

## The Role of Majaz Mursal in Understanding the Implicit Meanings of Hadith

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### Abstract

This study examines the role of majaz mursal in understanding the implicit meanings of the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) from the perspective of Arabic rhetoric. The study addresses whether a literal interpretation of hadith is sufficient or whether figurative understanding is essential for accurate comprehension. The issue arises from certain approaches that rely heavily on literal meanings while neglecting rhetorical and contextual elements of the Arabic language, potentially leading to misunderstandings of the intended message of hadith. Although studies on majaz in the al-Quran are extensive, research specifically focusing on majaz mursal in Prophetic hadith remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to identify the concept of majaz mursal in hadith, analyse its contextual significance, and evaluate its importance in hadith interpretation. Using a qualitative approach through textual analysis of selected hadiths, the study finds that the implicit meanings of majaz mursal should not be understood solely through literal interpretation, as this may affect the accuracy of meaning. Instead, contextual and rhetorical approaches are essential for achieving a more accurate, comprehensive, and in-depth understanding of hadith.

**Keywords:** Majaz Mursal, Implicit Meaning, Literal Meaning, Arabic Rhetoric, Hadith.

### Introduction

The hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) represent one of the principal sources of Islamic teachings after the al-Quran and serve as an essential reference in matters of theology, law, morality, and social life (Talib et al., 2010). Nevertheless, understanding hadith is not limited solely to examining the sanad and textual transmission, but also requires a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and rhetorical features of the Arabic language (Syamsuddin, 2020; Samsudin et al., 2021). Since the language of hadith frequently employs figurative and rhetorical expressions, complete reliance on literal interpretation does not necessarily reflect the actual meaning intended in the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad

(p.b.u.h.). This demonstrates the importance of Arabic rhetoric in hadith interpretation, particularly in understanding implicit meanings conveyed through non-literal expressions (Bakar, 2024).

Among the rhetorical elements extensively discussed in Arabic rhetoric is *majaz mursal*, which refers to the use of a word for a meaning other than its original meaning based on 'alaqah other than similarity, accompanied by *qarinah* that prevent literal understanding. The use of *majaz mursal* contributes to the beauty, precision, and depth of Arabic expression, thereby enabling meanings to be conveyed concisely yet comprehensively. In Prophetic hadith, *majaz mursal* plays an important role in explaining theological concepts, legal implications, moral teachings, and matters of the unseen in accordance with the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of the Arabic language (Fatih, 2017; Fasya, 2016; Hussin, 2016).

Despite its acknowledged significance, contemporary approaches to hadith interpretation sometimes demonstrate a strong tendency toward literalism, namely understanding hadith texts solely based on their outward meanings without considering rhetorical and contextual dimensions. Such an approach has the potential to create misunderstandings concerning divine attributes, legal rulings, and the actual objectives of certain hadiths. Without understanding *majaz mursal*, some hadith expressions may be interpreted literally, thereby affecting the accuracy and coherence of meaning (Zainuddin et al., 2023; Saepuddin et al., 2025). Therefore, contextual and rhetorical approaches are essential to ensure that the interpretation of religious texts can be carried out more accurately and comprehensively (Ahmad, 2015; Shah, 2016).

The significance of this study lies in its contribution toward strengthening contextual approaches in hadith interpretation while emphasising the importance of Arabic rhetoric in contemporary Islamic scholarship. This study is beneficial not only to hadith researchers, but also to scholars of Arabic linguistics, rhetoric, and Islamic interpretation, as it provides a clearer analytical framework for understanding implicit meanings in Prophetic hadith and reducing interpretative ambiguities arising from overly literal readings of religious texts.

Although discussions on *majaz* are widely found in Quranic studies and classical Arabic rhetoric, research specifically examining the role of *majaz mursal* in Prophetic hadith remains relatively limited and insufficiently explored in a systematic manner. Most previous studies have focused on *majaz* in the Qur'an or on rhetorical discussions in general without giving detailed attention to the application of *majaz mursal* in hadith interpretation (Rahman & Seman, 2021; Maulana & Irawan, 2025). This gap indicates the need for more in-depth scholarly examination regarding the contextual function of *majaz mursal* in understanding the implicit meanings of hadith.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify the concept of *majaz mursal* in Prophetic hadith, analyse its relationship with contextual meaning, and evaluate its significance in understanding the implicit meanings of hadith. By employing a qualitative approach through textual analysis of selected hadiths containing elements of *majaz mursal*, this study seeks to demonstrate that rhetorical and contextual interpretation plays an important role in achieving a more accurate, comprehensive, and meaningful understanding of hadith.

*The Concept of Majaz Mursal and Its Role in Arabic Rhetorical Studies*

Majaz (مجاز) is a derivative term, or *maṣḍar*, specifically classified under *maṣḍar mimi* based on the morphological pattern *maf'al* (مفعّل) (Munawwir, 1997). Ibn Manzur (1990), in his *Lisan al-Arab*, explains that the term *majaz* originates from the root *جوزا - وجوزا - وجوزوا - ومجازا*, generally conveying the meaning of “to pass through” or “to traverse”. An example expression is “جرت الطريق”, meaning “I have crossed the road”.

In Arabic rhetorical theory, *majaz* is generally divided into two main categories: *majaz aqli* and *majaz lughawi*, and the *majaz lughawi* is divided into *isti'arah* and *majaz mursal*. The distinction between these two is determined by the 'alaqah between the literal meaning and the figurative meaning. If the relationship is based on similarity, it is classified as *isti'arah*, whereas if it is not based on similarity, it is known as *majaz mursal*.

Furthermore, *majaz mursal* is one of the important rhetorical elements in understanding hadith texts. Its usage not only enhances linguistic expression but also conveys meaning in a more effective, subtle, and profound manner. It allows expressions to become concise, refined, and impactful without requiring lengthy explanation (Hussin, 2016). In addition, *majaz mursal* helps to illustrate meaning more clearly through specific 'alaqah between literal and figurative meaning. The aesthetic quality produced through its usage reflects the sophistication of Arabic rhetoric, which emphasises precision of meaning and elegance of expression (Khaerunnisa & Firdaus, 2026).

*Majaz mursal* also contributes significantly to the comprehension of Hadith and Quranic texts. To determine the intended meaning of figurative expressions, one must pay close attention to context, *qarinah*, and 'alaqah. Without taking these factors into consideration, one can take statements literally, which could distort the intended meaning (Rahman et al., 2018). Thus, understanding of *majaz mursal* is necessary to guarantee precise, thorough, and in-depth interpretation of religious texts. According to Hamzah (2020), *majaz mursal* can be viewed from the perspective of the Malay language as a type of figurative expression that is purposefully employed to soften the directness of speech or provide an artistic effect in language. When compared to other forms of expression, its use has a greater and more lasting effect.

Therefore, it is clear that *majaz mursal* is a special kind of language that has a big impact on how people perceive and understand meaning. Because of this, the al-Quran and Hadith's miraculous qualities are strongly linked to figurative expression, which is consistent with its function as a guide for the straight path of Islam.

According to al-Jurjani (1994) in *Dala'il al-I'jaz*, the use of *majaz mursal* in speech or writing has a significant psychological impact on individuals. Al-Maydani (1996) similarly notes that such expressions not only produce impactful sentences but also evoke emotional responses from listeners. Afifi and Komarudin (2021) emphasise its importance in translation and interpretation processes. Likewise, Qasim et al. (2003) state that *majaz mursal* enhances linguistic expression by expanding meaning, strengthening sentence structure, and adding figurative depth to discourse.

In conclusion, majaz mursal makes a big contribution to developing language that is more understandable, emotionally engaging, and artistically sophisticated. Proper understanding requires 'alaqah and qarīnah to accurately interpret intended meanings.

#### *Implications of Neglecting Majaz Mursal*

A strict interpretation of Arabic textual sources, especially the al-Quran and Hadith, may result from the rejection of majaz mursal. This is due to the fact that many Arabic idioms have nonliteral meanings that go beyond their obvious language. Ignoring such metaphorical aspects might lead to a literal interpretation of expressions that ignores linguistic and contextual considerations. According to Islamic law, this method could lead to a false interpretation of the writings' intended meaning (Shareef & Sahyoun, 2023).

Furthermore, neglecting majaz mursal could compromise the Arabic language's rhetorical complexity and aesthetic depth. Arabic is known for its expressive stylistic variation, which includes the use of majaz mursal to effectively and profoundly transmit meanings. Ignoring this component reduces the aesthetic value, which is one of the unique qualities of the Qur'an and Hadith, and restricts the semantic range of expressions. As a result, the reader or listener may find the intended message less significant and compelling (Hamzah, 2020; Suryani, 2019).

According to Wahyuni and Yusuf (2025), rejecting majaz mursal could result in incorrect interpretations of religious ideas and court decisions. To prevent meaning ambiguity, some textual data requires figurative interpretation (Khalaf & Youssef, 2023). Without understanding majaz mursal, certain hadith statements may be interpreted solely through their literal meanings, potentially leading to difficulties in comprehending divine attributes, legal rulings, and the intended meanings of Prophetic traditions. Therefore, knowledge of majaz mursal is essential to ensure a contextual, accurate, and linguistically coherent interpretation of religious texts in accordance with the principles of Arabic rhetoric (Norasid et al., 2024; Wahab et al., 2014).

From a historical standpoint, misinterpretations of Qur'anic and prophetic texts happened even during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and his companions because of a lack of knowledge and an insufficient understanding of contextual and rhetorical elements, such as majaz mursal (Fatih, 2017). Figurative expression has long been acknowledged as a difficult component of interpretation and translation, frequently posing problems for translators who are unfamiliar with the idea of majaz mursal (Samsudin et al., 2015).

#### *Analysis of Hadith Translation*

This research provides a comparative analysis of two hadith examples that were translated using contextual and textual methods. The contextual interpretation is further elaborated in this study, while the textual translation is sourced from KTRSJ. The first hadith is narrated by Muslim (no. 1428) and Ibn Majah (no. 1428) concerning the encouragement to increase actions of sujud. The hadith is as follows:

عليك بكثرة السجود

Translation: "Perbanyakkanlah sujud" (KTRSJ).

From a rhetorical perspective, the phrase *بكثر السجود* contains majaz mursal. The term *السجود* (sujud) is used figuratively to refer to the act of *الصلاة* (salah) as a whole. In this case, a part of the salah, namely sujud, is mentioned, while the intended meaning refers to the entire act of salah.

If the hadith is taken literally, it could be assumed that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is only encouraging frequent physical sujud. Nonetheless, an in-depth analysis of the hadith indicates that the objective is to promote sincere acts of worship, especially prayer, for the sake of Allah rather than sujud alone. Sujud is one of the essential components of prayer; without it, the prayer is invalid. Furthermore, sujud is highly regarded in Islam as it symbolises obedience to Allah and carries significant spiritual benefits (Kerwanto, 2023). Frequent sujud allows a Muslim to demonstrate sincerity before Allah and to seek His mercy and forgiveness (al-Ghazali, 1993).

The presence of majaz mursal in this hadith is supported by Hamid 'Auni (n.d.), who notes that the term *السجود* is used to signify prayer due to its significance. According to al-Jibrin (n.d.), increased sujud refers to acts of worship such as prayer and supplication. Since sujud is an essential component of prayer, it metaphorically represents the entire act of prayer.

Therefore, majaz mursal is employed through 'alaqah al-juz'iyah, where a part of prayer is mentioned while the whole act of worship is intended. This brief expression demonstrates the rhetorical richness of majaz mursal, as it conveys a broad meaning within a concise linguistic form.

The second hadith, narrated by Muslim (no. 228), discusses the perfection of prayer:

ما من امرئ مسلم تحضره صلاة مكتوبة فيحسن وضوءها، وخشوعها، وركوعها

Translation: "Tidak ada seorang muslim pun yang hadir waktu sembahyang fardu lalu dia menyempurnakan wudu'nya, khusu'nya, dan ruku'nya" (KTRSJ).

This hadith emphasises the importance of maintaining the quality of prayer from the moment of wudoo until its completion with full humility and proper performance of all its pillars. However, the term "وركوعها" is translated literally as "dan ruku'nya". From a rhetorical perspective, ruku' is also used as majaz mursal through 'alaqah al-juz'iyah, where one pillar of prayer is mentioned while the entire prayer is intended. According to al-Alusi (1954), the term ruku' can also refer to prayer itself. This is supported by Qur'anic linguistic usage such as "وهم راعون", which is understood as performing prayer rather than merely performing ruku'.

As a result, a strictly textual translation may fail to capture the implied meaning of majaz mursal in hadith. In contrast, a contextual translation preserves the intended meaning as well as its rhetorical richness. As Shareef and Sahyoun (2023) point out, literal translation may restrict semantic expansion and reduce the rhetorical richness of the text.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, majaz mursal is a crucial element in Arabic rhetorical studies that plays a significant role in understanding the implicit meanings of Prophetic hadith. Its usage in Arabic

not only reflects linguistic elegance and rhetorical precision but also enables deeper and more accurate communication of meaning.

A strong grasp of majaz mursal assists scholars, researchers, and students in interpreting implicit meanings within hadith more accurately and comprehensively. This understanding is particularly important in matters related to creed, legal rulings, and ethics, as misinterpretation may arise when texts are approached purely literally without considering contextual factors.

Neglecting majaz mursal may lead to misunderstanding hadith by restricting interpretation to literal meanings alone, without considering the linguistic and contextual background. Such an approach may result in confusion regarding the intended message of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

Therefore, the study of majaz mursal should be given serious attention in hadith and Arabic language studies. A deeper understanding of this concept not only strengthens comprehension of religious texts but also highlights the beauty and uniqueness of Arabic rhetorical expression in the Prophetic tradition. Ultimately, mastery of majaz mursal serves as an important tool in ensuring that hadith interpretation is carried out in a precise, balanced, and Shariah-compliant manner.

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