

The Etymology and Semantic Analysis of Synonyms for 'Father' in Qur'ānic Translations: Implications for Arabic Language Education and Translation Studies

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ABSTRACT

Synonym is a significant feature in the human language. It provides the advantage of enriching the use of language, enriching the vocabulary, choosing the most well-spoken and audible forms and for rhetorical purposes. This paper examines the semantic account for the translation of synonym for “father” in the al-Qur’ān. Two lexical are identified as synonym; ‘ab (أب) and wālid (والد) appear in sura’s of Qur’ān. This article is a qualitative-descriptive study using text analysis method. The researcher used a sample of the study consisting of lexical ‘ab and wālid contained in Qur’ān. The text used in this study is “Terjemahan Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman.” The method used in data analysis is the lexical decomposition method of the words ‘ab and wālid. The elements of the meaning of the two words are described by tracing their meaning both in the dictionary and in the context of the Qur’an. By shading a light on denotative meaning, this paper provides etymological account to these lexical based on linguists’ proposition. The implication of the study includes translation works and teaching and learning of Arabic. This study provides a significant account on synonym to assist translator to overcome challenges in translating works especially Quranic text’s translation and cultivate awareness among instructors of Arabic language in delivering synonym lexical items in Arabic language for students.

Keywords: Synonym, translation, ‘father’, meaning, Qur’ān

INTRODUCTION

Translation as an interaction between languages require to be strengthened over the time. Sometimes a long period of time means that a translation work needs to be re-examined so that the translated texts can and still be well comprehended. This is necessary because the language development takes place in terms of lexical item and linguistic aspects of language that are changing and increasing in accordance with socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic development of society and human civilization.

Synonym is one linguistic phenomenon in all languages, including Arabic (Abidah, 2012; Noor Eliza Abdul Rahman and Mohd Shahrizal Nasir, 2014). Informal use of languages may only use synonyms alternately to refer to something that sharing a similar inference. Synonyms provide the advantage of enriching the use of language, enriching the vocabulary, choosing the most well-spoken and audible forms and for rhetorical purposes (al-Mubarak, 1986; Muhd Sufian, 2012). In fact, synonyms have different boundaries of meaning as this study concerned and further will be discussed.

This study aims to analyze the semantic account for the translation from Arabic to Malay language of the synonym lexical “father” in the translation of the Quran. Two synonym lexical items were selected, namely أب (‘ab) and والد (wālid) which refers to (bapa) or (ayah) in the Malay and Indonesian language. The text used in

this study is “Terjemahan Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman,” a widely known Quranic exegesis translation in Malaysia. The methodology of this study is categorized as comparative linguistic analysis based on etymology’s research. Each selected lexical item with its translation is explained with table and its position in the suras (versus) of the al-Qur’ān. Comparative analysis is based on the denotative meaning of source language and target language. Furthermore, descriptive discussions were made thoroughly on the data collected to formulate the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hanafi (2011) asserted that Arabic language lexical item is unique and rich with synonym. He mentioned that Qur’ān has a high level of language which requires high ability to understand even no equal language to describe its nuances. However, the translation of Qur’ān is important to make its message delivered among non-Arabic speakers.

Synonym is one of the language phenomena in the study of Arabic language which was the subject of discussion among earlier linguists. There is a difference in opinion in the acceptance of synonyms in Arabic as well as in the Qur’ān. Some are extreme with their opinions, some have accepted and rejected them, and some have set guidelines in their acceptance. Studies in this area are always focused and discussed whether as an Arabic language perspective or as a Qur’ānic science topics.

The synonym of it early emerging was indirectly referred to by contemporary scholars with Sibawayh (180H / 803M) at the end of the second century of Hijrah Calendar. This was stated in al-Kitāb by Sibawayh noting:

“Notify that there are in their speeches (Arabs and scholars) with two distinct lexical but synonyms and there is also the one lexical but represents different in its meaning (mushtarak lafdhī). The different lexical but share the same meanings are as lexical ذهب and انطلق (go or set out)” (Sibawayh, 1999: 49).

Contributing factors for synonym in Arabic language could be summarized into five which are Arab dialect mixture, language borrowing, adjective use, metaphor application and phonetic changes (Ediyani 2017; Eliza Abdul Rahman and Mohd Shahrizal Nasir, 2014; Muhd Sufian, 2012). Moreover, three factors were added namely the changes of adjective to noun and individual self-giving to more than one name to thing (Ediyani, 2017; Muhd Sufian, 2012; Ali, 2007) and factor of diachronic study of synonymy, the traditionalists collected these synonyms from different periods of times (Ali, 2007).

Previous studies on synonyms stated that the difference in nuances of meaning between synonym pairs is still difficult to distinguish (Alanazi, 2017) because each synonym pair has different elements of meaning, nuances of meaning and collocation. Previous studies examined synonyms based on the function and context of synonymy pairs (Bar and Nachum, 2010). The use of synonymous words serves to reveal the implied meaning behind the express. Studies conducted on the novel: اللص و الكلاب (Allish wal Kilab) and زقاق المدق (Ziqaq al-Midaq) show, first, that synonymy pairs are used to explain the implied meanings behind the expression, especially in religious and literary texts. The second is used to get the equivalent of the same language feeling between the target language and the target language, the third is in the context of translation. In the context of translation, translators should not think of formal equality as an option, and they must choose functional and / or ideational equivalents to highlight the conventional implied meanings of synonymous expressions. This has been proven by the success of translating the lexical ریح (rīh) in an ideational way. Examining the synonymy in context can specify the difference in words between synonymy pairs by describing the elements of meaning contained in the word (Shehab, 2016).

Ridlo (2017) has asserted that the use of synonyms and antonyms in different expressions is proof of the majesty and miracle of the Qur’ān. If the Quran is read for the first time, the explicit meaning will be clear. But if it is read once again, the implicit meanings will also be found differently from the explicit meaning before and so on, to the extent that anyone may find phrases or words that having various meanings.

Problem Statement

Synonym is one of the elements that demonstrate the relationship between words other than antonyms, polysemy, hyponymy, homonym and so forth. In a linguistic study a word is notified to be synonymous with

another word if there is a similarity in meaning. Some researchers argue that the absolute equation in terms of meaning between the two words almost does not exist (see Palmer, 1986; Mounin 1991).

This can often be seen through meaning in the context of the use of phrases. For instance, the lexical *قرب* and *دنو*. Both lexical mean ‘close’ or ‘nearby’. Both words may hold the same meaning as in the verse *اقترب مني* or *ادنو مني*. But the same lexical might be used in *في الدنيا والآخرة* but not properly be used in *في القربى والآخرة*. Similarly with other examples in Malay such as “cikgu” and “guru” referring to ‘teacher.’ Both have the same meaning. But the word “cikgu” has the connotative meaning that is more appropriate when used in the form of a call as in the question [How are you teacher Liza?]: “Apa khabar cikgu Liza?” rather than “Apa khabar guru Liza?.”

This difference can lead to confusion either in terms of comprehension or aspect of use. In the field of translation for instance, translators should carefully select lexical that may give a proper meaning and fit the context of use. Similarly, in Arabic learning, understanding of synonym words is very important to ensure students are not confused and capable to master the precise vocabulary and use them accurately.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative and descriptive study using text analysis method. The researcher used a sample of the study consisting of lexical *’ab* and *wālid* contained in Qur’ān. The main instrument in this study is the scripture of Qur’ān. Other instruments that are used are three Arabic-Malay bilingual dictionaries and three Arab Arabic-Arabic dictionaries. Research data involving the frequency of *’ab* and *wālid* usage and the meaning and etymology of both lexical items are analyzed manually without applying specific software. The method used in data analysis is the lexical decomposition method of the words *’ab* and *wālid*. The elements of the meaning of the two words are described by tracing their meaning both in the dictionary and in the context of the Qur’ān.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The word *’ab* is more frequently mentioned in the Qur’ān than the word *wālid*. Based on data in the index of the Qur’ān Faturrahman Book by Syaikh Ilmi Zadeh (n.d), the word *’ab* and its derivatives are mentioned in the Qur’ān as many as 153 words, while *wālid* is mentioned in the Qur’ān as many as: 93 words. Based on the context in the Qur’ān, these two lexical items have the following elements of meaning:

Table 1. Common Reference to Lexical *’ab* and *wālid* in the Qur’an

No.	Reference	<i>’ab</i>	<i>wālid</i>
1.	General term for father	√	
2.	The term for father / biological father	√	√
3.	Beloved father or not, for example Azar, the father of the prophet Ibrahim	√	
4.	Mentioned in the Koran both in various contexts (neutral context)	√	
5.	Mentioned in the context of piety, the obedience between the child and the father, an example of the story of the prophets Ibrahim and Ismail	√	√
6.	Mentioned in the context of education / educating		√
7.	Mentioned in the context of insult, derision, an example of the story of the children of Israel who mocked Mary when she gave birth to Isa	√	
8.	A godly father	√	√
9.	Previous men (ancestors)	√	
10.	Ancestors	√	
11.	Biological father	√	√
12.	Father of man (Adam)		√
13.	Biological parents		√
14.	Positive context		√
15.	Father who is in the faith		√

The lexical 'ab is usually associated with the responsibility and obligation to find and provide for children, wives and their families. The lexical 'ab, apart from meaning father because of different markers such as ابا/ابي (abā/abiya) also means reluctant to take a food or anything (Kamus Besar Arab-Melayu Dewan, 2015). Contrary to the lexical ام, the place where the child and family return is because the mother prepares the food, and the needs of the child arrive at their education. As for the lexical wālid, it means more than the head/leader of the family to children because they are born and cannot be separated from their parents, hence the meaning, which gives birth. Therefore, it could be suggested, the lexical 'ab is used more than wālid, because of that responsibility, الرجال قومون على النساء, because men are stronger and more rational, different from women, not as strong as men and more emotional.

Discussion

This study has gathered the data of the lexical item based on the work of 'Abd al-Bāqī, Muḥammad Fu'ād in Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras Li alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karim. The analysis in the Qur'ān shows the 'ab in 116 places with various patterns of single, twofold or plural. The frequency of use in the Qur'ān is on the pattern of plural. While wālid found in 23 places with various forms of pattern either single word or twofold. The frequency of use in the Qur'ān is on its twofold pattern.

Both lexicals have the same meaning as stated by al-Aṣḥānī (1998: 16): "'ab is wālid and is named to anyone who is the reason for the existence of something or to clarify it, which is why the prophet is named (abū al-mu'minīn)." Based on the observations carried out in the book of Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman, these two lexical interpretations are translated as follows:

Table 2. Translation of 'ab and wālid

أب	Freq.	والد	Freq.
Grandparents (Datuk Nenek)	51	Parents (Ibu Bapa)	21
Parents (Ibu Bapa)	10	Father (Bapa)	1
Father (Bapa)	42	Person gives birth (Manusia yang melahirkan)	1
Father (Ayah)	13		
Abu Lahab (name of person)	1		
Total	116	Total	23

Denotative Meaning

The dictionary is used to examine the meaning of the lexical denotation of 'ab and al-wālid and also the corresponding translation of the Malay language. The table below summarizes research findings followed by brief discussion.

Table 3. Denotative meaning for Arab-Malay Translation

No.	أب	والد	References
1.	Bapa, ayah, abah	Bapa, ayah	Al-Marbawī (1350H)
2.	Bapa, ayah	Ayah, bapa	Al-Miftāḥ (2010)
3.	Bapa, ayah	Ayah	Al-Ma'rifah (2004)

In Malays language, lexical "father" has many synonyms in use. According to Abdullah Hassan and Ainon Mohd. (1997), "bapa" has variation of abah, ayah, ayahanda, bapak (pg. 20); "ayah" has variation of abah, ayahanda, bapa, bapak, pemimpin, orang tua (pg. 13); and "abah" has variation of ayah, ayahanda, bapa, bapak, papa (pg.1).

Table 4. Denotative meaning for Arabic-Arabic Translation

No.	أب	والد	References
1.	Father (الوالد القريب), grandfather (الجد), uncle from father side ((العم) and husband (الزوج)	Father (الأب)	Mu'jam Matan al-Lughah (1960: 139 & 418)
2.	Husband (الزوج), whom is given birth from (الذي يتولد من آخر من نوعه)	Father (الأب)	Mu'jam al-Nafa'is al-Kabir (2007: 14 & 2252)
3.	Father (والد), Grandfather (جد), title (لقب), someone who is the reason of existence or reform (من يكون سببا في إيجاد الشيء أو إصلاحه), guardian (وصي), teacher (مرب) and uncle –father side (عم)	Father (الأب)	Mu'jam al-lughah al-Arabiyyah al-Mu'āṣarah. (2008: 2252)

Etymological Meaning

Ibn Fāris (1999: 1/44) said the trilateral hamzah, bā' and waw (ا-ب-و) indicates the teaching and feeding. According to al-Munajjid (1997: 140-141), the general use of الأب includes father, grandfather and above directly. أب as well took place for descent and cognomen. Al-Munajjid (1997: 143) also considers 'ab for more in aspects of neurology in humans while wālid is at the aspects of emotion (psychology) and in relation to spiritual contact between humans. In the Qur'ān there are both these lexical items in the topic of inheritance, it combines both lexicals in surah al-Nisa' (4:11), which is the lexical 'ab used in the relationship of the body and the mind while from spiritual point of view by using wālid.

Although al-Aṣḥfahānī (1998: 16) states 'ab is wālid itself, he also gives a little evaluation on the lexical 'ab which for him also contains the meaning of scholars who keep knowledge. This example is given by surah al-Aḥzāb (33: 67) and al-Zukhruf (43: 23).

Whereas for lexical wālid, Ibn Fāris (1999: 6/143) said that the wau, lam and dāl are real evidence of their descent and kin. Verb tawallada intends "to come from it." This meaning is supported by the wālid pronunciation that is not found in the Qur'ān that carries the meaning of the grandfather. It is only available in single noun and twofold which means both parents.

Based on the study of the verses mentioned in the above table, as well as the backs of the sources of reference, 'ab is used in the Qur'ān in various contexts, firstly the use of 'ab has a variety of functions whether related to real descendants, guider, advisor and rule model and murabbi (educators) as well as religious leaders (ulama). Secondly lexical 'ab is used in the title (i.e. a name beginning with abū, abā and abī). It is also used for applications that show the actual father or offspring. For instance in al-Aḥzāb (33: 5) depriving the real father and adopted children to be called by his own father's names by using 'ab and not using other lexical especially wālid. Similarly, the other verse (al-Aḥzāb 33:40) explains the prophet Muhammad s.a.w instead of the real father of a man from you. There is also 'ab to show offspring with the meaning of grandfather in the story of the Prophet Yūsūf a.s in surah Yūsūf (12: 4), al-Ḥaj (22:48) and al-Ṣāfāt (37: 126).

Thirdly 'ab connotes in the context of reasoning preservation, advice, or guidance. For instance, in Surah Yūsūf (12: 80) explains that the son of the prophet Yackub a.s will not leave Egypt if they do not get the advice given by 'ab to them. While the use of 'ab as a guide in the Surah Yūsūf (12: 68) so that the sons of the Prophet Yacqūb a.s entered Egypt with the guidance that was revealed to them. Likewise, al-Baqarah (2: 170) uses 'ab in the context of guidance. Forthly, 'ab as rule model in surah al-Shucarā '(26:74) explains how they (the infidels) obey what their grandparents did (ābā': آبَاء) with a plural noun. Lastly, 'ab as educator i.e. scholar or leader who maintains humanity with knowledge. For example, surah al-Zukhruf (42:23) explains how they maintain their grandparent's deeds as their religion.

While the use of the wālid in the Qur'ān is used in two ways, firstly to refer to real father if used in twofold nouns. It means both real parents. For instance, in surah al-Baqarah (2:83) stressed that it is necessary to do good to both parents. Secondly to provide the true meaning of father based on the emotional aspects of

humanity. He is associated with love and compassion. Examples of the verses Luqmān (31:14 and 33) and al-Balad (90: 3). Even surah al-Isrā' (17: 23) shows the bond of the child's love for parents can save them both from the punishment of sin. This is also evidenced in surah al-Nisā' (4: 135), that the situation of affection towards the father himself will not influence him to be unfair even to yourself or both of your own parents.

CONCLUSIONS

Academically speaking, based on the views demonstrated previously, the lexical 'ab and wālid are almost similar in the semantic boundary. This was proven within denotative meaning given in commonly used dictionary, bilingually or monolingually. However, the meaning of the 'ab and wālid according to the use of the Qur'ān is deeper and nuances. For instance, 'ab is used in the context of biological affiliation, kin, guardians from the point of guidance and educating the minds as well as metaphor such as the ulama who are the guardians of the sciences of religion.

Whereby, the lexical wālid is used in the context of the original father who required for each child to honor him. Moreover, the use of wālid is mutually often associated with the true rights for inherent in the parents of the children and the connection between emotion and emotional relationships between a child and a father or to both parents. In brief, 'ab is related to the rights of human body claim itself from the point of mind and body while wālid is a relationship of spirit and feeling.

This study has two implications, language education and translation. In language education, the exposure of synonym for the content of Arabic language course is must. The acquisition of new vocabulary can be helpful when synonymous lexical are recognized and abilities difference among learners are respected to choose the suitable lexical for their own practices. In translation perspective, translator may use synonym in certain circumstances as a part of translation strategy.

However, in the case Qur'ānic text, knowing semantic boundary of synonym in source text is crucial for translator. Furthermore, knowing synonym in target text, in this case Malay language translator may also need to decide the best option in order to give the closest impact on the target language speaker/reader. Since some translators of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'ān cannot distinguish between near synonyms and therefore fail to translate them accurately, which makes their translations a faint echoing of the original and, more importantly, results in misunderstanding the meanings of the Qur'ān (Hassan, 2014). Further study of synonym may be extended to phrase level which seem similar in use and meaning but have different impact to context of use, socially and linguistically. The main conclusions of the study should be presented in a short Conclusions section, which should not simply repeat earlier sections.

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