

# The Semantic Acquisition Of Infinitive Within The Framework Of Context

Ahmet Ensar Kahraman<sup>1</sup>, Ramazan EGE<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Afyon Kocatepe University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Basic Islamic Sciences, Afyonkarahisar, Turkey,  
Email: [ahmetensar06417@gmail.com](mailto:ahmetensar06417@gmail.com), ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6133-2509>

<sup>2</sup>Prof. Usak University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Arabic Language and Rhetoric, Usak, Turkey, Email:  
[egeramazon66@gmail.com](mailto:egeramazon66@gmail.com), ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5749-510X>

## Corresponding author

Ahmet Ensar Kahraman Email: [ahmetensar06417@gmail.com](mailto:ahmetensar06417@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

In the Arabic language, the signification of a word (lafz) is not derived solely from the lexicon. Signification is categorized into six dimensions: lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, contextual, and social. Accurate semantic determination requires the consideration of all these distinct types, as speakers employ language not only based on dictionary definitions but also through intonation, grammatical structure, and situational context. Neglecting any of these dimensions inevitably leads to incomplete or erroneous comprehension.

This study demonstrates the insufficiency of relying exclusively on lexical definitions and highlights the pivotal role of contextual signification (siyāq) in shaping meaning, using the verbal noun (maṣdar) as a case study. Although classically defined merely as a word denoting an event, this research reveals that the maṣdar possesses semantic layers extending beyond this basic definition. Through an analysis of evidence from the Qur’ān, Arabic poetry, and various syntactic structures, twenty distinct meanings of the maṣdar were identified, each emerging from specific contextual elements. The findings underscore that context is a determinant factor in comprehending Arabic texts. Reducing meaning to dictionary equivalents significantly diminishes the text’s expressive power and depth. Consequently, this study contributes to the fields of Arabic linguistics, exegesis (tafsīr), and rhetoric (balāghah) by proving that even fundamental elements like the maṣdar carry rich semantic nuances when analyzed through a context-based approach.

**KEYWORDS:** Arabic Language, Indication, Meaning, Context, Infinitive.

**How to Cite:** Ahmet Ensar Kahraman, Ramazan EGE, (2025) The Semantic Acquisition Of Infinitive Within The Framework Of Context, Vascular and Endovascular Review, Vol.8, No.16s, 393-399.

## INTRODUCTION

Linguistic research on the Arabic language offers a broad field of study in terms of semantic richness and diversity of expression. In Arabic, the meaning of words is not confined solely to the basic senses recorded in dictionaries; rather, it is shaped by the functions acquired throughout the language’s historical development, the contexts of usage, and various linguistic factors. Within this framework, the concept of maṣdar holds particular significance. In classical Arabic linguistics, it is defined as the original form from which the verb is derived, abstracted from temporal reference, and capable of performing diverse functions across different linguistic contexts. The maṣdar, which constitutes the focus of this study, has historically been described by scholars as “the primary word from which the verb originates” and as “an utterance that denotes an event abstracted from time.” Accordingly, it has traditionally been regarded as a lexical unit whose principal role is to denote action.

A review of the existing literature reveals that studies on the maṣdar have predominantly focused on its lexical (luḡawī) and terminological (iṣṭilāḥī) meanings, while comprehensive and systematic research on its contextual (siyāqī) significations remains lacking. In this regard, the present study aims to go beyond the classical definitions of the maṣdar by examining it within its contextual framework, with the objective of identifying its multifaceted semantic functions—such as command, prohibition, supplication, imprecation, and temporal reference.

The methodology adopted in this study is structured to first present the lexical (luḡawī) and terminological (iṣṭilāḥī) definitions of the maṣdar, and then to analyze its contextual significations through examples drawn from a range of linguistic sources. By incorporating evidence from the Qur’ān as well as selections from classical Arabic poetry, the research examines in detail the contextual diversity of meanings associated with the maṣdar. This study seeks to provide a new perspective on the use of the maṣdar in Arabic linguistics and, by highlighting the richness of its contextual applications, aims to make an original contribution to the field.

## MAṢDAR/INFINITIVE

### Lexical Meaning

The term maṣdar derives from the triliteral root (ص د ر) and follows the morphological pattern of (اسْمُ الْمَكَانِ). Fundamentally, it denotes two primary meanings. The first is “to depart from a place.” The Arabs, for instance, would say ṣadara (صَدَرَ عَنِ الْبِلَادِ) to mean that someone visited a location and then departed from it. The second meaning is “chest” or “the foremost and uppermost

part of anything.” Thus, the Arabs used (صَدْرٌ) to refer to the human chest; (صِدَارٌ) for a garment covering the head and chest or for a sign placed on the front of a camel; (تَصْدِيرٌ) for the rope fastened to the front of a camel to prevent its load from slipping backward; (مُصَدِّرٌ) for a lion, by virtue of the strength of its chest; and (مُصَدِّرٌ) for a person suffering from pain in the chest. (Ibn Fâris, 1979, p. 3/337.)

### Terminological Meaning

Al-Khalîl b. Aḥmad (d. 175/791) defines the maṣḍar as “the original word from which verbs emanate.” Elsewhere, he describes it as “a noun that signifies an event in abstraction from time, containing the letters of its corresponding verb either explicitly—as in (عَلِمَ عَلَمًا), or implicitly through estimation—as in (قَاتَلَ قِتَالًا), or by substituting one letter in place of another for an elided root letter—as in (وَعَدَ عِدَّةً).” However, if a noun contains the letters of its verb yet does not denote an action, it cannot be regarded as a maṣḍar. Such a noun is merely a remnant derived from the verb. For example, in the case of (جَزَحَ, “to wound”), the word (جَزَحٌ) cannot serve as its maṣḍar, since—despite preserving the letters of the verb—it does not signify an act but rather constitutes a residue of the verb (جَزَحَ). (el-Ġalâyinî, 1993, p. 1/161.)

### The Contextual Signification of The Maṣḍar

Although the maṣḍar is classically defined as “an utterance that denotes merely the event, abstracted from time,” (Cürcânî, 1987, p. 52) its status as the origin of derived forms (el-Enbârî, 2003, p. 1/190) (مُسْتَفْعَلَاتٌ) grants it a broader range of semantic functions within contextual (سِيَاقِي) usage. It has been widely employed in the Qur’ân, ḥadîth, and Arabic poetry, where—beyond denoting the event itself—it conveys various additional meanings shaped by context. In this section, we aim to demonstrate that the maṣḍar is not confined to indicating the event alone, but rather is capable of expressing multiple meanings in different contexts. To this end, we identify these meanings and substantiate them through textual evidence.

### The Imperative Signification of The Maṣḍar/الأَمْرُ

The imperative meaning expressed by the verb may also be conveyed through the omission of the verb and the substitution of its maṣḍar. For example;

(فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْبَثْتُمْهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الوثَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا)

“Now when ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks until, when ye have routed them, then making fast of bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom till the war lay down its burdens.” (Muhammed 47/4)

In the Qur’ânîc verse, the maṣḍar ضَرْبُ the imperative meaning of اِضْرِبُوا الرِّقَابَ (“strike their necks”). Although the imperative verb could have been employed directly to express the command, the verb is omitted and replaced by the maṣḍar, thereby expressing the imperative through the nominal form. The effect of conveying the imperative by means of the maṣḍar rather than the verb lies in its rhetorical impact: it both intensifies the force of the command and achieves conciseness (iḥṭisâr) in expression. Thus, in the context of battle, the directive to strike the necks of the disbelievers is conveyed with heightened emphasis and rhetorical force. (Beyzâvî, 2002, p. 5/120)

### The Prohibitive Signification of The Maṣḍar/النَّهْيُ

Unlike the imperative signification, the prohibitive function of the maṣḍar may be expressed by introducing the conjunction (لَا) before it, thereby coordinating it with another maṣḍar that conveys an imperative meaning. For example, in the sentence (مَذَاكِرُهُ لَا تُهْمَلُهَا) “Study your lessons and do not neglect them” the maṣḍar مَذَاكِرُهُ stands in place of the imperative verb (ذَكَرَ) and thus conveys the imperative meaning. The phrase لَا تُهْمَلُهَا is coordinated with مَذَاكِرُهُ by means of the particle لَا, whereby the maṣḍar لَا تُهْمَلُهَا functions in the sense of the prohibitive verb (لَا تُهْمَلُهَا), “do not neglect them”). In this construction, the maṣḍar expressing prohibition governs the pronominal suffix هَا as its object (مَفْعُولٌ), which is in turn syntactically assigned accusative position (نَصْبٌ). (Berekât, 2007, p. 3/454; es-Sabbân, 1997, p. 2/430)

### The Supplicative Signification of The Maṣḍar/الدُّعَاءُ

When the maṣḍar substitutes for an omitted verb of supplication, it may convey a supplicative signification. For example, in the expression (رَحِمَكَ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً) “May Allah have mercy on you” the perfect verb رَحِمَ is explicitly mentioned and expresses a prayer, namely, “May Allah have mercy on you.” When the verb of supplication is omitted and replaced by its maṣḍar, as in (رَحْمَةً لَكَ), “May Allah grant you mercy”), the maṣḍar assumes the role of the omitted verb and thereby conveys the meaning of supplication. Functioning as a verb substitute, the maṣḍar acts as the syntactic governor (عَامِلٌ), with (لَكَ) serving as its direct object (مَفْعُولٌ بِهِ), and الله as its subject (فَاعِلٌ). Sâmerîrî, 2020, p. 2/204)

أَسْلَفْتُهَا أَنَا مِنْهَا مُشْفِقٌ وَجَلَّ يَا قَابِلُ التَّوْبِ غُفْرَانًا مَا تَمَّ قَدْ

“O Acceptor of repentance, forgive me my sins which I have committed, feared, and regretted.” (Ibn Mâlik, 1982, p. 2/1025)

In the verse, the phrase (غُفْرَانًا مَا تَمَّ), meaning “forgive the sins,” is to be understood in the sense of (اغْفِرْ مَا تَمَّ). Here, the imperative verb of supplication (اغْفِرْ) is omitted and replaced by the maṣḍar غُفْرَانًا, which thereby conveys the meaning of supplication. (Berekât, 2007, p. 3/455)

In the two aforementioned examples, the maṣḍar is employed in place of the verb to express supplication. The verb, however, inherently denotes both time and the event, whereas the maṣḍar signifies solely the event, abstracted from temporal reference. Consequently, a supplication articulated through a form that is not bound by time carries broader scope and greater emphasis than one expressed through a temporally constrained verbal form. (Radî el-Esterâbâdî, 1978, p. 1/306; Sâmerîrî, 2020, p. 2/205)

It should also be noted that there is a difference in signification between the maṣḍar being written in the nominative (مَرْفُوعٌ) and in the accusative (مَنْصُوبٌ). If the event to which the maṣḍar refers has already occurred, it appears in the nominative case; whereas if it denotes an event that has not yet occurred—such as in the context of supplication or command—it is expressed in the accusative. This is because the nominative indicates an action that has been realized, while the accusative refers to an action that has not yet been realized. For example;

(لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ)

“The curse of Allah is on those who do wrong!” (Hūd 11/18)

In the Qur’ānic verse, the maṣḍar (لَعْنَةُ) appears in the nominative (مَرْفُوع) form, and thus signifies an event that has already taken place. (el-Müberraed, ts., p. 3/221)

However, if the maṣḍar (لَعْنَةُ) in the verse were to be read in the accusative (مَنْصُوب), the meaning would be rendered as: “May Allah’s curse be upon the wrongdoers.” In such a case, the maṣḍar would refer to an event not yet realized and would therefore function as a supplication.

### The Imprecatory Signification of The Maṣḍar/اللَّعْنَةُ

Just as the maṣḍar conveys a supplicative meaning when it substitutes for an omitted verb of supplication, it likewise conveys an imprecatory meaning when it takes the place of an omitted verb of malediction. For example;

بِجَارِيَةِ بَهْرًا لَهُمْ بَعْدَهَا بَهْرًا تَقَافَدَ قَوْمِي إِذْ يَبْيَعُونَ مُهْجَتِي

“My people prevented me from being united with a concubine I loved; may destruction upon destruction befall them.” (İbn Meyyâde, 1982, p. 37)

In the verse, the maṣḍar (بَهْرًا) stands in place of the verb (يَهْرَهُمْ), which conveys an imprecatory sense, and through its use in the accusative (مَنْصُوب) form it expresses malediction. The meaning thus conveyed is rendered more emphatic by the substitution of the maṣḍar for the verb.

### The Va’d(el-Va’dü/ Promissory) Signification of The Maṣḍar/الْوَعْدُ

A maṣḍar that substitutes for an omitted verb may, through the aid of a contextual indicator, be employed with a va’d signification. For example;

فَالصَّادِقُ الْخُبُّ مَبْدُولٌ لَهُ الْأَمَلُ قَالَتْ وَبُلُوعًا بُغْيَةً وَمُنَى

“He said: “You shall attain what you seek; indeed, whoever truly seeks strives for the realization of his hope.”” (İbn Akîl, 1982, p. 2/243)

In the verse, the maṣḍar (بُلُوعًا) stands in place of the verb (يَتْلُو). By the general purport of the sentence, the speaker assures the addressee that he will attain his desire; thus, the maṣḍar بُلُوعًا conveys the meaning of promise or glad tidings. Acting as a syntactic governor (عَامِل), the maṣḍar governs the word (بُغْيَةً) as its direct object (مَفْعُولٌ بِهِ), thereby assigning it the accusative case (نَصْب). (Berekât, 2007, p. 3/455)

In the verse, the meaning of “you shall attain” is expressed by the maṣḍar (بُلُوعًا) in place of the verb. Through the use of the maṣḍar rather than the verb, the expression is not restricted to past, present, or future tense. As a nominal form, the maṣḍar denotes that the act of attainment is not merely a possibility bound to a specific time, but rather a certainty, entirely unrestricted by temporal limitation.

### Tevbîh/ Reproachful/التَّوْبِيحُ

The maṣḍar may, in certain contextual settings, convey a reproachful signification. This meaning can be expressed either with the use of an interrogative particle or without it.

Interrogative particles, in addition to serving their primary function of inquiring about an unknown matter, may also convey a variety of other meanings. One of which is reproach. (Kazvîni, ts., p. 3/79) For example;

وَدَلًا وَخَوْفًا مَنْ يُجَاهِرُكُمْ حَرْبًا أَبْعِيَا وَظَلَمًا مَنْ عَلِمْتُمْ مُسَالِمًا

“Do you wrong the one whom you know to be peaceable, while fearing those who have declared war against you?” (İbn Mâlik, 1990, p. 3/126)

In the verse, the maṣḍar (أَبْعِيَا) is used, together with the interrogative particle, in the sense of “Do you commit injustice?” Yet the purpose of the interrogative here is not to pose a question. Rather, within the contextual framework, the maṣḍar أَبْعِيَا, in conjunction with the preceding interrogative particle, conveys the meaning of reproach.

وَعَزُّكَ مَعْنِي بِكُلِّ جَمِيلٍ وَفَاقًا بَنَى الْأَهْوَاءَ وَالْغِيَّ وَالْوَنَى

“O people of caprice, injustice, and negligence! While others occupy themselves with righteous deeds, I wish you success too.” (Berekât, 2007, p. 3/456; İbn Mâlik, 1990, p. 3/126)

In the verse, the maṣḍar (وَفَاقًا) is employed without an interrogative particle. By virtue of the contextual framework, the maṣḍar conveys the meaning of reproach.

### Ta’accub/ Exclamatory/التَّعَجُّبُ

Through the use of an interrogative particle preceding it, the maṣḍar may, within its contextual framework, convey an exclamatory signification. (el-Ğalâyinî, 1993, p. 3/40)

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا سَارَ الْمَطِيُّ بَنًا عَشْرًا أَسَوَقًا؟ وَلَمَّا يَمُضْ لِي غَيْرُ لَيْلَةٍ

“Longing already? When not even a single night has yet passed for me! Then what would it be, if the mounts were to carry us for ten days?” (Sehîm, 1950, p. 56)

In the verse, the maṣḍar (سَوَقًا), derived from the root (سَوَقَ) meaning “longing arising from love,” conveys an exclamatory signification (ta’ajjub/Exclamation) by virtue of the interrogative particle preceding it, which indicates astonishment at such longing.

### Teveccu/Compassion/التَّوَجُّعُ

When the maṣḍar occurs after an interrogative particle, it may, within its contextual framework, convey a signification of compassion or pity. (el-Ğalâyinî, 1993, p. 3/40)

وَنَأْيٍ حَبِيبٍ؟ إِنَّ دَا لَعْظِيمٍ أَسْجَنًا وَقَتْلًا وَاشْتِيَاً وَغُرْبَةً

“Imprisonment, death, longing, exile, and separation from the beloved? Indeed, this is exceedingly burdensome.” (Tebriî, ts.,

In the verse, the poet voices his compassion for those who are imprisoned, slain, afflicted by longing, estranged in exile, and separated from the beloved. To convey this, he employs the *maṣḍars* of the verbs (سَجَنَ, “to imprison”), (قَتَلَ, “to kill”), (اشْتَأَقَ, “to long for”), (غَرِبَ, “to be in exile”), and (تَأَى, “to be distant”), placing the interrogative أ before them. Through this interrogative mode, the *maṣḍars*—which literally denote “imprisonment, killing, longing, estrangement, and separation”—are contextually construed as conveying a sense of pity and compassion.

### Quantitative Denotation/الكمية

The verb denotes both the event and its temporal reference; however, it requires additional elements in the sentence to specify the quantity of the action. For example, in the sentence (ضَرَبَ خَالِدٌ زَيْدًا, “Khālīd struck Zayd”), the verb ضَرَبَ indicates the act of striking and its occurrence in the past tense, yet the number of times the action was performed remains indeterminate. In order to clarify the quantity, the verbal noun (*maṣḍar*) may be added in the “the *maṣḍar* that denotes a single occurrence of the action” form. Thus, in the sentence (ضَرَبَ خَالِدٌ زَيْدًا ضَرْبَةً, “Khālīd struck Zayd once”), the *maṣḍar* ضَرْبَةً is introduced as a cognate accusative (مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ), thereby removing the ambiguity regarding the quantity of the action. (İbn Ya‘îş, 2001, p. 1/273)

When the *maṣḍar* is used as the مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ in order to indicate number, it may appear in the dual and plural forms. For example, in the sentences (ضَرَبَ خَالِدٌ زَيْدًا ضَرْبَتَيْنِ / ضَرْبَاتٍ, “Khālīd struck Zayd twice / several times”), the *maṣḍar* functions as the مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ and can be employed in the dual or plural inflections to denote repetition or multiplicity of the action. (Üşmûnî, 1955, p. 1/211)

### The Qualitative Signification of The Maṣḍar/الكيفية

In indicating the manner in which an event occurs, a *maṣḍar* (verbal noun) can be utilized in addition to particles of similitude. In this context, the *maṣḍar* must either be qualified by an adjective, be the first term of a genitive construction (iḍāfah), or be defined with the definite article “الـ”. For example; in the sentence (ضَرَبَ خَالِدٌ زَيْدًا ضَرْبًا طَوِيلًا, meaning “Khalid struck Zayd a prolonged strike,” the *maṣḍar* is qualified by an adjective. In the sentence (ضَرَبَ خَالِدٌ زَيْدًا ضَرْبَ الْأَسَدِ فَرِيسَتَهُ, meaning “Khalid struck Zayd with the strike of a lion on its prey,” the *maṣḍar* is the first term of a genitive construction (muḍāf). In the sentence (ضَرَبَ خَالِدٌ زَيْدًا الضَّرْبَ, meaning “Khalid gave Zayd the strike” (a specific strike known to the addressee), the *maṣḍar* is defined with the article “الـ”. (es-Suyūfî, 1998, p. 2/76; İbn Ya‘îş, 2001, p. 1/272)

### Tekid/ Emphasis/التأكيد

The *maṣḍar* (verbal noun) can be employed as a مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ (absolute object) within a sentence to emphasize the meaning of its governing verb (عَامِلٌ) or the general meaning of the sentence. In this capacity, an indefinite (نَكْرَةً) *maṣḍar* is used, which can be referred to as the “*maṣḍar* for emphasis” (المَصْنَعُ الْمُؤَكِّدُ). This *maṣḍar* is either derived from the same root as the verb in the sentence or is synonymous with it. Because it functions as a reiteration of the verb, it cannot be made dual (تَثْنِيَةً) or plural (جَمْعٌ). Furthermore, the omission (حَذْفٌ) of the governing verb is not permissible, as the purpose of the *maṣḍar* in this case is emphasis. To omit that which is being emphasized (المُؤَكِّدُ) while retaining the element of emphasis (التَّأَكُّدُ) is impermissible, as this would contradict the very principle of affirmation. (el-Ġalâyinî, 1993, p. 1/171; MehmetAli, 2020, p. 303; Üşmûnî, 1955, p. 1/211)

For example; the sentence (نَامَ الرَّجُلُ translates to “the man slept.” When the *maṣḍar* نَوْمًا is added, forming the sentence (نَامَ الرَّجُلُ نَوْمًا, the meaning of the verb is emphasized (تَأَكُّدٌ). (İbn Ya‘îş, 2001, p. 1/273) Likewise, in the Qur’anic verse (ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا), which translates as, “Then split the earth in clefts” (‘Abese 80/26.) the term شَقًّا expresses the meaning of emphasis.

A distinction must be made between emphasizing the meaning of a verb and emphasizing the verb itself. To the sentence (رَكَضَ خَالِدٌ, meaning “Khalid ran,” we can add the *maṣḍar* رَكُضًا to form رَكَضَ خَالِدٌ رَكُضًا, which conveys the meaning “Khalid indeed ran.” In this construction, the *maṣḍar* رَكُضًا does not emphasize the verb per se, but rather the abstract concept of ‘running’ contained within the verb. We can analyze the underlying structure (تَقْدِيرٌ) of this sentence as أَخَذْتُ خَالِدٌ رَكُضًا رَكُضًا, where the second *maṣḍar* serves to emphasize the first. However, if the intention is to emphasize the verb itself, then the verb must be repeated. For example, (رَكَضَ رَكَضَ خَالِدٌ means “Khalid ran, he ran.” The crucial difference is that in the first type of emphasis (with the *maṣḍar*), only the event is affirmed. In the second type of emphasis (with the repeated verb), both the event and its tense (the time of its occurrence) are emphasized.

A semantic distinction (دَلَالَةٌ) exists between these two forms of emphasis. The emphasis made with the *maṣḍar* is directed at an addressee who is not entirely certain whether Khalid ran or not. It is an affirmation specifically on the action of ‘running’ to prevent any misinterpretation that he was merely walking or walking briskly. In the second case, however, the emphasis is employed when the addressee may not have heard the action being stated, or heard it but did not fully comprehend it. The verb is therefore repeated in order to remove the ambiguity and ensure the statement is understood. (Radî el-Esterâbâdî, 1993, p. 1/347; Sâmerrâî, 2020, p. 2/185,186)

Although the concurrent use of omission (حَذْفٌ) and emphasis (تَأَكُّدٌ) may seem antithetical to the purpose, there are nevertheless examples where the verb is elided and emphasis is achieved through its *maṣḍar*.

فَسَمَا إِلَيْكَ مَعَ الصُّنُودِ لِأَمِيلٍ  
إِنِّي لِأَمْنُخُكَ الصُّنُودَ وَإِنِّي

“O, House of Atike! I present myself to the people as one who has turned his back upon you, yet I swear that I belong to you.”

(Ahvas, 1969, p. 153)

In the verse, the *maṣḍar* فَسَمَا is an absolute object (مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ) that signifies emphasis (تَأَكُّدٌ), and whose governing verb has been omitted (حَذْفٌ) (el-Müberred, ts., p. 3/233)

As has been stated previously, the governing verb (عَامِلٌ) of a *maṣḍar* may be elided (حَذْفٌ), provided that a contextual clue (فَرِيَّةٌ)



(سياقية) remains to indicate the omitted verb.

### The Temporal Signification of the Maṣḍar/الدلالة الزمانية

From a morphological (صرفي) perspective, the maṣḍar does not inherently signify time. However, within its contextual (سياقي) framework, it may acquire a structure that conveys a temporal signification. (Berekât, 2007, p. 3/457) The Types of Temporal Signification Expressed by the Maṣḍar in Context;

#### The Past Temporal Signification of the Maṣḍar/دلالة على الماضي

The maṣḍar may, within its contextual (سياقي) framework, convey a past temporal signification. For example; (فِيمَا نَقُضُهُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً)

“And because of their breaking their covenant, We have cursed them and made hard their hearts.” (Mâide 5/13)

In the verse, the maṣḍar (نَقَضَ) functions as an active element (عامل), governing the pronoun hum (هُم) as its subject (فاعل), which is nominative by position, and assigning the word mīthāq (ميثاق) the accusative case as its direct object (mafʿūl bihi). Within the contextual (siyāqī) framework, the maṣḍar signifies “the act of breaking the covenant.” Subsequently, the act of “cursing” is mentioned in the perfect (past) verbal form. Logically, since the “breaking of the covenant” precedes the act of “cursing,” the maṣḍar naqd must also, by contextual implication, denote a past temporal signification. Thus, the maṣḍar naqd, within its contextual usage, conveys the meaning of a past action. (Âyiş, 2012, p. 12; Kocabıyık, 2024)

#### The Perfect–Imperfect (Past–Present) Temporal Signification /الماضي المضارع

The event begins in the past and continues to have an effect up to the present. In such contexts, the maṣḍar may convey both past and present temporal signification, particularly when accompanied by expressions such as (مُنْذُ) or (مُنْذُ), or when the general meaning of the sentence implies continuity. For example, in the sentence (— استمّراري في الدراسة منذ الصغر سبب في تفوّقي الآن — “My continual engagement in study since childhood is the reason for my current success”), the maṣḍar استمّرّار (“continuation”) denotes persistence. The phrase (مُنْذُ الصغر) (“since childhood”) indicates that the act of studying began in the past and still continues, thereby granting the maṣḍar (past–present) temporal signification within its contextual framework. (Âyiş, 2012, p. 13)

#### The Present Temporal Signification of the Maṣḍar/المضارع

Through a contextual indicator (قرينة سياقية), the maṣḍar may convey a present temporal signification. For example, in the sentence (يُسْرُنِي عَمَلُكَ الْوَاجِبُ الْآنَ — “Your doing the homework now makes me happy”), the maṣḍar (عَمَلَ, “doing”) appears. Within the sentence, two contextual indicators denote the present tense: the adverb of time (الآن, “now”) and the imperfect verb (يُسْرُنِي, “makes me happy”). Accordingly, the maṣḍar عَمَلَ also conveys a present temporal reference by virtue of its contextual association. (قَالَ لَا تَتَرَبَّصَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ)

“He said: Have no fear this day! May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.” (Yûsuf 12/92) In the verse, the maṣḍar (تَتَرَبَّصَ) occurs, which—due to the contextual presence of the word (الْيَوْمَ, “today”)—conveys a present temporal signification within its contextual (سياقي) framework. (Âyiş, 2012, p. 13; Kocabıyık, 2025)

#### The Future Temporal Signification of the Maṣḍar/الاستقبال

When a contextual indicator denoting the future is present in the sentence, the maṣḍar may convey a future temporal signification. For example, in the sentence (بِدَايَةِ الدَّرَاسَةِ فِي الْأُسْبُوعِ الْقَادِمِ — “The beginning of the school term is next week”), the maṣḍar (بِدَايَةِ, “beginning”) is used. The phrase (الأسبوع القادم, “next week”) serves as a contextual indicator of future time. Therefore, the overall meaning of the sentence is “The school will begin next week,” and the maṣḍar بِدَايَةِ, by virtue of its contextual association, conveys a future temporal reference.

Furthermore, when the verbal noun (مَصْدَرٌ) can be replaced by the construction (أَنْ+فِعْلٌ), it may convey either future or past temporal signification, depending on the contextual framework that clarifies the intended time reference. For example, in the sentence (يُذْهِبُنِي إِرسَالُكَ رِسَالَةً غَدًا — “Your sending me a message tomorrow surprises me”), the maṣḍar (إِرسَالُ, “sending”) occurs. The adverbial phrase (غَدًا, “tomorrow”) serves as a contextual indicator of futurity, and the sentence allows for the substitution of the maṣḍar with the finite clause (أَنْ تُرْسِلَ, “that you will send”). Therefore, the maṣḍar إِرسَالُ conveys a future temporal signification within its contextual framework. (قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ)

“She said: What shall be his reward, who wisheth evil to thy folk, save prison or a painful doom?” (Yûsuf 12/25)

By virtue of its contextual meaning (المعنى السياقي), the infinitive construction (أَنْ يُسْجَنَ, “to be imprisoned”) conveys a future temporal signification. The explicit maṣḍar (عَذَابٌ, “punishment”), which is conjoined (مَعْطُوفٌ) to this infinitive, also carries a future temporal reference, since coordination (عطف) requires temporal agreement between the conjunct (مَعْطُوفٌ) and the conjoined (مَعْطُوفٌ عَلَيْهِ). (Âyiş, 2012, p. 13)

#### The Absolute Temporal Signification of the Maṣḍar

If there is no contextual indicator (قرينة سياقية) that assigns the maṣḍar to a specific time, the maṣḍar conveys an absolute temporal signification. For example, in the sentence (النَّجَاحُ أَمْرٌ صَعْبٌ — “Success is a difficult matter”), the maṣḍar (النَّجَاحُ, “success”) functions as a verbal noun without any contextual element specifying a temporal reference. Therefore, it denotes the concept of success in an abstract sense, independent of any particular time, and thus expresses an absolute temporal reference. (Âyiş, 2012, p. 14; Kocabıyık, 2025)

### The Temporal Signification of the Maṣḍar as an Adverb of Time

Within its contextual framework, the maṣḍar may function as an adverb of time, indicating a specific temporal reference. For example, the verb (شَرَقَ) means “to shine” or “to rise (of the sun)” and denotes a past action. Its corresponding maṣḍar, (شُرُوقُ), morphologically refers only to the event of rising. However, within a given context, it may also acquire a temporal signification. For instance, in response to the question (مَتَى ذَهَبْتَ إِلَى الْجَامِعَةِ؟) — “When did you go to the university?”, the answer (شُرُوقِ الشَّمْسِ) would be understood as (ذَهَبْتُ وَفَتْ شُرُوقِ الشَّمْسِ) — “I went at sunrise”. In this case, the maṣḍar شُرُوقُ functions as an adverb of time, referring specifically to the time of sunrise. (Sîbeveyhi, 1988, p. 1/222,223)

### Ikhtiṣāṣُ

When the maṣḍar is used with the definite article (الـ), it may convey a signification of specification (ikhtiṣāṣ). For example, in the sentence (ضَرَبْتُ الضَّرْبَ) — “I struck [the blow]”, the governed maṣḍar (الضَّرْبَ) appears in the accusative form (مَنْصُوب) and is prefixed with the definite article. The presence of الـ indicates that the action of striking refers to a specific instance known to the interlocutor. Thus, the definiteness of the maṣḍar marks it as referring to a particular, contextually recognized act.

### The Maṣḍar as a Clarifier of a Preceding Ambiguity

The maṣḍar may serve to clarify an ambiguity within the sentence. For example:

(فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْنَتُمُوهُمْ فَشَرُّوا الْوَثَاقَ فَمَا مَبْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءٌ حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا)

“Now when ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks until, when ye have routed them, then making fast of bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom till the war lay down its burdens.” (Muhammed 47/4)

In the verse, the maṣḍars (مَنْأَ, “release without ransom”) and (فِدَاءَ, “release for ransom”) function as the cognate accusatives (مَفْعُولٌ) of the elided verbs (تَمْنُونُ, “you set free”) and (تَفْدُونُ, “you ransom”). These maṣḍars serve to clarify the ambiguity inherent in the word (وَثَاقُ, “bond, captivity”). The phrase describing the disbelievers being bound implies their capture, yet it remains indeterminate as to what would happen to them afterward. The subsequent maṣḍars, فِدَاءَ and مَنْأَ, resolve this ambiguity by specifying that the captives would either be released gratuitously or in exchange for ransom. (Fehreddin er-Râzî, 1999, p. 28/38; MehmetAli, 2020, p. 304; Zemahşerî, ts., p. 4/319)

### The Passive Participle Signification of the Maṣḍar

In some instances, the maṣḍar is used in place of the passive participle (اسْمُ الْمَفْعُولِ) within a sentence, thereby conveying its meaning. For example:

(جَنَّاتٍ عَذْنٌ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ عِبَادَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَأْتِيًا)

“Gardens of Eden, which the Beneficent hath, promised to His slaves in the Unseen. Lo! His promise is ever sure of fulfilment.” (Meryem 19/61)

In the verse, the maṣḍar (وَعْدَ, “His promise”) is used in place of the passive participle (مَوْعُودُهُ, “that which He has promised,” i.e., Paradise). Thus, the maṣḍar conveys the meaning of the passive participle, referring not to the act of promising itself but to the promised object. (Taberî, 2001, p. 15/575)

### The Active Participle Signification of the Maṣḍar

The maṣḍar is sometimes used in place of the active participle (اسْمُ الْفَاعِلِ).

Masdar bazen ismi fâil yerine kullanılabilmektedir. (el-Müberra, ts., p. 3/234,235) For example, in the sentence (قَتَلْتَهُ صَبْرًا) — “I executed him patiently,” lit. “I killed him with patience”), the maṣḍar (صَبْرًا, “patience”) is used in place of the active participle (صَابِرًا, “being patient”). It functions syntactically as an adverbial accusative of state (خَال), describing the manner in which the action was performed. (el-Müberra, ts., p. 3/234,235)

(ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا)

“Then call them, they will come to thee in haste.” (Bakara 2/260)

In the verse, the maṣḍar (سَعْيًا, “striving”) is used in place of the active participle (سَاعِيَةً, “striving, exerting effort”) and functions syntactically as a circumstantial accusative (خَال). However, since it shares the same verbal root as its governing verb, it may also be analyzed grammatically as a cognate accusative (مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ). (Sâfî, 1997, p. 3/41)

### The Oath Signification of the Maṣḍar

The maṣḍar may also be used to convey the meaning of an oath. For example, in the expressions (عَمَرَكَ اللَّهُ) and (قَعَدَكَ اللَّهُ), the maṣḍars (عَمَرَ, “life”) and (قَعَدَ, “sitting”) are employed to express an oath, meaning “By the existence or presence of God.” In such usages, the maṣḍar functions independently, serving as an emphatic performative expression equivalent to an oath formula. (MehmetAli, 2020, p. 304; Radî el-Esterâbâdî, 1978, p. 1/312)

عَمَرَكَ اللَّهُ كَيْفَ يَلْتَقِيَانِ  
وَسُئِيلٌ إِذَا اسْتَقْلَّ يَمَانِ  
أَيُّهَا الْمُنْكَحُ الثَّرَيَّا سُبَيْلًا  
هِيَ شَامِيَةٌ إِذَا مَا اسْتَقْلَّتْ

“O Suhayh, who seeks to marry Thurayyâ! By the life and presence of God, how could you ever come together? One of you is in Yemen, and the other is in al-Shâm — you are by no means compatible with each other.” (Ebî Rabi‘a, 1996, p. 397)

In the verse, the word (عَمَرَكَ اللَّهُ) derives from the verb (عَمَرَ يَعْمُرُ) and functions as a maṣḍar. Within its contextual (سِبَاقِي) framework, it conveys the meaning of an oath, serving as an emphatic expression equivalent to “By your life, O God.”

## REFERENCES

1. Ahvas, A. b. M. b. A. b. A. b. S. (1969). Şi‘ru’l-‘Ahvasi’l-Ensârî. Mektebetü’l-Endülüis.
2. Âyiş, Ş. M. C. (2012). Delâletü Siyâki İsmi’l-Fâ’i fi’l-Hadîsi’n-Nebevi’ş-Şerîf-Sahîh Müslim ‘Enmûzecen. Cemi‘atü’ş-Şarki’l-Evsad.
3. Berekât, İ. İ. (2007). En-Nahvu’l-‘Arabî (Vols. 1–5). Dâru’n-Neşr li’l-Câmi‘ât.
4. Beyzâvî, N. E. S. A. b. Ö. b. M. (2002). Envâru’t-Tenzîl ve Esrâru’t-Te’vîl (Vols. 1–5). Dâru ‘İhyâi’t-Türâsi’l-‘Arabî.

5. Cürcânî, E. B. A. b. A. (1987). El-Miftâhu fi's-Sarf. Mü'essesetü'r-Risâle.
6. Ebî Râbî'a, A. b. A. b. E. R. b. el-Muğîre. (1996). Dîvânu 'Amr b. Ebî Râbî'a (2nd ed.). Dâru'l-Kitâbi'l-'Arabî.
7. Ebüssuûd, M. b. M. b. M. (ts.). Tefsîru Ebî's-Su'ûd: İrşâdu'l-'Akli's-Selîm ilâ Mezêye'l-Kitâbi'l-Kerîm (Vols. 1-9). Dâru 'İhyâi't-Türâsi'l-'Arabî.
8. el-Enbârî, K. (2003). El-İnsâf fî Mesâ'ili'l-Hilâf beyne'n-Nahviyyîne'l-Basriyyîn ve'l-Kûfiyyîn (Vols. 1-2). el-Matba'atü'l-'Asriyye.
9. el-Ğalâyînî, M. (1993). Câmi'u'd-Durûsi'l-'Arabiyye (30th ed., Vols. 1-3). el-Mektebetü'l-'Asriyye.
10. el-Hudrî, M. ed-Dimyâtî. (2003). Hâşiyetü'l-Hudrî 'alâ Şerhi'bni 'Akîl 'alâ Elfiyeti'bni Mâlik (Yusuf Muhammed el-Bakâ'î, Ed.; Vols. 1-2). Dâru'l-Fikr.
11. el-Müberred, E.-A. M. b. Y. b. A. b. U. (ts.). El-Muktedab (Vols. 1-4). 'Alemü'l-Kütüb.
12. es-Sabbân, E.-İrfân M. b. A. (1997). Hâşiyetü's-Sabbânî 'alâ Şerhi'l-'Üşmûnî li Ellfiyeti İbni Mâlik (Vols. 1-3). Dâru'l-Kütübi'l-'İlmiyye.
13. es-Suyûtî, C. (1998). Hem'u'l-Hevâmi' fi Şerhi Cem'i'l-Cevâmi' (Vols. 1-4). Dâru'l-Kütübi'l-'İlmiyye.
14. Fehreddin er-Râzî, E. A. F. M. b. Ö. b. H. (1999). Mefâtihu'l-Gayb- et-Tefsîru'l-Kebîr (3rd ed., Vols. 1-32). Dâru 'İhyâi't-Türâsi'l-'Arabî.
15. Hansâ, Ü. A. T. bint A. b. el-Hâris. (2004). Divânu'l-Hansâ (2nd ed.). Dâru'l-Ma'rife.
16. İbn Akîl, B. A. b. A. (1982). El-Müsâ'id 'alâ Teshîli'l-Fevâ'id (Vols. 1-4). Dâru'l-Fikr.
17. İbn 'Akîl, A. b. A. el-Hemedânî. (1980). Şerhu İbn 'Akîl 'alâ Elfiyeti'bni Mâlik (20th ed., Vols. 1-4). Dâru't-Türâs.
18. İbn Cinnî, E.-F. O. b. C. (ts.). El-Hasâis (4th ed., Vols. 1-3). el-Hey'etü'l-Misriyyeti'l-'Âmme li'l-Kitâb.
19. İbn Fâris, E.-H. A. b. F. b. Z. b. M. er-Râzî el-Kazvînî el-Hemedânî. (1979). Mu'cemu Makâyisi'l-Luga (Vols. 1-6). Dâru'l-Fikr.
20. İbn Mâlik, E. A. C. M. b. A. b. M. (1982). Şerhu'l-Kâfiyeti'ş-Şâfiye (Vols. 1-5). Câmi'atü Ümmi'l-Kurra'.
21. İbn Mâlik, E. A. C. M. b. A. b. M. (1990). Şerhu't-Teshîl li'bni Mâlik (Vols. 1-4). Dâru'l-Hecr.
22. İbn Meyyâde. (1982). Şi'ru İbn Meyyâde. y.y.
23. İbn Sîde, E.-H. A. b. İ. ed-Darîr el-Mürsî. (1996). El-Muhassas (Vols. 1-5). Dâru 'İhyâi't-Türâsi'l-'Arabî.
24. İbn Ya'îş, E.-B. M. (2001). Şerhu'l-Mufasssal li'z-Zemahşerî (Vols. 1-6). Dâru'l-Kütübi'l-'İlmiyye.
25. İbnü'l-Enbârî, E. B. M. b. el-K. b. M. (1992). Ez-Zâhir fi Me'âni Kelimâti'n-Nâs (Vols. 1-2). Muessesetü'r-Risâle.
26. Kâsım b. Sellâm, E. U. el-K. b. S. b. M. el-Herevî. (1964). Garîbu'l-Hadîs (Vols. 1-4). Matbaatu Dâirati'l-Meârifî'l-Osmâniyye.
27. Kazvînî, E.-M. C. el-H. M. b. A. b. Ö. b. A. (ts.). El-İzâh fî 'Ulûmi'l-Belâga (3rd ed., Vols. 1-3). Dâru'l-Cîyl.
28. Kocabıyık, H.İ. (2025). "The Ontology Of Speech: Existential Dimensions Of The Speakeraddressee Dialectic From Arabic Eloquence To Modern Philosophy Of Language", Synesis 17/2.
29. Kocabıyık, H.İ.- Açar, Y. (2024). "Different Uses of the حَتَّى Conjunction in Arabic Language", Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences 22/2.
30. Kocabıyık, H.İ.- Açar, Y. (2025). "Different Uses of the Conjunction Fa In The Arabic Language", IJAZARABI: Journal of Arabic Learning 8/1.
31. MehmetAli, B. (2020). Masdarın Anlam Delâleti. Harran Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 44, 288-312.
32. Radî el-Esterâbâdî, R. M. b. el-Hasen. (1978). Şerhu'r-Radî 'alâ'l-Kâfiye (Vols. 1-4). Bingazi Üniversitesi.
33. Radî el-Esterâbâdî, R. M. b. el-Hasen. (1993). Şerhu'r-Radî li-Kâfiyeti'bni'l-Hâcib (Vols. 1-2). Dâru'l-Hecr.
34. Sâfî, M. A. (1997). El-Cedvelü fi 'İrâbi'l-Kur'âni'l-Kerîm (4th ed., Vols. 1-31). Dâru'r-Raşîd.
35. Sâmerrâî, F. S. (2000). Me'âni'n-Nahv (1st ed., Vols. 1-4). Dâru'l-Fikr.
36. Sâmerrâî, F. S. (2020). Me'âni'n-Nahv (2nd ed., Vols. 1-4). Dâru İbn Kesîr.
37. Sehîm, 'Abdü benî'l-Hashâs. (1950). Dîvânu Sehîm. Dâru'l-Kütübi'l-Misriyye.
38. Sîbeveyhi, E. B. A. b. O. b. K. (1988). El-Kitâb (3rd ed., Vols. 1-4). Mektebetü'l-Hâncî.
39. Taberî, E. C. M. b. C. b. Y. el-Âmilî. (2001). Tefsîru't-Taberî- Câmi'u'l-Beyân 'an Te'vîli 'Âyi'l-Kur'ân (Vols. 1-26). Dâru Hicr.
40. Tarafetü'bnü'l-'Abd, T.-'Abd b. S. b. S. (2002). Dîvânu Tarafeti'bni'l-'Abd (3rd ed.). Dâru'l-Kütübi'l-'İlmiyye.
41. Tebrîzî, E. Z. Y. b. A. b. M. el-Hatîb. (ts.). Şerhu Dîvânî'l-Hamâse (Vols. 1-2). Dâru'l-Kalem.
42. Üşmûnî, E.-H. N. A. b. M. b. İ. b. Y. (1998). Şerhu'l-Uşmûnî 'âlâ Elfiyeti'bni Mâlik (Vols. 1-4). Dâru'l-Kütübi'l-'İlmiyye.
43. Üşmûnî, E.-H. N. b. M. b. İ. (1955). Menhecu's-Sâlik ilâ Elfiyyeti'bni Mâlik (Vols. 1-3). Dâru'l-Kütübi'l-'Arabî.
44. Zemahşerî, E.-K. M. b. Ö. b. M. el-Hârizmî. (ts.). El-Keşşâf 'an Hâkâ'ıķı Ğavâmiẓi't-Tenzîl ve 'Uyûni'l-Ekâvîl fî Vücûhi't-Te'vîl (Vols. 1-4). Dâru 'İhyâi't-Türâsi'l-'Arabî.