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BEYOND LITERAL COMMANDS IN PROPHETIC MESSAGES: REINTERPRETING IMPERATIVE MEANINGS IN *MUKHTĀR AL-AḤĀDĪTH AL-NABAWĪYAH WA-AL-ḤIKAM AL-MUḤAMMADĪYAH*

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ABSTRACT

The hadith corpus is a rich linguistic resource, but remains underexplored for its use of imperatives, whose meanings go far beyond the literal command. Prior scholarship has been predominantly confined to the Qur'anic text or to cross-thematic samples, and no study has systematically examined the meaning of imperatives in a thematic chapter of a classical hadith book, especially from the perspective of *ʿilm al-maʿānī*. This study addresses the gap by examining the pattern and meaning of imperatives (*amr*) in *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth al-Nabawīyah wa-al-Ḥikam al-Muḥammadīyah*, specifically in the chapter *Khātimah fī Tahdhīb al-Nufūs*. Data were collected using the observation note technique and analyzed using the distributional method via substitution. A total of 103 imperatives were identified in three patterns: *fiʿl al-amr* (90), *al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ bi lām al-amr* (11), and *ism fiʿl al-amr* (2). A notable finding concerns the absence of the *maṣdar*, one of the four patterns in the *ʿilm al-maʿānī*. This absence serves as a stylistic marker that distinguishes this thematic hadith from the Qur'anic imperative patterns. In terms of meaning, reinterpretation reveals the dominance of *duʿāʾ* (40), followed by *ḥaqīqī* (30), *irshād* (28), *tahdīd* (3), and *iltimās* (2). The dominance of *duʿāʾ* and *irshād*, collectively accounting for 66% of the corpus, demonstrates that imperatives function as a spiritual-pedagogical strategy rather than a binding normative command. These findings contribute to thematic hadith stylistics by establishing an empirical relationship between genre orientation and preference for imperative patterns. From an analytical framework perspective, they also emphasize the importance of the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* framework for reinterpreting the imperative meaning of hadith.

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INTRODUCTION

The book *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth al-Nabawīyah wa-al-Ḥikam al-Muḥammadīyah* (hereinafter referred to as *MANHM*) by Sayyid Ahmad bin Ibrahim al-Hashimi is a thematic hadith compilation that demonstrates structural and pedagogical distinction (al-Hashimi, 1960). Containing approximately 1,500 selected hadith arranged in a combination of Arabic alphabetical order and thematic groupings, the book is regarded as instrumental in shaping Islamic character in an integrated manner (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Ahmed & Chowdhury, 2024). This pedagogical value is particularly evident in the dominance of *amr* 'imperative' in its hadith texts. The imperative expression is present not merely as a marker of grammatical commands but also as a vehicle of directive communication that guides behavior and shapes concrete worship practices. As shown by Hussin et al. (2025) and reinforced by other rhetorical studies of the Prophet's hadith, the construction of imperative functions simultaneously serves as a didactic and mnemonic tool that facilitates the effective dissemination of Islamic teachings (Jabour & Hussein, 2024; Al-Wade'i, 2025). The dominance of the imperative in this book renders it a compelling object of linguistic inquiry, particularly for uncovering how moral educational values are conveyed through the directive speech structures of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Faraz et al., 2024; Ibrahim et al., 2024).

The dominance of *amr* in *MANHM* is not merely a grammatical phenomenon, but rather a manifestation of a deliberate prophetic communicative strategy. Its presence in Islamic texts, including hadith, cannot be interpreted solely as a literal command (Ghani, 2011; Nurhaliza et al., 2025). In the context of *MANHM*, the diversity of imperative meanings is particularly salient because the hadiths compiled in this book are the Prophet's speeches to his companions in various communicative situations. The meanings of imperatives that surface vary according to the *siyāq al-kalām* 'speech context', *'alāqah bayn al-mutakallim wa al-mukhāṭab* 'the relationship between speaker and listener', and *gharaḍ al-kalām* 'the purpose of the utterance' (Jauhar, 2025; Puspita & Yusup, 2023). Studies of imperatives in hadith have shown that the form of commands in prophetic texts may assume a variety of meanings depending on the accompanying contextual indicators (Inam & Jan, 2023; Nurhaliza et al., 2025). Although the imperatives in Islamic texts have been widely discussed, a specific, focused study examining imperatives within a thematic chapter of a hadith book through a comprehensive one of the classical Arabic rhetorical framework, *'ilm al-ma'ānī*, has yet to be conducted. This constitutes a significant lacuna, given the book's considerable role in the Islamic educational tradition and the richness of the imperatives construct it contains (Nurhaliza et al., 2025; Inam & Jan, 2023).

In general, literature on the study of imperatives in Islamic texts can be classified into three main scopes. The first focuses on the analysis of the Qur'an. Studies within this stream consistently yield a convergent core finding: *uslūb al-amr* 'style of imperatives' in the Qur'an cannot be understood solely as a literal command, because its illocutionary meaning is determined by *siyāq al-kalām*, *gharaḍ al-balāghah* 'rhetorical purpose', and the communicative context of each verse (Gani, 2020; Rifain et al., 2021; Haikal & Jannah, 2021; Pusti et al., 2024). Studies of various verses have shown that imperatives consistently undergo a semantic shift from the *ḥaqīqī* 'literal meaning' to the *majāzī* 'figurative meaning', such as *irshād* 'guidance', *du'ā'* 'prayer', *tahdīd* 'threat', and *iltimās* 'request', with *irshād* being the most prevalent meaning (Wijayanti, 2022; Kamal, 2024; Sehri & Alitaetah, 2020; Maulana, 2019). These studies also emphasize that a purely morphological reading of the verb-form imperative proves inadequate to

capture the full semantic depth of imperatives. A multidisciplinary reading that integrates classical Arabic rhetoric (*ʿilm al-balāghah*), *tafsir*, and linguistics is thus warranted (Al Farisi, 2018; Amin et al., 2017). Although productive and consistent in their findings, all of these first-stream studies are limited to the Qur'an and have not yet addressed the hadith text as an independent analytical corpus.

The second scope of research shifts attention to the hadith text through a pragmatic approach. The central finding that unifies these studies is that imperatives in prophetic utterances function as a directive speech act whose meaning is highly contingent upon the situational context, the status of the speaker-hearer relationship, and the communicative purpose surrounding the utterance (Jabour & Hussein, 2024; Inam & Jan, 2023; Barakah, 2019). Studies of various hadith corpora, such as *al-Mustadrak*, *Asbāb Wurūd al-Ḥadīth*, and *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*, consistently demonstrate that the meanings of *duʿāʾ* and *irshād* dominate the use of imperatives in prophetic texts, substantially outweighing their literal counterparts (Fadilah & Sholih, 2022; Puspita & Yusup, 2023; Nurhaliza et al., 2025). This pattern confirms that imperatives in hadith function more as a spiritual-educational strategy than as a binding instruction. Studies in this stream also demonstrate that the directive function is not always expressed explicitly as a verb but may manifest in cross-modal forms, including metaphorical interrogative sentences (Jazuli, 2019; Aulia & Arifuddin, 2019). Despite the hadith as the object, studies in this stream generally draw on imperative data from diverse themes without systematic thematic delimitation, so the pattern of meaning within a single thematic chapter of hadith has not been comprehensively mapped.

The third stream of research analyzes imperatives in classical Islamic texts beyond the Qur'an and the canonical hadith collections using the framework of *ʿilm al-maʿānī*. These studies collectively demonstrate that classical Islamic texts harbor imperative constructions of comparable complexity to those in the Qur'an, yet systematic linguistic studies of them remain rare (Nurhaliza et al., 2025). A recurring finding in this stream is that the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* approach has proven effective in uncovering the communicative function of imperatives concealed beneath their grammatical form by treating *qarīnah* 'contextual indicator', *bināʾ al-kalām* 'structure of utterances/sentences', and *ʿalāqah bayn al-mutakallim wa al-mukhāṭab* as the primary analytical parameters (Rohman & Taufiq, 2022; Jauhar, 2025). These studies also demonstrate that the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* framework can integratively bridge the analysis of morphological forms with the interpretation of communicative functions, something that grammatical analysis alone cannot accomplish (Rafi et al., 2021; Zaid et al., 2023). While promising, this third stream of studies has not yet specifically applied the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* approach to a single thematic chapter in a selected hadith book in a focused and comprehensive manner.

From the mapping of the three research scopes above, it is evident that research on imperatives in Islamic texts has advanced considerably, but leaves one significant gap. The foregoing mapping reveals a paucity of studies that analyze the form and meaning of imperatives in a thematic chapter of a hadith book using a comprehensive *ʿilm al-maʿānī* approach. The first stream of studies is limited to the Qur'an; the second uses cross-theme hadith data that is not thematically mapped; and the third stream of studies has not yet addressed selected hadith books such as *MANHM*. Although it is presumed to exhibit a pronounced pedagogical and spiritual orientation, with imperative constructions presumed to be rich in formal and semantic variation, *MANHM* has yet to receive dedicated linguistic scrutiny (Nurhaliza et al., 2025; Inam & Jan, 2023). The absence of research integrating the classification of imperative patterns with a systematic explanation of their meaning in the context of hadith rhetoric provides the

impetus for the present study. The novelty of this study lies in the systematic application of the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* framework to a single thematic chapter of a classical hadith book and the corpus-based mapping of imperative meanings within an oriented chapter, a thematic dimension unaddressed in prior research. Accordingly, this study advances two research questions. *First*, what imperative patterns are attested in *MANHM*? *Second*, what meanings do the imperatives in *MANHM* convey?

METHOD

This study adopts a library research design using a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was employed because the object of study is textual data from Arabic hadith texts, which require interpretive, contextual, and rigorous reading rather than numerical measurement (Ozuem et al., 2022). Library research was deemed appropriate because all primary and secondary data sources are written texts that can be accessed, studied, and analyzed without fieldwork (Lund & Wang, 2021; Khoa et al., 2023; Ruggiano & Perry, 2019). The analytical framework used is *ʿilm al-maʿānī*, a branch of *ʿilm al-balāghah* that specifically examines the correspondence between sentence structure (*binā' al-kalām*) and the context of the speech situation (*muqtaḍā al-ḥāl*) to ensure that the speaker's intended communicative meaning is aptly realized (‘Atiq, 1985; Ghani, 2011). In the context of this study, *ʿilm al-maʿānī* is operationalized to identify whether an imperative construction has a literal meaning or shifts to a figurative meaning based on three main parameters: the presence of a *qarīnah*, *maqām al-mutakallim wa al-mukhāṭab* ‘the hierarchical position of the speaker and the addressee’, and *gharaḍ al-kalām* (Jauhar, 2025; Rafi et al., 2021).

The primary data source for this study is the *MANHM,* with the corpus being the chapter *Khātimah fī Tahdhīb al-Nufūs* (al-Hashimi, 1960:161-204). This chapter was chosen for its unique content, which embodies educational values of soul purification. A thorough reading of the entire chapter was undertaken to identify all occurrences of imperatives. Data were collected through a reading-and-recording technique, in which each identified imperative form was recorded along with the hadith number and the contextual sentence, subsequently classified according to the designated pattern and meaning categories that constitute the primary analytical focus of this study. At the presentation stage, representative data were selected purposively to reflect the linguistic characteristics of each analyzed category. This purposive selection does not render the analysis partial; rather, it reflects a common presentation strategy in qualitative linguistic studies to maintain the depth of discussion without sacrificing the overall scope of the findings (Ningi, 2022; Cheong et al., 2023).

Data analysis was conducted using the distributional method, a linguistic analysis method whose primary instrument is drawn from within the language itself rather than from external sources (Sudaryanto, 2015). This method was selected because this study examines the internal phenomena of the hadith text, specifically the distribution and function of imperatives, based on their linguistic structure. The main technique applied is the substitution technique (replacement technique), specifically replacing the imperative form with a paradigmatic alternative (for instance, substituting *fi'l al-amr* with *al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ* imperfective verb') to observe the resultant semantic changes and verify whether a given form functions as a command marker or has shifted function to another meaning (Sudaryanto, 2015; Kamal, 2024). The analytical procedure proceeds through four sequential stages. *First*, data classification based on the imperative pattern. *Second*, identification of contextual indicators in each data point to determine whether

the meaning of imperatives remains literal or shifts to figurative meaning. *Third*, the application of the substitution technique to test the validity of the determination of meaning. *Fourth*, deductive conclusions are drawn from patterns identified across the corpus (Sudaryanto, 2015; Jauhar, 2025).

RESULT

A thorough reading of the corpus revealed 103 imperatives spread across 43 hadith. These findings are described in terms of pattern and meaning as follows.

Imperative Patterns in *MANHM*

Based on data analysis, three imperative patterns were found in *MANHM*: *fiʿl al-amr*, *al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ bi lām al-amr*, and *ism fiʿl al-amr*. *Maṣdar*, on the other hand, was not found in all sections. The distribution of these patterns is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Imperative Pattern Found in the *MANHM*

No	Pattern	Number of Occurrences	Percentage	Number of Hadith	Percentage
1	*Fiʿl al-amr*	90	87.4%	34	79.1%
2	*Al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ bi-lām al-amr*	11	10.7%	7	16.3%
3	*Ism fiʿl al-amr*	2	1.9%	2	4.7%
4	*Maṣdar*	0	0%	0	0%
	Total	103	100%	43	100%

Fiʿl al-Amr (Imperative Verb)

Fiʿl al-amr 'imperative verb' appears 90 times and is spread across 34 hadiths. Among the hadith numbers containing imperative verbs are 1405, 1418, 1423, 1439, 1442, 1444, 1448, 1460, 1462, 1470, 1471, 1472, 1473, 1478, 1484, 1489, 1494, 1503, 1509, 1510, 1511, 1514, 1520, 1524, 1528, 1530, 1535, 1537, 1538, 1540, 1549, 1551, 1556, 1558. As the most dominant pattern, an imperative verb in MANHM is shown in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1

١٤٦٢- **اجْعَلُوا** آخِرَصَلاَتِكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وِتْراً. (رواه إبن عمر)

"Make the witir prayer the closing prayer of the night." (Hadith narrated by Ibn Umar) - Hadith 1462. (al-Hashimi, 1960:17)

Excerpt 1 records a prophetic statement addressed to the companions, enjoining them to designate the *witr* prayer as the closing prayer of the night. The utterance takes the form of a command, marked by the imperative verb *ijʿalū* 'make' or 'designate', derived from the root *jaʿala-yajʿalu*. Were *ijʿalū* to be replaced by the imperfective form (*tajʿalūna*), the imperative force would be entirely lost, and the utterance would revert to a descriptive statement. The plural form *ijʿalū* indicates that the command is collectively addressed, thereby establishing its communal character. This hadith affirms that the command constitutes a collective religious obligation in adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad during the night prayer. The use of *fi'l al-amr* further

underscores the normative function of religious injunctions, reflecting the precision and directness characteristic of Arabic grammatical formulation. From the perspective of *ʿilm al-maʿānī*, the absence of any *qarīnah* that would redirect the meaning confirms that *ijʿalū* functions as *al-amr al-ḥaqīqī*, a genuine imperative. The *maqām al-mutakallim*, that is, the Prophet as the supreme religious authority, further reinforces the status of this command as a universally binding *sunnah* obligation, distinguishing it from imperatives bearing an *irshād* or *tahdīd* that would shift their meaning into the figurative domain.

al-Fiʿl al-Muḍāriʿ bi-Lām al-Amr (Imperfective Verb with Imperative Lām)

In the imperative form, the letter *lām* in *al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ* 'imperfective verb' is pronounced /*i*/, and the final letter is *sukūn* 'quiescent'. This pattern is found in eleven words spread across seven hadiths (1423, 1429, 1451, 1483, 1506, 1524, 1549). An example of an imperfective verb followed by the *lām al-amr* 'imperative *lām*' is *li-taḍrib* 'hit'. In other contexts, *lām* in imperative verbs is sometimes also pronounced without a vowel after the conjunctions *waw* 'and', *thumma* 'then', and *fa* 'then'. This phenomenon is evident in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2 ١٥٠٦ - ...وَإِذَا رَأَى غَيْرَ ذٰلِكَ مِمَّا يَكْرَهُ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ، فَلْيَسْتَعِذْ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَلَا يَذْكُرْهَا لِأَحَدٍ، فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَضُرُّهُ. (رواه شيخان)

> *"... If he sees something else that he does not like, let him seek refuge from its evil and not tell anyone about it, for that dream does not harm him."* (Hadith narrated by the two Sheiks) - *Hadith 1506.* (al-Hashimi, 1960:183)

In Excerpt 2, the form *fal-yastaʿīdh* 'let him seek refuge' is derived from the imperfective verb *yastaʿīdhu* 'to seek refuge', transformed by the prefixation of the imperative *lām* and the application of quiescent to the final consonant. The word traces its root to *ista'ādha* 'to seek refuge', employed here to instruct a person to seek refuge in Allah from the harm of a disturbing dream. The particle *fa* at the outset of the clause functions to underscore the urgency of this command, signaling the immediacy of the action required. Should the imperative *lām* be replaced by the negative *lām*, yielding *lam yasta'idh*, the meaning shifts entirely to the negative: 'he did not seek refuge'. From the perspective of *ʿilm al-maʿānī*, the deployment of *al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ bi-lām al-amr* pattern introduces a semantic dimension distinct from that of an ordinary imperative verb. This construction imparts a more deliberate and reflective quality to the command, befitting the hadith's speech context, which responds to a situation arising after a disturbing dream. The *gharaḍ al-kalām* here is spiritual protection through concrete action (*istiʿādhah*). The command is expressed in a form that demands immediate response while simultaneously reflecting the gradualist guidance offered to the *mukhāṭab*.

Ism Fiʿl al-Amr (Noun of Command)

The *ism fiʿl al-amr* 'noun of command' is a noun that functions like an imperative, but does not accept verb signs. This pattern appears twice in two hadiths (1507, 1512). The *ism fiʿl al-amr* form has a slightly higher level of politeness than the imperative verb because it is a noun but carries the meaning of a command. Examples include *āmīn*

'grant', *sah* 'shut up', and *mah* (stop). Examples of *ism fiʿl al-amr* found in the corpus are as follows.

Excerpt 3 ١٥١٢ - عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ مَلَكٌ مُوَكَّلٌ كُلَّمَا دَعَا لِأَخِيهِ بِخَيْرٍ قَالَ الْمَلَكُ الْمُوَكَّلُ "آمِينَ" وَلَكَ بِمِثْلِ ذلِكَ. (رواه مسلم عن أبي الدرداء)

There is an angel appointed over him, and whenever he prays for good for his brother, the appointed angel says, Āmīn,' and you will have the same." (Narrated by Muslim from Abu Darda') - Hadith 1512. (al-Hashimi, 1960:185)

In Excerpt 3 above, the *ism fiʿl al-amr* form that appears is the particle *āmīn* 'so be it' or 'grant it'. According to the rules of Arabic grammar (*naḥw*), *āmīn* functions as a *mafʿūl muṭlaq nāʾib ʿan fiʿlih* 'verbal noun substituting for its verb', in that it carries imperative meaning yet does not take the morphological markers of a verb. In the discipline of morphology (*ṣarf*), *āmīn* is classified as an *ism fiʿl al-amr* that undergoes no inflectional change (*mabnī 'alā al-sukūn* 'indeclinable') and functions to express a petition for the acceptance of supplication. *Āmīn* is understood as an *ism fiʿl al-amr* bearing the meaning of *istajib* 'grant it' or 'answer the prayer'. The deployment of this form affirms that the angel responds to each supplication with a petition for its acceptance. Accordingly, this construction not only attests to the linguistic dimension of non-verbal imperative command, but also confirms the pragmatic function of reinforcing supplication and promising equivalent reward for the one who prays. From the perspective of *ʿilm al-maʿānī*, the selection of *ism fiʿl al-amr* over the ordinary *fiʿl al-amr* form (*istajib*) carries a stylistic implication of *ījāz*, the compression of full meaning into a concise expression without verbal conjugation, which intensifies the force of the angel's response to every Muslim's supplication.

Imperative Meanings in *MANHM*

In the *MANHM corpus,* five meanings of *amr* are identified: *ḥaqīqī* (literal), *irshād* (guidance), *duʿāʾ* (supplication), *iltimās* (request), and *tahdīd* (threat), with *duʿāʾ* emerging as the predominant meaning as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Meaning of Amr Found in the *MANHM*

No	Meaning of Amr	Number of Occurrences	Percentage	Number of Hadith	Percentage
1	*Ḥaqīqī*	30	29.1%	16	34.8%
2	*Irshād*	28	27.2%	16	34.8%
3	*Duʿāʾ*	40	38.8%	10	21.7%
4	*Tahdīd*	3	2.9%	3	6.5%
5	*Iltimās*	2	1.9%	1	2.2%
	Total	103	100%	46	100%

Amr bi-Maʿnā Ḥaqīqī (Imperative with Literal Meaning)

If the person requesting is of a higher rank than the person being asked to do the work, then this is called literal meaning. In this classification, the imperative means what is ordered or conveyed, without a specific intention or purpose. The results of the analysis show that imperative with literal meaning appears in 30 data points spread

across 16 hadiths, with each hadith text sometimes containing one or more meanings of this term. The distribution map of literal meaning includes hadiths 1418, 1423, 1451, 1460, 1507, 1514, 1527, 1529, 1531, 1535, 1538, 1540, 1549, 1551, 1556, 1558. Examples of this meaning are shown in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4

١٥٥١ - وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.... (رواه مسلم)

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Fear injustice, for indeed injustice is darkness on the Day of Resurrection..." (Hadith narrated by Muslim) - Hadith No. 1551. (al-Hashimi, 1960:197)

In Excerpt 4, the Prophet Muhammad's address to his companions opens with the imperative verb *ittaqū* 'beware of' or 'avoid', addressed immediately to the addressees in the plural. Were the imperfective (*yattaqī*) or the perfective (*ittaqā*) to be substituted, the utterance would lose its sense of urgency and shift instead toward a descriptive or narrative statement of someone's action, rather than functioning as a direct command requiring compliance. Within *ʿilm al-maʿānī*, an imperative is classified as bearing literal meaning when no *qarīnah* redirects it toward an alternative sense. Here, the Prophet employs this command to affirm the universal obligation upon all Muslims to shun *al-ẓulm* 'darkness' in all its forms, whether against fellow human beings or against the rights of Allah. The warning *ẓulumātun yawma al-qiyāmah* 'darkness on the Day of Resurrection' functions as a *taʿlīl* 'causal construction' that reinforces the injunction rather than deflecting its meaning. Accordingly, the command is understood as a genuine demand to avoid all forms of injustice, and the substitution of *ittaqū* with the declarative form (*tattaqūna*) demonstrably eliminates the *taklīf* 'obligatory directive illocution' that constitutes the core of the message.

Amr bi-Maʿnā Irshād (Imperative with the Meaning of Guidance)

The imperative with the meaning of *irshād* 'guidance' occurs when a command is delivered in the form of advice. This meaning is found 28 times and is spread across 16 hadith (1405, 1429, 1444, 1462, 1470, 1472, 1478, 1483, 1489, 1506, 1510, 1520, 1526, 1535, 1537, 1549). Examples of this imperative meaning are shown in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5

١٤٤٤ - سَوُّوا صُفُوفَكُمْ، فَإِنَّ تَسْوِيَةَ الصَّفِّ مِنْ تَمَامِ الصَّلَاةِ. (رواه أنس)

"Straighten your rows, for straightening the rows is part of the perfection of prayer." (Hadith narrated by Anas) - Hadith No. 1444. (al-Hashimi, 1960:171)

Excerpt 5 contains the imperative verb *sawwū* 'straighten' or 'align'. This command was delivered by the Prophet before the opening *takbīr*, instructing the congregation to maintain order and unity in the congregational prayer. Based on the analysis of *dalālah al-amr* 'illocutionary meanings of the imperative construction', a *qarīnah* is present. Specifically, the expression *fa-inna taswiyat al-ṣaff min tamām al-ṣalāh* 'for aligning the rows is part of the perfection of prayer'. This context indicates that the command is not a stringent demand but rather a form of *irshād* (guidance), not *tahdīd* (threat). The expression links the regulation of bodily arrangement during prayer

with the attainment of prayer's perfection, affirming that physical alignment is directly connected to the quality of worship. This command is therefore understood as a moral directive, guiding the congregation toward a more complete and meaningful prayer. *Irshād* constitutes guidance for the optimal fulfillment of religious obligations in accordance with moral and spiritual values. The command above is thus not merely an instruction to align the rows, but a moral directive affirming that prayer is a collective experience demanding harmony and cooperation, aligning the congregation both physically and spiritually in their orientation toward Allah.

Amr bi-Maʿnā Duʿāʾ (Imperative with the Meaning of Supplication)

In the context of a request from a lower party to a higher party, the imperative form with the meaning of *duʿāʾ* 'supplication' is specifically addressed to Allah. There are 40 meanings of *duʿāʾ* found spread across 10 hadiths (1439, 1442, 1473, 1474, 1484, 1503, 1509, 1511, 1512, 1549). Examples of this meaning can be seen in Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6

١٤٧٤ - ... اللَّهُمَّ أْجُرْنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَاخْلُفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا...

...O Allah, reward me for my calamity and replace it with something better... - Hadith No. 1474. (al-Hashimi, 1960:176)

Excerpt 6 contains two *amr* patterns: *ājurnī* and *akhluf lī*. Morphologically (*ṣarf*), both are *fiʿl al-amr* forms derived from the imperfective verbs *yaʾjuru* 'to reward' or 'to recompense' and *yakhlufu* 'to replace'. If *ājurnī* 'grant me reward' is substituted with the declarative form (*ajaranī*), the utterance shifts in meaning to a statement of fact, demonstrating that the *amr* form here functions as supplication (*duʿāʾ*). The same analysis applies to *akhluf*. In the context of a petition to Allah, the *fiʿl al-amr* is employed not as a demanding command but as a humble supplication from a servant to his Lord. The *fiʿl al-amr* is categorized as *amr ghayr ḥaqīqī*, denoting supplication, a gentle petition to Allah to recompense the affliction and replace it with something better. The *fiʿl al-amr* thus functions as an expression of spiritual submission to Allah the Almighty. The simultaneous occurrence of two *fiʿl al-amr* forms within a single utterance reflects the intensity of the petition from a servant struck by affliction, a pattern termed *tawkīd al-ṭalab* 'intensification of the imperative illocution' in *ʿilm al-maʿānī*.

Amr bi-Maʿnā Taḥdīd (Imperative with the Meaning of Threat)

This imperative meaning arises when a command is delivered with an intention that contradicts its apparent meaning and contains an element of *taḥdīd* 'threat'. The meaning is found in hadiths 1423, 1448, and 1514, as shown in Excerpt 7.

Excerpt 7

١٤٢٣ - ...وَمَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ (رواه البخاري)

"... Whoever deliberately lies about me, let him take his place in Hell." (Hadith narrated by Bukhari) - Hadith No. 1423. (al-Hashimi, 1960:167)

Excerpt 7 contains an imperative in the form *fal-yatabawwaʾ* 'let him take his place', which morphologically derives from the verb *yatabawwaʾ* meaning 'to occupy' or 'to take one's place', prefixed with the letter *lām*. The imperative meaning in this phrase

is not a genuine command (*amr ḥaqīqī*) demanding execution; rather, it is a command bearing the meaning of *tahdīd*, a stern warning to those who fabricate lies against the Prophet. The phrase is accordingly not intended as a literal instruction, but as an emphatic declaration of the grave consequences entailed by such an act. This construction carries the meaning of threat, underscoring that lying in the name of the Prophet constitutes a major sin subject to severe punishment in the Hereafter. The substitution technique reinforces this classification: were *fal-yatabawwa'* replaced by an advisory *fiʿl al-amr* such as *ijtanib* 'avoid it', the threatening nuance would dissolve and shift toward an ordinary preventive command. The use of the conditional construction (*man kadhaba... fal-yatabawwa'*) itself produces the distinctive rhetorical effect of *tahdīd*, inviting the potential wrongdoer to 'choose' his seat in hellfire, making it unambiguously clear that this command is meant to instill fear, not to be carried out.

Amr bi-Maʿnā Iltimās (Imperative with the Meaning of Request)

A command can also mean a gentle request (*iltimās*), as it's spoken between two people of equal standing. In the corpus, this meaning appears in interactions between the Companions and the Prophet, as in hadith 1418 (Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8

١٤١٨- ... فَقَامَ عُكَاشَةُ بْنُ مِحْصَنٍ فَقَالَ: ادْعُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يَجْعَلَنِي مِنْهُمْ. فَقَالَ: «أَنْتَ مِنْهُمْ». ثُمَّ قَامَ رَجُلٌ آخَرُ فَقَالَ: ادْعُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يَجْعَلَنِي مِنْهُمْ. فَقَالَ: سَبَقَكَ بِهَا عُكَاشَةُ. (رَوَاهُ الشَّيْخَانِ)

"... Then Ukasyah bin Muhson said, 'Pray to Allah to make me one of them.' Then another man stood up and said, 'Pray to Allah to make me one of them.' The Prophet replied, 'Ukasyah has preceded you in that.' (Hadith narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim) - Hadith No. 1418. (al-Hashimi, 1960:165)

The utterance *udʿu* 'pray' or 'supplicate', spoken by the companion to the Prophet in Excerpt 8, constitutes a politely expressed request. Logically, the companions would not have issued a command to the Prophet, whose rank is far superior. It is therefore evident that the imperative form here represents a respectful entreaty to the Prophet to supplicate on their behalf to Allah. This is confirmed by the Prophet's response, which treats the utterance as a petition rather than an instruction to be fulfilled: he replies by conveying the news, *anta minhum* 'you are one of them', and to the second companion, he gently declines with *sabaqaka bihā ʿukāshah* ʿUkāshah has preceded you in that', neither of which represents the response pattern to a command, but rather to a request. Accordingly, the imperative verb in this hadith belongs to the category of non-literal imperative; it denotes a request, not a command. The *qarīnah maqāmīyah* 'extralinguistic contextual indicator', namely, the companions' position of lower rank relative to the Prophet, that shifts the meaning of *udʿu* from a command to *iltimās*.

DISCUSSION

Data analysis identified 103 imperative forms distributed across three patterns: *fiʿl al-amr*, *al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ bi lām al-amr*, and *ism fiʿl al-amr*. Among the three, *fiʿl al-amr* is markedly predominant, substantially outnumbering the other two forms. This dominance aligns with the character of prophetic speech, which tends to employ explicit imperative forms to convey teachings in a direct, concise, and readily internalized

manner (Hussin et al., 2025; Inam & Jan, 2023). The most linguistically significant finding is the absence of the *maṣdar* 'nominalization' form as a substitute for *fiʿl al-amr* in the entire corpus. Although *maṣdar* is theoretically recognized as one of the four imperative patterns (Ghani, 2011; 'Atiq, 1985), its non-occurrence in this chapter does not constitute a mere gap in the data but rather reflects a stylistic preference typical of hadiths with a *tahdhīb al-Nufūs* 'soul purification' orientation. Texts that aim to cultivate the soul and direct behavior spiritually tend to employ the direct, explicit imperative form rather than the more abstract nominal form.

The distribution pattern of imperative meaning, which largely exceeds the literal meaning, is not merely a statistical fact but rather reflects the coherence between linguistic choices and the thematic orientation of the chapter itself. The chapter *Khātimah fī Tahdhīb al-Nufūs* is explicitly oriented toward the cultivation of the soul, a spiritual-pedagogical tradition in Islam that emphasizes inner purification, the cultivation of moral virtue, and the soul's closeness to God as the highest goal (Maharani et al., 2024; Khusnadin & Shihab, 2025). In this context, the dominance of the *duʿāʾ* meaning can be understood as a linguistic manifestation of the vertical relationship between God and His servants. The Prophet Muhammad did not merely command; he also directed the addressees to invoke God as the most fundamental spiritual strategy (Jabour & Hussein, 2024). Meanwhile, the dominance of *irshād* reflects the pedagogical dimension of prophetic speech. The prophetic utterances in this chapter function more as vehicles of moral guidance than binding normative instructions (Hussin et al., 2025; Fadilah & Sholih, 2022). Thus, these findings reveal that the choice of imperative patterns in is consistently aligned with the chapter's main mission as a guide to the formation of the soul, rather than a mere codification of normative obligations.

The findings of this research align closely with several previous studies presented in the literature review. The most fundamental point of convergence lies in the confirmation that imperatives in Islamic texts, both the Qur'an and hadith, consistently undergo a semantic shift from the literal meaning toward the figurative meaning when a *qarīnah* redirects interpretation toward an alternative function (Gani, 2020; Haikal & Jannah, 2021; Rifain et al., 2021). The present study corroborates this pattern. Among the 103 data identified, the figurative meaning, particularly *duʿāʾ* and *irshād*, substantially predominates over the literal meaning. This convergence is also evident in the methodological dimension. Like Nurhaliza et al. (2025) in their study of imperatives in the book *Ṣuwar min Ḥayāh al-Ṣaḥābah* and Fadilah & Sholih (2022) in their study of *Asbāb Wurūd al-Ḥadīth*, this study found that the meanings of *duʿāʾ* and *irshād* dominate in prophetic texts with moral-spiritual themes. This finding also aligns with the arguments of Puspita & Yusup (2023) and Jauhar (2025) that *siyāq al-kalām* and the speaker-listener hierarchy are the main determinants of the shift in the meaning of imperatives. This pattern is consistently corroborated across the research corpus. This inter-study convergence reinforces the validity of the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* approach as a reliable framework for analyzing imperatives in Islamic texts.

Despite these similarities, this study reveals several significant differences and adds novelty. Unlike previous studies that collected data on imperatives across themes (Inam & Jan, 2023; Jabour & Hussein, 2024), this study delimits the corpus to a single thematic chapter, allowing for a more focused and systematic identification of the distribution patterns of imperative forms and meanings. This delimitation yields findings that would not be possible with cross-theme studies. In chapters oriented toward *tahdhīb al-Nufūs*, the meaning of *duʿāʾ* emerges as particularly prominent, superseding that of *irshād*, which is typically dominant in previous studies (Nurhaliza et

al., 2025; Fadilah & Sholih, 2022). This study also explicitly documents and analyzes the non-occurrence of the *maṣdar* form as a substitute for the imperative verb. This finding constitutes a dimension that has not been addressed in any of the prior studies surveyed. In contrast to the study of the Qur'an, which attested the diversity of the four imperative patterns (Kamal, 2024; Sehri & Alitaetah, 2020; Maulana, 2019), the absence of *maṣdar* in this thematic hadith corpus raises new questions concerning the relationship between the genre of Islamic texts and the preference of imperative patterns used, and carries implications for advancing the stylistic typology of hadith which has not been widely done (Al Khumairi, 2019; Rohman & Taufiq, 2022).

This study emphasizes the position of *ʿilm al-balāghah*, especially *ʿilm al-maʿānī*, as a framework capable not only of describing formal variation in imperatives but also of accounting for their communicative function within an integrative approach. This study bridges morphosyntactic analysis with pragmatic interpretation of meaning within a single, coherent framework (Jauhar, 2025; Rohman & Taufiq, 2022). Unlike Western pragmatic approaches that analyze directives solely through the lens of speech acts (Rafi et al., 2021), the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* approach positions *qarīnah*, *maqām*, and *gharaḍ al-kalām* as internal parameters that emerge from within the Arabic linguistic tradition itself, rendering it more attuned to the nuances of Islamic texts (Jauhar, 2025; ʿAtiq, 1985). The novelty of this study resides in dimensions that have never been presented simultaneously in previous studies, namely the application of the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* framework, the thematic orientation of the chapter, and the absence of *maṣdar* as a distinctive stylistic marker of thematic hadith, distinct from the Qur'anic pattern (Kamal, 2024; Sehri & Alitaetah, 2020). These three novelties open a new avenue for the study of hadith stylistic typology, linking thematic genre with the distributional preferences of imperative patterns, an area that has not been systematically explored (Ahmad et al., 2024; Nurhaliza et al., 2025).

This research has significant implications across several domains. In the realm of *ʿilm al-balāghah*, this study affirms that the *ʿilm al-maʿānī* approach functions not merely as a descriptive instrument but as a productive analytical framework for uncovering the communicative function of imperatives through a rigorous and systematic procedure (Jauhar, 2025; Rohman & Taufiq, 2022). In the scope of understanding hadith, these findings issue a significant methodological caution. A literal reading of imperatives without considering the *qarīnah* and the text's thematic orientation can lead to a misunderstanding of the prophetic intent, as Ramle & Huda (2022) underscore in their discussion of the significance of *asbāb al-wurūd* for an accurate interpretation of hadith. In the context of Islamic text translation, this study provides further support for Al Farisi's (2018) argument that failing to recognize the pragmatic meaning of imperatives can lead to serious distortions in the target language. Overall, this study contributes to the development of a thematic hadith stylistic typology that links thematic genre to linguistic preferences, while providing an analytical model replicable across other thematic chapters in selected hadith books (Nurhaliza et al., 2025; Ahmad et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Of the 103 identified imperatives, this study identified three patterns: *fiʿl al-amr*; *al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ by lām al-amr*; and *ism fiʿl al-amr*. A particularly significant finding that sets this study apart from prior research is the absence of the *maṣdar* form as a substitute for *fiʿl al-amr* in the entire corpus. This finding points to a distinctive stylistic preference in texts thematically oriented toward soul cultivation for explicit, direct

imperative forms. In terms of meaning, the distribution of data reveals that the imperatives in this chapter are predominantly characterized by *duʿāʾ* followed by *ḥaqīqī*, *irshād*, *tahdīd*, and *iltimās*. The dominance of the *duʿāʾ* and *irshād* together confirms that imperatives in this chapter function more as a spiritual and pedagogical strategy than as a binding normative command. These findings enrich scholarly discourse on the necessity of contextual reading of hadith texts through a *maʿānī* framework rather than merely grammatically, and contribute to the construction of a thematic hadith stylistic typology that links genre orientation with the preferred form of imperatives.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. Although the identification of imperatives was conducted comprehensively across all chapters, the analysis drew on purposively selected representative data from among the 103 identified forms. Therefore, generalizing the findings to other thematic chapters within the same book or other hadith books warrants further investigation. Furthermore, this study has not extended to cross-chapter or cross-book comparative dimensions that could strengthen the claims of the proposed stylistic typology. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the corpus by adding additional thematic chapters to *MANHM* or to apply the same approach to other thematic hadith books, enabling systematic cross-genre comparison of imperative forms. Future studies may also conduct a comparative analysis of the patterns of imperatives in the hadith and in the Qur'an with similar themes, with a view to deepening understanding of the role of imperatives in the moral and spiritual communication strategies of Islamic texts, using a more comprehensive methodological approach.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author played a major role in this study, including designing the study, collecting and analyzing data, drafting the manuscript, and translating the manuscript. The second and third authors provided guidance and direction throughout the research process and provided critical input on the study.

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