who mocked the messengers!) indicates that the act of "looking" is not physical sight but absolute certainty and understanding.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" is an interrogative noun built in the accusative case (خبر مقدم) for the verb "كان".

The word "عقابي" (My punishment) is the subject (اسم كان), with the "yā'" omitted for phonetic harmony in the verse endings.

In Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:32), "كيف" functions as:

1. A rhetorical confirmation, affirming the inevitability and severity of divine punishment.
2. A warning for disbelievers, urging them to reflect on the fate of past nations.
3. A means of evoking astonishment, emphasizing the fearsome consequences of rejecting divine guidance.

Thus, "كيف" in this verse reinforces the Qur'an's rhetorical precision, compelling readers to acknowledge the reality of divine justice.

Alertness and Awareness (التنبيه)

Alertness (التنبيه) derives from نَبَّهَ, meaning to make someone aware of something they were heedless of.

Awakening the heedless (تنبيه الغافل) refers to warning and informing someone of an important matter.

The word "كيف" conveys this meaning in three instances in the Qur'an, including:

Example 1: Raising Awareness of Divine Trial - Surah Al-A'raf (7:129)

"It is possible that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the land, and then He will see how you act."

Possible Interpretations of "فينظر كيف تعملون":

1. The grant of power and provision is a test, not an unconditional reward, so that Allah may examine their conduct.
2. Hardships and trials serve as a test of patience and endurance.
3. If Allah grants them victory, will they remain grateful?

(Al-Maturidi, 2005) explains that "كيف" here acts as a reminder and call for self-discipline, urging believers to remain steadfast in their faith despite blessings or hardships.

Purpose of "كيف" in this verse:

Al-Zajjaj interprets this verse as an alert to the Israelites, reminding them that divine punishment is based on their actions, not merely on Allah's knowledge.

Some scholars see "كيف" as a warning, emphasizing that if they misuse their newfound power, divine retribution will follow.

(Ibn Ashur, 1984) states that "كيف" here functions beyond a simple interrogative, serving as a cautionary and motivational tool to urge obedience to Allah.

Syntactic Analysis:

"كيف" is an interrogative noun in the accusative case (حال منصوب) or an absolute object (مفعول مطلق).

Example 2: Encouraging Reflection on Creation - Surah Al-Ghashiyah (88:17)

"Do they not look at the camels – how they were created?"

This verse calls upon people to observe and reflect upon creation, specifically the camel, which was particularly significant in the Arabian environment.

Linguistic and Syntactic Considerations:

The phrase "كيف خلقت" (how they were created) serves as a substitution (بدل) for "الإبل" (the camels), meaning: "Do they not look at the manner in which camels were created?"

Some grammarians argue against this syntactic substitution, as the preposition "إلى" (to) is not typically used with "كيف", unlike "على" (upon).

Ibn Hisham rejects the idea that "كيف" functions as a substitution, explaining that the verb "ينظرون" (they look) governs the entire phrase, making "كيف" an adverbial clause:

"Do they not look to the camels, contemplating how they were created?"

Rhetorical Significance:

This verse awakens human awareness by urging contemplation of natural signs. The use of "كيف" prompts deep reflection, leading to a realization of divine wisdom in creation.

Example from Classical Arabic Poetry:

A poet expressed a similar thought: "I complain to Allah about a need in Medina ... and another one in Sham – how can they meet?"

The phrase "كيف يلتقيان" (how can they meet?) functions similarly, emphasizing the impossibility of two things coming together, highlighting distance and separation.

In Surah Al-A'raf (7:129) and Surah Al-Ghashiyah (88:17), "كيف" serves as:

1. A tool for awakening awareness, urging people to reflect on their actions and divine trials.
2. A rhetorical device for contemplation, calling on people to observe creation and understand divine wisdom.
3. A means of motivation and warning, ensuring that divine blessings are not misused.

Thus, "كيف" in these contexts reinforces intellectual and spiritual reflection, compelling believers to recognize divine wisdom and act accordingly.

Conclusion

The term "كيف" does not solely function as an interrogative for inquiring about a state or condition, but it also conveys various rhetorical and semantic meanings based on the context in which it appears. This demonstrates the richness and depth of Quranic expression, where "كيف" plays a significant linguistic role in understanding Quranic texts. The word "كيف" is derived from "كيفية", meaning "manner" or "state," and it can also indicate a part or portion of something. Apart from its primary function as an interrogative for manner or state, "كيف" also appears with other rhetorical and semantic purposes, including astonishment, denial, sarcasm, threat, improbability, and more. The grammatical function of "كيف" varies based on its syntactic position in the sentence. It can be parsed as: a circumstantial adverb (حال), a fronted predicate (خبر مقدم) for a deficient verb, an absolute object (مفعول مطلق), a second direct object (مفعول به ثانٍ), a fronted predicate (خبر مقدم) in specific structures. "كيف" appears 83 times in the Qur'an: 30 times as an interrogative particle. 53 times as a built-in noun in various semantic contexts.

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