


RESEARCH ARTICLE				Mechanisms of Interpretation and Semantic Control in Classical Arabic Discourse: A Linguistic-Semantic Study	
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Abstract					
<p>This article explores semantic thinking among Muslim Quranic exegetes, highlighting how this semantic awareness emerged from the need to understand the Holy Quran, which led to the development of the science of Tafsir (exegesis), intertwined with linguistics, rhetoric, and logic.</p> <p>The article examines the influence of the asbab al-nuzul (occasions of revelation) in determining meaning and contextual time and place. It also discusses the role of abrogation (al-nasikh wa al-mansukh) in shaping legislative meaning. A distinction is made between muhkam (clear) and mutashabih (ambiguous) verses as two mechanisms for assessing the clarity or obscurity of meaning.</p> <p>The article emphasizes the importance of context—both verbal and situational in uncovering Quranic meanings, in addition to analyzing semantic linguistic phenomena such as: synonymy, polysemy, antonymy, and opposition. It further illustrates how nouns in the Quran carry greater potential for semantic interpretation than verbs, as exemplified in the word “kalalah”. The article also presents examples of exegetical disagreements resulting from variations in readings, syntax, and linguistic interpretation.</p> <p>The article concludes that the efforts of the exegetes constitute an early foundation for modern semantic analysis, and that understanding the Quranic meaning can only be achieved through the integration of context, language, indicators, and jurisprudential grounding.</p>					
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Introduction:

Semantics represents one of the central issues in the sciences of language and the Quran, as it is essential for understanding the divine discourse and deriving doctrinal and legislative meanings and rulings. Quranic exegetes

have given great attention to the meaning of the Quran in light of the semantics of words, resulting in a rich exegetical effort filled with linguistic and semantic reflections that reflect an advanced awareness of the dimensions of the Quranic text.

Research Problem:

The core problem addressed in this article can be summarized in the following question: How did semantic thinking develop among Quranic exegetes, and what tools and concepts did they rely on to uncover the meanings of the Holy Quran?

From this central question arise several sub-questions, including:

- What is the impact of occasions of revelation, abrogation, and the distinction between clear and ambiguous verses on directing meaning?
- How did the exegetes employ context and linguistic phenomena such as synonymy and polysemy in the interpretive process?
- To what extent did the differences among exegetes contribute to enriching the semantic understanding of the Quranic text?

Significance of the Study

The importance of this article lies in its focus on the semantic dimension, which is sometimes overlooked in exegetical scholarship. It highlights how early exegetes were pioneers in employing analytical tools that preceded what is now known as modern semantic analysis. The article also showcases their efforts in addressing linguistic phenomena within the Quranic text.

Objectives of the Study

- To uncover the foundations of semantic thinking among Quranic exegetes.
- To analyze the impact of Quranic phenomena—such as abrogation, context, and occasions of revelation on the direction of meaning.
- To highlight the role of language, context, and terminology in shaping exegetical perspectives among scholars.

Methodology

This article adopts an analytical-inductive approach by tracing examples from classical Tafsir works, analyzing the mechanisms through which exegetes understood meaning, and connecting these approaches with contemporary semantic concepts. It also incorporates comparative analysis between different exegetical interpretations.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on selected examples from the interpretations of early scholars, linguists, and jurists. It does not cover all exegetical trends or theological sects but rather concentrates on the semantic aspects as presented in Tafsir works with a linguistic and analytical orientation.

1. The Authenticity of Semantic Research among Exegetes

The method of semantic inquiry among the Arabs was developed in response to the urgent need to study the Holy Quran. Rhetoricians, exegetes, logicians, philosophers, and linguists contributed to this endeavor, which led to a deep semantic awareness among scholars of Arabic. This, in turn, enriched semantic research with results that align with those of modern semantic analysis.

The primary motivation behind the emergence of linguistic studies in general was to serve the Quran its language, miraculous nature, and rulings. Naturally, these studies emerged as overlapping and interconnected, evolving toward the service of the Quran's very language. From an early period, Arabs showed great concern for studying

the meanings of words used within Quranic and general linguistic studies. Reflection on the Quran and its spiritual, doctrinal, linguistic, and especially semantic dimensions was a major focus for scholars and researchers. As a result, their writings directly or indirectly explored the relationship between words and meaning ¹.

It is authentically reported that the Prophet ﷺ interpreted certain verses of the Quran. The Companions became aware of this and expanded upon it, interpreting many verses not directly explained by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. A well-known example is the responses of ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) [d. 68 AH] to the questions posed by the Kharijite leader Nafi’ ibn al-Azraq ², and Najda ibn ‘Uwaymir ³. They approached him in the Sacred Mosque with questions regarding rare and obscure Quranic terms, stipulating that he support every answer with evidence from classical Arabic usage. Ibn ‘Abbas answered all their inquiries, fulfilling their condition. These questions are considered among the earliest attempts at purely linguistic interpretation of the Quran, marking the beginning of semantic inquiry into word meanings in Islamic tradition.

Ibn al-Nadim (d. 380 AH) mentioned that the first book written in Quranic exegesis was the book of Ibn ‘Abbas, transmitted through Mujahid and reported from Mujahid via multiple chains. The students of Ibn ‘Abbas expanded semantic inquiry further in their interpretations. The Tafsir of Sa’id ibn Jubayr ibn Hisham al-Kufi (d. 95 AH) became well known as one of the earliest efforts to explore word meanings through Quranic vocabulary and clarify its rare expressions.

Quranic exegesis and its authorship went through multiple phases and took various directions. It arose from the very core of what we now recognize as semantic studies, as it dealt with the meaning of words and their usage in the Quran, supported by Arabic poetry and prose used to interpret that usage. Even the script and vocalization of the Quran were acts of semantic function, since any change in diacritical marks affects the grammatical role and meaning of the word. Thus, Quranic studies are largely linguistic in nature, with semantic analysis occupying a central role. It was the essential means by which the legal and theological truths of the text could be understood.

Among the earliest linguistic writings related to word semantics were the so-called lexical tafsir works, such as *Gharib al-Quran* by Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276 AH) and *Mufradat Alfaz al-Quran* by al-Raghib al-Asfahani (d. 504 AH). Ibn Qutaybah said:

“This book of ours is derived from the works of the exegetes and the leading linguists. We have not deviated from their approaches, nor have we ventured personal opinions beyond their meanings. We have simply selected, for each word, the interpretation that best matches the language and most closely aligns with the context of the verse.” ⁴

Another category of authorship within Quranic studies that focused on the semantic dimension includes the works titled *Ma’ani al-Quran* (Meanings of the Quran). These works addressed semantic matters by exploring the meanings of selected verses, explaining obscure vocabulary, clarifying rare expressions, and resolving ambiguities or apparent contradictions ⁵.

2. Rules of Quranic Interpretation and Their Relationship to Meaning

There are certain rules employed by exegetes in the field of Quranic interpretation which help clarify the distinction between a rule and a discipline, as exegetes sometimes refer to certain Quranic terms as “sciences” and at other times as “rules.” For example, abrogation (*naskh*) is referred to as both the science of abrogation and the rule of abrogation. The same applies to *muhkam* and *mutashabih* (clear and ambiguous), occasions of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), and other

2.1. Occasions of Revelation and Their Relationship to Meaning

Western society remains captivated by narratives that are temporally linked to compelling stories which create a connection between the mind and lived reality, enabling better comprehension of cultural content. The Holy Quran employed the linguistic styles of the Arabs to align with the mental inclinations of such societies and to convey reformative ideas suited to those mindsets. It also made use of figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, and metonymy secondary meanings of words that Arabs favor as a form of expressive creativity to describe and illustrate concepts.

In the Quran, however, such meanings take on a primary role: through them, Allah (Exalted is He) conveyed things truthfully, not metaphorically. The Quran used metaphor in form, not in substance it employed it as a stylistic tool that emotionally moves the soul, much like poetry does on the surface ⁶.

As stated in the Quran: ﴿قَالَ أَلْقُوا فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَزَكَّهُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ﴾ [Al-Imran 116]

Allah (Exalted is He) supported His prophet Musa (peace be upon him) with something resembling magic but in truth. This led the magicians to prostrate to the Lord of Musa and Harun. The Prophet ﷺ linked metaphor, simile, and figurative expression which are integral to eloquence with magic, when he said: "Indeed, some poetry contains wisdom, and indeed, some speech contains magic."

He did not say all poetry or all speech.

Thus, occasions of revelation (asbab al-nuzul) served as a Quranic pedagogical method aligned with the Arab's natural tendency toward stimulation and emotional engagement. Certain verses were tied to social events and situations relevant to their lives, enabling immediate interpretation and teaching them to return to the Quran for clarity on what was unclear to them ⁷.

Thus, the occasions of revelation (asbab al-nuzul) are among the phenomena that accompanied the process of Quranic revelation. They are external to the Quran itself specific events and incidents that necessitated a particular revelation, and which came to an end with the completion of the eternal Book. These events later came to be referred to as "occasions of revelation." The Quran itself, however, addressed only the revelation (nuzul) proper not its composite historical context. These occasions are to be understood as historical dimensions of the Noble Book, among them: ⁸

1. **Time of Revelation:** The Almighty says: ﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ﴾ Al-Qadr: 01
2. **Place of Revelation:** The Almighty says ﴿قَدِيرٌ شَيْءٍ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ Al-Anfal: 41 From this verse, the classification into *Makki* and *Madani* is derived.
3. **Means of Revelation: Revelation through divine messenger.** The Almighty says ﴿نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ﴾ Al-Shu'ara': 193.
4. **Mode of Revelation:** Either as a whole (*daf'i*) or gradually (*tadarruji*), since the Quran was revealed in two distinct manners: all at once and in installments.
5. **Purpose of Revelation** (not to be confused with the objective of the science of revelation) ﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا﴾ Al-Furqan: 1
6. **Nature and Quality of the Revelation:** ﴿وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾ Al-Isra: 105

As for the subject of the science of asbab al-nuzul (occasions of revelation), one may ask: does it concern the events that coincided with the revelation due to necessity? Or does it pertain to the Quranic expressions in terms of their relationship to those incidents? Or is it because of their connection to the text or because they were the cause for the text to be revealed in the first place, such that had the events not occurred, the text would not have been revealed?

Referring to these incidents as "occasions of revelation" (asbab al-nuzul) is accurate, if what is meant is that they were the cause of the revelation occurring at that specific time, regarding a particular person, group, or situation that required a divine response.

Thus, the meaning of a verse being revealed at the time of a specific incident is to offer a solution precisely when it is needed. This is because the Quran is detailed and explanatory of all things ⁹. The Prophet ﷺ said: ((إِذَا تَبَسَّطَ عَلَيْكُمْ))

¹⁰ ((الفتن كقطع الليل المظلم فعليكم بالقرآن))

Therefore, the verse or verses were revealed because of that event; otherwise, had there been no such incident, they would not have been revealed. However, this does not contradict the universality of the Quran. The verse was revealed regarding a particular person or situation to clarify it. For instance, the Almighty said: ﴿فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا﴾

Al-Ahzab: 37 ﴿وَوَخَّانَاكَ لَكِي لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا﴾

Though this verse refers to specific individuals, Allah (Exalted is He) made it a clear and comprehensive ruling that applies to all believers, as seen in the same verse: ﴿لَكِنِّي لَا يَكُونُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ خَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ﴾ **Al-Ahzab: 37**

This is why the hypocrites feared that the Quran might expose them. Allah says: ﴿يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلِئَلَّا يُفْلِحَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ **Al-Tawbah: 64**

For they understood that the Quran is a source of exposition and disclosure. Therefore, revelation in this sense is a kind of disclosure not of the Quran's wording itself, but of its attribute of universality, as a Book that explains.¹¹

2-2. Abrogation (al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh) and Its Relationship to Meaning or Semantics

Abrogation is one of the essential disciplines that exegetes cannot dispense with in guiding meaning. What is meant by naskh (abrogation) is: the repeal of a ruling established in the sacred Shariah due to the expiration of its time or term whether that repealed matter pertains to legal (taklifi) or positional (wadh'i) rulings, to divine offices, or other matters that fall under Allah's authority as Lawgiver. This includes cases such as the abrogation of Quranic recitation while keeping the ruling itself (i.e., abrogation of recitation only).

It is among the contextual factors surrounding the text, and the exegete must be aware of it otherwise, the intended semantic guidance from the sacred lawgiver cannot be fully understood. There are two types of abrogation:

1. A ruling established in the Quran is abrogated by a mutawatir Sunnah or by definitive consensus (ijma') that clearly indicates the abrogation was issued by the infallible Imam (peace be upon him). This type of abrogation is logically and textually undisputed.
2. A ruling established in the Quran is abrogated by another verse that directly addresses and lifts the original ruling¹².

For example, in the verse:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾ **Al-Mujadila: 12**

most scholars consider it to have been abrogated by the following verse:

﴿أَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ **Al-Mujadila: 12**

Ibn Khaldun (d. 808 AH) said regarding naskh: "The Prophet ﷺ would clarify what was general in the Quran, distinguish the abrogating from the abrogated, and his Companions would know this."¹³

It was reported that the Companions would study abrogation together. For instance, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) passed by a judge and asked him: "Do you know the abrogating from the abrogated?"

He replied, "No." 'Ali said: "You are ruined and have caused ruin!"

Some extended the concept of abrogation to include what is not explicitly mentioned in the Quran, such as the verse of stoning. It is narrated that 'Umar brought the verse of stoning and claimed it was part of the Quran. However, the Muslims did not accept his statement because the transmission of that verse was limited to him, and it was not affirmed in the codices. Later scholars considered it a case of abrogation of recitation while maintaining the ruling.

Since abrogation was a phenomenon that accompanied the revelation and ceased with the death of the Messenger ﷺ, Ibn Khaldun (d. 808 AH) classified it in his Muqaddimah as part of naqli (transmitted) exegesis, along with asbab al-nuzul and the purposes of verses. Thus, abrogation in legislation is solely the right of the Lawgiver, as in civil legislation.

It is evident from what al-Zarkashi (d. 794 AH) transmitted regarding the different instances and rulings of abrogation that it was a matter adopted by scholars of usul (legal theory). Al-Tabataba'i (d. 1402 AH) said: "Abrogation, as known among jurists, is the clarification of the expiration of a ruling and the end of its validity."¹⁴

One example of this is what was narrated by al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH)¹⁵ from Ibn ‘Umar regarding his interpretation of the verse: ﴿وَأِنْ تُبْذَوْا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفَوْهُ بِحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرْ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبْ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ **Al-Baqarah: 284** which he said was abrogated by the verse: ﴿لَا يَكْلِفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾ **Al-Baqarah: 286**

In another narration, Ibn ‘Umar said:

﴿وَأِنْ تُبْذَوْا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفَوْهُ﴾

this was abrogated by the verse that followed it

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ﴾ **Al-Isra: 18**

that it abrogated the verse:

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ﴾ **Al-Shura: 20**

Imam al-Shafi‘i defined abrogation as: “The repeal of a Shari‘ah ruling by another Shari‘ah ruling that was revealed later.” Ibn Jarir al-Tabari agreed with al-Shafi‘i’s definition. In his tafsir of the verse:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُولُوا فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ **Al-Baqarah: 115**

he stated in his book Bayan fi Usul al-Ahkam: “We have already proven in our book that there is no abrogating text whether from the Quran or the sayings of the Messenger ﷺ except what clearly nullifies an established ruling and imposes a new obligation on the people, without ambiguity in its apparent or hidden meanings. As for texts that could suggest alternatives such as exceptions, specificity, generality, clarification, or interpretation they are far from the category of abrogation. Abrogation is only applicable to what clearly and explicitly cancels an established ruling.”¹⁶

2-3. Al-Muhkam and Al-Mutashabih and Their Relationship to Meaning

Allah says: ﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ﴾ **Aal ‘Imran: 7**

Ibn Habib al-Naysaburi mentioned three opinions on the matter:

- The first: that the entire Quran is muhkam, based on the verse: ﴿كِتَابٌ أُخْكِمْتُ آيَاتُهُ﴾ **Hud: 1**.
- The second: that the entire Quran is mutashabih, based on the verse ﴿كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِي﴾ [Al-Zumar: 23].
- The third, and the correct view: is that the Quran is divided into muhkam and mutashabih, as indicated in the verse quoted above.

The response to the two verses is as follows: The meaning of ihkam (being muhkam) is perfection and protection from contradiction and inconsistency; and the meaning of tashabuh (being mutashabih) is that its parts resemble each other in truth, authenticity, and miraculousness¹⁷.

Some scholars said that the verse indicates limitation to two categories (muhkam and mutashabih), and that nothing falls outside of them. Allah says:

﴿لَتَنبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ **[An-Nahl: 44]**

And the muhkam needs no clarification, while the mutashabih is not expected to be explained¹⁸.

Shaykh al-Shinqiti (d. 1393 AH), in his tafsir Adwa’ al-Bayan fi Idah al-Quran bil-Quran, explained verse 7 of Aal ‘Imran:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ﴾ **[Aal ‘Imran: 7]**

He stated that this noble verse indicates that the Quran contains muhkam and mutashabih verses. Another verse indicates that all of it is muhkam:

﴿الرَّ كِتَابٌ أُخْكِمْتُ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فَصَّلْتُ مِنْ لَدُنِّ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ﴾ **[Hud: 1]**

And another verse suggests that all of it is mutashabih:

﴿كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِي﴾ [Al-Zumar: 23]

The reconciliation between these verses is as follows: The Quran is completely muhkam in the sense of being perfected and flawless in its words, meanings, and miraculousness true in information, just in rulings, and free from any defect in wording or meaning. It is also completely mutashabih in that its verses resemble one another in beauty, precision, truth, miraculousness, and immunity from flaws.

However, the division into muhkam and mutashabih means that:

- The muhkam is that which is clear in meaning to all people, such as: ﴿وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّيْفَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا﴾:

[Al-Isra': 32]

﴿لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُومًا مَخْذُولًا﴾ [Al-Isra': 22]

- The mutashabih is what is hidden to all but those firmly grounded in knowledge (rasikhun fi al-'ilm), based on whether the conjunction wa in ﴿وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ﴾ [Aal 'Imran: 7] is conjunctive or exceptional. It may also refer to what Allah alone has kept in His knowledge, such as the meanings of the disjointed letters at the beginning of some surahs¹⁹.

Shaykh **al-Tahir ibn 'Ashur**, in his Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir, explained the same verse and pointed out that ihkam originally means "prevention", citing the verse of Jarir:

"O sons of Hanifa, restrain your foolish ones, for I fear I may grow angry with you."²⁰

The term ihkam was then used to mean precision and reinforcement, because that prevents opposing meanings from creeping in. That is also why wisdom (hikmah) was named as such whether in literal or well-established metaphorical usage.

In this verse, muhkam was applied metaphorically to denote clarity of meaning, since clarity prevents the entry of multiple possibilities that cause uncertainty. Mutashabih, on the other hand, denotes metaphorically the obscurity of meaning, just like how visually similar objects are difficult to distinguish from one another²¹.

According to al-Asam, muhkam is what has a clear and established proof, while mutashabih is what requires contemplation like the verse:

﴿وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتًا كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ﴾ [Az-Zukhruf: 11],

where the beginning is muhkam and the end is mutashabih²².

Among the majority of scholars, there are two views:

- The first: muhkam is that which has clear and evident meaning, while mutashabih is that whose meaning is known only to Allah. This view is attributed to Malik in a narration from Ashhab in Jami' al-'Utbayyah, and to the Hanafis by al-Khafaji, and was favored by al-Shatibi in Al-Muwafaqat.

- The second: muhkam is that which is clear, and mutashabih is that which is obscure. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi favored this view. According to this opinion, nass and zahir (explicit and apparent) are muhkam due to their clarity, even if zahir carries a slight possibility of another meaning. Mujmal (ambiguous) and mu'awwal (interpreted) are considered mutashabih due to the obscurity of their indications mu'awwal implies a weaker meaning opposite a stronger one, and mujmal implies two equally probable weak meanings. This method was attributed to the Shafi'is

²³.

In the same context, 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad al-Mansur, in his book **Mushkil al-Quran**, commented on the meaning of the verse from Aal 'Imran. He said that Allah informs us that the Quran contains muhkam verses clear and unambiguous in meaning, understandable to all people and mutashabih verses ambiguous in meaning to many or some people. Whoever refers the ambiguous to the clear and judges the unclear by the evident has been rightly guided; but whoever does the opposite, is misled²⁴.

The Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith narrated by Abd Allah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-As: “ما عرفتم منه فاعملوا به و ما جهلتم منه فردوه إلى عالمه”

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Al-Hasan al-Basri interpreted the verse:

﴿الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 121] as: “They act upon its *muhkam* and believe in its *mutashabih*, and entrust what is unclear to its Knower.”²⁶

2-4. Context and Its Relationship to Meaning

The exegetes (mufasssirin) were among the earliest scholars who paid attention to context and relied on it as an essential tool for uncovering the intended meaning and the purpose of the Lawgiver. Since they dealt most extensively with the Quran, their inquiries covered what others such as readers, linguists, rhetoricians, jurists, and others addressed. For this reason, Abu Hayyan said that tafsir is: “A science that investigates how to pronounce the words of the Quran, their meanings, their individual and compound rulings, and the meanings implied in different syntactic constructions, including related elements.”²⁷

He also stated: “It is a science that studies the states of the Noble Quran in terms of its indication of the intended meaning, as much as is humanly possible. Tafsir involves elements of narration, while ta’wil concerns reasoned interpretation.”

He continued:

- “Our phrase ‘a science’ denotes the genus.
- ‘Investigates how to pronounce’ refers to the science of recitation (qiraah).
- ‘Their meanings’ relates to the meanings of the words, which falls under the study of Arabic language.
- ‘Their individual and compound rulings’ encompasses morphology, rhetoric, and eloquence.
- ‘The meanings implied in construction’ includes both literal and metaphorical meanings. Syntactic constructions may outwardly suggest a particular meaning but be constrained by contextual indicators, requiring a metaphorical interpretation.
- ‘Related elements’ include knowledge of abrogation (naskh), causes of revelation (asbab al-nuzul), narrative clarification, and similar topics.”²⁸

Al-SuyuTi, who cited Abu Hayyan’s definition in both *al-Itqan* and *al-Tahbir*, endorsed it and also presented another definition attributed to some scholars: “Tafsir is the uncovering of the meanings of the Quran and the clarification of what is meant, whether the meanings are linguistic or derived from legal usage, or through contextual clues and understanding the setting.”²⁹

These various definitions, despite their differences, share a focus on understanding the intended meaning of Allah’s words. The last definition quoted by al-SuyuTi is particularly relevant to context due to its emphasis on contextual indicators (qarain) and setting (maqam).

Exegetes have two main approaches for uncovering the intended meaning of the Quran these form the two types of tafsir:

- Tafsir by transmitted sources (bil-mathur)
- Tafsir by opinion (bil-ray)

Concerning tafsir bil-mathur, its sources are the Quran itself, the Sunnah, and the sayings of the Companions. Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH) said: “The soundest approach is to interpret the Quran using the Quran; what is summarized in one place is elaborated elsewhere. If this is insufficient, refer to the Sunnah, for it explains and clarifies the Quran.”³⁰

He added on the same page: “If no explanation is found in either the Quran or the Sunnah, then we turn to the statements of the Companions, for they understood it best. They witnessed the contextual indicators and circumstances unique to them and possessed sound understanding, correct knowledge, and were people of action especially the leading scholars among them, such as the four rightly guided caliphs and the rightly guided imams.”³¹

These three methods of tafsir bil-mathur heavily depend on both types of context. They involve examining the texts of the Quran and Sunnah context within the scripture. Al-ShinqīTi said: “Know that the Sunnah is encompassed within a single verse from its vast ocean namely, His statement: ﴿وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا﴾: [Al-Hāshir: 7].”

He mentioned how the Prophet ﷺ interpreted: ﴿وَلَا يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ﴾: [Al-Anam: 82] when the Companions asked him about it, and he explained that zulm (wrongdoing) here refers to shirk (associating partners with Allah), citing the verse: ﴿إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾: [Luqman: 13].

Situational context is also evident in the interpretations of the Companions, as they witnessed the circumstances and events that prompted the revelations. Among these contextual indicators, the causes of revelation (asbab al-nuzul) are especially important, as many verses were revealed in response to specific events.

Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH) said: “Knowing the cause of revelation helps to understand the verse, for knowledge of the cause leads to knowledge of the effect.”³²

Al-Zarkashi mentioned several benefits of knowing the causes of revelation, including:

- Understanding the intended meaning
- Specifying the ruling, especially for those who believe that rulings are determined by the specific cause

An example is Marwan ibn al-Hakam’s interpretation of the verse:

﴿لَا تَحْسَبِ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا آتَاوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسِبْهُمْ بِنَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾: [Aal Imran: 188],

where he said:

“If everyone who rejoices in what he has received and likes to be praised for what he has not done is to be punished, we would all be doomed.”

But Ibn Abbas clarified that the verse refers to the People of the Book who, when the Prophet ﷺ asked them about something, concealed the truth and presented a false answer, seeking praise for it.

Other elements of context that interested the exegetes include time and place, such as the classification of verses as Makkan or Madinan terms that refer to both time and location. Makkah differs from Madinah spatially, and events in Makkah preceded those in Madinah chronologically.

Exegetes identified Makkan and Madinan verses through two methods:

1. Transmission knowledge of the cause of revelation
2. Analytical deduction textual analysis of topics and themes found in each

Thus, the difference between Makkan and Madinan³³ verses is rhetorical and based on situational factors such as time, location, and stylistic features, all reflecting deep contextual analysis by the exegetes³⁴.

One example that highlights the importance of context is Ibn Kathir’s interpretation of the verse: ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِلْءُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ افْتَذَى بِهِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾: [Aal Imran: 91],

He said: “Whoever dies in a state of disbelief, no good deed will ever be accepted from him—even if he had spent the equivalent of the entire earth in gold, thinking it to be a righteous act. The Prophet ﷺ was asked about **Abd Allah ibn Judan** who used to host guests, free captives, and feed the poor whether any of this would benefit him. The Prophet ﷺ replied: ‘No, for he never once said during his life: O Lord, forgive me my sins on the Day of

Judgment.' Likewise, even if he were to ransom himself with the full weight of the earth in gold, it would not be accepted from him."³⁵

Ibn Kathir explained this position in his interpretation of the verse by stating:

"Allah said: ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يُغْفَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِلَّةُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ افْتَدَى بِهِ﴾. The phrase *wa lawiftada bihi* is joined by the conjunction *wa*, indicating that it is something distinct from what preceded it. What we have mentioned is better than saying that the conjunction is superfluous indeed, Allah knows best."³⁶

This means that nothing can save such a person from the punishment of Allah, even if he had spent gold equivalent to the earth's weight, or tried to ransom himself with it whether it be equal to its mountains, hills, soil, sand, plains, rough terrain, land, or sea.

Ibn Kathir may Allah have mercy on him understood this meaning through the context of the verse. The context distinguishes between giving the equivalent of the earth in gold and ransoming oneself with that amount. The coordinating conjunction *wa* indicates contrast. The first case refers to deeds in this world, where good deeds may be accepted, while the second refers to the Hereafter, where disbelievers may try to ransom themselves from punishment. He favored the view that the conjunction is not superfluous, since nothing in the Quran is redundant. This *wa* is one of the meaningful particles of the language and can be interpreted in line with the context, negating the need to consider it as superfluous. This opinion, which Ibn Kathir adopted, was also held by al-Zajjaj and approved by Ibn Atiyyah may Allah have mercy on them all.¹

- Another example of the impact of context in clarifying the meaning of consecutive verses appears in Ibn Kathir's commentary on the verse: ﴿وَلَتَبْلُوكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾: [Al-Baqarah: 155-156].

He wrote: "...Then Allah clarified who the praised patient ones are, saying: ﴿إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 156], meaning that they console themselves with this statement when afflicted by a calamity. They know they belong to Allah, who disposes of His servants as He wills. They also know that not even the weight of a mustard seed of deeds is lost with Him on the Day of Judgment. This awareness leads them to the understanding that they are His servants and that they will return to Him in the Hereafter."²

Thus, may Allah have mercy on him, he interpreted the phrase *al-ṣābirin* ("the patient ones") based on the Quranic context. The relative clause *alladhina* ("those who...") explains the meaning of *al-ṣābirin* that precedes it. Abu Ḥayyan al-Andalusi supported this by noting that *alladhina* is in the accusative case as an adjective describing *al-ṣābirin*.³

3- The Impact of Linguistic Significance on Interpretation Among the Exegetes:

Linguistic signification is considered one of the most important foundations upon which exegetes relied to understand the meanings of the Quran. The exegetes did not adopt a single stance regarding the linguistic meaning of a given word, nor did they yield to one interpretation among the possible ones. Rather, they sometimes agreed and sometimes differed. While exegetes paid more attention to meanings than to mere words, the semantic value of nouns proved broader in interpretive potential than that of verbs and particles.

4- The Impact of Noun Signification on Interpretation Among the Exegetes:

Nouns, by their nature, allow for more interpretive possibilities than verbs. This is because they are not bound by time or place. The inherent abstraction of nouns opened interpretive pathways for exegetes, making them more prone to semantic multiplicity than verbs or particles. Among the examples of nouns that were subject to interpretive analysis by exegetes are: *al-kalalah*, *Tulan*, *khayran*, *anna*, *al-waw*, *ḥimwan*, and *min*.³⁷

A – Al-Kalalah: In His saying: ﴿إِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلَالَةً أَوْ امْرَأَةٌ وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ﴾ [An-Nisa: 12], the key word is “kalalah”, which is derived from the trilateral root *kalla*. Exegetes have proposed several interpretations for it, and four semantic understandings have been recorded:

- **First:** *Kalalah* refers to the deceased who leaves behind neither children nor parents. According to this interpretation, *kalalah* denotes only the deceased and not the heirs. Al-Samin al-Ḥalabi clarified this by saying: “It is necessary, in order to assign it this meaning, that it not be the same as the subject in “*yurathu*”. *Kalalah* meaning ‘the heir’ is not indicated in the verse.” Thus, al-Samin al-Ḥalabi interprets *kalalah* as the deceased who leaves neither a father nor children, i.e., he has no first-degree heirs.
- **Second:** *Kalalah* means the direct heir, and the structure according to this interpretation would be: “And if a man is inherited from by *kalalah*,” meaning: he has heirs and they are his *kalalah*. However, this interpretation is somewhat ambiguous, as *kalalah* is not inherently tied to a specific category or individual, but may describe anyone. In this case, the word refers to the heir, not the deceased. *Kalalah* here is derived from *takallul* (encompassing), referring to relatives that surround the deceased like a crown (*iklil*).³⁸ From this comes the poet’s line:

You have inherited the lance of glory not through ** But from Abu Manaf, Abd Shams, and Hashim³⁹
kalalah

- **Third:** *Kalalah* refers to a distant relative. The structure here would be: “If a man is inherited on account of *kalalah*,” and the word would then indicate kinship not necessarily close family members but rather more distant relatives. Thus, *kalalah* would stem from *al-kalal* (fatigue), implying that inheritance reaches these heirs after much difficulty and hardship. This is the opinion of al-Zamakhshari, who cited the line of al-Asha:

So I swore I would not grieve for her from ** Nor from revelation until she meets Muḥammad
kalalah

In this interpretation, *kalalah* means fatigue, and al-Zamakhshari concluded that it denotes distant kinship i.e., the inheritance goes to distant relatives.⁴⁰

- **Fourth:** *Kalalah* as the inherited wealth. This is the view of al-Akbari, who said: “*Kalalah* is the name for the inherited wealth.” Thus, in this reading, it functions as the second object of the verb “*yurathu*” (to be inherited), just like one would say: “Zayd inherited wealth.” Al-Zamakhshari and al-Samin al-Ḥalabi also inclined toward this. Ibn al-Arabi added that the verb “*yurathu*” is read with either a *kasrah* or a *fathah* on the *ra*. The meaning of *kalalah* shifts depending on this reading: with a *fathah*, it refers to the wealth inherited, whereas with a *kasrah* (whether lightened or intensified), it refers to the heirs the distant relatives of the deceased. Thus, when the verb “*yurathu*” is read with a *fathah*, *kalalah* does not denote the heirs, since the grammatical position does not permit it; for instance, “Zayd *yurathu* brothers” would not be valid. But with the *kasrah* reading whether softened or stressed the sentence becomes grammatically and semantically coherent.⁴¹

Among the many examples of diverse interpretations of a single word, al-Zamakhshari often did not limit himself to a single meaning but would present one explanation and then follow it with another. Sometimes the second interpretation closely resembled the first; other times, it diverged. For instance, in his explanation of: ﴿وَيُقِيمُونَ﴾:

﴿وَيُقِيمُونَ﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 3], he wrote: “...The meaning of *iqamah al-ṣalah* (establishing prayer) is to straighten and perfect its pillars, and to preserve it from any defect in its obligations, recommended acts, and etiquettes derived from *aqama al-ud* (he set the stick straight). Or it could mean consistency and diligence in it as in *qamat al-suq* (the market was active).”

Similarly, in his interpretation of: ﴿وَإِنَّمَا يَرْثُكَ خَلِيلٌ﴾ [An-Nisa: 125], he wrote: “*Khalil* is from *al-mukhalah*, i.e., the one who befriends you and aligns with your traits, walking your path from *al-khall*, which means

a pathway through the sand dunes. Or it may mean the one who enters your inner space just as you fill his gaps, or the one who deeply penetrates your homes and veils.”⁴²

Another example is found in his interpretation of the word (زُرْقًا) in the verse: ﴿يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ وَنَحْشُرُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ زُرْقًا﴾ [Ta-Ha: 102]. He said: “There are two opinions on zurq: First, that blue eyes were considered the most detested color among Arabs because their enemies the Romans had blue eyes... Second, that the intended meaning is blindness, as the pupils of those who lose their sight turn bluish.”⁴³

5- The Disagreement Among Exegetes and Its Impact on Meaning:

Reasons Behind Disagreement in Interpretation:

It is important to know that the Prophet ﷺ explained the meanings of the Quran to his companions just as he explained its words. The statement of Allah ﴿لَتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ﴾ [An-Nahl: 44] encompasses both the clarification of its wording and its meaning. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to learn ten verses from the Prophet ﷺ and would not go beyond them until they had learned what knowledge and actions they contained. They said, “We learned the Quran, knowledge, and practice all together.”

Disagreement among the early generations in interpretation was rare, and their disagreement in rulings was more than their disagreement in interpretation. Most of the authentic disagreements among them are based on diversity (ikhtilaf tanawwu) rather than contradiction (ikhtilaf tadadd), and this falls under two types:

- The first: Each of them may express the intended meaning using a different expression from his companion, indicating a different aspect of the meaning of the same referent. This is like synonymous or near-synonymous names, such as sword, blade, or Muḥannad (sharp-edged).
- The second: Each may mention one type of a general term by way of example and to draw the listener's attention to a category, not to restrict or limit the referent completely in its definition or scope.

An example of this is Allah's saying: ﴿ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ﴾ [FaTir: 32].

From this, we understand that “the one who wrongs himself” includes those who neglect obligations or commit prohibitions; “the moderate” refers to one who fulfills obligations and avoids prohibitions. The moderate ones are the “companions of the right,” and the foremost in good deeds are the “nearest ones.”⁴⁴

As for those who err in both the evidence and its indication, such as the sects of innovators and people of desire, they adopt a doctrine that contradicts the truth which is upheld by the middle nation who do not collectively agree on misguidance the righteous predecessors of the Ummah and its scholars. They then turn to the Quran and interpret it in a way that aligns with their doctrine, distorting the words from their proper contexts.

Among these are the Khawarij, Rafidah, Jahmiyyah, Mutazilah, Qadariyyah, Murji'ah, and others. There is not a single interpretation among their false tafsirs except that its falsehood becomes apparent from many angles either from knowing the falsity of their belief or from the invalidity of the interpretation they offer for the Quran, whether it is presented as evidence for their view or as a response to objections against it.

On the other hand, those who err in the evidence but not in the conclusion, such as some Sufi groups, preachers, jurists, and others they offer correct meanings, but the Quran does not actually indicate those meanings. This is like much of what was mentioned by al-Sulami in Haqaiq al-Tafsir.

Other reasons for disagreement among exegetes include:

- Differences in **Quranic readings** (*qiraat*),
- Differences in **grammatical analysis**, even when the readings are the same,
- Disagreement among **linguists** regarding the meaning of a word,

- **Lexical ambiguity** where a word may carry two or more meanings,
- The potential for **restriction or generality**,
- The possibility of **literal or figurative usage**,
- The possibility of **ellipsis** or **self-contained** meaning,
- The possibility of a **word being superfluous**,
- Issues related to **word order**, advancement or delay (*taqdim wa takhir*),
- And the question of whether a ruling is **abrogated** or still **in effect**.

Additionally, disagreement may arise from variations in the **narrations** of tafsir attributed to the Prophet ﷺ or the righteous predecessors.⁴⁵

6- Semantic Phenomena Among the Exegetes:

Arabic scholars in their lexicons refer to the multiple meanings of a single word and clarify the primary meaning, which is usually a concrete and sensory one. They distinguish it from meanings that have developed through evolution or transfer. These meanings may be literal or metaphorical. The semantic evolution of a word's meanings grants it specific connotations beyond its original general sense, and may even shift it to a new meaning that might oppose or contrast with the original general indication.

The meanings of a single word may differ due to variety or contradiction, or a word's meaning may approximate that of another word. A single word might even be used literally in multiple meanings that can coexist within one context. These linguistic phenomena include linguistic nuances, homonymy, antonyms, and synonymy. Exegetes have developed their own approaches in dealing with these semantic concepts to make the meanings of the verses clearer in their interpretations.

6.1 – Synonymy (At-Taraduf):

The term taraduf is derived from a verbal noun implying reciprocal action, meaning sequence or cooperation. It originates from ar-ridf or ar-radif, referring to the rider behind another rider or to anything that follows another. Ar-ridfān refers to any two things that follow one another.⁴⁶

Technically, synonymy among words is: "What shares one meaning but has many names; the opposite of homonymy." In other words, it is when two or more words share the same meaning.

The classical scholars had a stance regarding this phenomenon. Sibawayh referred to it in his *Kitab*, as did Ibn Jimni under the label *taadi al-amthila wa-talaqi al-maani* ("divergence in form, convergence in meaning"), giving examples such as *khaliqa*, *sajjiyya*, *Tabia*, *ghariza*, and *salika*.

Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi defined synonymy as: "Singular words that indicate one thing from a unified perspective." He added: "We specify 'singular' to exclude names and definitions, for they are not synonyms, and 'unified perspective' to exclude words like *sawd* and *ṣarīm* (cutter), which refer to the same object but from different aspects one indicating the entity and the other a trait."⁴⁷

One of the earliest Arabic books titled after taraduf was written by Abu al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Isa (d. 384 AH), titled *Kitab al-Alfaz al-Mutaradifa wa-al-Mutaqariba fi al-Mana*.⁴⁸

Among modern scholars who defined synonymy is Kamal Bishr, who cited the definition by Stephen Ullmann in his book *The Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning* (translated by Bishr), which defines synonyms as "Words of identical meaning that can be interchanged in any context." However, he stipulated the requirement of interchangeability in every context, which ultimately leads to the conclusion that such total interchangeability is nearly impossible. Therefore, most "synonyms" are only partial or quasi-synonyms, because words are rarely used in the same context or style without some degree of distinction.⁴⁹

Professor Ali al-Jarim believed that precise synonymy demands complete identity of meaning, not mere approximation, such that the similarity is total as if the words were perfectly overlapping circles.³⁰

Shaykh Tahir ibn Ashur discussed the definition of synonymy, saying: “It is a singular word that, by linguistic convention, signifies a meaning that is also signified by another singular word, differing from it in some of its root letters, and both are used by all Arab tribes.”

Here, word encompasses noun, verb, and particle.

By linguistic convention excludes metaphorical or figurative uses, where the meaning is only derived contextually, not by original designation.

The clause signified by another word includes all that denotes meaning in Arabic whether wheat and barley, or gold and mosque, or morphological variations like sound plurals and broken plurals, which both denote collectivity. It also includes tools (particles) that indicate the same meaning, such as lam al-amr and the imperative form, both of which express a firm command.

The restriction to singular words is meant to exclude compound phrases whether restrictive, genitive, or predicative which may yield equivalent meanings, but such equivalence arises from composition rather than lexical synonymy.

³¹

Some contemporary Quranic scholars adopt the view that synonymy exists in the Quran. For example, in the verse: ﴿وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ لَا تُبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ﴾ [al-Muddaththir: 27–28], some see apparent synonymy between *la tadhar* (“leaves nothing”) and *la tubqi* (“spares nothing”), suggesting that the conjunction merely serves rhetorical emphasis and stylistic rhythm. According to some, the repetition of meaning with different words serves to **enhance meaning** and **increase linguistic richness**.

In the verse: ﴿أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سُرُّهُمْ وَنَحْوَاهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلْنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ﴾ [at-Tawbah: 78], *najwa* is understood as a synonym of *sirr* (secret).

Proponents of Quranic synonymy tend to focus on the shared general meaning between words, without necessarily considering the fine distinctions that become apparent when one traces how the Quran uses each word in different contexts.³²

For instance, in: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعَاجِزِينَ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّن رَّجَرٍ أَلِيمٌ﴾ [Saba: 5], *riiz* is taken to mean *punishment*, implying intensification and severity.

Ibn al-Athir, in his commentary on: ﴿وَإِن تَعَفُّوا وَتَصَنَّفُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾ [at-Taghabun: 14], sees *afw* (pardon), *salh* (overlooking), and *maghfira* (forgiveness) as synonymous, stating that their repetition beautifies the act of forgiving — such as a father pardoning his son or a husband his wife.³³

Among the examples of synonymy is the verse: ﴿قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَخُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [Yusuf/86], where it is held that *bathth* and *huzn* mean the same, repeated here due to the severity of the calamity that befell him and the multitude of its piercing arrows into his heart. Ibn al-Athir holds that this kind of repetition entails meaning that is added to itself with different wording a feature of synonymous expressions and that the purpose of this repetition is to emphasize and intensify the intended meaning.

Ibn al-Arabi, in interpreting the verse: ﴿وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [al-Hashr/09], considers *shuhh* and *bukhl* to have the same meaning, without any distinction, since no proof exists to differentiate them. He then states: “Any term interpreted in two ways, or any meaning expressed by two terms it is permissible for either to replace the other, either jointly or separately and this is frequent in the language.”³⁴

Other examples of synonymy include the verse: ﴿فَارْتَدَّاهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ﴾ [al-Baqarah/36], which was interpreted as: “He caused them to slip and distanced them,” implying that *izlal*, *tanhiya* (removal), and *tabid* (distancing) all share the same meaning.

Likewise, in the verse: ﴿لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ﴾ [al-Baqarah/259], it was said: “It did not change nor rot after a hundred years; tasannah means transformation,” thus tasannah, taghayyur (change), and natn (decay/rot) are seen as synonyms.

Another example is the verse: ﴿وَتَنَجَّوْنَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ يُّوْتَا فَارِهِنَ﴾ [ash-Shuara/149].

Al-Kirmanī said: “It was recited as farhin.” Ibn Abbas interpreted it as: “boastful and arrogant.” The ha in farhin is a substitution for ḥa, and farḥ in Arabic with ḥa implies pride and arrogance. As in the verse: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ﴾ [al-Qaṣaṣ/76].

Thus, the text suggests that farh, fariḥ, ashir, and baTar all carry the same meaning they are synonyms when the words differ but the meaning aligns.

Also cited is the verse: ﴿لَمْ يَطْمِئْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ﴾ [ar-Raḥman/56], in which al-Farra said: “Tamth is iftidad (defloration), meaning intercourse accompanied by bleeding. It is said: Tamatha yaTmithu and Tumitha; a girl is said to be Tumithat if her virginity is broken.” The exegetes stated: “They were not entered, approached, or copulated with.” The text thus indicates that Tamth, iftidad, intercourse with bleeding, waT, ghishya, and jima all share the same meaning and are considered synonyms.⁵⁵

6-2 – Homonymy (al-Mushtarak al-Lafzi):

Al-Bazdi stated in Uṣūluḥ: “Homonymy is every word that bears multiple distinct meanings or multiple referents (names) with differing meanings, in such a way that only one among them is intended in a particular context.”

And al-Qadi al-Nakri mentioned in Dustur al-Ulama: “Ishtirak (homonymy) is of two types: verbal and conceptual.

- As for verbal homonymy, it refers to a word that has been designated for two or more meanings through separate conventional assignments like the word ayn, which can mean the eye (the organ of sight), a stream, gold, and so forth.
- As for conceptual homonymy, it is when a word is assigned to a general, overarching meaning.”

Conceptual homonymy involves a shared core meaning between the two senses. The term is then applied to each of the meanings by virtue of this shared concept such as the word mawla, which may refer to both the master and the slave, since its original meaning is “helper” or “supporter.” Similarly, the term aḥrama (أحرم) may be used for entering the sacred months, the sacred territory (haram), or wearing the garments of iḥram, all of which are united by the notion of entering a state in which certain previously lawful things become prohibited.⁵⁶

Indication of the Homonym:

Since acting upon what the words indicate is a legal requirement, if a homonymous word appears in the text without explicit indication of the intended meaning among its possible senses, the exegete must then seek to remove the ambiguity associated with this homonym to enable correct application of its legal implication. Hence, scholars have ruled that homonymy is not the default in legal interpretation.⁵⁷

So, if the exegete establishes that a word intended for interpretation and legal analysis is homonymous, there are two possible approaches available to him:

A/- First Case:

If the homonymous word in the Quranic text is shared between a linguistic meaning and a technical (legal) Shari meaning, then the intended meaning is the technical Shari meaning. This applies to words such as ṣalah (prayer), zakah (alms), ṣiyam (fasting), ḥajj (pilgrimage), Talaq (divorce), and other similar terms in the texts of the Quran and Sunnah. In such contexts, the intended meaning of each of these is the legal meaning, not the linguistic one unless there is a clear contextual indicator (qarinah) that redirects the word to its linguistic meaning.

For instance, the word ṣiyam linguistically means abstention, but in Islamic law it refers to a specific act of worship. Therefore, whenever the term ṣiyam appears in the Quran or Sunnah, the legal Shari meaning is intended, as long

as there is no contextual evidence that shifts the meaning to the linguistic sense. If such evidence exists, then the meaning specified by that evidence must be adopted.

An example is the verse: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾ [al-Aḥzab: 56].

Here, ṣalah is a homonymous word between its linguistic meaning (“dua” – supplication) and its legal meaning (specific statements and actions initiated by takbir and concluded by taslim). In this verse, the contextual clue clearly indicates that the intended meaning is the linguistic one supplication and not the prescribed ritual prayer, which is exclusively offered to Allah.

Thus, the meaning assigned to a word by Islamic law is to be taken unless a clear indicator suggests the linguistic meaning. ¹ This is because the default in Shari terminology is to point to a legally intended meaning. A word should not be diverted from its legal sense to its linguistic sense except where a clear proof necessitates that. ²

B/- Second Case:

If the homonymous word in the Quranic text is shared between two or more meanings, and there is no specific Shari convention that designates one meaning over the others, then it becomes necessary to engage in ijtihad (independent reasoning) to determine the intended meaning. The interpreter or jurist must employ contextual clues, textual indicators, the wisdom of the legislation, and the objectives of the Shariah to identify the correct meaning.

For example, consider the word “waw” (و) in the verse: ﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا كَمْ يَذْكُرُ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ﴾ [al-Anam: 121].

Here, the “waw” can be interpreted in two ways:

- As introductory (isti’naʿ),
- Or as circumstantial (ḥal).

The Ḥanafi jurists favor the introductory reading of “waw” in ﴿وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ﴾. Thus, their ruling is that the prohibition in the verse applies to any slaughtered animal upon which the name of Allah was not mentioned, whether another name (like idols) was mentioned or no name at all. Therefore, according to them, meat from an animal deliberately slaughtered without mentioning Allah’s name is prohibited.

In contrast, the Shafii jurists interpret the “waw” in ﴿وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ﴾ as circumstantial. Hence, the ruling according to them is that the verse prohibits what was slaughtered with the name of other than Allah, such as mentioning idols. In this interpretation, it is as though the verse means: “Do not eat that upon which Allah’s name was not mentioned and while in this state, it is an act of fiṣq (sin) meaning, it was slaughtered in the name of another.” Therefore, for them, meat from an animal slaughtered without mentioning Allah’s name (intentionally or unintentionally) is still permissible.

Stephen Ullmann also observes that such variation involves distinct words that share form. When a linguistic environment indicates that the words belong to different lexical units, the case should be considered verbal homonymy (homonymy) even though he considers this phenomenon relatively rare. ³⁸

Ullmann further considers it an unnatural development in the language. Before declaring a word homonymous, one must rely on objective evidence such as linguistic atlases, which record the geographic distribution of phonemes, vocabulary, and grammatical elements.

Thus, the definition of homonymy (al-mushtarak al-lafzi) as presented by the scholars of uṣūl (legal theory) is:

It is the genuine signification of a single word to two or more distinct meanings (that are not opposites), in an equally real and independent way, with no semantic relationship between those meanings. ³⁹

Scholars further divide **HOMONYMY** into two categories:

a. **Lexical ambiguity (homonymy) resulting from semantic development**, i.e., when a word acquires a new meaning or multiple new meanings. This is called **polysemy**, meaning one word with multiple meanings.

b. **Lexical ambiguity due to phonetic development**, where phonetic evolution leads to identical pronunciation regardless of spelling, as with the words *sea* and *see*. This is called **homonymy**, referring to multiple words with multiple meanings.⁶⁰

The criterion for distinguishing between the two is as follows:

1. By collecting the components of meaning or definition features: if the examples share a semantic feature, then they are polysemes. If no common feature exists, then the case is one of homonymy, though identifying the suitable distinguishing feature is often difficult.

2. The other criterion is to measure the degree of similarity in meaning after identifying the shared components between two words. However, this alone is not sufficient to determine whether a word falls into either category. It is necessary to distinguish between core and peripheral features and to compare only the core ones.⁶¹

The semantic context also contributes to determining the meaning of words by placing them in the correct context whether the word is an example of homonymy or not. Al-Suyuti says: “If a single word is associated with two different meanings, the listener will not know which was intended. Hence, the meaning of the name in reference to its designation becomes suspended. This ambiguity can be resolved in several ways. One of them is: Arabic speech validates itself; the beginning is linked to the end. The meaning is not known except by completing the entire sentence. Thus, a word may apply to two opposite meanings, but what comes before or after it indicates the intended meaning.”⁶²

He supported this with several examples illustrating the principle. He repeatedly emphasized that determining contextual meaning depends on what precedes and follows a word, which guides its interpretation and clarifies the specific intended meaning.

This is also the view of Ullmann, who asserts that context alone, with its natural semantic indicators, determines the meaning especially when two or more words share identical pronunciation. He gives examples from English like *see* and *sea*, asserting that context alone specifies the intended meaning. For instance: (the sea) refers to the ocean; (to see) means to perceive with the eyes; (the bishop's see) refers to a diocese or bishopric. These words sound the same, but context and semantic markers clarify the intended meaning. Thus, Ullmann states: “Almost every word requires at least some clarification from context whether verbal or non-verbal. Even when stylistic aspects alone are involved, contextual information remains essential for interpreting lexical ambiguity.”⁶³

Lexical ambiguity (homonymy) is also found frequently in Al-Karmani's writings, although he does not always explicitly reference the phenomenon. He typically just lists the word and some of its meanings.

For example, in his interpretation of the word “*ṣur*” in the verse: ﴿فَصَرِّهٖنَّ إِلَيْكَ﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 260], he says: “Linguists and commentators said: ‘incline them towards yourself,’ i.e., direct them to you. It is said: *ṣartu ash-say’a aṣuruhu*, meaning I inclined it. Ibn Abbas, Sa’id, Jubayr, Al-Hasan, and Mujahid said: ‘cut them into pieces,’ as in *ṣara ash-shay’ yusawwiru ṣawran*, meaning to cut.” Thus, the word *ṣur* can mean to incline or to cut, making it a case of one form with multiple meanings.⁶⁴

Another example is the word “*dakkaa*” in the verse: ﴿جَعَلَهُ دَكَّا﴾ [Al-A’raf: 143], where Al-Karmani says: “*Al-dakkaa*’ is a she-camel without a hump, and also refers to hills flattened to ground level that do not rise enough to be mountains.”

Also, in the verse ﴿وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنْزِفُونَ﴾ [As-Saffat: 47], he says: “Those who pronounce the *zaa* with a *kasrah* (*inzifuun*): Al-Farra’ says it has two meanings one is ‘to finish the wine’ and the other is ‘to lose one's mind due to intoxication.’”

And again, in the word “rijz” in the verse ﴿وَالرَّجْزُ فَاهْجُرْ﴾ [Al-Muddathir: 5], he states: “A group of commentators said: it means idol worship. Linguistically, rijz means punishment. There are two pronunciations: with a kasrah or a dammah. Idol worship and polytheism are called rijz because they lead to punishment.”

The text shows that rijz can mean polytheism, idol worship, or punishment.⁶⁵

Then, the **disagreement in interpretation is of two types**: one whose basis is only transmitted reports (naql), and one that is known through means other than that, since knowledge is either verified transmission or sound reasoning.

As for the first category what can be known to be correct through authentic transmission this is indeed available and, praise be to Allah, widely found in tafsir (Quranic interpretation), hadith, rulings (ahkam), and accounts of the Prophet's battles (maghazi). These are reported from our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through sound transmission.

As for the second type the reason for disagreement that stems from reasoning rather than transmission most of the errors in interpretation arise from this category. These appeared **after the interpretations of the companions and their followers**, and those who made such interpretations fall into two groups:

- The first are people who held certain beliefs and then tried to impose the words of the Quran onto those beliefs.
- The second are people who interpreted the Quran merely based on what could linguistically be possible for an Arabic speaker to intend, without considering the speaker of the Quran, to whom it was revealed, or the audience being addressed.

The first group gave priority to the meanings they believed in without giving due attention to what the words of the Quran actually require in terms of signification and clarity. The second group gave priority to the wording alone, assuming it could mean anything that is linguistically possible, regardless of the speaker's intent or the context of the verse.

Both groups frequently made mistakes:

- The second group often errs in assuming that the wording can support the intended meaning in the language, just as the first group erred before them.
- The first group frequently errs in the **validity of the meaning** with which they interpret the Quran, just as the second group does, even though the first group's focus is on meaning while the second group's focus is on wording.

The first group also divides into two subtypes:

1. Those who **strip the Quranic wording of its true meaning** and intent.
2. Those who **attribute to it meanings it never intended or signified**.

In both cases, the meaning they intend to affirm or negate might be **false**, in which case their error lies in both the evidence (dalil) and the meaning (madlul). Or it might be **true**, in which case their error lies in the **evidence**, not in the **meaning**.⁶⁶

6-3 Antonymy (al-tadad):

Among the issues in the levels of semantic analysis, this topic holds great importance; hence, it has been addressed by linguists and Quranic commentators. Abu Ubayda addressed it in his book Majaz al-Quran, considering it a stylistic phenomenon in the Quran with an impact on meaning. A word is considered in terms of its usage, its position in the sentence, and its contextual meaning. Thus, this phenomenon appears in Quranic exegesis.

However, Abu Ubayda touched upon this phenomenon only briefly until Ibn Qutaybah strongly addressed it in his book Ta'wil Mushkil al-Quran, where he considered that words carrying opposite meanings are among the stylistic

difficulties. Failing to grasp the true sense of a word, its usage, and its apparent meaning could lead to errors in understanding its significance.⁶⁷

This is affirmed by Ullmann, who observed that a word becomes ambiguous and unfit for use as soon as it acquires two conflicting and unrelated meanings. However, we believe that the contextual determinant removes this ambiguity and clarifies the intended meaning within a given construction.⁶⁸

This points to Ullmann's mention of antonymy when he said that it is a well-known category in Arabic. One example is the word al-jawn, which refers both to black and white, and al-jalil, which can mean great or small. Clearly, the author classified antonymy as part of polysemy, or what is addressed in linguistic schools under "multiple meanings of a single word." He did not consider it a case of homonymy words with the same form but unrelated meanings. We do not agree with this position, as we regard antonymy as a type of homonymy. Both phenomena occur between two or more words, not within a single word contrary to what is commonly stated in Arabic linguistic tradition.⁶⁹

6-4 Semantic Opposition (al-taqabul):

Opposition in the Quranic text occurs between meanings just as it does between words. Among words, it adds pleasure and excitement; among meanings, it enhances power and clarity and adds beauty and magnificence.

Hazim al-Qartajanni states that: "The soul is stirred and inclined when it perceives the pairing of similarities, analogies, and opposites. This is due to the harmony of pleasing or similar things, which settle into the soul as one idea. The same applies to what is unpleasant its presence strengthens the impact. Furthermore, the contrast between good and evil increases one's delight in the former and aversion to the latter. The effect of opposites presented side by side on the soul is astonishing."⁷⁰

The opposing scenes in Quranic imagery may vary in length or be equal. This difference in scene length is often due to the subject matter of the surah and the context in which they appear. The scene of bliss may be longer, or, if the dominant tone of the surah is anger or intensity, then a lengthy depiction of punishment would be more appropriate.⁷¹

Ibn Rashi al-Qayrawani defined opposition by saying: "Its foundation is arranging speech as it should be, giving the beginning what suits it first and the end what suits it last. It brings agreement where needed and opposition where needed. Most of the time, opposition appears in antonyms. When the contrast extends beyond two opposites, it becomes full semantic opposition."

Modern scholar Dr. Ahmad al-Janabi defined semantic opposition technically as: "Every two words where one carries the opposite meaning of the other."⁷²

STUDY FINDINGS

1. The study confirmed that semantic thinking among Quranic exegetes was neither spontaneous nor partial; rather, it was a methodological process that took shape during the time of the Companions, relying on language, context, and the causes of revelation.
2. It was shown that serving the Holy Quran was the primary driving force behind the emergence of semantics within Islamic culture, where it intersected with the sciences of rhetoric, grammar, logic, and the principles of jurisprudence.
3. The results clarified that exegetes relied on the causes of revelation to understand the temporal and social backgrounds of the verses, which helped in determining the precise meaning of the verse.
4. It became evident that the concepts of abrogating and abrogated (al-nasikh wa al-mansukh) serve as critical semantic tools for understanding the development of rulings and for defining the textual timeframe of legislative meaning.

5. The study revealed that the concepts of *muhkam* (clear) and *mutashabih* (ambiguous) are key components in semantic interpretation: the *muhkam* represents clarity and standard, while the *mutashabih* represents a domain for interpretation based on depth in knowledge.
6. The findings affirmed that context both verbal and situational is a fundamental factor in directing meaning and is considered one of the most important tools used by scholars in interpretation.
7. The study showed that exegetes were fully aware of semantic phenomena such as synonymy, polysemy, antonymy, and opposition, and they utilized them to broaden the scope of understanding.
8. The results indicated that nouns in the Quran possess greater semantic and interpretive richness than verbs and particles a feature that exegetes exploited to construct multiple interpretations for a single word.
9. It was found that differences among exegetes were often differences of variety, not contradiction, stemming from multiple contextual indicators and differing linguistic, doctrinal, or methodological backgrounds.
10. The study concluded that exegetical efforts by early scholars constitute an authentic foundation for what is known today as modern semantic analysis and deserve to be revisited in light of contemporary linguistic theories.

Recommendations and Suggestions

1. Expanding Semantic Studies in Tafsir: It is recommended to dedicate in-depth research to Quranic semantics as understood by early exegetes and to reread their works using modern linguistic methodologies that take into account developments in semantics and semiotics.
2. Enhancing Integration Between Linguistics and Exegesis: It is essential to link studies in rhetoric, grammar, and lexicography with exegetical approaches in order to expand the semantic comprehension of the Quranic text.
3. Reviving Linguistic Tafsir: Encouraging the re-editing and study of works by exegetes specializing in rare or obscure Quranic vocabulary, as these works offer semantic richness and open new horizons for understanding and interpretation.
4. Studying Context as a Semantic Key: It is proposed to conduct applied analytical studies on selected verses to highlight the effect of verbal and situational context in constructing and directing meaning.
5. Standardizing Semantic Concepts: There is a need to define and regulate terms such as “synonymy,” “polysemy,” “antonymy,” and “opposition” within the field of exegesis to reduce ambiguity and unify understanding among researchers.
6. Benefiting from Multiple Readings: It is recommended to employ the various Quranic readings as a rich source of meaning diversity, connecting them not only to phonetic variation but also to semantic levels.
7. Opening the Door to Comparative Studies: A call for comparative studies among exegetes in how they direct a single meaning, in order to reveal the impact of doctrinal and sectarian backgrounds on interpretation.
8. Utilizing Digital Tools: A proposal to apply automated processing to exegetical texts to uncover semantic relationships between words and verses through artificial intelligence techniques.
9. Restoring the Value of Early Exegetes: It is recommended to shed light on the interpretive efforts of the Companions and Successors in linguistic tafsir, considering them an original reference in Quranic semantic thinking.
10. Creating Semantic Exegetical Dictionaries: A call to develop a semantic dictionary of the Holy Quran based on the use of words within exegetical contexts, linking words with their occasions and Quranic context.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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Footnotes

¹ Akbar Hassan Kaseer, The Authenticity of Semantic Research among the Arabs in Terms of Origin and the Development of Authorship, Tikrit University Journal for Humanities, Vol. 19, No. 12, December 2012, University of Kirkuk, p. 25.

² Nafi ibn al-Azraq from Banu Hanifa, also known as Abu Rashid, founder of the Azariqa sect, one of the Kharijite groups. He initially accompanied 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas, then rebelled against 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and supported 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. After the arbitration between 'Ali and Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan, he joined those opposing arbitration in Harura (a village near Kufa), which marked the beginning of the Kharijites. See: www.arab.wikipedia.org, accessed on 27/05/2015, at 11:00.

³ Najda ibn 'Amir al-Hanafi, one of the Kharijite leaders. Under his command, the Kharijites took control of Bahrain and made al-Qatif their base. He was later replaced by Abu Fudayk, one of his earlier supporters and also a Kharijite. His rule lasted until 'Abd Allah ibn Marwan sent an army that defeated him in 73 AH. See: www.arab.wikipedia.org, accessed on 27/05/2015, at 11:10.

⁴ See: Jawad (Ali Farhan), The Interpretive Introduction in the Linguistic Methodology of the Holy Qur'an, Uruk Journal for Human Studies, Vol. 3, No. 2, May 2010, p. 47.

⁵ Khudr (Akbar Hassan Kaseer), The Authenticity of Semantic Research among the Arabs in Terms of Origin and the Development of Authorship, p. 31.

⁶ Al-Fa'izi (Hadi Hussein 'Imran), Rules of Qur'anic Interpretation: Their Logical Foundations, Derivation, and Definitiveness, Master's Thesis, University of Kufa, Faculty of Jurisprudence, Academic Year 1431 AH – 2010 AD, p. 92.

⁷ Ibid., p. 93.

⁸ Al-Fa'izi (Hadi Hussein 'Imran), Rules of Qur'anic Interpretation: Their Logical Foundations, Derivation, and Definitiveness, p. 94.

⁹ Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁰ As narrated by 'Abd Allah (peace be upon him) from his forefathers (peace be upon them), in Wasa'il al-Shi'a, Vol. 4, p. 828, Book 3, and Al-Usul, p. 590.

¹¹ Al-Fa'izi, Hadi, Rules of Qur'anic Interpretation, p. 97.

¹² Jawad (Ali Farhan), The Interpretive Introduction in the Linguistic Methodology of the Holy Qur'an, p. 53.

¹³ Ibn Khaldun ('Abd al-Rahman), Al-Muqaddimah, Dar al-Fikr for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 2001, p. 554.

¹⁴ Al-Fa'izi (Hadi Hussein 'Imran), Rules of Qur'anic Interpretation: Their Logical Foundations, Derivation, and Definitiveness, p. 98.

¹⁵ Al-Bukhari: Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari (13 Shawwal 194 AH – 1 Shawwal 256 AH / 20 July 810 AD – 870 AD), one of the great preservers and jurists, among the most important scholars of Hadith, biography, evaluation, and criticism according to the Sunni tradition. He authored many works, the most prominent of which is Al-Jami' al-Sahih, commonly known as Sahih al-Bukhari, considered the most authentic book after the Qur'an. He collected around 600,000 hadiths, and many major hadith scholars studied under him, such as Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, Ibn Khuzaymah, al-Tirmidhi, and others. He faced trials later in life and was forced out of Nishapur and Bukhara, eventually settling in the villages of Samarkand, where he fell ill and died. See: www.arab.wikipedia.org, accessed on 27/05/2015, at 11:30.

¹⁶ Saud (bin 'Abd Allah al-Fanisan), The Causes and Effects of Differences among Qur'anic Interpreters, Dar Ishbiliya, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1st ed., 1997, pp. 134–135.

¹⁷ Al-Suyuti (Jalal al-Din), Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut, commentary by Mustafa Najm Mustafa, 1st ed., 2007, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 425.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 425.

¹⁹ Al-Shinqiti (Muhammad al-Amin ibn Muhammad al-Mukhtar al-Janki), Adwa' al-Bayan fi Idah al-Qur'an bil-Qur'an, Dar al-Hadith, Vol. 10, 2006 edition, Cairo, p. 29.

- ²⁰ Line by Jarir: Its meaning repel them, stop them, and prevent them from approaching me. In the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas: A man would inherit a woman of kin and constrain her until she died or returned her dowry to him. Allah prohibited and forbade such action. “Aḥkamtū fulanan” means: I prevented him. See: www.library.islamweb.net, accessed on 05/06/2015 at 19:09.
- ²¹ See: Ibn ‘Ashur, al-Tahir, Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir, Vol. 2, Dar Sahnoun for Publishing and Distribution, Tunisia, p. 154.
- ²² Ibn ‘Ashur, al-Tahir, Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir, Vol. 2, p. 156.
- ²³ See: Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 156.
- ²⁴ See: Ahmad al-Mansur, Mushkil al-Qur’an, Dar Ibn al-Jawzi for Publishing and Distribution, 1st ed., 1426 AH, Saudi Arabia, p. 355.
- ²⁵ Reported by Imam Ahmad in Al-Musnad (6702) and authenticated by the researchers of Al-Musnad under the supervision of Shaykh Shuayb al-Arna’ut, Al-Resalah Foundation.
- ²⁶ Al-Mansur, Ahmad, Mushkil al-Qur’an, Dar Ibn al-Jawzi for Publishing and Distribution, 1st ed., 1426 AH, Saudi Arabia, p. 356.
- ²⁷ Al-Suyuti, Al-Tahbir fi ‘Ilm al-Tafsir, ed. Fathi ‘Abd al-Qadir Farid, 1st ed., 1403 AH, Dar al-‘Ulum for Publishing and Distribution, Saudi Arabia, p. 37.
- ²⁸ Ibid., pp. 37–38.
- ²⁹ Al-Talhi (Raddah Allah ibn Raddah ibn Dayf Allah), The Indication of Context, Series of Academic Theses, 1424 AH, Umm al-Qura University, p. 105.
- ³⁰ Al-Talhi (Raddah Allah ibn Raddah ibn Dayf Allah), The Indication of Context, p. 105.
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 106.
- ³² Ibid., p. 106.
- ³³ Badr al-Khazraji, The Contextual Indicator and Its Impact on the Qur’anic Text, Journal of the College of Basic Education, Issue 68, 2011, p. 07.
- ³⁴ Ibid., p. 08.
- ³⁵ Al-Mutairi (‘Abd al-Rahman), The Qur’anic Context and Its Effect on Interpretation, Master’s Thesis in Tafsir and Qur’anic Sciences, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Faculty of Dawah and Fundamentals of Religion, 2008, p. 203.
- ³⁶ Ibid., p. 204.
- ¹ Al-Mutairi (‘Abd al-Rahman), The Qur’anic Context and Its Effect on Interpretation, p. 207.
- ² Ibid., p. 207.
- ³ Ibid., p. 207.
- ³⁷ Kamal Muqabala, The Impact of Linguistic Semantics on Interpretation among Qur’anic Exegetes, The Jordanian Journal of Islamic Studies, Vol. 5, No. (3/B), (1430 AH / 2009 AD), p. 251.
- ³⁸ Ibid., p. 252.
- ³⁹ Line by Al-Farazdaq: “Kalalah” is derived from “Ikleele” (a crown that surrounds the head but does not rise above it), meaning you inherited the throne from your fathers, not your mothers.
- ⁴⁰ Kamal Muqabala, The Impact of Linguistic Semantics on Interpretation among Qur’anic Exegetes, The Jordanian Journal of Islamic Studies, p. 251.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., p. 252.
- ⁴² Dildar (Ghafoor Hamad Amin), Al-Kashshaf Interpretation by Al-Zamakhshari: A Linguistic Study, 2010, Dar Dijlah, Amman, p. 76.

- ⁴³ Dildar (Ghafoor Hamad Amin), *Al-Kashshaf Interpretation by Al-Zamakhshari: A Linguistic Study*, p. 76.
- ⁴⁴ Khalid (‘Abd al-Rahman al-Ak), *The Fundamentals and Rules of Qur’anic Interpretation*, 2007 edition, Beirut, Lebanon, pp. 83–84.
- ⁴⁵ Khalid (‘Abd al-Rahman al-Ak), *The Fundamentals and Rules of Qur’anic Interpretation*, p. 86.
- ⁴⁶ Al-Fayruzabadi, *Al-Qamus Al-Muhit*, pp. 143–144.
- ⁴⁷ Ahmad (Mukhtar ‘Umar), *Semantics*, 1st ed., 1985, Cairo, pp. 215–216.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 216.
- ⁴⁹ Al-Shaya (Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Salih), *Linguistic Differences and Their Impact on the Interpretation of the Holy Qur’an*, 1st ed., 1993, Riyadh, p. 32.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- ⁵¹ See: Al-Shaya (Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Salih), *Linguistic Differences and Their Impact on the Interpretation of the Qur’an*, pp. 33–34.
- ⁵² Al-Shaya (Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Salih), *Linguistic Differences and Their Impact on the Interpretation of the Qur’an*, p. 162.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.
- ⁵⁴ See: Al-Shaya (Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Salih), *Linguistic Differences and Their Impact on the Interpretation of the Qur’an*, p. 166.
- ⁵⁵ (Abu al-Ala’), *Keys to the Melodies in Recitations and Meanings*, pp. 41–42.
- ⁵⁶ Al-‘Ak (Khalid ‘Abd al-Rahman), *The Fundamentals and Rules of Qur’anic Interpretation*, p. 392.
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- ¹ Al-‘Ak (Khalid ‘Abd al-Rahman), *The Fundamentals and Rules of Qur’anic Interpretation*, p. 392.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 392.
- ⁵⁸ Al-‘Ak (Khalid ‘Abd al-Rahman), *The Fundamentals and Rules of Qur’anic Interpretation*, pp. 392–393.
- ⁵⁹ Hasan (‘Abd al-Wahid al-Shaykh), *Semantic Relations and Rhetorical Heritage: An Applied Study*, 1st ed., 1999, Egypt, p. 65.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67.
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- ⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- ⁶⁴ Al-Kirmani (Abu al-Ala’), *Keys to the Melodies in Recitations and Meanings*, studied and edited by ‘Abd al-Karim Mustafa Madlij, introduction by Muhsin ‘Abd al-Hamid, 1st ed., (2001 AD / 1422 AH), Dar Ibn Hazm, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 43.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- ⁶⁶ See: Al-‘Ak (Khalid ‘Abd al-Rahman), *The Fundamentals and Rules of Qur’anic Interpretation*, pp. 84–85.
- ⁶⁷ Hasan (‘Abd al-Wahid al-Shaykh), *Semantic Relations and Rhetorical Heritage: An Applied Study*, p. 85.
- ⁶⁸ Stephen Ullmann, *The Role of the Word in Language*, translated, introduced, and annotated by Kamal Muhammad Bashir, published by Maktabat al-Shabab, p. 118.
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- ⁷⁰ Al-Qartajanni, Hazm, *Minhaj al-Bulagha’ wa Siraj al-Udaba’*, introduced and edited by Muhammad al-Habib ibn al-Khujah, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1981, pp. 44–45.

⁷¹ Abu Zayd Ahmad, Rhetorical Harmony in the Holy Qur'an, Publications of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Rabat, printed at Matba'at al-Najah al-Jadidah, Casablanca, 1992, p. 157.

⁷² Ra'd Hadeel, Semantic Opposition in Surat al-Hadid, Journal of the University of Anbar for Islamic Sciences, p. 362.