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Thematization in Quranic Texts

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Abstract

This study investigates marked thematization in selected Quranic verses using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). SFL treats language as a resource for making meaning in context. It examines how choices in grammar shape experience, interaction, and text organization. Previous research highlighted cohesion, reference, and general thematic structures in the Quran (Alamiri, 2020; Qasim and Shaber, 2021). However, investigating marked themes in the original Arabic and comparing with unmarked ones remain underexplored. This is important because fronted participants or circumstances create emphasis and guide interpretation. The study examines verses from Al-Fatiha, Al-Baqarah, and Al-Jathiyah, comparing the marked and unmarked ones. It uses a qualitative interpretive approach grounded in SFL's Theme-Rheme framework. Context, neighboring verses, and classical tafsir inform the analysis. Findings show that marked Themes are deliberate and functionally motivated. They influence emphasis, rhetorical effect, and textual coherence. The study demonstrates how Quranic word order contributes to meaning and guides the reader's focus. By bridging modern SFL theory with traditional Quranic interpretation, the study offers a systematic method to analyze the Quran's thematic structures. It provides insights into how grammatical choices serve theological, rhetorical, and communicative functions.



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1. Introduction

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed by Halliday, sees language as a tool for meaning-making. It is different from traditional grammar. SFL focuses on how choices in language create meaning in context (Matthiessen and Halliday, 1997). Every sentence reflects purposeful, context-dependent choices. Halliday argued that language evolved to meet human communicative needs (Bloor and Bloor, 2013). This makes SFL suitable for analyzing texts shaped by culture and context, like the Quran. Meaning emerges from the interaction between language and situation (Eggins, 2004).

SFL has three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction represents experience through processes, participants, and circumstances (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). The interpersonal metafunction manages interaction and reflects speaker-hearer relationships. Mood and modality express statements, questions, and obligations (Eggins, 2004). The textual metafunction organizes information through Theme-Rheme structures, ensuring cohesion and coherence (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2014).

Thematic structure is strategic, not grammatical. Marked Themes, such as fronted participants or circumstances, draw attention and shape interpretation. They interact with ideational and interpersonal choices to convey emphasis and guide meaning. By analyzing marked vs. unmarked Themes in selected Quranic verses, this study explores how grammatical decisions produce rhetorical and theological effects.

This research focuses on four key verses from Al-Fatiha, Al-Baqarah, and Al-Jathiyah, comparing them with unmarked counterparts. It applies SFL's Theme-Rheme analysis, considering context, neighboring verses, and tafsir.

2. Literature Review and Background

This study begins with a review of earlier works on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and the Quran. It notes that marked thematization in Arabic has not been systematically studied. It then outlines the theoretical background. This focuses on the textual metafunction and the Theme–Rheme system. Both unmarked and marked Themes are introduced. Textual and interpersonal Themes are also explained. The discussion shows why SFL is relevant to Quranic discourse. It highlights the Quran's distinct textual features. A brief contrast is made between Arabic and English lexicogrammar. This shows how systemic differences affect meaning. The article sets out its objectives and research questions. These focus on marked Themes in selected Quranic verses. The significance of the study is stated. It demonstrates value for linguistics and Quranic interpretation. Finally, the methodology is presented. The qualitative approach is described. Purposive selection of verses is explained. Steps of analysis are outlined. Marked and unmarked structures are compared.

2.1 Previous studies

Despite a growing body of research applying modern linguistics to the Quran, the specific function of marked thematization and compared with the unmarked in the original Arabic remains a significantly underexplored area. While many studies have acknowledged the rhetorical force of the Quran's word order (known in classical Arabic rhetoric as *balāghah* and *taqdīm wa ta'khīr* – fronting and postponing), a systematic SFL-based analysis that precisely connects marked thematic choices—such as the fronting of elements—to their specific theological and rhetorical functions is still largely lacking.

Previous SFL applications to the Quran have laid important groundwork. However, they have not fully addressed this specific level of analysis in the original Arabic. Here are some previous works:

- Alamiri (2020) conducted a valuable SFL-based analysis demonstrating the Quran's cohesive texture. He was focusing on devices such as reference, ellipsis, and conjunction. However, Alamiri's study concentrated on inter-clausal cohesive links. Alamiri did not systematically investigate the

internal clausal strategies, such as marked thematization, that are instrumental in creating rhetorical effect and guiding interpretation at the clause level.

- Qasim and Shaber (2021) provided a comparative SFL analysis of four surahs. He was examining the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. While insightful, their study was broader in scope and, crucially, relied on an English translation. Consequently, the specific rhetorical force generated by precise grammatical variations in the original Arabic—a central feature of Quranic rhetoric—was not the primary focus, as nuances related to the fronting of clausal elements are often obscured or lost in translation.

- Other recent scholarship, such as Mahmoud (2023), has focused on other aspects like gender-based clusters and transitivity, or Al-Zebari (2025) on thematic studies of civilizations, without directly engaging with the structural aspect of marked thematization in the original Arabic text.

A clear need therefore remains for a study that applies SFL's Theme-Rheme analysis systematically to marked structures within the original Arabic text of the Quran. By doing so, this can bridge the descriptive power of SFL with traditional Quranic interpretation, providing a strong framework for understanding how grammatical choices in the Quran are functionally motivated to produce profound theological meaning. This study addresses that need directly. In other words, it can be said that by applying SFL to these marked structures, the study can reveal the specific linguistic choices made in the original Arabic and explain *why* those choices were made. This connects modern linguistic theory with centuries of Islamic interpretation.

2.2 The Textual Metafunction and Thematic Structure: Foundational Concepts

In SFL, the textual metafunction refers to how speakers and writers organize language to create coherent and cohesive texts within a given context (Matthiessen and Halliday, 1997; Sari and Musthafa, 2024). It serves as the structural framework of discourse. This supports both casual conversation and formal writing. This metafunction manages the flow of information so that the elements of a text or speech work together to form a unified and meaningful whole in other words they are technically terms cohesion and coherence (Sari and Musthafa, 2024).

A key feature of the textual metafunction is the Theme-Rheme structure of the clause. It controls how information is arranged and interpreted (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2004). The Theme is the first element in the clause and serves as the “point of departure” for the message (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2004). It provides a starting point that helps place the clause within a wider context. As White (2000) explains, the Theme shows what the clause is “about”. Theme usually contains information already known or expected by both the speaker and the listener. Following the Theme is the Rheme. It contains the rest of the clause (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2004). The Rheme presents new information. It is what the speaker wants to say about the Theme. It helps develop or elaborate the message (White, 2000). In this way, the Theme guides the listener's or reader's expectations.

Importantly, choosing the Theme is not just a grammatical decision. But it is a strategic choice by which the writer or speaker does. Thematic choices fundamentally shape how messages are understood and what the audience focuses on (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). When the Themes in a text are planned carefully and follow a clear pattern—what is called thematic progression. Then the writing or speech becomes easier to understand and flows smoothly. But if the Themes are disorganized or keep jumping around, it confuses the audience and breaks the flow of the message (Eggs, 2004). That is why thematic structure is so important. It helps people build clear, meaningful, and well-connected texts (Martin and Rose, 2007).

Furthermore, the linguistic feature of thematization in the Quran remains almost an underexplored area of research. For instance, recent scholarship has focused on other areas, such as Hammoodi's (2025) semantic analysis of a specific verb and Al-Zebari's (2025) thematic study on the fall of civilizations, without directly engaging with this structural aspect of the language.

2.3 Theme Types in SFL

In every clause, there must be at least one Topical Theme. This carries the main experiential content of the message. Nevertheless, a clause can also include other elements that come before the Topical Theme. When this happens, the clause is said to have a Multiple Theme (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Sari and Musthafa, 2024). These earlier elements are typically either Textual Themes, such as conjunctions and linking words like *and*, *but*, *however*. Interpersonal Themes, which express the speaker's mood, attitude, or relationship with the listener, using items like *frankly*, *perhaps* and so forth (Eggins, 2004; Thompson, 2014). All of these come before the Topical Theme in the clause. This structure shows language serve multiple purposes at the same time. It organizes the flow of information. Second, it also manages social interaction. And it finally expresses the speaker's experience. All these occur within one clause (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Sari and Musthafa, 2024).

2.3.1 Topical Theme

The Topical Theme is the essential part of a Theme structure. It is the first element in the clause that carries experiential meaning. It is related to the content of the message or what the clause is "about" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2014). In other words, it signals the key subject matter of the clause. This meaning is usually expressed through elements from the transitivity system: a participant (like a person or thing), a circumstance (such as time, place, or manner), or a process (an action or a state) (Eggins, 2004; Thompson, 2014). These elements help show how the world is being represented in the clause.

There are two main types of Topical Themes in English:

2.3.1.1 Unmarked Topical Theme

This occurs when the Theme of the clause is also its grammatical subject. This is considered the most common and expected thematic choice in English. This certainly contributes to a normal and predictable flow of information in the text (Sari and Musthafa, 2024).

(1) John left the class early.

"John" is both the Subject and the Topical Theme.

(2) Smoking is dangerous for our health.

"Smoking" is functioning as both the Subject and the Theme.

2.3.1.2 Marked Topical Theme

A Marked Topical Theme occurs when the Theme is not the grammatical subject of the clause. It often begins with a Circumstance (like time or place) and a fronted Participant (such as an object placed at the start of the clause). This marked positioning draws attention and adds emphasis or contrast to the information being introduced (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004).

(3) (Circumstance): Yesterday I went to the zoo with my family.

"Yesterday" is marked because it is not the Subject but appears at the start.

(4) (Participant): "The truth they could not accept.

"The truth" is the object moved to the front for emphasis, a marked Participant Theme.

Distinguishing between unmarked and marked Themes is critical. This is because it shows how speakers and writers can influence how their message is understood. When the Theme is unmarked typically, the first element is the subject of the clause. The message flows in a smooth and expected way. But when a marked Theme is used, it brings something else to the front, such as a circumstance (like "in the morning") or a fronted Participant (such as an object placed at the start of the clause). This shift draws special attention to that part of the message. The choice between marked and unmarked Themes is not just a matter of grammar. But, it is a powerful tool that helps the speaker structure meaning, manage emphasis, and guide the listener or reader's focus (Eggins, 2004).

2.3.2 Textual Theme

Textual Themes are the elements that come before the Topical Theme in a clause. Their main job is to help the message flow smoothly. This is obtained by connecting ideas and showing how one part of the text relates to another. They play a great role in creating cohesion and coherence. This helps the reader or listener follow the logic of the discourse (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004).

There are three main types of Textual Themes:

- Continuatives: These are the words like *well*, *oh*, or *yes*, often used in discourse. They do not carry much meaning themselves, but signal that the speaker is continuing or resuming the message (Eggins, 2004).
 - Conjunctions: These words join clauses together. They can be:
 - Paratactic, linking two clauses of equal status (e.g., *and*, *but*, *or*).
 - Hypotactic, introducing a dependent clause (e.g., *because*, *although*, *if*)
 - Conjunctive Adjuncts: These are adverbs or prepositional phrases like *however*, *therefore*, or *on the other hand*. They show logical connections such as contrast, cause and effect, sequence, or addition (Martin and Rose, 2003; Thompson, 2014).
- (5) However, it's not quite fair to say it is the same.

“*However*” is a conjunctive adjunct that signals contrast.

- (6) “First, COVID-19 resulted in people taking care of their health even more.”
 “*First*” indicates sequence, making it a conjunctive Textual Theme.

By using these element kinds of Textual Themes, writers and speakers make their texts easier to follow. It shows how each part fits into the larger picture.

2.3.3 Interpersonal Theme

Interpersonal Themes come before the Topical Theme in a clause. The aim is to help show the speaker's or writer's attitude, stance, or their relationship with the listener or reader. They are part of the interpersonal metafunction. This typically indicates language as a way to make exchanges to interact with others and build social relationships (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

These themes signal the speaker's expression of things like doubt, certainty, politeness, commands, or address someone directly. In other words, they show how the speaker is engaged with the message and with the audience. Interpersonal Themes are usually realized through features from the Mood and Modality systems (Sari and Musthafa, 2024), such as:

- Finite verbs: the clause might begin with a verb like *did* or *can*. These can help form the mood of the sentence and signal that it's a question.
- (7) Can you help me? – Here, “can” is the finite verb and works as an Interpersonal Theme.
- Modal adjuncts: Words like *perhaps*, *surely*, or *usually* show degrees of probability, obligation, or frequency.
- (8) Perhaps, we should reconsider the proposal.” – “Perhaps” expresses uncertainty.
- Vocatives: Names or terms of address used to speak directly to someone.
- (9) Bill, are you ready?” – “Bill” is a vocative, and it's part of the Interpersonal Theme.
- Wh-interrogatives: When they ask about a participant or a circumstance, like *who*, *what*, *when*.
- (10) Why did she leave early? “Why” is an interrogative Theme.

Understanding these types of Themes helps people see how writers or speakers shape the tone and social dynamics of their message. The use of Interpersonal Themes is not random. It reflects pragmatic choices based on the purpose of the communication and the context (White, 2000; Febuanti et al., 2023).

All in all, a speaker or a writer might choose marked Themes to emphasize something, or they might use more textual Themes to make the logic between sentences very clear. A speaker might include more interpersonal Themes to show politeness, certainty, or personal involvement. These choices give deep insights into how language works not just grammatically, but *socially* and *rhetorically*.

All these show that how people use words to build meaning, engage with others, and respond to the situation around them.

Table 1: Main Types of Themes in SFL

Theme Type	Definition	Function	Examples
Topical Theme	The first element in a clause that expresses representational meaning (participant, circumstance, or process).	Grounds the clause in its experiential context; signals what the clause is “about.”	Unmarked: Bill left early. Smoking is dangerous. Marked: This afternoon we will go. The truth they could not accept.
Textual Theme	Elements preceding the Topical Theme that link clauses or parts of discourse.	Creates cohesion and coherence; organizes the message flow.	Continuatives: Umm, I think so. Conjunctions: And then we left. Because it was late, we left. Conjunctive Adjuncts: However, it was difficult. First, consider the data.
Interpersonal Theme	Elements preceding the Topical Theme that express speaker stance, attitude, or relationship with the addressee.	Enacts social relations; conveys speaker engagement or interactional role.	Finite verbs (in interrogatives): Can you do this? Modal adjuncts: Perhaps, we should go. Frankly, I don't care. Vocatives: Ben, are you ready?

2.4 The Quran as a Text: Relevance to Functional Linguistic Analysis

The Quran is the central and divine religious text in Islam. Muslims believe it to be the literal word of Allah. It was revealed in Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty-three years. The Quran consists of 114 chapters (Surahs) and more than 6,000 verses (ayat). Linguistically, the Quran is more than a sacred scripture. It is a highly structured and cohesive discourse. Its rhetorical patterns, stylistic features, and lexical choices make it a rich subject area for conducting linguistic analysis (Abdel Haleem, 2004).

Classical Arabic scholars studied the Quran. One contribution is the theory of *nazm* (textual arrangement). It has been developed by Al-Jurjānī. This theory emphasized coherence and unity. Today, modern frameworks such as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) provide new tools for examining the Quran's language (Mohd Nathir, 2021).

SFL views language as a social semiotic system. It explores how meaning is constructed in context (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). This makes it suitable for analyzing the Quran. SFL displays thematic structure, cohesion, and semantic interconnectedness. Studies show that the Quran employs cohesive devices such as reference, conjunction, ellipsis, and repetition to create textual unity (Alamiri, 2020). SFL-based research has also identified the presence of the three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. These are realized through transitivity, modality, and thematic progression (Qasim and Shaber, 2021; Rajiha, 2020). The Quran's divine origin and elevated rhetorical style make it unique. These features also pose challenges for linguistic analysis. Its genre differs from ordinary texts in both form and function. As Mahmoud (2023) notes,

the Quran presents balanced themes such as ethics, law, and gender and areas suitable for functional exploration.

This study analyzes selected verses using SFL to uncover patterns of cohesion, function, and thematization. It connects modern linguistic theory with traditional Quranic interpretation. The focus is on marked thematic structures. While many studies describe their rhetorical impact, this research aims to validate these effects through empirical analysis. The method compares marked verses with their unmarked counterparts. It reveals that marked Themes are intentional and not stylistic coincidence. Their use enhances emphasis, structure, and meaning. This confirms SFL's claim that language choices are functionally motivated. The study provides a systematic framework to support interpretations with textual evidence. This offers a more grounded alternative to *purely subjective* readings.

2.5 Lexicogrammatically Features in Arabic and English

As stated SFL views language as a system of choices. It focuses on how language creates meaning in context. Grammar, in this view, is not a fixed set of rules but a resource for expressing meaning (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

SFL centers on three metafunctions, which operate simultaneously:

- **Ideational Metafunction:** Represents experience (who does what, when, where, and why).
- **Interpersonal Metafunction:** Manages social interaction (e.g., statements, questions, commands).
- **Textual Metafunction:** Organizes messages (how the information flows and is structured).

When analyzed through this lens, the structural differences between English and Arabic become striking.

1. Ideational Meta function: Representing Reality

This meta function is realized through transitivity—processes (verbs), participants (nouns), and circumstances (adverbials) (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

Clause Structure Differences:

English typically uses one clause type with an SVO structure.

(11) The boy [Actor] ate [Process] the apple [Goal].

This is a material process clause (Thompson, 2014).

Arabic offers two distinct sentence types, each with different thematic implications (Ryding, 2005; Al-Khatib, 2009):

Verbal Sentence (الجملة الفعلية): Starts with a verb (VSO). Emphasizes the process.

(12) أَكَلِ الْوَلَدُ التَّفَاحَةَ (akala al-waladu al-tuffāḥata)

The verb (Process) is fronted, shaping the message's point of departure.

Nominal Sentence (الجملة الاسمية): Starts with a noun (SVO). Emphasizes the participant.

(13) الْوَلَدُ أَكَلِ التَّفَاحَةَ (al-waladu akala al-tuffāḥata)

Similar to English, but in Arabic, this is a marked choice for topicalizing the participant.

Copula Realization:

In **English**, relational processes use the verb *to be*.

(14) The house is big.

In **Arabic**, present-tense nominal sentences omit the copula.

(15) الْبَيْتُ كَبِيرٌ (al-baytu kabīrun)

The relational process is implied through juxtaposition.

2. Interpersonal Metafunction: Enacting Relationships

This metafunction is realized through the **MOOD system**—Subject and Finite elements (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

Mood Block Realization:

English separates Subject and Finite, which determines clause type.

Declarative: You are happy.

Interrogative: Are you happy?

Arabic often fuses Subject and Finite due to its rich verb morphology.

(16) أكلتُ (akaltu) — “I ate”

The suffix “-tu” encodes both Subject and tense (Al-Khatib, 2009).

Interrogatives:

English uses inversion for yes/no questions.

Arabic adds an interrogative particle (e.g., *hal*).

(17) هل أكل الولد التفاحة؟

Translation: Did the boy eat the apple?

3. Textual Metafunction: Organizing the Message

This metafunction concerns **Theme-Rheme** structure. The **Theme** is the point of departure; the **Rheme** adds new information (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

Unmarked Theme Differences:

English: In declarative clauses, the Subject is the typical (unmarked) Theme.

(18) The boy [Theme] ate the apple [Rheme].

Marked: In the garden [Theme], the boy ate the apple [Rheme] (Thompson, 2014).

Arabic: The unmarked Theme depends on sentence type (Farghal and Shunnaq, 1999):

Verbal Sentence (VSO): The verb (Process) is the unmarked Theme.

(19) أكل [Theme] الولد التفاحة [Rheme].

Nominal Sentence (SVO): The Subject is the unmarked Theme.

(20) الولد [Theme] أكل التفاحة [Rheme].

This distinction is critical for thematic analysis. Arabic offers structural flexibility. This affects how meaning is organized. Theme choices are highly functional and context-dependent.

Table 2: Summary of Key Differences

SFL Feature	English Structure	Arabic Structure
Fundamental Clause Type	One primary SVO structure.	Two distinct types: Verbal (VSO) and Nominal (SVO).
Ideational: Process	Usually follows the Subject.	Can be the first element (VSO) or follow the Subject (SVO).
Ideational: Copula ‘be’	Obligatory in relational clauses (<i>The house is big</i>).	Often a “zero copula” in present tense (<i>The house big</i>).
Interpersonal: Subject	Obligatory element in a finite clause.	Pro-drop: Subject pronoun often omitted and fused into verb.
Interpersonal: Mood	Mood block (Subject + Finite) is central; questions by inversion.	Mood block concept is weak; questions by adding a particle (e.g., <i>hal</i>).
Textual: Unmarked Theme	The Subject is the Unmarked Theme.	VSO: The Verb/Process is the Unmarked Theme SVO: The Subject/Participant is the Unmarked Theme.

Using SFL reveals that the differences between English and Arabic are not just about word order (SVO vs. VSO). The differences are systemic and have profound implications for how meaning is constructed across all three metafunctions. In Arabic as in English is vital and indicates strategic and purposeful tactics. The fundamental choice in Arabic between a verbal sentence (foregrounding the event) and a nominal sentence (foregrounding the participant) is a powerful grammatical resource. This help shape the ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning of every clause in a way that has no direct equivalent in English (Al-Khatib, 2009).

2.6 Study Objectives and Questions

This study aims to analyze the function of marked Themes in selected Quranic verses and their impact on meaning. Specifically, the objectives are:

1. To identify and analyze the use of marked Topical Themes in selected Quranic verses in their original Arabic.
2. To explore how marked Topical Themes alter the communicative effect and emphasis of a message when contrasted with their unmarked equivalents.
3. To bridge the descriptive power of SFL with an understanding of the Quran's textual coherence and consistency, providing a systemic linguistic explanation for classical rhetorical insights into *taqdīm* (fronting).

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are marked Topical Themes realized grammatically in selected Quranic verses in their original Arabic?
2. How do marked Topical Themes in the Quran alter the meaning, emphasis, or communicative effect when compared to their unmarked counterparts?
3. How does an SFL-based Theme-Rheme analysis contribute to understanding the deeper textual and contextual functions of thematic choices in Quranic discourse, particularly in relation to classical Arabic rhetoric?

2.7 Significance and Scope of the Study

This study contributes significantly to both linguistics and Quranic studies by demonstrating how specific grammatical choices, such as marked Topical Themes, serve profound communicative and rhetorical functions. It introduces a practical method for supporting Quranic interpretations based not only on intuition or tradition, but on clear and applicable linguistic patterns grounded in modern theory. By focusing on the original Arabic text and employing a contrastive analysis with unmarked counterparts, the research aims to empirically validate the rhetorical effects of marked thematization. The study explores selected verses from the Quran, focusing on marked Topical Themes related to the textual metafunction, while also acknowledging interactions with ideational and interpersonal meanings where relevant to the analysis. The core sample of four key verses is drawn from three distinct surahs (Al-Fatiha, Al-Baqarah, and Al-Jathiyah) to demonstrate that the use of marked Themes is a consistent and deliberate rhetorical device throughout the Quran.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach. It investigates the use of marked Themes in selected Quranic verses. The methodology is grounded in SFL, focusing on Halliday (1976) theory of Theme-Rheme structure. This theory belongs to the textual metafunction and explains how information is organized within the clause.

The interpretive paradigm allows for exploring how meaning is shaped in the Quran. The Quran has a text with rich religious and cultural dimensions. The study also draws on classical Quranic exegesis, especially the concept of intertextual coherence to support interpretations.

This study's analysis is based on a primary sample of four key verses. To provide a comparative framework, several other unmarked verses with analogous meanings were also selected for contrastive analysis, serving as a baseline. The data was selected using purposive sampling, and the verses were chosen according to the following criteria:

- Evident Thematic Marking: The verses had to contain clear examples of marked themes, such as fronted syntactic elements (e.g., objects or prepositional phrases/circumstance) and atypical word orders.
- Stylistic Breadth: The four core verses were drawn from three distinct surahs (Al-Fatiha, Al-Baqarah, and Al-Jathiyah). This stylistic diversity was intended to demonstrate that the use of marked themes is a consistent and deliberate rhetorical device throughout the Quran.
- Effective Demonstration: The chosen verses were required to effectively showcase the consistent application of this specific rhetorical strategy.

Finally, interpretive validation is applied. The study evaluates how thematic choices contribute to emphasis, focus, or contrast. Interpretations are cross-checked using other verses and traditional tafsir to clarify meaning.

3.2 Data Selection

The data for this study has been selected through purposive sampling. The primary data consists of Quranic verses that contain clear instances of marked Themes. Crucially, the core sample of four key verses was selected not only for their linguistic features but also because they are archetypal examples of taqdīm (fronting) frequently discussed in classical works of tafsir (exegesis) and balāghah (rhetoric). Their prominence in traditional scholarship makes them ideal for demonstrating the consistent application of this rhetorical device and for bridging classical insights with modern SFL analysis.

The specific verses analyzed are:

- Surah Al-Fatiha (1:5): **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ**
- Surah Al-Baqarah (2:3 and 2:4): **وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ** and **وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ**
- Surah Al-Jathiyah (45:36): **فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ...**

In addition to this primary sample, unmarked themes in verses with comparable meanings are also chosen for the contrastive analysis. These unmarked clauses serve as an essential baseline. This also allows for a more rigorous assessment of the semantic and pragmatic effects of markedness and strengthening the study's interpretive claims.

3.3 Method of Analysis

The analysis proceeds through the following steps:

1. Typical word order is defined based on the distinction between unmarked VSO verbal sentences and unmarked SVO nominal sentences in Arabic
2. Analyze the function of these Themes using SFL, focusing on meaning organization and emphasis.
3. Compare marked and unmarked versions to assess the communicative effect of markedness.
4. Consider broader context, including neighboring verses and Quranic structure. Classical tafsir and linguistic studies inform this stage.
5. Findings will be interpreted by synthesizing insights from Arabic grammar, SFL theory, and Quranic semantics, informed by classical exegesis (tafsir) where relevant.

4. Data Analysis: Results and Discussion

Text 1

The first verse is selected is [إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ] in the first Surah in the Quran.

Verse: **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** (Surah Al-Fatiha, 1:5)

Transliteration: Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'in.

Translation: *You* alone we worship, and (*You* alone we ask for help).

In Arabic, the unmarked word order for a verbal sentence (جملة فعلية) is Verb-Subject-Object (VSO).

For the first clause, “we worship You,” the unmarked form would be: **نَعْبُدُكَ** (Na'budu-ka). The details will be:

- Verb-process: **نَعْبُدُ** (na'budu - we worship)
- Subject-actor: The implied pronoun نحن (naḥnu - we) contained within the verb.
- Object-goal: The attached pronoun **كَ** (-ka - You).

For the second clause, “we ask for Your help,” the unmarked form would be:

نَسْتَعِينُ بِكَ (Nasta'inu bi-ka)

- Verb-process: **نَسْتَعِينُ** (nasta'inu - we ask for help)
- Subject-actor: The implied pronoun نحن (naḥnu - we).

- Object-goal: The pronoun كَ (-ka - You), preceded by the required preposition بِ (bi-).

The unmarked sentence is a simple declaration of an action. In the actual verse, **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ**, the word order is Object-Verb-Subject (OVS) which is considered a marked theme.

- Theme: **إِيَّاكَ** (Iyyāka - You)
- Rheme: **نَعْبُدُ** (na'budu - we worship)

According to SFL, the Theme is the element placed at the beginning of the clause. It serves as topical theme and the point of departure for the message. Here, the Theme is the object pronoun **إِيَّاكَ**. The function of this thematic choice is goal. By placing “You” (Allah) in the first position, the message is not primarily about the act of “worshipping” or the identity of the “worshippers.” Instead, the message revolved exclusively and entirely around the one who is worshiped. The departure point and the entire idea of the statement is Allah Himself. This fronting of the object functions to give it topical prominence and marked emphasis. The same structure is repeated in the second clause (**وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ**), reinforcing this focus. Additionally, the textual Theme is **وَ** (wa - and). Its function is to connect this clause to the preceding one. It creates a seamless link. It signals that what follows is parallel and equal in importance to what came before.

Another important point the study goes around is comparing marked and unmarked versions to assess the communicative effect of markedness. Thus, comparing the marked (actual) verse with its unmarked (hypothetical) version reveals a significant shift in communicative effect. The Unmarked is **نَعْبُدُكَ** (Na'budu-ka) - “We worship You.” This is a simple, informative statement. It states that the act of worship is directed towards Allah, but The Unmarked is **نَعْبُدُكَ** does not grammatically exclude the possibility of worshipping others. Thus affirmation method used is Marked: **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** (Iyyāka na'budu) “**You** alone we worship.” This structure, known in Arabic rhetoric (بلاغة) as **الحصر والقصر** (al-ḥaṣr wa-l-qasr), signifies exclusivity and specification. By fronting the object, the sentence implies “We worship You, and we worship no one but You.” The act of worship is *restricted exclusively* to Allah. The communicative effect is therefore not just an affirmation but a pledge and a bond. It is a declaration of pure monotheism (Tawhid), simultaneously affirming worship for Allah and negating it for all other beings. The marked structure transforms a simple report into the foundational belief of Islam.

Contextually, this verse serves as the central pivot of Surah Al-Fatiha. The preceding verses (1-4) are praise and acknowledgement of Allah in the third person (“Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds. Master of the Day of Judgment”). This verse is a dramatic turn (known as *iltifat* or *grammatical shift*) to direct address in the second person (“You”). After establishing who Allah is, the worshipper now turns to Him directly to state the core of their relationship. The verses that follow are supplication (“Guide us...”). This pledge of exclusive worship and reliance is the prerequisite for asking for guidance. One can only ask for guidance after establishing to whom one’s absolute loyalty belongs.

Classical exegetes and linguists highlight the significance of this word order. Al-Zamakhshari in his *Al-Kashshaf*, a work renowned for its linguistic analysis, states that fronting the object (*taqdīm al-maf'ūl*) is for the purpose of specification (*ikhtisāṣ*) to express that worship is specified for Allah alone. Ibn Kathir explains that “Iyyāka na'budu” means “We do not worship anyone besides You,” and “wa iyyāka nasta'in” means “we do not seek help from anyone besides You.” He directly links the grammatical structure to the theological principle of Tawhid. This grammatical choice is considered one of the most powerful examples of the Quran’s rhetorical inimitability (*i'jāz*), where a subtle change in word order encapsulates a vast and fundamental theological concept.

Nevertheless, the Quran uses both marked and unmarked structures, each with a distinct rhetorical function. Here are examples of verses where worship is mentioned in the typical, unmarked (VSO) word order as exemplified below:

The General Command to Worship is found in this verse as Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:21)
 Transliteration: *Yā ayyuha-n-nāsu- 'budū Rabbakumu-lladhī khalaqakum wa-lladhīna min qablikum la'allakum tattaqūn.*

Translation: *O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous.*

اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ (Worship your Lord) is a typical (Unmarked) Word Order: The clause اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ ('budū Rabbakum) follows and observes the standard Arabic VSO structure:

- Verb: اعْبُدُوا ('budū - Worship!)
- Subject: The implied pronoun أَنْتُمْ (antum - you plural) contained within the verb.
- Object: رَبَّكُمُ (Rabbakum - your Lord). This is the unmarked verbal sentence, a direct command.

The Theme of the clause is the verb itself اعْبُدُوا ('budū). In a standard VSO clause, the verb often functions as an unmarked Theme. The point of departure for the message is the action or the **process** being commanded. The primary message is "Here is the command: Worship." The subsequent elements, the subject and object, provide the details of who should perform the action and upon whom.

Comparison and Communicative Effect is here manifested. Marked theme (إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ) focused on the one who is worshiped. This indicates exclusivity. It is a declaration of faith from the worshipper to Allah. According to unmarked (اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ), the focus is on the act of worship itself. The communicative effect is legislative and instructional. It is Allah issuing a command to humanity. It establishes the fundamental duty of worship. Exclusivity is not inherent in the VSO structure itself but is understood from the broader context and other verses. The primary function is to establish the law or instruction.

Contextually, this is the first command issued in the Quran after the opening chapter. It is addressed to all of "mankind" (النَّاسُ). The verse immediately provides the rationale for this command. This is because He is the Creator. The context is foundational. This establishes the primary relationship between the Creator and the creation. the creation's obligation is to worship the Creator.

In this verse Allah ordered His Prophet to say that indeed, he has been demanded to worship Allah. (فُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ (Surah Az-Zumar, 39:11)

Transliteration: *Qul innī umirtu an a'buda-llāha mukhliṣan lahu-d-dīn.*

Translation: *Say, "Indeed, I have been commanded to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion."*

The structure of أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ (to worship Allah) is typical (Unmarked) Word Order: The subordinate clause أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ (an a'buda-llāha) also follows the standard VSO structure:

- Verb-process: أَعْبُدَ (a'buda - I worship)
- Subject-actor: The implied pronoun أَنَا (ana - I) within the verb.
- Object-goal: اللَّهَ (Allāha - Allah). This is an unmarked verbal clause functioning as the object of the verb "I have been commanded."

In SFL, the Theme of this clause is the verb أَعْبُدَ (a'buda). The focus is on the *process* of worship that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) has been commanded to worship. The message is structured around the action He must perform.

Marked theme (إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ) is attained. It is a personal, direct, and exclusive pledge to Allah. But the Unmarked theme is in (أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ). It is a declarative statement communicating a divine command. The Prophet is reporting the nature of his mission. The effect is informative and sets a precedent for His followers. The subsequent phrase مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ (being sincere to Him in religion) explicitly adds the dimension of exclusivity, which the VSO structure by itself does not automatically imply.

Contextually, this verse is part of a passage where the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is instructed to declare his steady monotheistic stance in the face of the polytheism of the Quraysh. He clarifies that his mission is based on a divine command to worship Allah alone.

Table 3: Summary of Text 1

Feature	Marked: إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ (OVS)	Unmarked: اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ (VSO)
Primary Focus	The Recipient of the action (Allah).	The Action/Process itself (Worship).
Communicative Effect	Creedal Covenant and Exclusivity. It establishes a personal, binding pledge that inherently negates all other objects of worship (al-ḥaṣr wa-l-qaṣr).	Legislative Command and Declaration. It establishes the duty or reports the fact of worship.
Source of Exclusivity	Inherent in the grammatical structure.	Stated separately in a following clause (e.g., "...and associate no partners with Him") or implied by context.
Typical Context	A direct, intimate address from the worshipper to Allah, defining the relationship (Surah Al-Fatiha).	A divine command from Allah to humanity, or a prophet declaring his mission.

The Quran employs both structures. The unmarked *VSO* form is used for legislation, commands, and descriptions of the act of worship. The marked *OVS* form in *Iyyāka na'budu* is reserved for a moment of *supreme theological importance*. This transforms a simple action into an all-inclusive declaration of *pure monotheism* that defines the *very essence* of the faith.

Text 2

This verse (وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ) is another example reflecting marked theme. It is also important to explicate that the verse carry Textual Theme: وَ (wa - and). This textual theme connects this clause to the preceding list of qualities of the muttaqīn (believing in the unseen, establishing prayer). It signals that this is the next element in a cumulative description. The way the sentence is structured is the key. In Arabic, the phrase "from what We have provided them" is placed right at the beginning. This deliberate choice shifts the focus entirely. It is not about the action of spending. But it is about the *source* of the wealth being spent. It constantly reminds the believer that the wealth was a gift from Allah in the first place. This makes the act of giving a natural circulation of divine blessings. It is not a loss of personal property. This indicates that whatever one spends for the sake of Allah will be rewarded with abundant and increasing blessings.

Verse: وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:3)

Transliteration: Wa mimmā razaqnāhum yunfiqūn.

Translation: And from what We have provided them, they spend.

In Arabic, the unmarked word order for a verbal sentence (جملة فعلية) is Verb-Subject-Object or Verb-Subject-Circumstance. For this clause, the unmarked construction would be:

Yunfiqūn mimmā razaqnāhum (Yunfiqūn mimmā razaqnāhum)

- **Verb-process:** يُنْفِقُونَ (yunfiqūn - they spend)
- **Subject-actor:** The implied pronoun وَ (they) within the verb.
- **The prepositional phrase-Circumstance:** The prepositional phrase مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ (mimmā razaqnāhum - from what We have provided them).

This standard VSCirc structure would simply be a factual statement: "They spend from what We have provided them."

In the actual verse, the structure is prepositional phrase-Circumstance -Verb-Subject (CircVS).

- **Theme:** وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ (Wa mimmā razaqnāhum - And from what We have provided them)
- **Rheme:** يُنْفِقُونَ (yunfiqūn - they spend)

By fronting the entire prepositional phrase, the verse makes the source and nature of the provision its point of departure. The message is framed by the reality that the wealth being spent is a provision (rizq) from Allah. This thematic choice serves to focus the listener's attention on the divine origin of the wealth before mentioning the action of spending.

The communicative effect of the marked (CircVS) structure is vastly different from the unmarked (VSCirc) one. This Unmarked (VSCirc) structure "يُنْفِقُونَ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ" ("They spend from what We have provided them) is an informative statement that focuses on the action of spending. The Marked theme is وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ("And from that which We have provided them, they spend."). This is that structure achieves multiple rhetorical goals simultaneously. Firstly, it emphasizes the divine source of all wealth. Second, the preposition مِنْ (from) is often seen as partitive—it means they give only a part of what Allah gave, not all. This highlights moderation. Al-Zamakhsharī (n.d., vol. 1) supported this, saying that putting the phrase first adds emphasis to this meaning. Third, it motivates people. It shows charity as managing what Allah gave, not losing it.

This verse is the third quality and feature of the muttaqin at the very start of Surah Al-Baqarah. Then it follows belief in the unseen and establishing prayer. This sequence—Faith, Worship, and Social/Economic Responsibility is foundational. The marked structure of this third quality gives it a profound conceptual weight.

The exegetes highlighted this structure. Al-Zamakhsharī (n.d.) calls the fronting a way of "giving precedence to what is most important" (taqaddum al-'ināyah). Ibn Kathīr (1999, vol. 1) connects it to gratitude. He explains that spending from what Allah has given is a practical expression of thanks that ensures blessings continue.

To fully appreciate the deliberate choice in 2:3, it can be compared to other verses that use the unmarked VSCirc structure for the command to spend. The Direct Command is also in (Al-Baqarah, 2:254):

أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ *Anfiqū mimmā razaqnākum* (Spend from what We have provided you)

This is a standard VSCirc command. Its purpose is legislative. The focus is on the *act* of spending. The second place brings unmarked is from (Al-Munafiqun, 63:10).

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ *Wa anfiqū min mā razaqnākum* (And spend from what We have provided you).

The above is another VSCirc command. Its objective is a warning. The focus is on the *necessity* of the act before it is too late.

Table 4: Summary of Text 2

Feature	Marked Verse (OVS): وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ	Unmarked Verses (VSO): أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
Grammatical Structure	Circumstance - Verb-S	Verb - Subject - Circumstance
Thematic Focus	The source of the provision (مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ).	The act of spending (أَنْفِقُوا).
Communicative Effect	Establishes a creed/philosophy about wealth: it is a divine trust, and spending from it fosters gratitude and stewardship.	Issues a legislative command or urgent warning. It focuses on the necessity of performing the action.
Rhetorical Goal	To describe the deep identity of the muttaqin and their fundamental relationship with wealth as part of their faith.	To direct the behavior of the believers by issuing a law or a motivational command.

Text 3

The third extract is the verse وَالْآخِرَةَ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:4)

Transliteration: Wa bi-l-ākhirati hum yūqinūn.

Translation: And in the Hereafter, they are certain.

The components of this verb/clause are the verb (yūqinūn), the pronoun subject (و w) within the verb (yūqinūn), and the prepositional phrase (bi-l-ākhirati). There are two primary “unmarked” forms this statement could take in standard Arabic:

- Unmarked Verbal Sentence (VSCirc): The common structure would be: *وَيُوقِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ* (Wa yūqinūna bi-l-ākhirati)

This translates to “And they are certain of the Hereafter.” The hum is muftada acts as the subject/actor. It is a simple, factual statement.

- Unmarked Nominal Sentence (SVCirc): This structure keeps the explicit subject pronoun: *وَهُمْ يُوقِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ* (Wa hum yūqinūna bi-l-ākhirati)

This translates to “And *they* are certain of the Hereafter.” This form gives a slight emphasis to the muftada (hum). It distinguishes them from others, but the primary focus remains a standard declaration.

The actual verse, being prepositional phrase acts as prepositional phrase-Circumstance-Subject-Verb (CircSV), is markedly different from both of these standard forms.

In SFL Thematic Analysis the structure of the actual verse is *وَيُوقِنُونَ + بِالْآخِرَةِ + وَ*.

The Textual Theme informative in the verse is *وَ* (wa - and). This theme’s role is continuation. It connects this characteristic to the preceding list of qualities of the muttaqīn (belief in the unseen, prayer, spending). It signals that this is the final, summative point in that description. This verse may imply as the concluding clause for the term muttaqīn. This signals that the certainty of the hereafter has made these people reach the degree of muttaqīn.

The Topical Theme is *بِالْآخِرَةِ* (bi-l-ākhirati - in/of the Hereafter). This is a prepositional phrase functioning as a circumstance. It is a marked Topical Theme because it has been fronted from its normal position after the verb to the very beginning of the clause (after the textual theme). By fronting *بِالْآخِرَةِ*, the verse makes the Hereafter itself the point of departure for the message. The entire statement is framed around this concept. The focus is immediately placed on the Circ place of their certainty. This gives it ultimate importance. The message is not “about them” or “about their certainty,” but is a statement made *about the Hereafter* and their unique relationship to it.

Comparing the actual (CircSV) verse with its unmarked counterparts exposes the insightful communicative effect of the Quranic structure.

The Unmarked (VSCirc/SVO) is *وَهُمْ يُوقِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ* or *وَيُوقِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ*. These are simple declarations. They state that certainty in the Hereafter is one of the believers’ qualities. The focus is on the action (yūqinūn) or the actors (hum).

The Marked them is *وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ*. This structure creates a *powerful dual emphasis*. The emphasis on the Hereafter by fronting of *بِالْآخِرَةِ* gives it prominence. This confirms a degree of restriction (ḥaṣr). It indicates that while others may deny, the believers’ certainty regarding the Hereafter is absolute and defining. It is *this specific belief* that is being highlighted as a cornerstone of their identity.

Nonetheless, the inclusion of the explicit pronoun *هُمْ* after the fronted Circumstance affirms the statement. The structure suggests: “And as for the Hereafter, it is *they* (and no one else in the same way) who possess true, unshakeable certainty.” This distinguishes their yaqīn (certainty) from mere īmān (belief) and sets them apart from all other groups.

The marked structure turns a simple statement into a strong declaration. It highlights what the believers are certain about the Hereafter. It also draws attention to both the Circumstance of their certainty (the Hereafter) and the subjects who possess it.

According to the co-text, this is the final trait that defines the muttaqīn in the opening of Surah Al-Baqarah. It serves as a capstone to the whole description. It comes after belief in the unseen, prayer, and giving charity. This final position is intentional. Belief in the Hereafter gives meaning and motivation to all the earlier actions. People pray and give from their wealth because they believe in accountability and reward in the next life. The marked structure in this verse highlights this final and vital pillar of faith.

Classical exegetes like Al-Zamakhshari and Al-Rāzī highlight the fronting of *بِالْآخِرَةِ* as being for the purpose of specification (*ikhtiṣāṣ*) and giving importance (*ihitimām*). They argue it serves to contrast the believers' unshakeable certainty with the denial of the disbelievers or the doubts of the people of the Book regarding the specific nature of the Islamic Hereafter.

They also point out the use of the word *يُوقِنُونَ* (from *yaqīn*), which means a level of belief that goes beyond doubt. It expresses direct and unwavering conviction. Placing this strong word at the end of the clause gives the sentence a sense of finality and power. The grammar and structure work hand in hand with the meaning. They show that the faith of the *muttaqīn* reaches its peak in absolute certainty about the final judgment.

They also note the choice of the word *يُوقِنُونَ* (from *yaqīn*) demonstrates full knowledge beyond doubt. The placement of this powerful word at the end of the clause gives it finality and strength. The grammatical structure therefore perfectly serves the theological point: the faith of the *muttaqīn* culminates in absolute certainty about the final reckoning.

Table 5: Summary of Text 3

Feature	Marked Verse (CircSV): <i>وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ</i>	Unmarked Verses (VSCirc/SVCirc): <i>وَيُوقِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ</i> or <i>وَهُمْ يُوقِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ</i>
Grammatical Structure	Circ- Subject - Verb	Verb - Subject – Circ or Subject - Verb - Circ
Thematic Focus	The Hereafter (<i>بِالْآخِرَةِ</i>). The concept itself is the point of departure.	The action of being certain (<i>يُوقِنُونَ</i>) or the actors (<i>هُمْ</i>).
Communicative Effect	Dual Emphasis and Restriction. It highlights the supreme importance of the Hereafter AND specifies the believers (<i>هُمْ</i>) as the unique possessors of true certainty (<i>yaqīn</i>).	Factual Declaration. It states a fact about the believers—that they are certain of the Hereafter—without the same level of emphasis or exclusivity.
Rhetorical Goal	To define the believers' identity (<i>muttaqīn</i>) through their unique and absolute certainty in the Hereafter, contrasting them with all others.	To inform the listener that belief in the Hereafter is one of the qualities of the righteous.

Text 4

The Verse *فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ* (Surah Al-Jathiyah, 45:36) is the fourth extract. *Transliteration: Fa-lillāhi l-ḥamdu Rabbi s-samāwāti wa Rabbi l-arḍi Rabbi l-'ālamīn. Translation: So to Allah belongs all praise—Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of all worlds.*

Typical (Unmarked) Word Order in a nominal sentence (*جملة اسمية*) and standard is Subject-Predicate (*مبتدأ-خبر*).

- Subject (Mubtada'): *الْحَمْدُ* (al-ḥamdu - The Praise)
- Prepositional phrase in place of Predicate (Khabar): *لِلَّهِ* (lillāhi - to Allah)

Therefore, the unmarked structure would be: *فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ* (Fa-l-ḥamdu lillāhi), *This translates to "So, the praise is for Allah." This form is extremely common in the Quran (e.g., the opening of Al-Fatiha) and serves as a general, foundational statement.*

The actual verse *reverses* this order. It places the predicate before the subject. As a result, this creates a marked structure that demands attention and place observation.

In SFL Thematic Analysis here is a textual theme. The structure of the main clause is **ف (Fa) + لله (lillāhi) + الْحَمْدُ (al-ḥamdu)**.

Textual Theme is found in **ف (fa - So/Thus)**. This is a crucial textual theme that signals consequence or conclusion. The preceding verses of Surah Al-Jathiyah detail Allah's signs, His power in creation, the arrogance of the deniers, and their ultimate fate. The **ف** connects this verse to all that has come before, effectively saying: "Based on all the evidence of Our sovereignty and their failure, *therefore...*"

In this clause, **الله (to Allah)** is a prepositional phrase acting as the Topical Theme. It comes first, even though it's the predicate. It shows marked Theme structure. The subject (**الْحَمْدُ** – "the praise") follows. The textual Theme **ف** introduces the clause as a strong, final statement. Putting **الله** first shifts focus directly to Allah as the recipient of praise. The message is not just about praise. But it is about who deserves it. It declares that all praise belongs to Allah alone, as the only logical result of His Lordship.

This verse is like the grand finale of Surah Al-Jathiyah. Throughout the surah, on one hand, Allah's power as the Creator has been clearly shown. On the other hand, the arrogance of those who reject Him has been strongly criticized. Now, with the word "**ف fa**" (meaning "so" or "therefore"), the verse gives the conclusion: all praise belongs only to Him. The next verse (45:37) continues the same message. It states that all greatness and majesty belong to Him in the heavens and the earth. So, praising Allah (al-ḥamd) is the natural and proper response to His greatness (al-kibriyā).

Classical exegetes state that the fronting of **الله** is for the purpose of specification and restriction (al-ikhtisāṣ wa-l-ḥaṣr). Al-Zamakhshari would argue that this structure implies that no one else is worthy of true, absolute praise.

The subsequent phrases (**رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ...**) function as an appositive (badal) or description (na't) for "Allah." This magnificent repetition of **رَبِّ (Lord)** three times provides the reason for the exclusive praise. It builds in scope: from the heavens and the earth (the immediate creation) to **الْعَالَمِينَ** (all worlds/all beings), including everything imaginable. This expansive description of His Lordship serves as the ultimate justification for why praise belongs to Him and Him alone.

Table 6: Summary of Text 4

Feature	Marked Verse (Predicate-Subject): فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ	Unmarked Version (Subject-Predicate): فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
Grammatical Structure	Predicate - Subject	Subject - Predicate
Thematic Focus	Allah (الله), the sole and deserving recipient of praise.	Praise (الْحَمْدُ), the concept or act itself.
Communicative Effect	Exclusivity and Conclusion (ḥaṣr). It declares that all praise belongs to Allah alone, and this is the inevitable result of His power. It answers the implicit question, "To whom is all praise due?"	Affirmation. It makes a general statement that praise is for Allah. It is a foundational truth but lacks the immediate restrictive force of the marked structure.
Rhetorical Goal	To make a final, powerful, and exclusive declaration of Allah's right to praise, summarizing the entire argument of the surah.	To state a general truth or initiate a statement of praise.

There are so many other examples in Quranic verses containing marked themes. They demonstrate exclusivity and extraordinary importance. Aforementioned analyzed marked themes in Quranic texts can be generalized to all other upcoming examples. In brief, they are discussed.

The following verses provide further evidence of marked themes across the Quran. This supports the patterns identified in the primary analysis. The following examples are fronting the Object (OVS) for Emphasis and Specification:

- وَرَبِّكَ فَكْبِرْ (And your Lord, magnify) - Surah Al-Muddaththir, 74:3
- وَثِيَابِكَ فَطَهِّرْ (And your garments, purify) - Surah Al-Muddaththir, 74:4
- وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ (And impurity, avoid) - Surah Al-Muddaththir, 74:5
- فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ (So as for the orphan, do not oppress) - Surah Ad-Duha, 93:9
- وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ (And as for the petitioner, do not repel) - Surah Ad-Duha, 93:10
- وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ (And as for the favor of your Lord, proclaim) - Surah Ad-Duha, 93:11

This sequence uses marked Themes to produce a strong focus on the object-goal of each command and prohibition. The marked thematic elements are prioritized.

Moreover, these are the verses fronting a Prepositional Phrase (Circ-V) for Exclusivity

- وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ (And to your Lord, direct [your] longing) - Surah Ash-Sharh, 94:8
- وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ (And upon Allah let those who trust, trust) - Surah Ibrahim, 14:12
- أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصْدِيرُ الْأُمُورِ (Unquestionably, to Allah do all matters return) - Surah Ash-Shura, 42:53
- إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا (To Him is your return all together) - Surah Yunus, 10:4
- إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ (Indeed, to Us is their return; Then indeed, upon Us is their reckoning) - Surah Al-Ghashiyah, 88:25-26

This diverse collection of examples supports the study's central argument. These are covering numerous surahs verses. They are from direct commands and social laws to theological declarations. These verses demonstrate that the use of a marked Theme is a purposeful choice according to SFL. They serve to create exclusivity (*ḥaṣr*), establish special concern (*ihtimām*), or frame the message's context. The prevalence of this technique confirms that marked themes are an integral and systematic feature of the Quran's linguistic design. Additionally, they employed with accuracy to accomplish explicit communicative and theological goals.

This study confirms that SFL is an effective tool for Quranic analysis. It offers a modern framework for understanding *taqdīm* (fronting). This complements classical *balāghah* through the Theme-Rheme model. The integration of traditional and modern approaches is a key strength. The frequent use of marked structures reflects the Quran's deep connection between form and meaning, aligning with *taṣrīf* to promote *tadabbur* (reflection).

5. Conclusions

This study, *Thematization in Quranic Texts*, examined the communicative role of marked Themes in the Quran's Theme-Rheme structure. The analysis used the SFL framework. The findings show that marked Themes are deliberate rhetorical tools, not random stylistic features. They shift the flow of information and guide interpretation in ways that unmarked Themes cannot.

This study has addressed a gap in Quranic linguistic research by examining marked thematization in the original Arabic text and comparing it with unmarked structures to highlight their differences in meaning and rhetorical effect. Although earlier works, such as Alamiri (2020) and Qasim and Shaber (2021), have enriched our understanding of cohesion and metafunctions, they either focused on broader patterns or relied on translations that cannot fully capture the force of Arabic word order. Other recent studies have pursued different aspects of Quranic discourse without directly analyzing marked thematic structures. By applying SFL's Theme-Rheme analysis to both marked and unmarked choices, this study has demonstrated how the Quran employs grammatical variation not only to organize information but also to produce specific theological and rhetorical effects, thereby bridging modern linguistic theory with classical Quranic interpretation.

The study contrasted marked and unmarked Themes. In Arabic, unmarked Themes follow verbal (VSO) or nominal (SVO) patterns. In the selected verses, elements usually in the Rheme, such as

objects or circumstantial phrases, were moved to the Theme position. This gives them prominence. For example, (إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ) and (فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ) show fronting of objects or predicates, creating marked Themes that shape interpretation. In (وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ) and (وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ), marked circumstantial elements frame meaning, adding philosophical depth.

Textual Themes such as (و) and (ف) link these structures into coherent discourse. Marked Themes express both ideational and interpersonal meanings. This aligns with classical taqdīm (fronting) but provides a systematic linguistic explanation. Additional examples from other surahs support and validate the findings.

These patterns reflect the Quran's communicative strategy, known as tasrif, the deliberate diversification of its message. As stated in 17:41 (وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا) "And We [Allah] have certainly diversified [the message] in this Quran that they may be reminded." Grammatical variations are therefore not structural alone. They form part of a divine pedagogical method designed to engage readers and highlight the message's philosophical significance.

Finally, understanding the Quran requires attention to clause structure. The marked Theme and its Rheme work together to shape meaning. This study confirms that form and meaning in the Quran are inseparable.

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بابه تیبیون له دهقه قورئانییه کاندایا

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پوخته

ئهم توێژینهوهیه له بابته تیبیونی دهقه قورئانییه کاندایا دهکولێتهوه به پشتبستن به زمانهوانی ئهرکی سیسته می (SFL). توێژینهوهکه تیشکی خستوهته سهه بهکارهینانی بابته نیشانکراوهکان، وهک پیشخستن و دواخستن. لهم توێژینهوهیهدا باسی ئهوه دهکریته که ئهم پیکهاتانه ههلبژاردی ستالیلی هههرمهکی نین، بهلکو ستراتژیی رهوانیژیی مه بهستدارن که له نیو گوتهار و دهقه قورئانه یکاندا دارێژراون. توێژینهوهکه به بهکارهینانی رینازی شیکاریی بهراوردکاری له نیوان ئهوه ئایهتانهی بابته نیشانکراوهکانیان تیدایه لهگهله هاوتای نیشانه کراوهکانیادا بهراورده کرین. ئهم ریبازه تیروانییکی قولتر نیشانه دات دهبارهی ئهوهی که چۆن ههلبژاردنه بابته تیهکان سه رهکیهکان ده رهخهن. ئهمهش یه کپارچهیی دهق بههیز دهکات و تیگه یشتنکی قولتر ده بهخشیت. بۆ نمونه، پیکهاته نیشانکراوهکانی وهک (إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ) واتای تابه تکردن نیشان دهکات، له کاتیکدا ئایهتهکانی وهک (وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ) بابته تی فهلسه فیی فراوانتر وهک به ریه بردن دهخه نه روو. ئهم شیکارییه پشت به ههردوو تیوریی زمانهوانی هاوچه رخ (پیکهاتهکانی بابته تیبیون له زمانهوانی ئهرکی سیسته میدا و رهوانیژیی عه ره بیی کلاسیک) ده به ستیت، به مهش پردیک له نیوان چوارچهوه زمانهوانییه هاوچه رخهکان و ئامرا دهکانی ته فسیری کلاسیکدا دروست دهکات. ئه نجامهکان ده ره دهخه که پیکهاته می بابته تیبیون له قورئاندا ئامرا زیکی په یوه ندی کردنی بههیزه که بۆ راکیشانی سه رنج دروست کردنی به رامبه ری (تقابل) و بنیانتانی واتای نۆی به کاردیت. شایه نی باسه، ئهم توێژینهوهیه به شداری دهکات له ههردوو بواری زمانهوانی و توێژینهوه قورئانییه کاندایا، ئه ویش له ریه گی پیشکه شکردنی شیکارییه کی سیستما تیکه وه که له سه ره بنه مای زمانهوانی ئهرکی سیسته مییه بۆ دیاردهی پیشخستن. ههروهها پرونی دهکاته وه که ریزمان و بیروباوه ر له قورئاندا لیک دانابین، و بابته نیشانکراوهکان وهک میکانیزمیکی سه ره کی بۆ گه یاندنی جه وه ره ی په یامه خوداییه که به کارهاتون.

وشه سه ره کیهکان: بابته تیبیون، زمانهوانی ئهرکی سیسته می، بابته نیشانکراوهکان، دهقه قورئانییهکان، پیشخستن، دواخستن.

تموضیة فی النصوص القرآنیة

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المخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة ظاهرة التقديم الموضوعي المبرز (Marked Thematization) في آيات قرآنية مختارة باستخدام اللسانيات الوظيفية النظامية (SFL). تتعامل اللسانيات الوظيفية النظامية مع اللغة كمورد لصناعة المعنى في السياق، وتبحث في كيفية تشكيل الخيارات النحوية للتجربة والتفاعل وتنظيم النص. لقد سلطت الأبحاث السابقة الضوء على التماسك، والإحالة، والبنى الموضوعاتية العامة في القرآن (العامري، 2020؛ قاسم وشبر، 2021). ومع ذلك، لا تزال الموضوعات المبرزة في النص العربي الأصلي غير مدروسة بشكل كاف. وهذا مهم لأن تقديم المشاركين أو الظروف يخلق تأكيداً ويوجه التفسير. تدرس الدراسة آيات من سور الفاتحة والبقرة والجاثية، وتقارن بين الجمل ذات التقديم المبرز وغير المبرز. وتستخدم منهجاً تفسيرياً نوعياً يركز على إطار "الموضوع-المسند" (Theme-Rheme) الخاص باللسانيات الوظيفية النظامية. ويستتير التحليل بالسياق، والآيات المجاورة، والتفسير الكلاسيكية. تظهر النتائج أن الموضوعات المبرزة مقصودة وذات دافع وظيفي، حيث تؤثر على التأكيد، والأثر البلاغي، والتماسك النصي. توضح الدراسة كيف يساهم ترتيب الكلمات في القرآن في بناء المعنى وتوجيه تركيز القارئ. ومن خلال الربط بين نظرية اللسانيات الوظيفية النظامية الحديثة والتفسير القرآني التقليدي، تقدم الدراسة منهجاً منظماً لتحليل البنى الموضوعاتية في القرآن. كما تقدم رؤى حول كيفية خدمة الخيارات النحوية للأغراض العقديّة والبلاغية والتواصلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التوضع، اللغويات الوظيفية النظامية، الموضوعات الموسومة، النصوص القرآنية، التقديم، التأخير.