

## **Evolution of Balāghah and Majāz in Arabic Rhetoric and the Need for its Innovation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Previous literature reveals diverse aspects of Balāghah (Arabic Rhetoric) and Majāz (figurative language), but very scanty literature exists on the evolution of both Balāghah and Majāz in Arabic language. This paper attempts to take an exhaustive review the existing literature in order to find out the stages and the factors which helped in the evolution of Balāghah and Majāz. The review reveals that the factors for development of Balāghah in Arabic language and rhetoric are figures of profane literature and their modification, evolution from oral tradition to written tradition, doctrine of 'I'jāz, doctrine of laḥn and Greek literature. The review also revealed the gradual evolution of Majāz through various stages which culminated in the works of Al-Jurjāni (d.471). The paper argues that Arabic rhetoric has remained stagnant since Al-Jurjāni, and it needs innovation in light of modern linguistic theories. This paper is a modest contribution to the literature on Arabic rhetoric and Majāz which may help the researchers working on Arabic rhetoric and metaphor, but it would recommend further research of classical and modern literature in order to achieve more insights on the evolution and development of Arabic rhetoric.*

**Key words:** *Balāghah, Majāz, 'I'jāz, Qur'ān, metaphor.*

## Introduction

*Balāghah* or Arabic rhetoric is the sine quo non for understanding the Glorious Qur'ān because the metaphorical language highly draws on the *Balāghah* /Arabic Rhetoric. Therefore, it is vital for any serious discussion on the metaphorical language, its nature, comprehension and meaning construction to have an overview of *Balāghah*/Arabic rhetoric. This importance of *Balāghah* necessitates a brief overview of the meaning, evolution and development of *Balāghah*/Arabic Rhetoric, its importance in construal of the Qur'ānic verses, and its decline as well as the necessity for its innovation.

*Balāghah* is an Arabic term used for Rhetoric, and it refers to the study of aesthetic effectiveness or to convey the meaning through appropriate lexical construction<sup>1</sup>. However, it can be regarded as closest to rhetoric, the science of eloquence, as the *'Ilm ul-Balāghah* absorbs within itself both the rhetoric and poetic, and thus, it can be regarded as literary theory<sup>2</sup>. Literally, the word *Balāghah* means to reach its own destination and to stop, but in literary perspective, it signifies the study of the contextual requirements of appropriate lexical forms in a given situation<sup>3</sup>. Hence, *Balāghah* means the appropriate use of words according to the situational context in order to convey the message in an effective manner. *'Ilm ul-Balāghah* consists of theory of imagery (*bayān*), syntactical meanings (*ma'āni*), and rhetorical figures (*badi'*), the third one added by al-Khatīb al-Qazwīnī in his summary *Thalikhīs al-Miftah*<sup>4</sup>. The three branches of *'Ilm ul-Balāghah* are: *'Ilm al-Ma'āni* means the semantics of syntax or the science of patterns of Arabic speech in a context; *'Ilm ul-Bayān* means the science of figurative expressions like simile, metaphor, metonymy and *badi'* means the science of stylistics<sup>5</sup>.

This paper has taken an exhaustive review of classical and modern literature on Arabic rhetoric and *Majāz*. Review of the classical literature has been carried on with the help of *Maktabah Shamilah*, and the works of only those authors were selected for review, which have been discussed in the modern literature on Arabic rhetoric. The modern literature was surveyed on the scholar Google through keywords of *Majāz* and Arabic rhetoric. The available literature reveals various factors for development, such as figures of profane literature and their modification, evolution from oral tradition to written tradition, doctrine of *'I'jāz*, doctrine of *lahn* and Greek literature. The literature also revealed that the Arabic theory of *Majāz* passed on through various stages before its consummation in the works of Al-Jurjānī (d.471). However, the modern linguistic theories necessitate the innovation and development of Arabic rhetoric and theory of *Majāz*. The evolution of *Balāghah* has been discussed below.

## Evolution of *Balāghah* or Arabic Rhetoric

The research indicates that the evolution of *Balāghah*, the Arabic science of literary theory was rooted in exploring the various aspects of the Glorious Qur'ān.

Arabic rhetoric developed together with the Qur'ānic exegesis, and it culminated in the works of Abdul Qāhir Al-Jurjāni (d.471) and Abu al-Qasim Maḥmūd Al-Zamakhshari (d.539/1139)<sup>6</sup>. However, its evolution and development was gradual, and it can be briefly outlined as below:

### ***Balāghah* and figures of profane literature**

The figures of profane literature played a vital role in evolution of *Balāghah*. The figures of profane literature were gradually adopted for highlighting the various aspects of the Glorious Qur'ān by the exegetes and men of letters. The gradual adaptation of figures of profane literature caused, sometimes, the figures' names altered, modified or rendered obsolete during application to the Qur'ānic language. It can be inferred from the gradual adaptation of these figures that the Arabic literary theory evolved from the field of profane literature<sup>7</sup>. These figures led the Arabic linguists to coin artistic terms in pre-Islamic era like *sh'ir*, *saj*, *rāwi*, *madih*, *hija*, *ritha*, *'uyūb al- sh'ir*, (عيوب الشعر), but they went through semantic shift and development, and attained technical shape in the hands of philologist of Basra and Kūfa. Later on these terms attained highly developed form in Abbasid era in the hands of al-Rummāni, (d.386/997), Ibn Qutiybah (d.276/889), al-Khattābi (d.388/998) and Abdul Qahir Al-Jurjāni (d.471/1078)<sup>8</sup>.

However, these terminologies were not unanimously applied. Each term went through changes with different men of letters, and their application was haphazard and uncritical. It was due to the fact that different people applied them differently for different purposes in order to prove their point of views in the Qur'ānic and literary studies. In other words, initially the artistic terminologies had different meanings for different writers<sup>9</sup>. The situation remained the same until Al-Jurjāni who brought order out of chaos in his books *Asrār ul Balāghah* and *Dalā'il al-'I'jaz*. The linguistic and literary thoughts of Al-Jurjāni were still too luxuriant to bring perfection to the order, and it was al-Sakkāki, whose *Miftāḥ al-'ulum* helped in bringing order into the luxuriant thinking of Al-Jurjāni<sup>10</sup>.

### **Evolution from Orality to Literacy**

The pre-Islamic tradition of literature was, for the most part, orally communicated, and the rhetorical devices in Arabic oral tradition were mnemonic that helped in preservation of the oral text. However, with commencement of the tradition of literacy, the oral text took communicative functions, and finally, it attained the status of linguistic correlative. The linguistic inventions were the consequences of cultural ferment of 'Abbasid and various Arab theologians derived terminologies, which were not available in Arabic language. The linguistic code was cracked through the sciences of *Ishthiqāq*, *naḥu* and *sarf* to coin new expressions, and the rhetoric elements were retooled to change them from sensory to conceptually more abstract and complex concepts<sup>11</sup>.

## Modification of Figures of Profane Literature

As has already been stated above that the figures of profane literature gave solid footing to the evolution of *'Ilm al-Balāghah*. The theologians drew upon these figures and even modified them. The exegetes either exploited the literary terms of profane literature, or coined new ones, or modified the existing ones in their application to the interpretation of Qur'ān. Their purpose was two folds, to prove the inimitability of the Glorious Qur'ān and interpretation<sup>12</sup>. This he demonstrated with the evolution of *madhab kalāmi* and *laf wa nashr* both of which incorporates the versus rapportati and the exegetical instrument gloss. Relevant *Shawahid* (examples) were accumulated from both the profane literature and the Qur'ān to prove their terminologies. For example, al-Khatīb al-Qazwīni (d.1338) quotes in his *Talkhīs al-Miftah* from Ibn Ḥayyūs (d.1080) as well as the Qur'ān, as below<sup>13</sup>.

"كيف اسلو وانت حقف وغصن  
وغزال لحظا وقدا وردفا"

"How can I forget, when you are a dune, a branch, and a sun, in glance, stature, and figure?"

"وَمِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ"

"And of His mercy He has given you night and day, that you may rest therein and that you may seek of His grace."<sup>14</sup>

Wansbroug concludes that *laf wa nashr* was originally an exegetical term but it contains the elements of profane literature. This idea is supplemented by *Asrār al-Balāghah* and *Dalā'il al-'I'jaz* of Al-Jurjāni in which he dealt with both references from the poetry and the Qur'ān respectively. The whole system of *Balāghah* owes its development to poetic interest and scriptural interpretation<sup>15</sup>.

According to Falāhi<sup>16</sup>, Al-Jurjāni does not give distinctive position to the Qur'ān in his *Dalā'il al-'I'jaz*, rather he gives examples both from poetry and the Qur'ān. In exposition of *hazf*, he quotes the following couplet of Bakhtari.

"قد طلبنا، فلم نجد لك في السؤ  
دد، والمجد والمكارم مثلاً"

"We searched but in leadership, nobility and morality we could not find like u".

Here the word order should have been *فلم نجد لك مثلاً في السؤ* but as *مثلاً* comes in the second line, therefore, it has been omitted in the first line in order to maintain the lucidity and beauty of the verse. Contrary to omission, repetition of the same noun in place of pronoun in some places may be more appropriate and eloquent. The verse of the Glorious Qur'ān<sup>17</sup> *وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَّلَ* would not have been so much eloquent if it had been *وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِهِ نَزَّلَ*.

Besides the above, a number of factors contributed to the development of *balāghah*. Among them may be mentioned the doctrine of *'I'jaz*, exegetical interpretation, phenomenon of *lahn* and influences of Greek literature, briefly

detailed below.

### Doctrine of 'I'jāz and Balāghah

The science of *Balāghah* flourished among the Muslims theologians largely as a result of the doctrine of 'I'jāz. 'I'jāz means that the Glorious Qur'ān is inimitable in *fasahah* and *balāghah*, and that it is a unique genre, having a unique literary style, and the Muslim regards its inimitability as an important ingredient of faith<sup>18</sup>.

'I'jāz is derived from a-j-z from which is derived *mu'jizah* meaning miracle<sup>19</sup>. *mu'jizah* is an actual act, while 'I'jāz is a conceptual term, and the Qur'ānic term for it is *aaya* or *bayyinah*<sup>20</sup>. It is any act sprung from some challenge, free from contradiction, and is not naturally possible<sup>21</sup>. When the obdurate opponents of the Holy Prophet asked for miracles, the Glorious Qur'ān declared in a rhetorical question,

"أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ"

"And is it not enough for them that we have sent down to thee the Book which is rehearsed to them?"<sup>22</sup>.

The Holy Prophet said that revelation was his miracle and that he hoped that on day of Resurrection, the number of his followers will be more than the followers of other prophets<sup>23</sup>.

The doctrine of 'I'jāz popularly stems from the challenge of the Glorious Qur'ān to its opponents who regarded themselves as paragons of eloquence and were proud of literary aptitude<sup>24</sup>. The Glorious Qur'ān says,

"قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا"

"Say: "If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support."<sup>25</sup>

When they could not do it, another challenge came.

"أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَاذْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ"

"Or they may say, "He forged it," Say, "Bring ye then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever ye can, other than Allah.- If ye speak the truth!"<sup>26</sup>

When they also failed in this, they were again challenged with a warn;

"وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَاذْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ( ) فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ ۗ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ"

"And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true. But if ye cannot - and of a surety ye cannot - then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, - which is

*prepared for those who reject Faith.”<sup>27</sup>*

However, they failed in every respect in spite of their pride in their artistic taste, and like psychic patients, they consistently reiterated “قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا” “We have heard this (before): if we wished, we could say (words) like these:” (I-Tūr, 34), and therefore, they were called “قَوْمٌ حَصِيمُونَ” “contentious people” (I-Zukhruf, 58) and “قَوْمًا لُدًّا” “people given to contention” (I-Kahf, 97) because of their quarrelsome nature. In spite of their arrogance Waleed bin Mughīra had to confess the unsurpassable beauty and eloquence of the Glorious Qur’ān, saying as “والله ان لقوله لحلاوة وان عليه لطلاوة، وانه ليحطم ما تحته، وانه ليعلو وما يعلى.” “By Allah, I thought about what the man says, and it is not poetry. Verily, it has sweetness and it is truly elegant. Verily, it is exalted and it is not overcome”, and then, termed it as “إِنَّ هَذَا” “إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ” (I-Mudathir, 24)<sup>28</sup>. It was this effect which led the proud Quraysh into oblivious silence, paying no attention to ‘Utba ibn Rabī’ah’s advice that this Qur’ān will be news among the Arab tribes, overwhelming everything<sup>29</sup>, and lost everything in their futile attempt to crush the new religion by force<sup>30</sup>. The term ‘I’jāz was probably first used by Imam Aḥmad bin Ḥambal (d. 204 A. H)<sup>31</sup>, but it took technical shape when the Mu tazillite Nazzam ignited the debate by introducing the doctrine of sarfa, opening the field for flourishing literary activity, which in turn led to the production of linguistic theories<sup>32</sup>. In this regard, it may be pertinent to mention “Al-bayān wa-Tabyān” of Jaḥīz’, “Tawīl Mushkil Al Qur’ān” of Ibn Qutaybah (d.276/889), “I’jāz al-Qur’ān” of Baqlāni (d.315 A.H.), “al-Nukat fi I’jāz al-Qur’ān” of al-Rummani, (d.386/997), “al-Ma’āni fi Abwāb al-Tawhīd wa-al-‘Aadl” of Qādi Abdul Jabbār (d. 359 A.H), “Bayan I’jāz al-Qur’ān” of al-Khattābi (d.388/998) and “Asrār ul Balāghah” and “Dala’il al-I’jāz” of Abdul Qahir Al-Jurjāni (d.471/1078). The Scripture was regarded as source of the canons of classical rhetoric, and relevant examples were collected both from the Glorious Qur’ān and profane literature by scholars in support of their figures of rhetoric and their exegetical interpretation<sup>33</sup>.

### **Balāghah and Exegetical Interpretation**

Exegetical interpretation was the another factor which led to flourishing of Balaghah literature, and the exegetes made references to the poetry of jahiliyyah and modified or coined new terminologies for exegetical interpretation. The main cause of literary endeavor was not merely the aesthetic foundation but a theological impulse to interpret the meanings of the Glorious Qur’ān. The unique style of the Glorious Qur’ān led the Muslims to apply the existing rhetorical devices to its text not as much for proving its inimitability as for exegetical interpretation<sup>34</sup>.

### **Balāghah and Doctrine of *Lahn***

Besides these, the linguistic feature of *Lahn* also contributed a lot to the efforts behind the development of Arabic linguistic and *Balaghah*, and various schoolmen tried a lot to enrich literature on syntax, grammar, morphology, phonology so as to preserve Qur'ānic language from damage and corruption when non-Arabs entered Islam<sup>35</sup>. The codification of Arabic language was carried out not only to preserve the Glorious Qur'ān but also the classical Arabic language from linguistic corruption<sup>36</sup>. *Lahn* as a phenomenon prompted the scholars to frame grammatical models with the aim to assist both the new converts to Islam and native speakers of Arabic language to learn Arabic<sup>37</sup>. The first to realize this was Caliph Umer (RA), who, upon hearing wrong recitation of a verse of the Glorious Qur'ān, advised Abu al-Aswad to lay down the rules of grammar. Abu al-Aswad completed his work on the rules of grammar with the inspiration of Caliph Ali (RA), and thus founded by Abu al-Aswad, the Arabic grammar reached its zenith in works of Al-Jurjāni, Ibn Malik and Ibn Hasham<sup>38</sup>.

### **Balāghah and Greek Influence**

Besides the above factors, Greek rhetoric particularly Aristotelian logic also contributed to the development of Arabic rhetoric. Its motive was both literary and theological. The influence of Greek thought can be felt in writers like al-Jahīz, Al-Jurjāni and al-Sayuti, but they kept their originality. The Arabic literary theory and rhetoric had Greek influence, and it helped the innovators in their arguments with the conservative traditionalists<sup>39</sup>. Similarity can be dug out between the Greeks and the Arabs in field of Rhetoric, as is the case with concept of metaphor and simile in Greek and Arabic rhetoric. Greek books of rhetoric were translated and appreciated by Farābi (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sīna (d. 428/1037), yet there is no greater influence of Greek thought on Arabic literary criticism<sup>40</sup>. However, it will be more moderate to assume that external influences such as that of Greek, Syriac, Pahlavi, and Indian languages on development of Arabic linguistics have not been validated<sup>41</sup>.

### **Importance of *Balāghah* or Arabic Rhetoric in Qur'ānic studies**

Ibn Abbas, in an answer to a question regarding the meaning of “يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ” said that if there is an ambiguity in the meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān, it must be sought in Arabic poetry, as it is the repository of Arabic language<sup>42</sup>. Al-Jurjāni held that in absence of the science of rhetoric, it is impossible to grasp Qur'ān and its interpretation and consequently it hinders commentaries on the text of the revelation<sup>43</sup>. In other words, knowledge of the science of rhetoric is pre-requisite for knowledge of the Glorious Qur'ān, which can solely be obtained from the study of poetry. Thus, Al-Jurjāni emphasizes that the Qur'ān may be studied from literary perspective. Zamakhshri (d.538h) testifies Al-Jurjāni's assertion that the Qur'ānic interpretation requires the knowledge of *al-Ma'āni* and *al-Bayān*<sup>44</sup>.

Al-Sayuti<sup>45</sup> holds that besides grammar, syntax, morphology, the knowledge of *ʿIlm al-Balāghah* is vital for meaning construal of the Qurʾān. The importance of *ʿIlm al-Balāghah* can be compared to salt in food which can only be tasted but cannot be explained. Thus, for a thorough examination and appreciation of the Glorious Qurʾān, the knowledge of rhetoric is inevitable. Stetkevych<sup>46</sup> holds that absolute rhetorical beauty equals absolute power and this argument runs in Islamic faith - the miraculousness of the Qurʾān and the truth of the Prophethood of the Prophet can only be grasped through the knowledge of rhetoric, and thus, knowledge of rhetoric is not only pre-requisite for understanding the Qurʾān, but also for consummation of faith.

### **Concept of metaphor before Arabic rhetoric**

Aristotle was the first critic to define metaphor. Aristotle<sup>47</sup> defines metaphor as “the application of a name to something that belongs to something else”. Aristotle’s concept of metaphor is based on transference of dominant attribute, and his definition is the root of his classification of metaphor i.e. specific-generic-specific and analogous. Three significant assumptions can be derived from Aristotle’s definition. First, he restricts the concept of metaphor to the use of name for an object which is used for any other object, thus bringing metaphor to the word level. The essence of metaphor has been left to the etymological sense of the word ‘metaphor’. This view of metaphor restricted the metaphor just to name of objects or to a piece of a speech<sup>48</sup>. He draws the distinction between the literal and figurative language through his concept of metaphor, but he has not elaborated the relationship of similarity and relationship between metaphors and attributes transferal. Aristotle argues that the use of metaphor is a natural gift, and that it cannot be learnt. In other words, Aristotle<sup>49</sup> holds that metaphor is novel use of a word or noun and is not part of spoken language. Thus, metaphor was considered purely a linguistic device, used for embellishing the style.

Second, he treats metaphor and simile alike, as both are based on comparison, and if the explanation is omitted from similes, they will make metaphors<sup>50</sup>. His stand on simile and metaphor leaves two questions, whether simile is also produced by transference, which is illogical, and whether metaphor is produced by similarity, which contradicts his categorization of metaphors. Third, his concept of transferences is not clear and he seems to be more concerned with extrinsic similarities between things rather than with intrinsic attributes of things. His theory is not based on the dominant attribute of the two things themselves, but on the outward qualities their respective classes. Therefore, his theory of metaphor is regarded as closer to the technical term of *al-majāz* in Arabic rhetoric<sup>51</sup>.

### ***Majāz* in Arabic *Balāghah***

Metaphor in Arabic *ʿIlm ul-Balāghah* is strongly entrenched in syntactic and semantic investigation of the Qurʾān. *Majāz*, technically, in Arabic language is



used for figurative language in general, and hence, it is very close to the sense of metaphor used in this research. It has a long history of its own before it became coupled with *ḥaqīqah* (real meaning). In the beginning, it referred to metaphor and metaphorical meaning<sup>52</sup>.

### Abu 'Ubaidah and *Majāz*

Abu 'Ubaidah was the first to use the term *Majāz* in his *Majāz ul Qur'ān*. However, Abu 'Ubaidah was mainly concerned with the original, linguistic and etymological meaning of word and the original words order. He refers to *Majāz* in his book with reference to addition, omission, abridgement, foregrounding, back grounding, singular for plural and plural for singular etc<sup>53</sup>.

Abu 'Ubaidah did not use it in rhetorical sense of metaphor or metonymy and such terms as *isti'ārah*, *kināyah*, *thamthil* etc were not even used in the whole of his book. Thus, his interest lies in original meaning of words and normal order of expression instead of rhetorical sense. Hence, he did not use it in opposition to *ḥaqīqah* but used it in a formula: A is the *Majāz* of B, whereas B is the natural equivalent of A i.e. Qur'ānic word or phrase<sup>54</sup>. It means that he meant by it explanatory re-writing of idiomatic language in natural language. Thus, he has used the word in purely linguistic sense. For him, it is only the original usage or etymological form or meaning of a particular word in its original usage, and not the metaphorical expression<sup>55</sup>.

### Ibn Qutaybah Concept of *Majāz*

Ibn Qutaybah<sup>56</sup> has used the word *Majāz* in plural as *majāzāt*. He says that *majāzāt* connotes the figures of speech in Arabic discourse and language. His definition is no doubt, all-inclusive, enlisting many poetic devices like *isti'ārah*, *kināyah*, *thamthil*, *taqdīm wa takhīr*, *ḥazaf*, *ikhfah*, *izhār*, *qalb* and *tikrar*. He says that the list is not exhaustive, but it includes many other things. Keeping in view the all-inclusive concept of *majāzāt*, Heinrichs<sup>57</sup> says that Ibn Qutaybah definition is partial in nature.

But, Heinrichs has not probed into his discussion of *Majāz*. Ibn Qutaybah drew a difference between *Majāz* and *ḥaqīqah* (the real meaning), and held that due to abundant use of *majāzāt* in the Qur'ān, many people make mistakes in semantic analysis of the Qur'ān. In line with Aristotelian tradition, he uses this term "in giving name to a thing which belongs to another". For example, the word "umm-mother" is used in Arabic language for the earth. His discussion of *Majāz* becomes linguistically more significant during his analysis of *isti'ārah*, where he introduces the concept of borrowing of meaning for a word other than its most contextual meaning. The borrowing of meaning may either depend upon similarity or contiguity. However, he has not drawn a line between *isti'ārah* and *Majāz*, but rather says that most of *majāzāt* fall in the category of *isti'ārah*<sup>58</sup>.

### Al-Jahīz concept of *Majāz*

According to al-Jahīz<sup>59</sup>, meaning of the words depends upon the context. Anyone who does not know about the meaning of a word in an utterance, parable, analogy or derivatives, he is likely to make errors in interpretation of the Glorious Book and the Sunnah. Though Heinrichs is suspicious whether al-Jahīz used the term *Majāz* in the sense of Abu 'Ubaidah or poetic language, but according to al-Jahīz, words may have literal or metaphorical meanings. Jahīz uses the word *Majāz* in figurative sense<sup>60</sup>. He refers to the rejecters of *Majāz* and says that if they say that they will not opt for the figurative meanings in place of the literal meanings, why Allah has mentioned the animals in figurative sense. He, while discussing the nouns *عسل* and *شراب* and the verbs *ذق* and *اكل*, argues that metaphor, simile and similitude are constituents of *Majāz*<sup>61</sup>. The most fascinating aspect of his treatment of *Majāz* is *Majāz al-Aqli* as is evident from his discussion of the words *ذق* and *اكل*.

It is not something, which is outward similarity between things, but as a manner of spoken and written and language, and this is what he called the strange of discourse<sup>62</sup>. He does not discuss the terminologies nor go into their specific nature. He only dwells upon the dichotomy of real and figurative meaning in text. Al-Jahīz argues that *Majāz* includes all kinds of poetic devices, and serves as a tool to give grandeur to spoken as well as written language, giving examples both from the Qur'ān and Arabic poetry.

### Al-Jurjāni's theory of *Majāz*

Al-Jurjāni<sup>63</sup> has taken the term *Majāz* in its pure linguistic sense. He holds that when a word is used in a situational context for semantic argument which is not according to its semantic value in its most frequent contextual usage, it is termed as *Majāz*. Al-Jurjāni has also elaborated different kinds of *Majāz*. According to him, the first kind of *Majāz* is "*Lughawi*- linguistic. It is based on language. The second kind of *Majāz* "*al-Aqli-Reason*", which is based on the intellect of a person. He further classifies the language based *Majāz* into resemblance based *Majāz*, such as '*isti'ārah* "metaphor", '*thashbih*' "simile" and '*thamthil*' "parable" and contiguity based *Majāz* "metonymy"<sup>64</sup>. Al-Jurjāni laid the foundation of Arabic *balāghah* on his theory of *Majāz*.

Al-Jurjāni defined metaphor as, "a word in a sentence which substantial evidence supports its use for a specific meaning and is used by the poet or other man for a meaning other than its own as if it were borrowed for the sentence". Unlike Aristotle, Al-Jurjāni regards metaphor not as segment of discourse, but as a part of the sentence and a product of construction. He regards the transference not of name but of meaning in the context, and he terms it as the meaning of meaning. He introduces the conception of '*al-mafhūm*', which means the semantic value directly accessed by the word. In other words, it means the perceptual sense encoded by a

lexical item. But, if the semantic argument of a lexical item is retrieved with the help of linguistic context, it is termed as the meaning of meaning<sup>65</sup>.

Context mediates the semantic values of words. Context involves both the linguistic sentence and the cultural context of the language. Semantic value depends upon the context of the sentence in which a word occurs and the culture in which it is in use. For example, lion is the symbol of bravery and power in Arabic culture and it might not have the same meaning in all the cultures. Thus, the context depends upon the culture. If one understands the culture, one can comprehend the context of an image in a sentence. If we know the Arabic culture, we should translate رأيت الأسد as I saw a lion. He says,

“If he translates our speech, "I saw a lion" which stands for a brave man in a way which means "strong brave," and fails to assign the particular name in his own language to this image, he fails to express our speech but is composing for himself his own speech”<sup>66</sup>.

Al-Jurjāni view of metaphor involves the projection of the dominant quality from one object to another object to signify the meaning of that object. Thus, Al-Jurjāni’s theory of metaphor is evaluative, innovating the Aristotelian descriptive theory of metaphor. The dominant quality or trait is called in Arabic language as “*al-sifat al- Ra’isiyyah* -main attribute” or “*al-sifat al-khās*-particular trait”. When it is projected from one object to another, it substantially changes the meaning of the later. It is based on the similitude between the objects. The psychological process in the writer’s mind, ‘*nafs*’ is at work here. He looks for similarities between the two objects and takes the common principal attribute of both objects. For example in the lion image, the writer ignores all other attributes except bravery<sup>67</sup>. This concept of similarity is intrinsic, and it left far reaching effects on the classification of metaphor by Al-Jurjāni. The similarity between the two objects, because of *al-sifat al-Ra’isiyyah* “main attribute”, is crucial point of this classification. When the objects are similar, it needs does not so much interpretation or intellectual effort ‘*tawīl*’, but if the objects are not similar, the writer searches for the stored images in the *nafs* (mind) and employs imagination to analyze the images and visualize and bring forth what was hidden<sup>68</sup>.

Al-Jurjāni on the basis of dominant trait distinguishes *isti’ārah* “metaphor” from ‘*tashbih*’ “simile”. Similarity is at work both in simile *tashbih* and metaphor *isti’ārah*, and he considers metaphor a type of *tashbih* but different from it. Al-Jurjāni says,

"والتشبيه كالأصل في الاستعارة، وهي شبيهة بالفرع له، أو صورة مقتضبة من صوره إلا أنّها هنا أموراً اقتضت أن تقع البداية بالاستعارة"

“*Tashbih* is like the origin for *isti’ārah* and *isti’ārah* is a similar branch of *tashbih*, or it is brief image derived from the picture but here are things which necessitates its placement through *isti’ārah*”<sup>69</sup>. He further says,

"ام الاستعارة فهي ضرب من التشبيه، ونمط من التمثيل، والتشبيه قياس، والقياس يجرى فيما تعيه القلوب، وتدركه العقول"

"So far isti'ārah is concerned, it is a type of tashbih, and a branch of tamthil. Tashbih is analogy and analogy is current among the qualities which can be detected by the heart and realized by the intellect"<sup>70</sup>.

Contrary to Aristotle, Al-Jurjāni argued that metaphor, though different from simile, is a branch of it. Though both are based on similarity yet there is difference of treatment of similitude in simile and metaphor. In simile, the subject is placed with the predicate for clarification. Thus, in simile the attributes of one object signifies the other in the same statement and there is no transference. On the other hand, metaphor is a process, which takes the *wasf al-khās* from both the objects and gives it an image through integration. Simile requires both *mushabah* and *mushabah bihi* to have direct interaction and similarity comparison. In simile nothing is borrowed, but rather similarity on basis of *wajh al-shabah* is established. Contrary to this metaphor works on the borrowing of the semantic element embodied in the *wasf al- khās* from the *mushabah* lender to signify the *mushabah bihi*, the borrower, but without mentioning the borrower. Thus where in simile, there is description, in metaphor there is fusion of the dominant attribute. For example, in the sentence "Zaid is a lion", knowledge is given to the audience about Zaid's possession of bravery, which is the dominant attribute in the lion. The predicate "lion" gives information about the subject "Zaid". However, in the sentence, "The lion came" reveals that the attribute of bravery has been given image through loin in the man, and thus, the main attribute of bravery in the man and loin has been fused and integrated. The image of bravery as lion has previously been established in the mind of the speaker and the audience. Thus, the *mushabah* and *mushabah bihi* fuse in to each other through the *wasf al-khas*.

Al-Jurjāni's treatment of metaphor stands apart from the Aristotelian concept of metaphor on one hand and from the modern concept of metaphor on another. Contrary to Aristotelian concept of metaphor, he regards metaphor as linguistic phenomenon which is an integral part of construction and fundamental part of discourse. Al-Jurjāni does not regard simile and metaphor alike, rather he holds that in metaphor the objects of comparison are merged into a single unit, but in simile they do not fuse into one. Moreover, all similes cannot be converted into metaphors. Moreover, unlike the western tradition, he regards the nominative metaphors as expressive similes and not metaphors as already pointed out above<sup>71</sup>. The structure of nominative metaphors has led in western tradition to regard metaphor as name transfer, but rather it is the transference of meaning and not name. The name transfer tends to make the metaphors more than a fixed permanent phenomenon, but metaphor is semantic shift of a lexical item.

### Arabic Rhetoric after Al-Jurjāni

After Al-Jurjāni, the movement of rhetoric development felt fatigue<sup>72</sup>. A number of factors caused the decline in rhetorical criticism and literary theory. After the great Abbasid period, there was consistent decline in the fields of science and philosophy. The growth in science and philosophy inspired the West to reconsider its position in the world, but this psychological experience was not present in the Medieval Islam to reassert the literary creativeness<sup>73</sup>. However, on the other hand, this decline was also due to the swerving away from the rich Arabic tradition left in heritage by the schoolmen of medieval period and the unreasonable attachment to the Western ideals. If the traditional Arabic theories of literature and linguistics had not been ignored due to cognitive detachment with the past tradition and the assumed superiority of the West, and if they had been further developed, they would have challenged the modern literary and linguistic theories<sup>74</sup>. Hence, this decline is the result of the glorification of the past without any contribution, and this trend is the consequence of cultural, political, historical, economic and psychological factors<sup>75</sup>.

The literary approach was further developed in modern times by Muhammad Abduh (1855-1905), Amin al-Kuhli (1895-1966) and Taha Husain (1889-1973). Abduh's literary approach, as evident in *Tafsīr al-manār*, combines the dogmas of various schools of thought to build modern theology on rational basis. But, his method was eclectic rather than creative or critical as he combines approaches of different schools of thought without realizing their differences<sup>76</sup>. According to al-Kuhli, the traditional theory of *Balāghah* should be innovated by connecting it to psychology, literary criticism and literature, and then the new theory may be applied to scholarship on the Glorious Qur'ān. However, there is extensive development in modern knowledge in all fields such as semantics, semiotics, hermeneutics and psychology and the analysis of the Qur'ān from literary perspective of may be faced with many other challenges<sup>77</sup>.

### *Balāghah* and the Need for Innovation

Since Abdul Qahir Al-Jurjāni, the study figures of speech have changed a little in Arabic discourse, which make the core of *ʿIlm al-Bayān* as compared to its innovation and development in western thought and language, particularly of metaphor. The only luminary who added mathematical precision to the metaphoric expression was al-Sakkāki and thereafter no contribution was made it and all the efforts concentrated on commentaries of Al-Jurjāni and al-Sakkāki's works<sup>78</sup>. He objects to the logic of differentiation between *al-majāz al-'aqli* and *al-majāz al-lughawi*, as both obtains in the mind, and he regards it as what Halliday calls grammatical metaphor. He also suggests a new classification model of Figure of Speech with addition of grammatical metaphor and conceptual metaphor. Libdeh regards that figures of speech do not only have aesthetic function, but are informative and have a social function and that is missing in Al-Jurjāni model of

### Figures of speech<sup>79</sup>.

No doubt, in medieval age, there has been substantial discussion on the nature of metaphor, but neither its history nor its function has found a solid ground place in modern literature. According to Heinrichs<sup>80</sup>, there is dearth of studies on figures of speech in Arabic rhetoric particularly the nature and function of metaphor. Contrary to the Western studies, no serious work of the transformation and the transforming power of metaphor in Arabic modernism have been launched. Thus, there is stagnancy in the field of Figure of Speech in general and metaphor in particular. Current Western studies of metaphor are very informative and can be fruitful in studying the interactions between metaphor and modernism in any national literature and there is need of innovation in Arabic sciences of rhetoric<sup>81</sup>.

The application of cognitive theories of metaphor to Arabic may bring fruitful results in changing the nature and function of metaphor and other figures of speech, as they are more realistic and have experiential basis. Metaphor has been regarded now as conceptual in nature and does not have merely aesthetic consideration. The views of rhetoricians on metaphor are blurred as they just only take into account the similarity relation between the entities. They regard it as a tool to embellish the style, but metaphor is all pervasive and has conceptual consideration<sup>82</sup>. The cognitive theory of metaphor has given a new dimension to the figurative language research in Arabic language, rhetoric and literature. Various studies have investigated the conceptual metaphor in the Arabic language and the Qur'ān, and these recommends further exploration of Arabic language and literature from cognitive linguistic perspective.

### Conclusion

The Arabic *'Ilm al-Balāghah* took its root in exegetical interpretation with extensive derivation from the figures of profane literature. The exegetes and rhetoricians extensively studied the classical Arabic poetry of pre-Islamic era to dig out the figures of speech used there and to adopt, modify and innovate them in their application to the Glorious Qur'ān to expound its meaning and appreciate its beauty. Thus, the foundation and the growth of *'Ilm al-Balāghah* was the theological impulse and aesthetic consideration. However, after the glorious period of Abbasid, *'Ilm al-Balāghah* witnessed a constant stagnancy till the modern period when voices have been raised to innovate this science of medieval period through the lens of western research in the field of linguistic. The present research is such an attempt to urge future researchers to explore the language of the Quran and Hadith literature in light of modern cognitive theories of metaphor and figurative language.

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