

Tauriyah as A Semantic Ornamentation (*Muḥassināt Ma'nawiyah*) in the Qur'an: Meaning Structure and Rhetorical Function

Mukhyaruddin¹, Muhammad Irfan Nasution², Riski Nadia Nasution³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Corresponding E-mail: Mukhyaruddin@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines *tauriyah* as a form of semantic ornamentation (*muḥassināt ma'nawiyah*) in the Qur'an by focusing on its meaning structure and rhetorical function. The study responds to a conceptual limitation in Qur'anic rhetorical studies, where *tauriyah* is often treated as an aesthetic device within *badī* rather than as a semantic-rhetorical mechanism that organizes layered meaning. Using a qualitative textual-hermeneutical design supported by corpus-assisted philological analysis, the article analyzes selected Qur'anic expressions that display interaction between the near meaning (*al-ma'nā al-qarīb*) and the distant intended meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ba'īd*). The analysis integrates classical Arabic rhetoric, Qur'anic semantics, discourse-pragmatic interpretation, and limited verification through digital linguistic resources. The findings show that *tauriyah* in Qur'anic discourse does not produce arbitrary ambiguity but guides readers through an ordered movement from lexical possibility to contextual intention. Its rhetorical functions include strengthening persuasion, creating reflective delay, deepening theological awareness, and intensifying the communicative force of Qur'anic expression. The study further demonstrates that *muḥassināt ma'nawiyah* should be reframed as an interpretive and semantic category rather than a merely decorative subdivision of *badī*. The article contributes to Qur'anic studies by bridging classical *balāghah* and modern semantic-pragmatic analysis, while also showing how corpus-assisted verification can support, without replacing, close rhetorical reading.

Keywords: *tauriyah*, Qur'anic rhetoric, *muḥassināt ma'nawiyah*, semantic ornamentation, *balāghah*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji *tauriyah* sebagai bentuk ornamentasi semantik (*muḥassināt ma'nawiyah*) dalam Al-Qur'an dengan menitikberatkan pada struktur makna dan fungsi retorikanya. Studi ini berangkat dari keterbatasan konseptual dalam kajian retorika Al-Qur'an, ketika *tauriyah* sering dipahami hanya sebagai perangkat estetika dalam *badī*, bukan sebagai mekanisme semantik-retorik yang mengorganisasi makna berlapis. Dengan menggunakan desain kualitatif tekstual-hermeneutis yang didukung oleh analisis filologis berbantuan korpus, artikel ini menganalisis sejumlah ungkapan Al-Qur'an yang memperlihatkan interaksi antara makna dekat (*al-ma'nā al-qarīb*) dan makna jauh yang dimaksudkan (*al-ma'nā al-ba'īd*). Analisis dilakukan dengan mengintegrasikan retorika Arab klasik, semantik Al-Qur'an, pendekatan pragmatik-wacana, serta verifikasi terbatas melalui sumber linguistik digital. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *tauriyah* dalam wacana Al-Qur'an tidak menghasilkan ambiguitas yang arbitrer, tetapi mengarahkan pembaca melalui gerak interpretif yang teratur dari kemungkinan leksikal menuju maksud kontekstual. Fungsi retorikanya mencakup penguatan persuasi, penciptaan jeda reflektif, pendalaman kesadaran teologis, dan intensifikasi daya komunikatif ungkapan Al-Qur'an. Studi ini juga menunjukkan bahwa *muḥassināt ma'nawiyah* perlu dipahami sebagai kategori interpretif dan semantik, bukan sekadar subbagian dekoratif dari *badī*. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada kajian Al-Qur'an dengan menjembatani *balāghah* klasik dan analisis semantik-pragmatik modern, sekaligus memperlihatkan bahwa verifikasi berbantuan korpus dapat mendukung, tanpa menggantikan, pembacaan retorik yang mendalam.

Kata kunci: *tauriyah*, retorika al-qur'an, *muḥassināt ma'nawiyah*, ornamentasi semantik, *balāghah*



Introduction

The Qur'an has never been received merely as a doctrinal text. Within Islamic intellectual history, it has functioned simultaneously as scripture, linguistic authority, liturgical discourse, moral address, and an inexhaustible field of semantic reflection. This multidimensional status explains why Qur'anic interpretation in *Ushuluddin* and Islamic Studies has consistently involved more than the extraction of legal or theological propositions. It also requires attention to the way meaning is organized, intensified, deferred, and made persuasive through Arabic rhetorical form. In contemporary scholarship, this issue has acquired renewed importance because Qur'anic studies increasingly engage philology, discourse analysis, semantics, translation studies, and digital corpus methods, while Muslim communities continue to encounter the Qur'an across multilingual, educational, and public interpretive settings. With Muslims constituting roughly one quarter of the world's population, the question of how Qur'anic meaning is structured and communicated is not only a textual matter, but also a socio-intellectual concern connected to religious literacy, interpretive authority, and the transmission of Islamic knowledge in global contexts.¹

Within the classical sciences of Arabic rhetoric, *balāghah* provided one of the most refined instruments for understanding the Qur'an's communicative force. Its tripartite division into *ma'ānī*, *bayān*, and *badī'* enabled Muslim scholars to examine how utterances correspond to context, how figurative expression produces clarity and depth, and how verbal or semantic embellishment strengthens meaning without reducing discourse to ornament alone.² Among the devices classified under *al-muḥassināt al-ma'nawiyyah*, *tauriyah* occupies a distinctive place because it operates through semantic duality: a word or expression presents an immediate, proximate meaning while allowing a more distant, contextually intended meaning to emerge. Unlike simple ambiguity, *tauriyah* is rhetorically disciplined; it depends on the tension between lexical availability and contextual direction. In Qur'anic discourse, this tension is especially significant because the text frequently activates layered meanings through compact expression, semantic economy, intertextual resonance, and theological density.³

The central problem addressed in this study arises from a tension in the way *tauriyah* has often been treated. In many pedagogical accounts of *badī'*, it is introduced as an aesthetic device, a form of semantic beautification that demonstrates the eloquence of Arabic expression. Such a description is not wrong, but it is insufficient. When applied to the Qur'an, *tauriyah* cannot be reduced to decorative ambiguity, because Qur'anic rhetoric is inseparable from guidance, argument, warning, consolation, and theological instruction. The unresolved issue, therefore, is how *tauriyah* functions as a structure of meaning and as a rhetorical strategy within Qur'anic discourse. Does it merely embellish the utterance, or does it guide the reader toward a deeper interpretive movement from surface signification to intended semantic force? This question becomes more pressing considering modern hermeneutical debates, where literary approaches to the Qur'an have sometimes been criticized for aestheticizing scripture, while purely

¹ Pew Research Center, "How the Global Religious Landscape Changed from 2010 to 2020" (Pew Research Center, 2025), <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/06/09/how-the-global-religious-landscape-changed-from-2010-to-2020/>.

² Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis* (Routledge, 2006), [https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Arabic Rhetoric A Pragmatic Analysis Abdul-Raof](https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Arabic+Rhetoric+A+Pragmatic+Analysis+Abdul-Raof).

³ Elsaid M Badawi and M A S Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage* (Brill, 2008), <https://brill.com/display/title/12559>.

doctrinal readings may overlook the linguistic mechanisms through which Qur'anic meanings are made persuasive.⁴

Previous studies may be grouped into three broad trajectories. The first consists of works on Arabic rhetoric and Qur'anic stylistics, which demonstrate the centrality of *balāghah* in understanding Qur'anic eloquence, coherence, and pragmatic effect.⁵ The second includes studies on Qur'anic textual relations and discourse structure, where scholars have examined coherence, thematic organization, and rhetorical composition beyond isolated verses.⁶ The third trajectory is represented by semantic and lexicographical studies that foreground Qur'anic vocabulary, polysemy, root-based meaning, and context-dependent interpretation. More recently, digital projects such as the Qur'anic Arabic Corpus and Quran Morph have made morphological, syntactic, and lexical data more accessible, enabling researchers to approach Qur'anic language with greater empirical precision.⁷ These bodies of scholarship have considerably advanced the study of Qur'anic language, yet they have not fully explained *tauriyah* as a distinct semantic-rhetorical mechanism within *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah*.

The research gap is therefore threefold. Conceptually, *tauriyah* remains under-theorized in Qur'anic studies because it is often absorbed into broader discussions of eloquence, ambiguity, polysemy, or figurative language without being examined as a specific structure of semantic postponement. Methodologically, existing treatments tend either to cite examples in a classificatory manner or to discuss Qur'anic rhetoric at the macro-level of coherence and composition, leaving insufficient attention to how the near meaning and far meaning interact within particular Qur'anic contexts. Empirically, there is still a need for close textual analysis that identifies selected occurrences of *tauriyah*, maps their semantic layers, and explains their rhetorical function in relation to theological, moral, and argumentative purposes. This gap justifies a study that moves beyond cataloguing rhetorical devices toward a more analytical model of meaning production.

This article is guided by three research questions. First, how is *tauriyah* semantically structured in selected Qur'anic expressions traditionally or analytically associated with *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah*? Second, how do the proximate and distant meanings interact with lexical context, syntactic arrangement, and broader discourse environment? Third, what rhetorical functions does *tauriyah* perform in Qur'anic communication, particularly in relation to persuasion, theological depth, interpretive reflection, and aesthetic intensification? Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to formulate a

⁴ Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis* (Amsterdam University Press., 2003); Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁵ Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*; H Abdul-Raof, *Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis, Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315670942>.

⁶ Salwa M S El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure* (Routledge, 2005), <https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Textual Relations in the Qur'an%27an El-Awa; M Cuypers, The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis, The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis, 2015, https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85049160610&partnerID=40&md5=aa8750643913d2761fa34e5097f48c07; M Shah and M A Haleem, The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies, The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.001.0001>.

⁷ Eric D Dukes, "The Quranic Arabic Corpus: A Bridge Between the Sacred Text and Computational Linguistics," *Proceedings of the Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC)*, 2010; Diyam Akra, Tymaa Hammouda, and Mustafa Jarrar, "QuranMorph: Morphologically Annotated Quranic Corpus" (arXiv, 2025), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2506.18148>.

semantic model of *tauriyah* in Qur'anic discourse, to analyze selected textual cases through close reading, and to clarify how semantic ornamentation contributes to the Qur'an's rhetorical effectiveness rather than functioning as mere embellishment.

The theoretical framework of this study combines classical Arabic rhetoric with modern semantic-pragmatic analysis. From *balāghah*, the study adopts the classification of *tauriyah* within *badī'* and the distinction between apparent and intended meaning. From semantics, it draws on polysemy, contextual meaning, and lexical activation. From pragmatics and discourse analysis, it examines how meaning is inferred through context, audience expectation, and communicative purpose. This integrated framework is necessary because *tauriyah* operates at the intersection of word meaning, interpretive inference, and rhetorical effect. It also allows the study to remain anchored in the Islamic scholarly tradition while engaging contemporary methods in Qur'anic linguistics.

By focusing on *tauriyah* as semantic ornamentation in the Qur'an, this study contributes to ongoing debates on Qur'anic rhetoric, Arabic semantics, and Islamic hermeneutics. Its novelty lies in treating *tauriyah* not as a marginal decorative trope, but as a disciplined mechanism of layered meaning that mediates between lexical form and theological-rhetorical function. The study is academically significant because it refines the analysis of *muḥassināt ma'nawiyyah*, strengthens the methodological bridge between classical *balāghah* and modern semantic theory, and offers a focused model for reading Qur'anic eloquence as both aesthetic and interpretive. In doing so, it positions *tauriyah* as an important entry point for rethinking how the Qur'an generates depth, persuasion, and reflective engagement through the economy of language.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative textual-hermeneutical design supported by corpus-assisted philological analysis. The choice of this design is based on the nature of the research problem, which does not concern measurable frequency alone, but rather the semantic structure, contextual activation, and rhetorical function of *tauriyah* as one of the *muḥassināt ma'nawiyyah* in Qur'anic discourse. A qualitative textual approach is appropriate because the study seeks to interpret selected Qur'anic expressions through close reading, semantic analysis, and rhetorical evaluation. At the same time, the study adopts limited corpus assistance to support lexical and morphological verification, not to replace interpretive reasoning. This combination allows the research to remain grounded in the classical tradition of *balāghah* while benefiting from contemporary Qur'anic linguistic resources.

The primary source of this study is the Arabic text of the Qur'an. The analysis focuses on selected verses that display semantic layering, lexical indirection, or a possible relation between a proximate meaning (*al-ma'nā al-qarīb*) and a distant intended meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ba'īd*), which are central to the rhetorical mechanism of *tauriyah*. The selection of verses follows three criteria. First, the verse must contain a lexical item or expression that plausibly carries more than one meaning within the semantic range of Qur'anic Arabic. Second, the apparent meaning must be contextually accessible, while another meaning must be rhetorically more forceful or interpretively more relevant to the broader discourse. Third, the expression must contribute to the argumentative, theological, moral, or aesthetic function of the verse, rather than merely producing lexical ambiguity. Verses in which semantic plurality arises only from grammatical uncertainty, variant readings, or general metaphor without the specific relation between near

and distant meaning are excluded from the core analysis in order to maintain conceptual precision.

The secondary sources consist of works on Arabic rhetoric, Qur'anic stylistics, Qur'anic semantics, and textual relations in the Qur'an. Abdul-Raof's works on Arabic rhetoric and Qur'anic discourse provide the main framework for understanding how rhetorical form functions pragmatically within Qur'anic communication.⁸ Badawi and Abdel Haleem's *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage* is used to verify Qur'anic lexical meanings and semantic ranges within Qur'anic contexts.⁹ Studies on Qur'anic coherence and textual relations are also used to examine how the meaning of a given expression is shaped by its immediate and wider discourse environment. In addition, digital linguistic resources, particularly the Qur'anic Arabic Corpus and QuranMorph, are used as supporting tools to check morphology, lemma distribution, and syntactic information. These resources are not treated as interpretive authorities, but as instruments for increasing transparency in textual observation.

The analytical framework of this study integrates three levels of analysis. The first is rhetorical analysis based on the classical concept of *tauriyah* within *badī'*, especially its distinction between the immediately apparent meaning and the more distant intended meaning. The second is semantic analysis, which examines lexical range, polysemy, contextual restriction, and the relation between denotative and implied meanings. The third is discourse-pragmatic analysis, which investigates how the expression functions in relation to persuasion, theological emphasis, moral instruction, narrative tension, or contemplative effect. This layered framework is necessary because *tauriyah* cannot be adequately understood as ornamentation alone; it must be examined as a mechanism through which the Qur'an organizes meaning and directs interpretation¹⁰

The interpretive procedure consists of five stages. First, potential cases of *tauriyah* are identified through a preliminary reading of Qur'anic passages and relevant discussions in Arabic rhetorical and Qur'anic studies literature. Second, each selected expression is examined lexically by consulting Qur'anic dictionaries and corpus-based morphological data. This stage establishes the possible semantic range of the expression and prevents arbitrary interpretation. Third, the expression is analyzed within its immediate syntactic and verse-level context to determine which meaning appears first to the reader and which meaning is more strongly supported by the discourse. Fourth, the wider textual environment is considered, including thematic progression, surrounding verses, rhetorical situation, and theological or ethical emphasis. Fifth, the rhetorical function of the *tauriyah* is classified according to whether it intensifies persuasion, creates reflective delay, strengthens theological meaning, softens expression, sharpens argument, or produces aesthetic-semantic density.

To ensure methodological transparency, the study uses an analytical matrix for each selected verse. The matrix records the Qur'anic expression, literal or proximate meaning, distant or intended meaning, lexical evidence, contextual evidence, rhetorical function, and relevant scholarly references. This procedure makes the interpretive movement visible and allows the reader to evaluate whether the proposed case genuinely represents *tauriyah* or only general

⁸ Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*; Abdul-Raof, *Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis*; Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Qur'anic Semantics: Corpus and Lexical Behavior* (Routledge, 2023), [https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Qur%27anic Semantics Corpus and Lexical Behavior Abdul-Raof](https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Qur%27anic+Semantics+Corpus+and+Lexical+Behavior+Abdul-Raof).

⁹ Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage*.

¹⁰ Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach*.

ambiguity. Since this study modifies the classical rhetorical method by combining it with semantic-pragmatic and corpus-assisted tools, the modification is justified by the need to make traditional *balāghah* analysis more explicit, replicable, and academically assessable in contemporary Qur'anic studies. The corpus component is limited to linguistic verification; final interpretation remains dependent on close reading, rhetorical reasoning, and coherence with Qur'anic discourse.

The validity of interpretation is maintained through source triangulation and contextual control. Source triangulation is applied by comparing rhetorical theory, Qur'anic lexical resources, tafsīr-oriented scholarship, and corpus-based linguistic data. Contextual control is applied by avoiding isolated word analysis and by reading each expression within its verse, passage, and broader Qur'anic usage. This prevents overinterpretation and reduces the risk of imposing a meaning that is not supported by the text. The study also acknowledges that *tauriyah* is interpretive by nature; therefore, the aim is not to claim exhaustive certainty for every case, but to provide a disciplined and evidence-based account of how layered meaning operates rhetorically in selected Qur'anic expressions.

Through this method, the study is positioned as a qualitative inquiry into Qur'anic rhetoric rather than a statistical corpus study or a purely historical survey of *balāghah*. Its methodological contribution lies in bringing together classical rhetorical classification, semantic analysis, discourse-sensitive interpretation, and limited corpus verification. This approach is considered appropriate for addressing the research objectives because it allows the study to explain not only where *tauriyah* appears, but also how it structures meaning and why it matters rhetorically within Qur'anic communication.

Results and Discussion

Semantic Architecture of *Tauriyah* in Qur'anic Expression

The principal finding of this subsection is that *tauriyah* in Qur'anic expression operates not as accidental ambiguity, but as a controlled semantic architecture in which the apparent meaning is textually available while a deeper, contextually stronger meaning is rhetorically activated. In classical *balāghah*, *tauriyah* is usually defined through the coexistence of two semantic possibilities: the near meaning (*al-ma'nā al-qarīb*), which first comes to the reader's mind, and the distant meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ba'īd*), which is ultimately intended by the discourse. This distinction is crucial for Qur'anic analysis because the Qur'an frequently employs highly economical lexical forms whose semantic force cannot be exhausted by a single literal equivalent. The selected textual evidence indicates that the rhetorical value of *tauriyah* lies precisely in this movement from lexical immediacy to interpretive depth.

A representative example may be observed in the Qur'anic use of the root *w-f-y* in relation to sleep and death. In Q. 6:60, the expression *yatawaffākum bi-l-layl* describes God as the one who "takes" human beings at night. The proximate association of *tawaffā* may suggest death, since the same root is widely used in Qur'anic discourse for the taking of the soul at death. Yet the immediate context clarifies that the verse refers to sleep, followed by awakening during the day. The semantic architecture of the expression therefore depends on a tension between mortality and nightly suspension of consciousness. The near meaning evokes the finality of death, while the contextual meaning points to sleep as a temporary form of divine taking. This layered structure does not create confusion; rather, it rhetorically links ordinary human sleep to eschatological vulnerability and divine sovereignty. The finding supports Abdul-Raof's argument that Qur'anic rhetoric is

pragmatic in force, since lexical selection is directed toward communicative impact rather than ornament alone.¹¹

Another significant case appears in Q. 51:47, where the phrase *bi-aydin* has often been discussed in relation to divine power. At the level of immediate lexical recognition, the form may evoke the semantic field of “hand,” especially for readers familiar with the root *y-d-y*. However, Qur'anic lexicography and contextual usage indicate that *ayd* in this construction signifies strength, might, or power. The rhetorical effect emerges from the semantic proximity between agency and power: the verse describes the construction of the heavens not through physical imagery in a crude anthropomorphic sense, but through a compact expression that conveys divine creative authority. This confirms the need to distinguish *tauriyah* from ordinary polysemy. In polysemy, several meanings may simply belong to the same lexical item; in *tauriyah*, the relation between meanings is rhetorically staged so that the reader is moved from a surface possibility toward a discourse-governed intention.¹²

The analysis also shows that the semantic structure of *tauriyah* is shaped by syntax. The distant meaning does not stand outside the verse; it is produced through grammatical positioning, collocation, and surrounding discourse. This is why a word cannot be classified as *tauriyah* merely because it has more than one dictionary meaning. The syntactic and thematic environment must make one meaning initially perceptible while directing interpretation toward another. In this respect, the Qur'anic use of layered meaning refines traditional accounts of *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah*. It shows that semantic ornamentation is not an external embellishment added to meaning, but an internal mechanism by which meaning is organized, delayed, and intensified. Such a reading is consistent with studies that emphasize Qur'anic coherence, where individual expressions gain force from their relation to wider textual structure rather than from isolated lexical analysis.

This finding expands previous scholarship in two ways. First, it supports classical *balāghah* by confirming that the categories of *badī* remain analytically useful for Qur'anic studies. Second, it revises a purely decorative understanding of *badī* by showing that *tauriyah* performs semantic work. It constructs a double horizon of meaning: one horizon arrests the reader through lexical familiarity, while the other deepens the verse's theological and rhetorical significance. Corpus-assisted tools such as the Qur'anic Arabic Corpus and QuranMorph are useful at this stage because they help verify lemmas, morphological forms, and occurrences across the Qur'anic text, although they do not determine interpretation by themselves.¹³ The methodological implication is that the study of Qur'anic rhetoric can benefit from combining close reading, classical rhetorical taxonomy, lexicographical control, and digital verification.

Theoretically, the semantic architecture of *tauriyah* demonstrates that Qur'anic ornamentation is inseparable from interpretation. The apparent meaning functions as an entry point, while the distant meaning becomes the site of rhetorical and theological realization. This challenges readings that treat *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah* as merely aesthetic devices and instead positions them as disciplined mechanisms of meaning production. The contribution of this

¹¹ Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*; Abdul-Raof, *Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis*.

¹² Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage*; Abdul-Raof, *Qur'anic Semantics: Corpus and Lexical Behavior*.

¹³ Kais Dukes, “The Qur'anic Arabic Corpus: Annotated Linguistic Resource for the Holy Qur'an,” *Language Resources and Evaluation* 47 (2013): 123–55; Akra, Hammouda, and Jarrar, “QuranMorph: Morphologically Annotated Quranic Corpus.”

subsection, therefore, is to show that *tauriyah* in Qur'anic expression should be read as a semantic-rhetorical structure: it generates depth not by multiplying meanings arbitrarily, but by guiding the reader through an ordered movement from lexical possibility to contextual intention.

From Lexical Ambiguity to Rhetorical Intention: The Near and Distant Meanings of *Tauriyah*

The main finding of this subsection is that *tauriyah* in Qur'anic discourse transforms lexical ambiguity into rhetorical intention by guiding the reader from an immediately accessible meaning toward a deeper meaning authorized by context. This process is not a free play of meanings, nor does it reduce the Qur'anic expression to decorative wordplay. Rather, it reveals a disciplined semantic movement in which the near meaning (*al-ma'nā al-qarīb*) attracts initial attention, while the distant meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ba'īd*) becomes persuasive through syntactic environment, thematic coherence, and the communicative aim of the verse. In this respect, *tauriyah* is best understood as an inferential device: it requires the reader to move from lexical possibility to contextual intention. This finding supports the view that Qur'anic meaning is generated through the interaction of expression, textual relation, and pragmatic force.¹⁴

A clear instance of this movement can be seen in Q. 55:6: *wa-l-najmu wa-l-shajaru yasjudān* "and the *najm* and the trees prostrate." At first encounter, especially after Q. 55:5, which mentions the sun and the moon, the word *al-najm* may evoke the celestial "star." This is the near meaning, strengthened by the preceding cosmic imagery. Yet the coordination of *al-najm* with *al-shajar* "trees" also activates another lexical possibility: *najm* as vegetation without a trunk, a meaning recorded in Arabic lexicographical and Qur'anic semantic sources. The verse therefore stages a subtle semantic shift. It begins by inviting a cosmic reading, then narrows the field through collocation, allowing the reader to recognize a terrestrial meaning that completes the image of created beings in submission. The rhetorical intention is not to confuse the reader, but to expand the semantic field of prostration from the heavenly order to the vegetal world. The expression thus condenses cosmology and ecology within a single lexical pivot.

This example also demonstrates that *tauriyah* differs from ordinary polysemy. Polysemy refers to the existence of multiple related meanings within a lexical item, but *tauriyah* requires a rhetorical sequence: one meaning appears first, while another is contextually privileged. In Q. 55:6, the reader's movement from "star" to "plant" is not arbitrary; it is directed by textual arrangement. The preceding mention of sun and moon opens the celestial horizon, while the pairing with trees redirects the semantic focus toward the earth. This interaction confirms El-Awa's argument that Qur'anic meaning is often produced through textual relations rather than isolated lexical units.¹⁵ It also refines Saeed's hermeneutical concern that interpretation must attend to the contextual and communicative dimensions of Qur'anic language, not merely to dictionary meaning or inherited doctrinal assumptions.¹⁶

A second example appears in Q. 6:60, where the expression *yatawaffākum bi-l-layl* describes God as the one who "takes you by night." The lexical field of *tawaffā* is strongly associated with death in several Qur'anic contexts, so the near meaning evokes mortality. However, the continuation of the verse, which speaks

¹⁴ El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*; Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach*.

¹⁵ El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*.

¹⁶ Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach*.

of what human beings commit by day and of being raised again, shows that the immediate reference is sleep. Here the distant meaning does not cancel the near meaning; instead, it absorbs and redirects it. Sleep becomes a nightly sign of human dependence, a temporary withdrawal of consciousness that reminds the reader of the final taking of the soul. The rhetorical intention is theological: the verse makes an ordinary human condition disclose divine power, accountability, and eschatological return. Such usage confirms Abdul-Raof's claim that Qur'anic discourse frequently employs linguistic structure to produce pragmatic and theological effects beyond surface reference.

The significance of these findings lies in their challenge to a narrow classification of *tauriyah* as a mere semantic ornament. In the selected cases, *tauriyah* functions as an interpretive mechanism that slows down the reader's movement through the verse and requires a second act of understanding. The near meaning is not discarded as a mistake; it is retained as part of the rhetorical effect. The distant meaning, meanwhile, becomes dominant because it is supported by context, coherence, and discourse purpose. This structure corresponds to broader pragmatic theories of inference, where meaning is not simply encoded in words but recovered through the relation between linguistic stimulus and contextual interpretation.¹⁷ In Qur'anic rhetoric, however, the inferential movement is not merely communicative efficiency; it also deepens reflection and strengthens the persuasive force of revelation.

Methodologically, the analysis shows why *tauriyah* should be studied through close reading supported by lexical and corpus-based verification. Digital tools such as the Qur'anic Arabic Corpus can help trace morphology and usage patterns, but they cannot by themselves determine rhetorical intention. Interpretation still requires attention to semantic layering, syntactic position, and thematic progression. The academic contribution of this subsection is therefore twofold. First, it preserves the classical insight that *tauriyah* depends on the relation between near and distant meanings. Second, it expands that insight by showing that, in Qur'anic discourse, the transition from lexical ambiguity to rhetorical intention is a structured hermeneutical process. Through this process, the Qur'an transforms semantic doubleness into theological depth, argumentative precision, and contemplative engagement.

Rhetorical Functions of *Tauriyah*: Persuasion, Reflection, and Theological Depth

The principal finding of this subsection is that *tauriyah* in Qur'anic discourse functions as a rhetorical mechanism that persuades, slows interpretation, and deepens theological consciousness. Its function is not limited to semantic embellishment in the decorative sense; rather, it reorganizes the reader's encounter with meaning by making the first lexical impression yield to a more contextually charged intention. This finding refines the conventional placement of *tauriyah* under *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah*. While classical rhetoric rightly identifies it as a semantic ornament, the Qur'anic examples show that ornamentation is inseparable from communicative force. The beauty of the

¹⁷ Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, "Relevance Theory," in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. Laurence R Horn and Gregory Ward (Blackwell, 2004), 607–32, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470756959.ch27>; Robyn Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication* (Blackwell, 2002), <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Thoughts+and+Utterances%3A+The+Pragmatics+of+Explicit+Communication-p-9780631214880>.

expression lies in its capacity to intensify guidance, argument, warning, and reflection.¹⁸

One of the clearest rhetorical functions of *tauriyah* is persuasion through semantic redirection. In Q. 15:99, the command *wa'bud rabbaka ḥattā ya'tiyaka al-yaqīn* “worship your Lord until *al-yaqīn* comes to you” presents an expression whose near meaning is “certainty.” At the first level, *al-yaqīn* may be understood as firm knowledge or inner conviction. Yet in Qur'anic usage and exegetical tradition, the term here is commonly understood as death, because death is the moment at which unseen realities become inescapably certain. The verse therefore does not merely instruct continuous worship until one possesses belief; it commands worship until the end of earthly life. The rhetorical force emerges from the semantic movement itself: death is not named directly, but is made present through the language of certainty. This indirection strengthens persuasion because it transforms an abstract theological concept into an existential horizon.¹⁹

A second function is reflective delay. *Tauriyah* does not deliver meaning in a flat or immediate manner; it creates a short interpretive interval in which the reader must test the apparent meaning against the surrounding discourse. This process is visible in expressions where the near meaning is semantically possible but insufficient unless read through textual coherence. Such delay is productive because it obliges the reader to participate in meaning-making without abandoning the discipline of context. This supports El-Awa's argument that Qur'anic interpretation depends heavily on textual relations, where the significance of an expression is generated through its connection with surrounding verses, thematic progression, and discourse structure. It also corresponds to pragmatic theories of inference, according to which hearers move from encoded meaning to intended meaning by using contextual clues and expectations of relevance.²⁰

A third function is theological deepening. *Tauriyah* enables the Qur'an to speak of ultimate realities—death, divine power, accountability, and human dependence—without always naming them in direct propositional form. The expression *al-yaqīn* in Q. 15:99, for example, does not simply replace the word “death”; it frames death as the unveiling of certainty. The rhetorical effect is therefore doctrinal as well as affective. It teaches that human life is suspended between worship and disclosure, between obedience and the final confirmation of what revelation has already announced. This confirms Abdul-Raof's view that Qur'anic rhetoric cannot be reduced to formal elegance, since linguistic form often carries theological and pragmatic weight. It also resonates with broader Qur'anic studies that treat the Qur'an as a discourse whose literary form is integral to its religious authority and communicative power.²¹

The analysis further shows that *tauriyah* can intensify spiritual attention by making the reader encounter familiar words in unfamiliar depth. A term such as *al-yaqīn* remains semantically recognizable, yet the Qur'anic context expands it beyond cognitive certainty into eschatological certainty. This layered operation is different from metaphor alone. Metaphor transfers meaning from one domain to

¹⁸ Shah and Haleem, *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*; Cuypers, *Compos. Qur'an Rhetor. Anal.*

¹⁹ Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ed., *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, vol. 1–5 (Brill, 2001), <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran>.

²⁰ Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication*; Wilson and Sperber, “Relevance Theory.”

²¹ Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, “The Dilemma of the Literary Approach to the Qur'an,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 23 (2003): 8–47, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1350075>; Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

another, while *tauriyah* stages a relation between two available meanings and lets context determine which meaning carries the rhetorical intention. The effect is subtle but powerful: the reader does not simply decode a figure of speech; the reader undergoes an interpretive transition. In that transition, the Qur'anic utterance produces reflection before conclusion and contemplation before doctrinal recognition.

These findings both support and extend previous scholarship. They support studies of Qur'anic rhetoric that regard language as central to the Qur'an's persuasive and devotional force. They also extend coherence-based approaches by showing that semantic ornamentation can operate at the micro-level of individual words while still depending on macro-level discourse relations. Methodologically, this subsection demonstrates that *tauriyah* should be analyzed through a combination of close reading, Qur'anic lexicography, discourse context, and, where relevant, corpus-assisted lexical verification. Digital resources such as the Qur'anic Arabic Corpus are useful for checking morphology and usage patterns, but the rhetorical function of *tauriyah* becomes clear only when linguistic evidence is interpreted within the communicative architecture of the verse.

The academic contribution of this discussion lies in reframing *tauriyah* as a mechanism of rhetorical cognition. It persuades by directing the reader toward a more forceful intended meaning, encourages reflection by delaying interpretive closure, and deepens theology by allowing a single Qur'anic expression to hold lexical familiarity and eschatological intensity together. In this sense, *tauriyah* is not peripheral to Qur'anic rhetoric. It is one of the ways in which Qur'anic discourse transforms semantic economy into spiritual and intellectual depth.

Reframing *Muḥassināt Ma'nawīyyah*: Toward a Corpus-Assisted Semantic Reading of Qur'anic Rhetoric

The central finding of this subsection is that *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah* can be reframed not merely as a classificatory category within *badī*, but as a productive analytical lens for examining how Qur'anic meaning is semantically patterned, rhetorically intensified, and contextually constrained. In the case of *tauriyah*, this reframing is especially important because the device does not operate through external ornamentation added after meaning has been established. Rather, it functions inside the architecture of meaning itself, where lexical choice, semantic range, syntactic placement, and discourse setting work together to produce interpretive depth. This finding challenges a narrow pedagogical understanding of *badī* as embellishment and instead places *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah* within a broader theory of semantic-rhetorical organization.²²

The corpus-assisted dimension of this study does not replace traditional *balāghah* or close reading. Its value lies in strengthening the evidentiary control of interpretation. When a Qur'anic expression is proposed as *tauriyah*, the researcher must show that the lexical item has more than one plausible semantic pathway, that these pathways are attested in Arabic usage or Qur'anic lexicography, and that the verse's context directs the reader toward one meaning as rhetorically intended. Corpus tools allow this process to be made more transparent by checking morphological form, lemma distribution, collocation, and repeated usage across the Qur'anic text. This approach is consistent with corpus-linguistic principles that treat textual evidence not as a substitute for

²² K Bauer and F Hamza, "Qur'anic Plot and the Practice of Emotional Virtue, with the Example of Al-Arāf (Q. 7)," in *Grasping Emotions: Approaches to Emotions in Interreligious and Interdisciplinary Discourse*, 2024, 229–52, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111185576-011>.

interpretation, but as a way to discipline claims about language patterns and usage.²³

A corpus-assisted reading also clarifies the difference between semantic possibility and rhetorical function. Many Qur'anic words possess broad semantic ranges, but not every instance of polysemy qualifies as *tauriyah*. The decisive question is whether the verse rhetorically stages a movement between a more immediate meaning and a more contextually decisive one. Here, Arabic natural language processing and annotated corpora provide methodological support. Work on Arabic computational linguistics has shown that Arabic morphology is structurally complex because of root-pattern formation, clitic attachment, inflectional variation, and context-sensitive tagging. These features make manual close reading essential, but they also explain why digital verification is valuable when dealing with Qur'anic lexical and morphological data.²⁴ The contribution of corpus support, therefore, is not automation of meaning, but refinement of linguistic observation.

This reframing also contributes to Qur'anic studies by bridging micro-level semantic analysis with macro-level discourse coherence. Studies of Qur'anic structure have shown that meaning often emerges through patterned relations between adjacent units, thematic progression, and rhetorical arrangement rather than through isolated lexical items alone.²⁵ A corpus-assisted semantic reading of *tauriyah* extends this insight by showing how a single word or phrase may carry local semantic tension while also participating in a wider communicative design. In this respect, *muḥassināt ma'nawiyah* should not be studied as a list of rhetorical devices detached from context, but as an interpretive field in which semantic density, textual relation, and theological force converge.

The finding further engages with digital humanities debates. Digital methods in literary and religious studies often promise scale, pattern recognition, and new forms of textual access, yet they can become reductive if they treat texts as data without sustained interpretation. This study avoids that problem by combining distant verification with close rhetorical reading. The corpus identifies patterns of form and usage, while *balāghah* explains how those patterns become meaningful within communicative discourse. Such a balance is important because Qur'anic rhetoric cannot be captured by frequency alone. A word may occur rarely

²³ Douglas Biber, Susan Conrad, and Randi Reppen, *Corpus Linguistics: Investigating Language Structure and Use* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804489>; Elena Tognini-Bonelli, *Corpus Linguistics at Work* (John Benjamins, 2001), <https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.6>; Tony McEnery and Andrew Hardie, *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511981395>.

²⁴ Nizar Y Habash, *Introduction to Arabic Natural Language Processing* (Morgan & Claypool Publishers, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.2200/S00277ED1V01Y201008HLT010>; Ali Farghaly and Khaled Shaalan, "Arabic Natural Language Processing: Challenges and Solutions," *ACM Transactions on Asian Language Information Processing* 8, no. 4 (2009): 14, <https://doi.org/10.1145/1644879.1644881>; Karin C Ryding, *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486975>; Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-the-arabic-language.html>.

²⁵ Raymond Farrin, *Structure and Qur'anic Interpretation: A Study of Symmetry and Coherence in Islam's Holy Text* (White Cloud Press, 2014), <https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=Structure+and+Qur'anic+Interpretation+Raymond+Farrin>; Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Marriage on Trial: Islamic Family Law in Iran and Morocco* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000); N Sinai, *The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction, The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction: The Qur'an*, 2017, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85212730983&partnerID=40&md5=a21fde1ceb5ab73c4440175a64fcdac>; Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage*.

and still perform major rhetorical work or occur frequently while assuming different functions in different contexts. This methodological caution aligns with broader digital humanities discussions that emphasize the need to connect computational evidence with interpretive judgment.²⁶

The integration of corpus evidence also has implications for Islamic hermeneutics. It helps prevent two methodological extremes: impressionistic rhetorical interpretation without linguistic control, and computational analysis without sensitivity to revelation as discourse. In Qur'anic studies, meaning is not produced by lexical frequency alone; it emerges through the interaction of wording, grammar, context, recitation, reception, and interpretive tradition. For this reason, digital verification must remain subordinate to disciplined textual reasoning. This position resonates with scholarship on the plurality of Islamic textual interpretation, where ambiguity is not necessarily a defect but can become an intellectually productive feature when governed by philological precision and interpretive responsibility.²⁷

Theoretically, this subsection proposes that *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah* be understood as semantic cognition rather than ornamental surplus. The Qur'an's rhetorical beauty is not separable from the way it organizes perception, inference, memory, and theological recognition. In the case of *tauriyah*, the reader is not simply entertained by ambiguity; the reader is guided through an ordered interpretive transition. The apparent meaning opens the semantic field, while the contextually intended meaning stabilizes the rhetorical effect. This means that ambiguity becomes meaningful only when it is textually directed and hermeneutically accountable.

The academic contribution of this subsection lies in offering a methodological model for Qur'anic rhetorical analysis. It shows that classical *balāghah* can be renewed without being displaced, and that digital corpora can support Islamic textual studies without reducing revelation to computational data. By reframing *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah* as a corpus-assisted semantic tool, the study provides a more systematic way to examine *tauriyah*: first by verifying lexical and morphological possibilities, then by analyzing contextual selection, and finally by explaining rhetorical function. This model strengthens the article's novelty because it moves beyond identifying examples of *tauriyah* and toward explaining how semantic ornamentation participates in Qur'anic meaning production.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that *tauriyah* in the Qur'an should not be understood merely as a decorative device within *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah*, but as a disciplined semantic-rhetorical mechanism through which Qur'anic discourse organizes layered meaning, directs interpretation, and intensifies theological reflection. In response to the first research objective, the study shows that *tauriyah* is structured through the interaction between the near meaning (*al-ma'nā al-*

²⁶ L W C van Lit, *Among Digitized Manuscripts: Philology, Codicology, Paleography in a Digital World* (Brill, 2020), <https://brill.com/display/title/56145>; Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (Verso, 2013), <https://www.versobooks.com/products/144-distant-reading>; Matthew L Jockers, *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History* (University of Illinois Press, 2013), <https://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/?id=p080899>; Elias Muhanna, ed., *The Digital Humanities and Islamic & Middle East Studies* (De Gruyter, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110376517>.

²⁷ Thomas A4 - Biesterfeldt Bauer Hinrich A4 - Tunstall, Tricia, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam* (Columbia University Press, 2021), <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/a-culture-of-ambiguity/9780231170659>; Travis Zadeh, *The Vernacular Qur'an: Translation and the Rise of Persian Exegesis* (Oxford University Press, 2015), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-vernacular-quran-9780198733331>.

qarīb) and the distant intended meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ba'īd*). The selected Qur'anic expressions indicate that the near meaning functions as the reader's initial semantic entry point, while the distant meaning becomes dominant through contextual control, syntactic arrangement, and wider discourse coherence. This confirms that Qur'anic semantic ornamentation is not arbitrary ambiguity, but an ordered movement from lexical possibility to rhetorical intention.

In relation to the second objective, the study has clarified that the interaction between proximate and distant meanings depends on more than dictionary-based polysemy. The analysis of selected verses shows that *tauriyah* becomes rhetorically meaningful only when lexical plurality is guided by textual environment, collocation, thematic progression, and communicative purpose. The Qur'anic examples discussed in the article reveal that the apparent meaning is not simply rejected once the distant meaning is identified; rather, it remains part of the rhetorical effect. The reader is invited to pass through an interpretive sequence in which lexical familiarity opens the field of meaning and contextual evidence stabilizes the intended sense.

In response to the third objective, the study establishes that *tauriyah* performs several major rhetorical functions in Qur'anic communication. It strengthens persuasion by directing the reader toward a more forceful intended meaning, produces reflective delay by requiring a second act of interpretation, and deepens theological awareness by allowing a single expression to hold semantic economy and doctrinal intensity together. These findings show that *tauriyah* contributes to the Qur'an's communicative power not by beautifying meaning externally, but by shaping how meaning is encountered, inferred, and internalized.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in reframing *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah* as a semantic and interpretive category rather than a merely ornamental subdivision of *badī'*. By integrating classical *balāghah*, Qur'anic semantics, discourse-pragmatic analysis, and limited corpus-assisted verification, the study offers a more systematic model for analyzing *tauriyah* in Qur'anic rhetoric. This model preserves the conceptual strength of the classical rhetorical tradition while making its analytical procedure more explicit, transparent, and academically assessable within contemporary Islamic Studies and Qur'anic linguistics.

The broader academic significance of the study is that it helps bridge traditional Arabic rhetorical theory and modern textual analysis. It demonstrates that classical concepts such as *tauriyah* remain productive for contemporary scholarship when they are examined through careful close reading, lexical control, contextual interpretation, and digital linguistic support. At the same time, the study cautions against reducing Qur'anic rhetoric either to aesthetic classification or to computational description. Corpus tools can assist the verification of morphology, lemma distribution, and usage patterns, but rhetorical meaning ultimately requires interpretive reasoning grounded in the discourse of the Qur'an.

Future research may expand this study by examining a larger set of Qur'anic passages, comparing *tauriyah* with other forms of *muḥassināt ma'nawīyyah*, or developing a more extensive annotated corpus of Qur'anic rhetorical devices. Further work may also explore how *tauriyah* is treated in classical tafsīr, how it affects Qur'an translation, and how semantic indirection contributes to reception across different interpretive traditions. Such studies would strengthen the methodological bridge between *balāghah*, hermeneutics, and digital humanities, while deepening our understanding of how the Qur'an produces meaning through linguistic precision, rhetorical subtlety, and theological depth.

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