



The Particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic

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Abstract

This paper provides a linguistic characterization of the particle *bal*, roughly translated as 'rather' in English, in Qur'anic Arabic. In the Qur'an corpus, which includes 77880 words, the particle occurs 121 times, and in its various occurrences, the particle does not have the same syntactic categorization nor the same semantic meaning or function. Therefore, the present paper explores the syntactic and semantic features of the particle alongside its uses in its varying positions. It examines the positions, distributions, semantic meaning and functions of the particle in different contexts. The paper also sheds light on the recurrent linguistic aspects that characterize the structures in which the particle occurs. The method employed involves distributional and qualitative descriptive techniques. The study shows that, in terms of positions, the particle either introduces a clause or occurs between two equal elements. In terms of functions, the study highlights that the use of the particle involves transitioning from and, in certain instances, invalidating the proposition expressed by the preceding clause as well as affirmation of and, in certain instances, an intensification of the proposition expressed by the following clause. The study also indicates the polysemy of the particle and that it can be synonymous with e.g. *lakin* 'but', *bi-l-2aHra*: 'rather', *Haqqan* 'indeed', *badalan min* 'instead of' and the emphatic particles *2inna* and *2innama*:. Moreover, based on the investigation of the features of the particle *bal* in its varying contexts, the study proposes a number of categories through which the particle can be analyzed, which include: an adversative coordinator, a conjunctive adverb, and a complementizer. The findings thus highlight the diversity in the syntax and semantics of a single particle that is realized as *bal* in the contexts of Qur'anic Arabic, and the paper makes a contribution to literature in the understudied area of the syntax and semantics of Qur'anic Arabic.

Keywords: transitioning, adversative coordinator, conjunctive adverb, complementizer.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the particle *bal* — roughly 'rather' in English — in Qur'anic Arabic, the language of the holy book to the Muslim nation. It is a form of classical Arabic that has peculiar features which distinguish it from the other form of Arabic, namely modern standard Arabic (Mohamed, 2017). In the varying occurrences of the particle in Qur'anic Arabic, the particle neither has the same meaning and function nor the same position and distribution. It is established in the syntactic and linguistic literature that such variation in the linguistic aspects

of an item in the language correlates with variation in the theoretical status and grammatical categorization of the respective item (see e.g. Owen, (1989), Gelderen, (2010), Radford, (2016), Anderson et al, (2022)). To single out an instance, a word like 'fast' in English is categorized as either an adjective, an adverb or a verb based on its distribution, function and its semantics as in 'she is fast', 'she walks fast' and 'she fasted' respectively. Take the other instance of the word 'that', which can either be a complementizer or a determiner as in 'the girl that arrived' and 'that girl'. As for the particle *bal*, despite the variation in its features, the only and general categorization that is posited in the literature is that of the particle *bal* being a conjunction as in Aadheema, (1984), Al-Mubarid, (1994), and Al-Radhi, (1996). However, what type of conjunction the particle represents is not specified, nor are other syntactic categorizations of the distinct cases of the particle provided. Moreover, it can also be pointed out that although representations of the features of the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic, whether semantic or structural features, are found in the literature — see, for example, Aadheema, (1984), Abdul-Rasheed, (2016), and Nasution and Uril, (2019) — nevertheless such representations follow the traditional approach of grammatical descriptions. The focus in these works is mostly on identifying the function of the particle in a given instance, and hence a modification of the traditional functional classification of the particle is proposed in the present work. Aadheema, (1984) displays the various views in Arabic grammar regarding the particle *bal*, presenting a display of its functions and examples for the respective functional type from Qur'anic Arabic. In Abdul-Rasheed, (2016), the focus of the paper is investigating the particle *bal* as well as other particles carrying the same function in texts of a specific genre of classical Arabic, namely prophetic sayings. Prior to that, Abdul-Rasheed, (2016) provides a brief review of the particle *bal* in Arabic in general and in Qur'anic Arabic in particular, presenting its types according to function. Nasution & Uril's, (2019) work, on the other hand, mainly focuses on Qur'anic Arabic and similarly investigates the function of the particle *bal* in selected occurrences of the particle. It can also be pointed out that despite the variation in the features of the particle in its several occurrences in Qur'anic Arabic, the only categorization that is posited in the literature is that of the particle *bal* being a coordinating conjunction; no syntactic categorization of the other cases of the particle is given. Therefore, the present work aims to bridge this gap by carrying out a linguistic and systematic characterization and account of the particle, investigating the functions and meaning, positions and structural features, and providing a syntactic categorization of the varying cases of the particle based on evidence from its linguistic features. From what the researcher knows, this is the only linguistic research work in the field of knowledge and literature on the topic of the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic. The data in the present work is collected from the Qur'an corpus and methods of distributional and qualitative descriptions are used. Resources on syntactic parsing and semantic interpretation of Qur'anic texts are consulted (e.g. Darwish, (1983), Al-Baghawi, (1997), Al-Tabari (2000), Al-Saadi (2000)). The paper is organized as follows: section 2 presents the syntactic and semantic features of the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic as found in the literature and results from the data of the study observations; section 3 represents a proposed categorization of the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic based on the respective features; and section 4 concludes the work wherein a summary of the main results and suggestions for further studies are presented.

2. Features of the Particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic

As mentioned earlier, the features of the particle *bal*, in its several occurrences, vary. Therefore, in this section I will shed light on the syntactic as well as the semantic aspects of the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic. These include aspects related to the positions and the distributions of the particle, the functions and the meaning of the particle, and the aspects of the structures in which the particle is found.

2.1. Positions of the Particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic

The particle *bal* can be found in two main types of positions: it either occurs at the beginning of a clause or between two equal elements, but never occurs last. Where the particle occurs at the beginning of a clause, the clause can be an independent or a dependent clause. The following examples display those positions of the particle:

- 1) *بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا*
bal tu2thiru:na il-Haya:ta id-dunya:
 (But you prefer the worldly life.) [87:16]
- 2) *قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةً عَامٍ*
qa:la kam labitht qāla labithtu yawman 2aw ba3Da yawm qa:la bal labithta mi2ata
3a:m
 (He said, “How long have you remained?” The man said, “I have remained a day or part of a day.” He said, “Rather, you have remained one hundred years.”) [2:259]
- 3) *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ*
2inna il-ladhīna ja:2u: bi-l-2ifki 3uSbatun minkum la: taHsabu:hu sharrun lakum bal
huwa xayrun lakum
 (Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you. Do not think it bad for you; rather it is good for you.) [24:11]

In the first example, the particle *bal* occurs at the beginning of the independent clause constituting the verb *tu2thir* ‘prefer’, the implicit subject pronoun and the complement *il-Haya:ta id-dunya*: ‘the worldly life’. In the example given in (2), however, the clause is a dependent clause that occurs within the verb phrase starting with the verb *qa:la* ‘say’. In the example as given in (3), the particle *bal* occurs between two equal elements which are two comparable verbless clauses: *sharrun lakum* ‘bad for you’ and *xayrun lakum* ‘good for you’. The main positions of the particle are given in the following table:

Table 1: Positions of the Particle

Positions of the Particle	
At the beginning of a clause, which can be independent or dependent	Between two equal elements

2.1. Functions and Meanings of the Particle

The other feature of the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic to be discussed here relates to the functions of the particle. In the literature on Arabic grammar, the term *iDra:b* ‘lit. striking’, is used to describe the type of the particle *bal* (Al-Radhi, (1996), Al-Mubarid, (1994)). The term is defined, as in *ma3a:ni il-ja:mi3* Dictionary, as ‘the turning away from the thing after the turning in for it’. This ‘striking’ or ‘turning away’ involved in the use of the particle *bal* applies to the proposition presented by the clause preceding the particle *bal*. In some instances, the particle is indicated to carry out an invalidation of the respective proposition, while in other instances there is no such invalidation, and the particle is said to mainly involve a transitioning to and affirmation of the proposition represented by the clause following the particle. Aiming for precision in description and based on the examination of the data, it is worth pointing out that the classification of the functions provided in this paper as synthesised below and the descriptive terms used vary in some respects from the classification in the literature. In current literature, two types are claimed, and either of the types is said to be involved in a given

instance. The types are referred to as: (1) invalidating *iDra:b* 'lit. striking' and (2) transitioning *iDra:b* 'lit. striking'. However, the descriptive term *iDra:b* 'lit. striking' is deemed to involve, by definition – beside the turning away from the preceding proposition – the transitioning to the following proposition. Additionally, the examination of the data shows that an incorporation of the possible functions is plausible, hence the modified proposed classification in the present work. The transitioning from the preceding proposition to the following one when there is no invalidation of the preceding proposition can be for varying purposes which vary in the different instances; nevertheless, the delimitation and identification of the purposes in the varying contexts are beyond the scope of the present work.

The varying cases of the function of the particle can be illustrated by the examples given in (1-3). For example, in the instances given in (2) and (3), the use of the particle involves invalidation of the preceding propositions; in other words, the points regarding the period the person thinks he spent sleeping — *yawman 2aw ba3Da yawm* 'a day or some of a day', — or that the people believe it to be bad for them are incorrect. Rather, what holds is that the man in reality slept for a hundred days and that what has happened is actually good for them. Therefore, these latter propositions that are expressed by the following clauses are affirmed and intensified. Note the contrastive or opposite relations between the two propositions in the two instances. Conversely, in the example given in (1) and repeated in (4) below within its preceding context, there is no invalidation of the preceding proposition. The particle *bal* occurs after a proposition expressing the success of a specific sect of people carrying out certain deeds. Rather, the use of the particle involves the transitioning to and the affirmation of the following independent proposition about people's preference of worldly life. Unlike in the examples in (2) and (3), the relation between the propositions preceding and following the particle is not contrastive or strong.

- 4) *قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى * وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى * بَلْ تُؤَْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا*
qad 2flaha man tazakka: wa dhakara isma rabbihi faSala: bal tu2thiru:na il-Haya:ta id-dunya:

(He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself. And mentions the name of his Lord and prays. But you prefer the worldly life.) [87:14-16]

It can also be added here that with the functions of invalidating and transitioning, intensification can be involved in the varying instances. Intensification can be of the affirmed proposition following the particle per se or of the involved opposition to and contrast with the preceding proposition. Accordingly, the varying functions of the use of the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic can include one or more of the following functions: (1) transitioning to and affirmation of the following proposition, (2) invalidation of the preceding proposition, and (3) intensification of the following proposition and/or of the opposition or contrast between the two propositions.

It is worth noting that certain structural aspects are indicated here to correlate with these two types of functions of the particle (see e.g. Aadheema, (1984), Abdul-Rasheed, (2016)). For example, it is indicated that in cases where the preceding clause is a negative statement or negative command, there is an invalidation of the proposition presented by the preceding clause and the particle *bal* presents an opposition or a contrast of the proposition of the clause that follows to the one that precedes. Hence, the function is transitioning and invalidating in terms of the modified classification proposed here. The contrary case is also claimed; where the particle is preceded by a command or an affirmative statement, the particle is stated to involve transitioning to and affirming of the proposition expressed by the following clause. However, this latter case does not always hold as can be seen in the example in (5); the preceding clause is affirmative and the function of the particle is not that of transitioning but it also involves invalidation of the preceding proposition.

- 5) *أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُزَكُّونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ*
2alam tara: ?ila: il-ladhi:na yuzaku:na 2anfusahum bali illa:hu yuzakki: man
yasha:2
 (Have you not seen those who claim themselves to be pure? Rather, Allah purifies
 whom He wills.) [4:49]

Based on the above exploration of the functions of the particle *bal*, the meaning of the particle varies, and as such can be described as polysemous. There are the instances where the particle is synonymous with words or phrases representing a contrast or opposition e.g. *lakin* 'but' or the phrases *badalan min* 'instead of' or *bil-aHra:* 'rather'. Note that in Abdul-Rasheed, (2016) the particle *bal* is compared and is classified with the particle *lakin* 'but' as both being particles of *iDra:b* 'lit. striking'; hence, indicating the synonymous relation between the two particles (for synonymous relations among particles in Arabic see Gully, (1994)). The particle also occur in instances where it mainly intensifies the meaning and is therefore similar in this respect to emphatic words such as *Haqan* 'indeed', *2inna* and *2innama:*. Nusation & Uril, (2019) indicate the occurrence of *bal* in the meaning of the emphatic particle *2inna*. Note that such variations in the meaning of the particle *bal* can obviously be seen in the given English translations of the Qur'an verses. The first case of the particle denoting a contrast or opposition applies to the examples in (2) and (3), whereas the second case where the particle does not imply a contrast but mainly has an emphatic effect clearly applies to the example given in (1).

2.2. Miscellaneous Structural Aspects

The last point to present here on the features of the particle in Qur'anic Arabic relates to the aspects of the structures in which the particle is found. To mention a few, the clause following the particle *bal* is affirmative, as can be seen in the examples given so far, but the clause preceding the particle can be negative as can be seen in the example given in (3). There is also a recurrent case in Qur'anic Arabic where the negative particle *kalla:* 'nay' precedes the particle *bal* as in the example given in (6); this sequence of the two particles can be seen to intensify the opposition carried out by the particle *bal*.

- 6) *كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ*
kalla: bal tuHibu:na il-3a:jila
 (Nay, but you love the fleeting life.) [75:20]

In addition, it is also frequently found that the preceding clause is an interrogative and the clause including the particle *bal* represents a comment or a reply to the interrogative. Such a structural feature also involves an intensification of the proposition that is affirmed in the clause representing the comment or the reply.

- 7) *أَفَعِيبْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ*
2afa2ayi:na: bi-l-xalqi il-2awal bal hum fi labsin min xalqin jadi:d
 (Did We fail in the first creation? But they are in confused doubt about a new
 creation.) [50:15]

In this example, the clause with the particle *bal* i.e. *bal hum fi labsin min xalqin jadi:d* 'indeed, they are in confused doubt about a new creation' represents a comment on the proposition represented by the interrogative *2afa2ayi:na: bi-l-xalqi il-2awal* 'Did we fail in the first creation?'

Another aspect of the structures including the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic is that the particle can be found recurring at the beginning of a sequence of clauses, a stylistic feature that

characterizes Qur'anic Arabic. The example in (8) includes three occurrences of the particle *bal*.

- 8) *بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلَامٍ بَلْ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ*
bal qa:lu: 2aDgha:thu 2aHla:min bal iftara:hu bal huwa sha:2irun falya2tina:
bi2a:yatin kama: 2ursila il-2awalu:n
 (But they say, "[The revelation is but] a mixture of false dreams; rather, he has invented it; rather, he is a poet.) [21: 5]

3. Categories of the Particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic

In this section I will provide a categorization of the various cases of the particle *bal* as found in its several occurrences in Qur'anic Arabic. This is based on the different syntactic and semantic features explored in the preceding section which relate to the distribution, function and meaning of the particle. Determining the syntactic categorization of words in a given context on the basis of the linguistic features is not new in the literature on linguistics (see e.g. Owen, (1989), Gelderen, (2010), Radford, (2016), Anderson et al, (2022). The set of categories that are universally established include the major categories of verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs. These categories are referred to as lexical items or contentors as they involve content meaning. There are also the minor categories that are referred to as functional items or functors, which involve a restricted number of members. Examples of functors include conjunctions, complementizers, determiners, auxiliaries, quantifiers, etc. The definitional criteria for determining the category of an item may relate to the morphological, syntactic, or semantic features of the respective item. Moreover, it is needless to say that languages differ in the type of criteria and the set of features that are definitional of a particular category. As for the item under study, it clearly belongs under the class of functors. It does not have content and no inflectional or derivational affixation is plausible, and based on the features and behavior of the particle, I propose three main categories of functors into which the particle can be analyzed: (1) the particle as an adversative coordinator; (2) the particle as a conjunctive adverb; and (3) the particle as a complementizer.

3.1. The particle *bal* as an Adversative Coordinator

One category that can be proposed for the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic is that of being an adversative coordinator in terms of Haspelmath's (2004) categorization of coordinating conjunctions. According to Haspelmath (2004), a particle is analysed as a coordinating conjunction when it joins between two equal elements or what is referred to as conjuncts. By being equal, this means that the conjuncts are structurally comparable, and as the particle *bal* in this use represents adversity and contrast between a preceding proposition and a following proposition that are represented by equal structures, the particle can be said to represent an adversative coordinator. In this respect, the particle *bal* in this category is seen to be comparable to the conjunction *lakin* 'but'. In the example given in (3), repeated below for convenience, the particle *bal* is an adversative coordinator. The particle conjoins between the two independent clauses that represent contrastive propositions namely the verbal clause *la: taHsabu:hu sharrun lakum* 'do not think it bad for you' and the verbless clause *huwa xayrun lakum* 'it is good for you'. A comparable example is given in (10).

- 9) *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ*
2inna il-ladhi:na ja:2u: bi-l-2ifki 3uSbatun minkum la: taHsabu:hu sharrun lakum bal
huwa xayrun lakum
 (Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you. Do not think it bad for you; rather it is good for you.) [24:11]

- 10) وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْواتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ
wa la: taHsabanna il-ladhi:n qutulu: fi: sabi:li illa:hi 2amwa:ta: bal 2aHya:2un 3inda rabbihim yurzaqu:n
 (And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision.) [3:169]

It can be pointed out that where *bal* is an adversative coordinator in Qur'anic Arabic, the types of conjuncts being coordinated are clauses, rather than words or phrases. No instance of coordination between words or phrases is attested. In one instance, quoted in Aadheema, (1984), however, and based on a possible interpretation of the context in which *bal* occurs, the coordination is not between clauses but phrases. This is found in the example given in (11); the NP *2aktharuhum* 'the majority of them' is coordinated to the NP *fari:qun minhum* 'a group of them'.

- 11) أَوْكَلَّمَا عَاهَدُوا عَهْدًا نَبَذَهُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
2awa kullama: 2a:hadu: 2ahdan nabadhahu fari:qun minhum bal 2aktharuhum la: yu2minu:n
 (Is it not (the case) that every time they make a covenant, some party among them throw it aside? Nay! the truth is most of them believe no.) [2:100]

3.2. The Particle *bal* as a Conjunctive Adverb

The other category of the particle in Qur'anic Arabic that can be proposed in this paper is that of a conjunctive adverb. Conjunctive adverbs connect one idea to another between or within sentences and independent clauses, and have the role of helping the reader follow the relations between the ideas (see e.g. Murray & Anna, (2018)). The case where the particle *bal* is a conjunctive adverb includes those instances where the particle is shown to occur at the beginning of an independent clause and there is a close relation between the propositions expressed by the preceding and the following clauses. Therefore, the use of the particle functions to affirm and transition to the proposition presented by the following clause and it may or may not involve invalidating the proposition in the preceding clause. The particle in this respect has the meaning of *kalla: 2innama:*, which can have the English equivalent 'nay but', 'indeed', 'rather', 'instead', and the like. It is worth pointing out that while in the case of the particle occurring as an adversative coordinator, the two propositions are represented by structurally equal conjuncts that are in a direct contrastive relation. In the case of the conjunctive adverb *bal*, on the other hand, there is no such structural equality and there is a close but not direct relation that implies opposition between the propositions presented by the two clauses. The instances in Qur'anic Arabic where the particle is found as a conjunctive adverb are common. In the example given in (5), and repeated in (12) below, the particle *bal* is a conjunctive adverb. The adverbial conjunctive *bal* in this example occurs as the beginning of the independent clause *illa:hu yuzakki: man yasha:2* and it involves an invalidation of and a transitioning from the preceding clause to the opposing proposition presented in the following clause.

- 12) أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُرْكَبُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ بَالِ اللَّهِ يُرْكَبِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
2alam tara: ?ila: il-ladhi:na yuzaku:na 2anfusahum bali illa:hu yuzakki: man yasha:2
 (Have you not seen those who claim themselves to be pure? Rather, Allah purifies whom He wills.) [4:49]

3.3. The Particle *bal* as a Complementizer

The other category of the particle proposed here is that of a complementizer – either a sentence complementizer or a complementizer in an embedded clause. This applies to instances when the particle occurs at the beginning of an independent clause and where it functions as transitioning to and intensifying the proposition presented by the clause introduced by the particle *bal* without involving an opposition to or an invalidation of the proposition presented by the preceding clause. The particle in this case is comparable to the emphatic particle *inna* in Arabic which is also analyzed as a complementizer (see e.g. Radford, (2004), Aoun et al, (2010)). Notably, in the instances where the particle is a sentence complementizer, there is no strong connection between the proposition in the preceding clause and the proposition in the clause introduced by the complementizer *bal*, thus distinguishing it from the case of the conjunctive adverb. The particle *bal* in the example given in (4), repeated in (11) below, presents a sentence complementizer.

- 13) *قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى * وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى * بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا*
qad 2flaHa man tazakka: wa dhakara isma rabbihi faSala: bal tu2thiru:na il-Haya:ta
id-dunya:
 (He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself. And mentions the name of his Lord and prays. But you prefer the worldly life.) [87:14-16]

In the other case, the particle is a complementizer in a dependent clause that functions as a complement. This is seen in instances where the clause introduced by *bal* follows the verb *qa:l* and the clause is hence a complement of the verb. The particle in this category involves transitioning as well as intensifying the opposing proposition presented by the clause introduced by the particle and is therefore similar to the emphatic particle *innama:* in Arabic which also implies opposition and intensification.

- 14) *قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتُمْ مِائَةً عَامٍ*
qa:la kam labitht qāla labithtu yawman 2aw ba3Da yawm qa:la bal labithta mi2ata
3a:m
 (He said, “How long have you remained?” The man said, “I have remained a day or part of a day.” He said, “Rather, you have remained one hundred years.”) [2:259]

A last point worthy of indication here is that, as seen from the above representation of the categories, there is not always a one-to-one correlation but sometimes a mismatch between the categories on one side and the positions, functions and meaning of the particle on the other. In the category of *bal* as a coordinating conjunction, it is always between two equal conjuncts and involves an invalidation of the preceding proposition. Where the particle is a conjunctive adverb, it occurs at the beginning of an independent clause, but it may or may not involve invalidation of the preceding proposition (this is indicated by the parenthesis in table 2 below). It involves transitioning and in some instances the intensification of the following proposition and of an explicit or implied contrast or opposition to the preceding proposition. In the case of the particle as a sentence complementizer, it also occurs at the beginning of an independent clause that has no strong relation with the preceding proposition, and it involves transitioning and intensification of the proposition represented by the respective clause. And in the last category, the particle is at the beginning of a dependent rather than an independent clause as in the preceding cases and there is a strong connection with the preceding proposition. This form of the particle involves invalidation of as well as transitioning from the proposition in the preceding clause and affirmation and intensification of the opposite proposition in the

following clause. The categories and the different matching features are summarized in the following table.

Table 2: Categories and the Features

Category	Position	Function	Relation between Propositions
Coordinating Conjunction	Between two equal elements	Invalidating, transitioning and intensification	Contrastive relation
Conjunctive Adverb	At the beginning of an independent clause	(Invalidating), transitioning and intensification	Opposition
Sentence Complementiser	At the beginning of an independent clause	transitioning and intensification	Loose Relation
Complementiser in an embedded clause	At the beginning of a dependent clause	transitioning and intensification	Contrastive or Opposition

4. Conclusion

This paper has provided a characterization of the syntactic and semantic aspects of the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic which relates to distributions, functions, meanings, and the aspects of the structures in which the particle is found. I have shown that there are two main types of distributions of the particle: (1) at the beginning of a clause, whether that be an independent or a dependent clause, and (2) between two equal elements. I have also highlighted the functions of the use of the particle in Qur'anic Arabic and have posited a modified classification which includes: (1) transitioning and contrasting, and (2) transitioning and intensifying. I have also pointed out that the particle *bal* can be described as polysemous and can express a contrastive meaning comparable to words and phrases such as *lakin* 'but', *badalan min* 'instead of' and *bi-l-aHra*: 'rather', or mainly an intensified meaning as in the case of emphatic words such as *haqqan* 'indeed', *2inna* and *2innama*:. I have also indicated a number of other aspects characterizing the structures in which the particle *bal* is found. Moreover, based on the syntactic and semantic aspects of the particle, I have proposed in this paper a categorization of the particle in Qur'anic Arabic which includes the particle as an adversative coordinator, a conjunctive adverb and a complementizer. It will be interesting to investigate how an analysis of the particle in its varying cases can be done within the modern linguistic theoretical frameworks e.g. lexical functional grammar. Another suggestion for a further study is to explore the features of the particle *bal* in, say for instance, modern standard Arabic and other varieties of Arabic. So, such and probably other questions about the particle *bal* in Qur'anic Arabic in particular and in other forms and varieties of Arabic in general remain unanswered. Nevertheless, I believe the present work has achieved its aims.

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