

# A Linguistic Exploration of the Word ‘sky’ in the Holy Quran: An Analytical Study

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## Abstract

The current research paper involves exploring the word ‘sky’ in the Holy Quran. The aims are to show the meanings of the word ‘sky’ in the Holy Quran and also to show the effect of the Quranic Surahs’ classification on the context of the verse. Thus, the analytical method has been adopted side by side with statistical analysis of the word ‘sky’ as mentioned in the surahs of the Holy Quran. The results show that the word ‘sky’ comes in four intended meanings, first, in the meaning of ‘clouds’, second, in the meaning of ‘sky’, third, in the meaning of ‘rain’, and fourth in the meaning of ‘height’. In addition, the results show that the word ‘sky’ comes in both classifications of the Quranic Surahs performing a great rhetorical role according to the place of revelation of the Quranic Surah and according to the addressee. Moreover, the results show that the context of the Quranic verse is possible to come within a group of preceding verses or following verses making one context that comes together with intended divine purposes.

**Keywords:** the Holy Quran, Meccan Surahs, Medinan Surahs, Verse, Sky, Context

## 1. Introduction

The Holy Quran is the immortal Book of Allah (God) and is the miracle of Allah's Messenger Muhammad (SAWS: sallallahu alayhi wa salaam (may God's prayers and peace be with him)). The verses of the Noble Quran are accurate and perfect and their words are interconnected. In this regard, Allah said, “-(This is) a Book, the Verses whereof are perfected (in every sphere of knowledge), and then explained in detail from One (Allâh) Who is All-Wise Well-Acquainted (with all things).” [1:11]. (The Holy Qur'an: King Fahd Complex For The Printing Of The Holy Qur'an).

When the Holy Quran was sent down, it had a great impact on the people of Mecca and the Arabs. The Noble Quran was revealed in Arabic at a time when Meccan people were boasting of their language and were proficient in the use of Arabic language as well. “The accomplishments the Arabs prided themselves on, were: eloquence and a perfect skill in their own tongue” (Galwash, p.27). Although Meccan people and the disbelievers, in general, were the people of language and eloquence; they could not produce the like of the Quran. According to Abou-El-Enin (2009) “Linguistic styles and literary images in the Qur'an are surpassable and are excelled and rose above man's speech.”. In this regard, Allah said, “Say: “If the mankind and the jinn were together to produce the like of this Qur'ân, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another.” [88:17].

One of the miracles of the Noble Quran is reflected in its words that include precise meanings which are miraculously chosen by Allah Almighty. In this respect, Allah said, “Do they not then consider the Qur'ân carefully? Had it been from other than Allâh, they would surely have found therein many a contradiction.” [82:4]. The eloquence of the Holy Quran is made clear in using the same word in many verses or sometimes in the same verse. One of the essentials in interpreting the Quran is to know the intended purpose of using a Quranic word if this word comes in more than one intended meaning. So, what are the intended meanings of the word ‘sky’ in the Noble Quran? Before the commencement of the research, the researcher would like to point out that the results of this research reflect only the researcher's understanding and discretion.

### 1.2 Topic of the Research

This research attracts attention to a word that has repeated forty-eight times in the Holy Quran. This word is *the sky*.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Research

This research intends to achieve, as much as possible, the following:

1. The researcher attempts to search and investigate the meanings of the word ‘sky’ in the Holy Quran.
2. The researcher attempts to clarify the relationship between the place of revelation of the surah and the context of the verse.
3. This research is considered as a way to perceive and ponder over the Holy Quran.

### 1.4 Research Questions

This research is based on the following questions:

1. What are the meanings of the word ‘sky’ in the Holy Quran?
2. What can the place where the Quranic surah is revealed add on the target word?

### 1.5 Method of the Research

The researcher has adopted an analytical method that attempts, as much as possible, to make use of statistical analysis of the word ‘sky’ as mentioned in the surahs of the Holy Quran under study. The sources of this research were the verses themselves as a primary source referring back them to their places by mentioning the name of the surahs, verse number, and place of revelation as well as references books about the sky. In addition to, exegesis books, the Internet, and journals as secondary sources.

## 2. Theoretical Considerations

In studying the word ‘sky’ in the Holy Quran, it might be paid attention to three aspects: the Holy Quran: general overview, classifications of the Quranic Surahs and the notion of the word ‘sky’. These are explained in details in the next sections.

### 2.1 The Holy Quran: General Overview

The Holy Quran is the eternal miracle of Allah that was revealed upon His Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) by Gabriel. In this regard, Allah said, “And truly, this (the Qur’ân) is a revelation from the Lord of the ‘Âlamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists), Which the trustworthy *Rûh* [Jibrîl (Gabriel)] has brought down” [192,193:26]

It is stated in Merriam-Webster dictionary that the words Quran or Qur'an are variant spellings of ‘Koran’. Moreover, Yuksel, al-Shaiban, & Schulte-Nafeh ( 2007) state

Al-Quran is used only for a particular book given to Muhammad. So, the Quran is unique. There is no other quran besides the Quran. Some may suggest translating the word Quran as "reading," but the word "reading" is not unique, but the Quran is. (p. 14)

Furthermore, the Holy Quran consists of thirty units; these units include one hundred and fourteen surahs. The surahs are varied in lengths, the longest surah is Al-Baqarah (The Cow) and the shortest one is Al-Kauthar (A River in Paradise).

Anyway, there are several names for the Holy Quran “The *Kittab* (Book), The *Furqaan* (Criterion), The *Dhikr* (Remembrance, or narrative)”. (Qadhi, 1999, p. 45)

### 2.2 Classifications of the Quranic Surahs

The surahs of the Holy Quran are classified into Meccan Surahs and Medinan Surahs. According to King Fahd Complex For The Printing Of The Holy Qur'an, the Meccan Surahs are eighty-six, whereas the Medinan Surahs are twenty-eight. AlBzour (2017) illustrates

The surahs of the Holy Quran are classified into two categories depending on the place where the surah was revealed upon Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). And in this case, the surah is Meccan if it is revealed in Mecca and on the other hand it is Medinan if it is revealed in Medina. Each of these surahs has its own features that distinguish them from each other. (p. 120)

Since the Holy Quran was revealed upon Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) in two different places that inhabited by different people, it was normal that the style of speech of the Noble Quran and its content differed from place to place. In this respect, Thabet (2006) states that “the verses of the Qur'an were not revealed in one place but rather in stages over a period of 23 years.” (p. 3). Thabet (2006) adds “The contents of the chapters and verses are directly related to the events, circumstances and different needs of the period of the Prophet's mission.” (p. 3). According to Abd al Ati, “The Qur'an was revealed from God piece by piece on various occasions to answer certain questions, solve certain problems, settle certain disputes and to be man's best guide to the Truth of God and eternal happiness.” (p. 43)

Meccan Surahs are distinguished by the power of style and the intensity of speech because most of the Meccan people at that time were atheists who did not believe in Allah's Oneness. According to AlBzour (2016), the Meccan Surahs are characterised by

First, they focus on the oneness of Allah because people in that period worshipped and believed in more than one Allah (God). Second, they expose the works of the Mushrikun (polytheists). Third, they mention the stories of Prophets. Fourth, they use the power of words and phrases as well as the shortening of their phrases. Fifth, they use the phrase ‘O people! Or O mankind!’. (p. 104)

On the other hand, the majority of Medinan Surahs are distinguished by soft style and the ease of speech because most of the Medinan people at that time were believers. According to AlBzour (2016), the Medinan Surahs are characterised by “First, they mention the hypocrites. Second, they use the phrase ‘O you who believe! Or Believers! Third, they display the rules of governance, the means of legislation, the limits, the hajj (pilgrimage), the transactions, the worships and more.”(p. 104)

### 2.3 The Notion of the Word ‘sky’

Allah said, “And if the people of the towns had believed and had the *Taqwâ* (piety), certainly, We should have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they belied (the Messengers) -” [96:7], “Indeed your Lord is Allâh, Who created the heavens and the earth in Six Days-” [54:7] and “Is not He (better than your gods) Who created the heavens and the earth, and sends down for you water (rain) from the sky-” [60:27]

The words *heaven*, *heavens*, and *sky* that have been mentioned in English Holy Quran have two forms in Arabic Holy Quran: ‘*sky*’, ‘*heaven*’ (in Arabic: l-samā), and ‘*heavens*’ (in Arabic: l-samāwāt (plural form of l-samā)) and all of them are nouns taking into account that it is possible to change the pronunciation and the form of the words in Arabic according to the case of nouns.

Anyway, the three words (heaven, heavens, and sky) have been mentioned about three hundred times in the Holy Quran. Thus, it is important to differentiate between the words ‘sky’ and ‘heaven’.

According to OXFORD ( 2002), the word ‘heaven’ means “the place where it is believed that God and the angels live and good people go when they die.” ( p.355) ; on the other hand,

the word ‘sky’ means “the space that you can see when you look up from the earth, and where you can see the sun, moon and stars.” OXFORD ( 2002 p. 701). In addition to, Jacobs (1999) states that “The sky is part of our atmosphere(At-mus-feer). The atmosphere is a layer of air that completely surrounds Earth.” (p.5). Furthermore, the origin of ‘sky’ as stated in Merriam-Webster is “Middle English, cloud, sky, from Old Norse *sky* cloud; akin to Old English *scēo* cloud”. The word ‘sky’ comes in other meanings such as “the climate: *the sunny skies of Italy* and *Obsolete. a cloud*” (Dictionary.com), “the source of divine power” (Collins ), and “The highest level or degree: *reaching for the sky.*” (TheFreeDictionary).

### 3. The Intended Meanings of the Word ‘sky’ in the Noble Quran

Yahya related to me from Malik that he heard that Luqman al-Hakim made his will and counselled his son, saying, "My son! Sit with the learned men and keep close to them. Allah gives life to the hearts with the light of wisdom as Allah gives life to the dead earth with the abundant rain of the sky." [Malik]

This section sheds light on the word ‘sky’ and its meanings as mentioned in the Noble Quran. Noting that the word ‘sky’ is mentioned 48 times according to the translations of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an of King Fahd Complex For The printing Of The Holy Qur'an. In order to do this, four responses might be cleared up, first, the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘clouds’, second, the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘the sky’, third, the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘rain’, fourth, the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘height’.

#### 3.1 The First Response: The Word ‘sky’ in the Meaning of ‘clouds’

It is known that the sky is the source of rain through the clouds and it is Allah alone Who sends down water (rain) from the sky. According to Robert & Houze (1993), a cloud is “a visible aggregate of minute particles of water or ice, or both in the free air.” (p. 8)

This section highlights the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘clouds’. Also, it highlights the context in which it is mentioned.

Table 1. Distribution of the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘clouds’

Surah and its order/ Verse No.	Classified as	Context of the verse
Al-Baqarah 2:19	Medinan	Simile and giving an example about the hypocrites.
Al-Baqarah 2:22	Medinan	The ability and Oneness of Allah. Allah’s graces.
Al-Baqarah 2:164	Medinan	The signs of Allah’s Oneness, Mercy, Ability.
Al-An’âm 6:99	Meccan	The signs of Allah’s Ability.

Al-Anfâl 8:11	Medinan	Allah's support for the believers.
Yûnus 10:24	Meccan	Simile to the worldly life.
Hûd 11:44	Meccan	Allah tells us about Noah's people and their sinking.
Ar-Ra'd 13:17	Medinan	Giving examples of forth truth and falsehood.
Ibrâhîm 14:32	Meccan	The Ability and Oneness of Allah. Allah's graces.
Al-Hijr 15:22	Meccan	Allah's Ability. Rain formation.
An-Nahl 16:10	Meccan	Allah's Ability, Oneness, and Mercy.
An-Nahl 16:65	Meccan	The signs of Allah's Ability.
Al-Kahf 18:40	Meccan	Allah's Ability on changing conditions.
Al-Kahf 18:45	Meccan	Simile. An example of worldly life.
Tâ-Hâ 20:53	Meccan	Allah's Ability.
Al-Hajj 22:63	Medinan	Allah's Ability. The kindness of Allah with all things.
Al-Mu'minûn 23:18	Meccan	Allah's Ability.
An-Nûr 24:43	Medinan	Allah's Ability.
Al-Furqân 25:48	Meccan	Allah's Ability.
An-Naml 27:60	Meccan	The Ability and Oneness of Allah.
Al-'Ankabût 29:63	Meccan	Allah's Ability. A proof for the polytheists.
Ar-Rûm 30:24	Meccan	The signs of Allah's Ability.
Luqmân 31:10	Meccan	Allah's Ability.
Fâtir 35:27	Meccan	Allah's Ability.
Az-Zumar 39:21	Meccan	A reminder of Allah's Ability.
Az-Zukhruf 43:11	Meccan	The accuracy of Allah's Ability. A proof.
Al-Jâthiyah 45:5	Meccan	The signs of Allah's Ability. A proof.
Qâf 50:9	Meccan	Allah's Ability.
Târiq 86:11	Meccan	An oath by Allah.

It can be seen from table 1 that the word 'sky' is strikingly used 29 times (29 out of 48) in the Holy Quran in the meaning of 'clouds'. Within the 29 times, the word 'sky' is used 22 times (22 out of 29) in contexts of talking about Allah' Ability. This ability is inimitability confirmed by phrases such as 'and the water (rain) which Allâh sends down from the sky' [Al-Baqarah 2:164], 'It is He Who sends down water (rain) from the sky' [Al-An'âm 6:99], 'Allâh is He Who has created the heavens and the earth and sends down water (rain) from the sky' [Ibrâhîm 14:32], 'And Allâh is Able to do everything.' [Al-Kahf 18:45], 'And We send down blessed water (rain) from the sky' [Qâf 50:9] and 'See you not that Allâh sends down water (rain) from the sky' [Al-Hajj 22:63], etc. Moreover, in some contexts where the word 'sky' has been mentioned, Allah's Ability is also considered as signs and this is marvelously supported by phrases such as 'In these things there are signs for people who believe.' [Al-An'âm 6:99], 'Verily, in this is a sign (clear proof) for people who listen (obey Allâh).'

[An-Nahl 16:65], and ‘And among His Signs is that He shows you the lightning, for fear and for hope, and He sends down water (rain) from the sky’ [Ar-Rûm 30:24], etc.

Furthermore, Allah has clearly mentioned in some of His verses that water from the sky ‘clouds’ is a provision as a sign that livelihood is from Allah the All-Provider and this is marvelously confirmed by phrases such as ‘and sent down water (rain) from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you’ [Al-Baqarah 2:22], ‘and sends down water (rain) from the sky, and thereby brought forth fruits as provision for you’ [Ibrâhîm 14:32] and ‘and the provision (rain) that Allâh sends down from the sky’ [Al-Jâthiyah 45:5].

Besides, the word ‘sky’ is inimitability come together with simile 3 times (3 out of 29) and this is creatively supported by phrases like ‘Or like a rainstorm from the sky’ [Al-Baqarah 2:19], Verily, the likeness of (this) worldly life is as the water (rain) which We send down from the sky’ [Yûnus 10:24] and ‘And put forward to them the example of the life of this world: it is like the water (rain) which We send down from the sky’ [Al-Kahf 18:45] and this phrase is also considered as a giving example by Allah. Besides, the word ‘sky’ is inimitability come together with simile 3 times (3 out of 29) and this is creatively supported by phrases like ‘Or like a rainstorm from the sky’ [Al-Baqarah 2:19], Verily, the likeness of (this) worldly life is as the water (rain) which We send down from the sky’ [Yûnus 10:24] and ‘And put forward to them the example of the life of this world: it is like the water (rain) which We send down from the sky’ [Al-Kahf 18:45] and this phrase is also considered as a given example by Allah.

In addition to, the rest four words have been mentioned in different contexts. First, the word ‘sky’ is strikingly used once (1 out of 29) in a context where Allah has reminded the believers when He has supported them and this is amazingly confirmed by the phrases ‘(Remember) when He covered you with a slumber as a security from Him, and He caused water (rain) to descend on you from the sky, to clean you thereby and to remove from you the *Rijz* (whispering, evil-suggestions) of *Shaitân* (Satan)’ [Al-Anfâl 8:11].

Second, the word ‘sky’ is impressively used once (1 out of 29) in Noah’s story with his people and this is superbly confirmed by the phrase ‘And indeed We sent Nûh (Noah) to his people’ [Hûd 11:25]. Third, the word ‘sky’ is strikingly used once (1 out of 29) in a context where Allah has set forth parables and this is magnificently confirmed by the phrase ‘Thus Allâh sets forth parables (for the truth and falsehood, i.e. Belief and disbelief)’ [Ar-Ra’d 13:17]. Fourth, the word ‘sky’ is strikingly used once (1 out of 29) in a context where Allah has taken an oath and this is wondrously supported by the phrase ‘By the sky (having rain clouds) which gives rain’ [Târiq 86:11].

Anyway, as shown in table 1, 22 (22 out of 29) verses are Meccan where much talk about the polytheists who lived at the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) especially Meccan people who associated partners with Allah, who challenged Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) with miraculous requests, who knew that Allah is the Creator of all things but they deviated the truth as well. Allah has mentioned His Ability, and His Oneness in His accurate verses and this is admirably confirmed by the phrases such as ‘Allâh is He Who has created the heavens and the earth and sends down water (rain) from the sky’ [Ibrâhîm 14:32], ‘then cause the

water (rain) to descend from the sky, and We give it to you to drink, and it is not you who are the owners of its stores' [Al-Hijr 15:22], 'And Allâh sends down water (rain) from the sky' [An-Nahl 16:65] and 'and sends down for you water (rain) from the sky, whereby We cause to grow wonderful gardens full of beauty and delight? It is not in your ability to cause the growth of their trees. Is there any *ilâh* (god) with Allâh? Nay, but they are a people who ascribe equals (to Him)!' [An-Naml 27:60], etc. In addition, the speech is directed to Meccan polytheists in particular and absolutely for all people in general, especially, for those who do not believe in Allah and who doubt the Oneness of Allah.

On the other hand, 7 (7 out of 29) verse are Medinan where much talk about the believers and the hypocrites and this is amazingly supported by phrases like 'And of mankind, there are some (hypocrites) who say: "We believe in Allâh and the Last Day" while in fact they believe not.' [Al-Baqarah 2:8], 'And when they meet those who believe, they say: "We believe," but when they are alone with their *Shayâtîn* (devils - polytheists, hypocrites), they say: "Truly, we are with you; verily, we were but mocking." [Al-Baqarah 2:14], and '(Remember) when He covered you with a slumber as a security from Him' [Al-Anfâl 8:11].

Finally, it is true that the word 'sky' has performed its linguistic role in the context of the verse where it is mentioned, but all the verses in table 1 occurred within a context of more than a verse, for example, in order to know to whom the pronoun 'they' in this verse refers to 'Or like a rainstorm from the sky, wherein is darkness, thunder, and lightning. *They* thrust their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap for fear of death.' [Al-Baqarah 2:19], it had to refer back to verse 8 'And of mankind, there are some (hypocrites)' [Al-Baqarah 2:19].

### 3.2 The Second Response: The Word 'sky' in the Meaning of 'the sky'

According to Cambridge Dictionary 'sky' means 'the area above the earth, in which clouds, the sun, etc. can be seen'. This section attracts attention to the word 'sky' in the meaning of 'the sky'. Also, it highlights the context in which it is mentioned.

Table 2. Distribution of the word 'sky' in the meaning of 'the sky'

Surah and its order/ Verse No.	Classified as	Context of the verse
Al-Baqarah 2:22	Medinan	Simile. The Ability and Oneness of Allah.
Al-Baqarah 2:164	Medinan	The signs of Allah's Oneness, Mercy, and Ability.
Al-An'âm 6:35	Meccan	Muhammad's care for his people to become Muslims.
Al-An'âm 6:125	Meccan	Simile. The breasts that are opened and closed to Islam.
Al-Anfâl 8:32	Medinan	Ignorance, negation and intransigence of the polytheists.
An-Nahl 16:79	Meccan	Allah's Ability.
Al-Isrâ' 17:93	Meccan	The unfeasible requests by the polytheists.
Al-'Ankabût 29:34	Meccan	The torment on the people of Lût's (Lot) town.
Ar-Rûm 30:48	Meccan	Allah Almighty tells about the perfection of His power.
Ghâfir 40:64	Meccan	Simile. The Ability and Oneness of Allah.



Ad-Dukhân 44:10	Meccan	A sign of the Day.
Al-Ma‘ârij 70:8	Meccan	Simile. The sky is like the boiling filth of oil in the Day.

It can be seen from table 2 that the word ‘sky’ is wondrously used 12 times (12 out of 48) in the Holy Quran in the meaning of *the sky* (the area above the earth). The word ‘sky’ is uniquely used side by side with simile 4 times (4 out of 12), first, the word ‘sky’ is likened to a canopy twice and this is inimitably confirmed by the phrases ‘Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky as a canopy’ [Al-Baqarah 2:22] and ‘Allâh, it is He Who has made for you the earth as a dwelling place and the sky as a canopy’ [Ghâfir 40:64]. Another key point, Allah has made mention of His Ability and Oneness in the previous verses and this is uniquely supported by the phrases ‘Then do not set up rivals unto Allâh (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped)’ [Al-Baqarah 2:22] and ‘Allâh, it is He Who has made-That is Allâh, your Lord: so Blessed be Allâh’ [Ghâfir 40:64]. Second, the word ‘sky’ is come together with simile once to express who cannot enter monotheism and faith in his heart as if who cannot climb up to *the sky* (the earth’s atmosphere) and this is uniquely confirmed by the phrase ‘and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky’ [Al-An‘âm 6:125]. Third, the word ‘sky’ is come together with simile once to clarify an event of the horrors of the Day (the Day of Resurrection) and this is amazingly confirmed by the phrase ‘The Day that the sky will be like the boiling filth of oil, (or molten copper or silver or lead)’ [Al-Ma‘ârij 70:8].

Furthermore, the word ‘sky’ is strikingly used twice (2 out of 12) in the meaning of ‘the place where the clouds belong to’ and this is attractively supported by the phrases ‘and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth’ [Al-Baqarah 2:164] and ‘Allâh is He Who sends the winds, so that they raise clouds, and spread them along the sky as He wills’ [Ar-Rûm 30:48].

In addition to, the word ‘sky’ is marvelously used twice (2 out of 12) to indicate to go up into the sky and this is magnificently supported by the phrases ‘then if you were able to seek a tunnel in the earth or a ladder to the sky’ [Al-An‘âm 6:35] and ‘or you ascend up into the sky’ [Al-Isrâ‘ 17:93].

Moreover, the word ‘sky’ is uniquely used twice (2 out of 12) as indications to an afflicting place and this is inimitably confirmed by the phrases ‘then rain down stones on us from the sky or bring on us a painful torment’ [Al-Anfâl 8:32] and ‘Verily, we are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment from the sky’ [Al-‘Ankabût 29:34]. Additionally, the word ‘sky’ is used once (1 out of 12) to indicate that Allah alone Who is able to hold the birds in the sky and this is marvelously confirmed by the phrase ‘Do they not see the birds held (flying) in the midst of the sky? None holds them but Allâh’ [An-Nahl 16:79]. Finally, the word ‘sky’ is uniquely used once (1 out of 12) in a context indicating a sign of the Day of Resurrection and this is impressively confirmed by the phrase ‘Then wait you for the Day when the sky will bring forth a visible smoke’ [Ad-Dukhân 44:10].

In addition to what is explained before, 5 verses (5 out of 12) talk about Allah’s Ability and His signs and this is uniquely confirmed by phrases such as ‘Do they not see the birds held

(flying) in the midst of the sky? None holds them but Allâh [none gave them the ability to fly but Allâh]. Verily, in this are clear Ayât (proofs and signs) for people who believe (in the Oneness of Allâh).’ [An-Nahl 16:79] and ‘and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed Ayât (proofs, evidence, signs, etc.) for people of understanding.’ [Al-Baqarah 2:164].

Anyway, 9 verses (9 out of 12) are Meccan where the speech is mainly directed to Meccan polytheists and for all people in general, whereas 3 verses (3 out of 9) are Medinan where much talk about the believers.

### 3.3 The Third Response: The Word ‘sky’ in the Meaning of ‘rain’

Among the uses of the word ‘sky’, is its use in the meaning of ‘rain’. According to National Geographic,

Rain is liquid precipitation: water falling from the sky. Raindrops fall to Earth when clouds become saturated, or filled, with water droplets. Millions of water droplets bump into each other as they gather in a cloud. When a small water droplet bumps into a bigger one, it condenses, or combines, with the larger one. As this continues to happen, the droplet gets heavier and heavier. When the water droplet becomes too heavy to continue floating around in the cloud, it falls to the ground.

This section highlights the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘rain’. Also, it highlights the context in which it is mentioned.

Table 3. Distribution of the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘rain’

Surah and its order/ Verse No.	Classified as	Context of the verse
Al-An’âm 6:6	Meccan	A warning and preaching from Allah.
Yûnus 10:31	Meccan	A prove of Allah’s Oneness and His Ability.
Hûd 11:52	Meccan	Hûd tells his people how to increase their graces.
Fâtir 35:3	Meccan	The Ability and Oneness of Allah. Allah’s graces.
Ghâfir 40:13	Meccan	The signs of Allah’s Ability. A proof.

In table 3, it can be seen that the word ‘sky’ is amazingly used 5 times (5 out of 48) in the Holy Quran in the meaning of ‘rain’. To start with, the word ‘sky’ is uniquely used 3 times (3 out of 5) in contexts indicating to Allah’s Ability, Oneness, and a proof and this is strikingly confirmed by the phrases ‘Say (O Muhammad SAWA): "Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?" They will say: "Allâh."’ [Yûnus 10:31], ‘O mankind! Remember the Grace of Allâh upon you! Is there any creator other than Allâh who provides for you from the sky (rain) and the earth? *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He)’ [Fâtir 35:3] and ‘It is He Who shows you His Ayât (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and sends down (rain with which grows) provision for you from the sky.’ [Ghâfir 40:13]. Second, the word ‘sky’ is uniquely used once (1 out of 5) in a context indicating taking a lesson from previous people

and at the same time indicating a warning from Allah for those who reject the signs of Allah and this is wondrously confirmed by the phrases ‘Have they not seen how many a generation before them We have destroyed whom We had established on the earth such as We have not established you? And We poured out on them rain from the sky in abundance, and made the rivers flow under them. Yet We destroyed them for their sins, and We created after them other generations.’ [Al-An’âm 6:6]. Third, the word ‘sky’ is also uniquely used once (1 out of 5) in a context relating to a prophet’s (Hûd) story with his people when Hûd advised his people to repent to Allah and ask forgiveness from Him and this is magnificently supported by the phrases “And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him, He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain, and add strength to your strength, ” [Hûd 11:52].

Moreover, all of the verses where the word ‘sky’ has been mentioned are Meccan where much talk about Meccan people in particular and for all people in general.

### *3.4 The Fourth Response: The Word ‘sky’ in the Meaning of ‘height’*

Among the uses of the word ‘sky’, is its use in the meaning of ‘height’. As stated before in section 2.3, the sky is part of our atmosphere and it consists of six layers. The six layers and their heights are illustrated by NASA: [https://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/sunearth/science/atmosphere-layers2.html](https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/sunearth/science/atmosphere-layers2.html)

This section attracts attention to the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘height’. Also, it highlights the context in which it is mentioned.

Table 4. Distribution of the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘height’

Surah and its order/ Verse No.	Classified as	Context of the verse
Ibrâhîm 14:24	Meccan	Giving a parable of monotheism.
Al-Hajj 22:31	Medinan	Simile. Those who assign partners to Allah.

As shown in table 4, the word ‘sky’ is strikingly used twice (2 out of 48) in the Holy Quran in the meaning of ‘height’. First, the word ‘sky’ is amazingly used once (1 out of 2) in a context relating to giving a parable and this is impressively supported by the phrases ‘See you not how Allâh sets forth a parable? A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky (i.e. very high).’ [Ibrâhîm 14:24]. Second, the word ‘sky’ is marvelously used once (1 out of 2) in a context relating to simile and this is magnificently confirmed by the phrases ‘and whoever assigns partners to Allâh, it is as if he had fallen from the sky,’ [Al-Hajj 22:31]. In addition to, one verse is Meccan and the other one is Medinan.

## **4. Results**

After bringing into prominence the word ‘sky’ and its meanings in the Noble Quran, a number of results were achieved. To start with, the major use of the word ‘sky’ was in the meaning of ‘clouds’ and this indicates and reflects the Greatness and Creativity of Allah in His creation. On the other hand, the minor use was the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘height’.

However, regardless of the percentage of repetitions, this diversity in the use of the word ‘sky’ revealed the great eloquence of the Quran. The results of the repetition of the word ‘sky’ according to the response are shown in table 1.

Table 1.

Response	Repetition (out of 48)	Percentage
the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘clouds’	29	60.5 %
the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘the sky’	12	25 %
the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘rain’	5	10.5 %
the word ‘sky’ in the meaning of ‘height’	2	4 %

Second, the word ‘sky’ was used in all its meanings within contexts where much talk about Allah’s Ability. This was necessary at the time when people worshiped more than one Allah, and

they did not estimate Allah with an estimation due to Him. In addition, the word ‘sky’ was rhetorically used in contexts with simile and this showed how great the eloquence of the Holy Quran is. Finally, the other contexts came in different percentages and they were not less important than the previous ones. The results of the repetition of the word ‘sky’ according to the contexts are shown in table 2.

Table 2.

Context of the Verse	Repetition (out of 48)	Percentage
Allah’s Ability	30	62.5 %
Simile	8	16.5 %
Others	10	21 %

Third, as mentioned in section 2.2, the Quranic Surahs are classified into Meccan and Medinan. Since the word ‘sky’ was mentioned in 48 Quranic verses, the results showed that the major contexts were Meccan indicating the importance of the word ‘sky’ in Meccan contexts. The results of the repetition of the word ‘sky’ according to the classification of the Quranic Surahs are shown in table 3.

Table 3.

Classified as	‘clouds’ (out of 29)	‘the sky’ (out of 12)	‘rain’ (out of 5)	‘height’ (out of 2)	Total (out of 48)
Meccan	22	9	5	1	37
Percentage	76%	75 %	100 %	50 %	77 %
Medinan	7	3	X	1	11
Percentage	24 %	25 %	X	50 %	23%

Fourth, the results showed that the word 'sky' was mentioned in 29 Surahs (29 out of 114) indicating the importance of the word 'sky' in the Quranic contexts as well as the importance of its linguistic functions. The results that show the number of surahs where the word 'sky' was mentioned is shown in table 4.

Table 4.

Surahs of the Noble Quran	The word 'sky' is mentioned in	Percentage
114	29	25.5

Finally, the results showed that the verse where the word 'sky' has been mentioned did not clarify the context totally, so it was necessary to refer to a set of preceding or following verses to understand the context well, for example, the stories of Noah and Hud with their peoples. In addition, it was necessary to refer to the entire surah (Al Tariq) to understand the context where the word 'sky' has been mentioned.

## 5. Conclusion

Having examined the word 'sky' and its meanings in the Holy Quran analytically and statistically, it was proved that they were used linguistically in an impressive way. The analyses prove that the use of the word 'sky' in different meanings is an indication of the greatness of the Holy Quran rhetorically and linguistically. In addition to, the analyses prove that the classification of the Quranic Surahs -whether it is Meccan or Medinan- increases the understanding of the context of the Quranic verse and thus shows how the Quranic word is rhetorical. As a result of this, knowing the classification, it increases the understanding and pondering the Holy Quran. Furthermore, the analyses prove that there is a Quranic context consists of a group of verses that relates to one basic purpose. Therefore, the context of a verse can be extended to what precedes it or follows it and it may have an extension in the entire surah. This proves, with certainty, that the Quran is Allah's Book.

## Recommendations

Despite the fact that the current research attracted special attention to the word 'sky', it was impossible to highlight the word 'heaven' that is mentioned in many verses in the Noble Quran, so the researcher recommends that studying the word 'heaven' may reveal new results that can be linked together and therefore enrich the field of linguistics with new facts about the rhetorical language of the Holy Quran.

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## Appendix A

The verses where the word 'sky' is mentioned in the meaning of 'clouds'

### 1. Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 2:19

Or like a rainstorm from *the sky*, wherein is darkness, thunder, and lightning. They thrust their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap for fear of death. But Allâh ever encompasses the disbelievers (i.e. Allâh will gather them all together).

### 2. Al-Baqarah 2:22

Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky as a canopy, and sent down water (rain) from *the sky* and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allâh (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped)

### 3. Al-Baqarah 2:164

Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allâh sends down from *the sky* and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed *Ayât* (proofs, evidence, signs, etc.) for people of understanding.

### 4. Al-An'âm (The Cattle) 6:99

It is He Who sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, and with it we bring forth vegetation of all kinds, and out of it we bring forth green stalks, from which we bring forth thick clustered grain. And out of the date-palm and its spathe come forth clusters of dates hanging low and near, and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety and taste). Look at their fruits when they begin to bear, and the ripeness thereof. Verily! In these things there are signs for people who believe.

### 5. Al-Anfâl (The Spoils of War) 8:11

(Remember) when He covered you with a slumber as a security from Him, and He caused water (rain) to descend on you from *the sky*, to clean you thereby and to remove from you the *Rijz* (whispering, evil-suggestions) of *Shaitân* (Satan), and to strengthen your hearts, and make your feet firm thereby.

6. Yûnus (Jonah) 10:24

Verily, the likeness of (this) worldly life is as the water (rain) which We send down from *the sky*; so by it arises the intermingled produce of the earth of which men and cattle eat: until when the earth is clad in its adornments and is beautified, and its people think that they have all the powers of disposal over it, Our Command reaches it by night or by day and We make it like a clean-mown harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday! Thus do We explain the *Ayât* (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, laws, etc.) in detail for the people who reflect.

7. Hûd [(Prophet) Hûd] 11:44

And it was said: "O earth! Swallow up your water, and O *sky*! Withhold (your rain)." And the water was made to subside and the Decree (of Allâh) was fulfilled (i.e. the destruction of the people of Nûh (Noah). And it (the ship) rested on (Mount) Jûdî, and it was said: "Away with the people who are *Zalimûn* (polytheists and wrong-doers)!"

8. Ar-Ra'd (The Thunder) 13:17

He sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, and the valleys flow according to their measure, but the flood bears away the foam that mounts up to the surface - and (also) from that (ore) which they heat in the fire in order to make ornaments or utensils, rises a foam like unto it, thus does Allâh (by parables) show forth truth and falsehood. Then, as for the foam it passes away as scum upon the banks, while that which is for the good of mankind remains in the earth. Thus Allâh sets forth parables (for the truth and falsehood, i.e. Belief and disbelief).

9. Ibrâhîm (Abraham) 14:32

Allâh is He Who has created the heavens and the earth and sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, and thereby brought forth fruits as provision for you; and He has made the ships to be of service to you, that they may sail through the sea by His Command; and He has made rivers (also) to be of service to you.

10. Al-Hijr (The Rocky Tract) 15:22

And We send the winds fertilizing (to fill heavily the clouds with water), then cause the water (rain) to descend from *the sky*, and We give it to you to drink, and it is not you who are the owners of its stores [i.e. to give water to whom you like or to withhold it from whom you like].

11. An-Nahl (The Bees) 16:10



He it is Who sends down water (rain) from *the sky*; from it you drink and from it (grows) the vegetation on which you send your cattle to pasture.

12. An-Nahl 16:65

And Allâh sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, then He revives the earth therewith after its death. Verily, in this is a sign (clear proof) for people who listen (obey Allâh).

13. Al-Kahf (The Cave) 18:40

"It may be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden, and will send on it *Husbân* (torment, bolt) from *the sky*, then it will be a barren slippery earth.

14. Al-Kahf 18:45

And put forward to them the example of the life of this world: it is like the water (rain) which We send down from *the sky*, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it, and becomes fresh and green. But (later) it becomes dry and broken pieces, which the winds scatter. And Allâh is Able to do everything.

15. Tâ-Hâ 20:53

Who has made earth for you like a bed (spread out); and has opened roads (ways and paths) for you therein, and has sent down water (rain) from *the sky*. And We have brought forth with it various kinds of vegetation.

16. Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage) 22:63

See you not that Allâh sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, and then the earth becomes green? Verily, Allâh is the Most Kind and Courteous, Well-Acquainted with all things.

17. Al-Mu'minûn (The Believers) 23:18

And We sent down from *the sky* water (rain) in (due) measure, and We gave it lodging in the earth, and verily, We are Able to take it away.

18. An-Nûr (The Light) 24:43

See you not that Allâh drives the clouds gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap of layers, and you see the rain comes forth from between them; and He sends down from *the sky* hail (like) mountains, (or there are in the heaven mountains of hail from where He sends down hail), and strikes therewith whom He wills, and averts it from whom He wills. The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the sight.

19. Al-Furqân (The Criterion) 25:48

And it is He Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy (rain); and We send down pure water from *the sky*.

20. An-Naml (The Ants) 27:60

Is not He (better than your gods) Who created the heavens and the earth, and sends down for you water (rain) from *the sky*, whereby We cause to grow wonderful gardens full of beauty and delight? It is not in your ability to cause the growth of their trees. Is there any *ilâh* (god) with Allâh? Nay, but they are a people who ascribe equals (to Him)!

21. Al-‘Ankabût (The Spider) 29:63

And if you were to ask them: "Who sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, and gives life therewith to the earth after its death?" they will surely reply: "Allâh." Say: "All the praises and thanks be to Allâh!" Nay, most of them have no sense.

22. Ar-Rûm (The Romans) 30:24

And among His Signs is that He shows you the lightning, for fear and for hope, and He sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, and therewith revives the earth after its death. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who understand.

23. Luqmân (Luqmân) 31:10

He has created the heavens without any pillars that you see, and has set on the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with you. And He has scattered therein moving (living) creatures of all kinds. And We send down water (rain) from *the sky*, and We cause (plants) of every goodly kind to grow therein.

24. Fâtir or Al-Malâ’ikah (The Originator of Creation, or The Angels) 35:27

See you not that Allâh sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, and We produce therewith fruits of various colours, and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colours and (others) very black.

25. Az-Zumar (The Groups) 39:21

See you not that Allâh sends down water (rain) from *the sky*, and causes it to penetrate the earth, (and then makes it to spring up) as water-springs, and afterward thereby produces crops of different colours, and afterward they wither and you see them turn yellow; then He makes them dry and broken pieces. Verily, in this is a Reminder for men of understanding.

26. Az-Zukhruf (The Gold Adornments) 43:11

And Who sends down water (rain) from *the sky* in due measure, then We revive a dead land therewith, and even so you will be brought forth (from the graves).

27. Al-Jâthiyah (The Kneeling) 45:5

And in the alternation of night and day, and the provision (rain) that Allâh sends down from *the sky*, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the turning about of the winds (i.e. sometimes towards the east or north, and sometimes towards the south or west sometimes bringing glad tidings of rain etc., and sometimes bringing the torment), are signs for a people who understand.

28. Qâf 50:9

And We send down blessed water (rain) from *the sky*, then We produce therewith gardens and grain (every kind of harvests) that are reaped.

29. At-Târiq (The Night-Comer) 86:11

By *the sky* (having rain clouds) which gives rain, again and again.

## Appendix B

The verses where the word 'sky' is mentioned in the meaning of 'sky'

1. Al-Baqarah ( The Cow) 2:22

Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and *the sky* as a canopy, and sent down water (rain) from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allâh (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped).

2. Al-Baqarah 2:164

Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allâh sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between *the sky* and the earth, are indeed *Ayât* (proofs, evidence, signs, etc.) for people of understanding.

3. Al-An'âm (The Cattle) 6:35

If their aversion (from you, O Muhammad SAWA and from that with which you have been sent) is hard on you, (and you cannot be patient of their harm to you), then if you were able to seek a tunnel in the earth or a ladder to *the sky*, so that you may bring them a sign (and you cannot do it, so be patient). And had Allâh willed, He could have gathered them together (all) on true guidance, so be not you one of those who are *Al-Jâhilûn* (the ignorant).

4. Al-An'âm 6:125

And whomsoever Allâh wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islâm; and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to *the sky*. Thus Allâh puts the wrath on those who believe not.

5. Al-Anfâl (The Spoils of War) 8:32

And (remember) when they said: "O Allâh! If this (the Qur'ân) is indeed the truth (revealed) from You, then rain down stones on us from *the sky* or bring on us a painful torment."

6. An-Nahl (The Bees) 16:79

Do they not see the birds held (flying) in the midst of *the sky*? None holds them but Allâh [none gave them the ability to fly but Allâh]. Verily, in this are clear *Ayât* (proofs and signs) for people who believe (in the Oneness of Allâh).

## 7. Al-Isrâ' (The Journey by Night) 17:93

"Or you have a house of *Zukhruf* (like silver and pure gold), or you ascend up into *the sky*, and even then we will put no faith in your ascension until you bring down for us a Book that we would read." Say (O Muhammad SAWA ): "Glorified (and Exalted) be my Lord [(Allâh) above all that evil they (polytheists) associate with Him]! Am I anything but a man, sent as a Messenger?"

## 8. Al-'Ankabût (The Spider) 29:34

"Verily, we are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment from *the sky*, because they have been rebellious (against Allâh's Command)."

## 9. Ar-Rûm (The Romans) 30:48

Allâh is He Who sends the winds, so that they raise clouds, and spread them along *the sky* as He wills, and then break them into fragments, until you see rain drops come forth from their midst! Then when He has made them fall on whom of His slaves as He wills, lo, they rejoice!

## 10. Ghâfir or Al-Mû'min (The Forgiving or The Believer) 40:64

Allâh, it is He Who has made for you the earth as a dwelling place and *the sky* as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shapes good (looking) and has provided you with good things. That is Allâh, your Lord: so Blessed be Allâh, the Lord of the '*Âlamîn* (mankind, jinn and all that exists).

## 11. Ad-Dukhân (The Smoke) 44:10

Then wait you for the Day when *the sky* will bring forth a visible smoke,

## 12. Al-Ma'ârij (The Ways Of Ascent) 70:8

The Day that *the sky* will be like the boiling filth of oil, (or molten copper or silver or lead).

**Appendix C**

The verses where the word 'sky' is mentioned in the meaning of 'rain'

## 1. Al-An'âm (The Cattle) 6:6

Have they not seen how many a generation before them We have destroyed whom We had established on the earth such as We have not established you? And We poured out on them rain from *the sky* in abundance, and made the rivers flow under them. Yet We destroyed them for their sins, and We created after them other generations.

## 2. Yûnus (Jonah) 10:31

Say (O Muhammad SAWA): "Who provides for you from *the sky* and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?" They will say: "Allâh." Say: "Will you not then be afraid of Allâh's punishment (for setting up rivals in worship with Allâh)?"

### 3. Hûd [(Prophet) Hûd] 11:52

"And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him, He will send you (from *the sky*) abundant rain, and add strength to your strength, so do not turn away as *Mujrimûn* (criminals, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh)."

### 4. Fâtir or Al-Malâ'ikah (The Originator of Creation, or The Angels) 35:3

O mankind! Remember the Grace of Allâh upon you! Is there any creator other than Allâh who provides for you from *the sky* (rain) and the earth? *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He). How then are you turning away (from Him)?

### 5. Ghâfir or Al-Mû'min (The Forgiving or The Believer) 40:13

It is He Who shows you His *Ayât* (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and sends down (rain with which grows) provision for you from *the sky*. And none remembers but those who turn (to Allâh in obedience and) in repentance (by begging His Pardon and by worshipping and obeying Him Alone and none else).

## Appendix D

The verses where the word 'sky' is mentioned in the meaning of 'height'

#### 1. Ibrâhîm (Abraham) 14:24

See you not how Allâh sets forth a parable? A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to *the sky* (i.e. very high).

#### 2. Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage) 22:31

Hunafâ' Lillâh (i.e. worshiping none but Allâh), not associating partners (in worship) unto Him; and whoever assigns partners to Allâh, it is as if he had fallen from *the sky*, and the birds had snatched him, or the wind had thrown him to a far off place.

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