

DISENTANGLING THE EQUVALENT MEANING AND DICTION OF QUR'ANIC TEXTS: THEORY OF *AL-HAML 'ALĀ AL-MA'NĀ*

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Abstract: This paper aims to explain a theoretical concept of *al-haml 'alā al-ma'nā* or *murū'āt al-ma'nā* to evidence a correlation between meanings and texts. It states that text should be inferior to the meaning. Based on our inquiry, verbs should be formed in the feminine (*mu'annath*) in two situations: first, if verbs consist of *ism ḡābir* (visible noun), *mu'annath ḡāqīqī* (actual feminine), and no texts are bridging the verb. Second, if verbs consist of *ism mustatīr* (invisible noun) with which the subject (*fā'il*) is in actual feminine or allegorical feminine (*mu'annath majāzī*). Thus, the masculine or feminine form should be based on their respective meaning. The careless interpretation in constructing meaning may lead to an error understanding, which is contrary to its original meaning. To avoid this, some approaches are needed, such as semantics, *ma'ānī*, *siyāq al-kalām*, and *asbāb al-nuzūl*.

Keywords: Meaning, Text, *ḡāqīqī*, *Majāzī*, *Murū'āt al-ma'nā*.

Abstrak: Tulisan ini hendak mengkaji teori *al-haml 'alā al-ma'nā* atau *murū'āt al-ma'nā* untuk menunjukkan adanya keserasian antara makna dan bentuk lafalnya. Teori ini mengatakan bahwa teks harus tunduk pada makna, bukan sebaliknya. Tulisan ini kemudian berargumen bahwa kata kerja (*fā'il*) harus dalam bentuk *mu'annath* ketika berada dalam dua posisi: pertama, apabila kata kerjanya terdiri dari *ism ḡābir* (kata kerja yang tampak), *mu'annath ḡāqīqī*, dan tidak ada lafal yang mengantari dengan kata kerja tersebut. Kedua, apabila kata kerja tersebut terdiri dari *ism mustatīr* (kata benda yang tersembunyi), dan subjeknya berupa *mu'annath ḡāqīqī* atau *mu'annath majāzī*. Sehingga, bentuk *mudhakkār* atau *mu'annath* dari sebuah kata bergantung pada maknanya. Kesalahan dalam memaknai ayat-ayat dapat mengakibatkan kekeliruan dalam memproduksi makna yang sangat mungkin bisa bertolak belakang makna awal yang dikehendaki Pengarang. Untuk menghindari kekeliruan tersebut, maka dibutuhkan pendekatan semantik, *ma'ānī*, *siyāq al-kalām*, dan *asbāb al-nuzūl*.

Kata Kunci: Makna, Teks, *ḡāqīqī*, *Majāzī*, *Murū'āt al-ma'nā*.

Introduction

Language is a medium of delivering a message from the speaker to the interlocutor. The receiver could understand the meaning of the message through a medium, which is the language.¹ Among many aspects of being prominently examined in the study of texts (*lafẓ*) are symbols (semiotics) and meaning.² The primary principle in the study of the text is that symbols should be inferior to the meaning. Therefore, the task of the reader is to figure out the meaning behind semiotic features and the intended meaning of the texts.

The Qur'anic verses are '*ilāhīya* codes,' entailing messages that guide humankind. The accuracy of the instrument used to unveil the meaning will lead the reader to uncover the essence of the Qur'an. On the other hand, the absence of adequate knowledge will lead the reader to fail to grasp the meaning of the text. Thus, one will trap in the subjective justification toward the meaning. As for the Qur'an is a divine message for humankind (the prophet and his people), and it uses language as a medium, a detecting tool to understand the intended divine meaning is needed. The interaction between the Qur'anic language and human understanding requires adequate knowledge of the language. The act of reading to the Qur'an requires comprehending its grammatical structures, understanding its principles, and mastering of its secrets³ along with all its consequences. Linguistics analysis is inevitable because the Qur'an is revealed in Arabic, as stated in the Q.S. Yusuf [12]:2. In this sense, Arabic means the language, not the tribe, and its ethnicity, although the Arabian states are the first locus of Islamic transmission⁴. Therefore, one cannot interpret it unless he/she has a strong background knowledge of the language⁵. The study of Islamic linguistics is universal and flexible, entailing both the theory and

¹ Abdurrahman Rusli Tanjung, "Wawasan Penafsiran Alquran dengan Pendekatan Corak Lugawi: Tafsir Lugawi", dalam *Analytica Islamica*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (2014), 336.

² Teguh Ratmanto, "Pesan: Tinjauan Bahasa, Semiotika, dan Hermeneutika", dalam *Jurnal Mediator*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (2004), 1.

³ Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥiṭh fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Kairo: Dār al-Tawfīq, 2005), 260.

⁴ Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Kayf Nata'āmal ma' al-Qur'ān* (Kairo: Al-Ma'had al-Ālamī li al-Fikr al-Islāmī, 2009), 254.

⁵ Mardan, *Alquran: Sebuah Pengantar Memahami Alquran Secara Utuh* (Makassar: CV. Berkah Utami, 2009), 254.

practice, although it is bound to the principles based on the valid and genuine Qur'anic verses and Hadith⁶.

The texts of the Qur'an are dependent on the meaning intended by God. A certain text can be categorized into the form of *mudhakkak* (masculine) as it accords with the intended meaning. In other places, the texts are usually used beyond the normal Arabic structure because God has a certain intended meaning that is beyond the understanding of the commoners. In this way, the form of masculine sometimes refers to the form of the feminine (*mu'annath*), or vice versa. Also, the form of *ḥaqīqī* (the true meaning) sometimes used to entail *majāzī* meaning (metaphor). In certain cases, to show an enormous masculine meaning, the Qur'an sometimes employs feminine forms.

On the other hand, the Qur'an uses a masculine form to refer to a small number of feminine words. In this regard, the interpreter should have adequate linguistic knowledge to analyze these unusual forms. The classical scholars of *naḥw* (grammarian), however, did not delineate for why the feminine word is allowed to turn into masculine or vice versa. Otherwise, modern Arabic experts strive to explain this issue.

To unveil the meaning of the Qur'anic texts, one ideally possesses the ability in Arabic linguistic competence. The theoretical principle of Arabic, which states: texts should be based on the meaning, is a relevant foundation to deal with the lexical problems in the Qur'anic texts. Although the text is home to meaning, the latter should not be inferior to the former. The search for meaning should reflect on the texts because the true meaning of the revelation has been inherent in the texts as its home. Therefore, a text sometimes goes beyond its normal pattern because the meaning sometimes determines its form. The task of the interpreter is then to examine the texts by grounding in the principles of the science of *naḥw*, which is known as *al-ḥaml 'alā al-ma'nā* or *murū'āt al-ma'nā*. This principle intends to assert that certain texts should be below and inferior to

⁶Aḥmad Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām, *Madkhal Islāmī ilā al-Lughawīyāt al-'Ammah* (Gombak: Pusat Penyelidikan Universiti Islam Antara bangsa Malaysia, 2000), 48-50.

⁷Najamuddin H. Abd. Shafa, "Al-Dirāsāt al-Lughawīyat wa Ahammīyatuhā fī Fahm al-Nuṣūṣ al-Shar'īyat min al-Āyāt al-Qur'ānīyat wa al-Aḥādīth al-Nabawīyah", *Oration Text as Professor*, Arabic Language and Literature, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Hasanuddin University of Makassar, 14th March 2017, 8.

their meaning. On this principle as well, the interpreters should regard them while understanding the meaning of the Qur'anic verses. Otherwise, it will lead to a misinterpretation of the text.

This study anchored in the content analysis method which focuses on analyzing relevant documents⁸ that involve the analysis of Qur'anic verses, *nahw*, and relevant texts of exegesis. This study examines the plural noun (*ism*) by drawing on the perspective of classical and contemporary Arabic grammarians. The objects of the research are the Qur'anic texts with plural noun structure, singular form (*mufrad*), the masculine form which refers to feminine, and vice versa. The texts are then navigated through *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufabras li Alfāẓ al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*⁹, whose textual meaning is interpreted using semantics. Subsequently, it also deals with *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughab al-'Arabīyah*¹⁰ with several methods: first, by identifying the texts of masculine nouns referring to the meaning of feminine and vice versa, and the meaning of *majāzī* and *ḥaqīqī*. Second, by elaborating on the meaning under the corridor of the science of exegesis. Third, by referring them to the theories of *nahw* (grammar). Fourth, by paying attention to the explanation of exegetes who explain the texts through the syntactic approach of Arabic, such as *siyāq al-kalām, inter-relationship (munāsabah)*¹¹, semantics, and *asbāb al-nuzūl*.

Scholars' View

There are several relevant studies regarding the syntactic structure of Arabic and the Qur'an, such as that of 'Abd al-Salām, *Madkhal Islāmī ilā al-Lughawīyāt al-'Ammah*¹², which delineates Islamic approach for the linguistic studies. Aḥmad Makkī al-Anṣārī authoring *Naẓariyāt al-Nahw al-Qur'ānī*¹³ who explains the syntactic structure of the Qur'an and reveals that how high the linguistic structure of the

⁸Lexy Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Renika Cipta, 1990), 23; Crippan Dot, *Analisis Isi: Pengantar dan Metodologi*, Trans: Farid Wajdi (Jakarta: CV Rajawali, 1991), 67.

⁹Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufabras li Alfāẓ al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Libanon: Dār al-Ma'rifat, 2012), 87.

¹⁰Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Fāris b. Zakaryā, *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughab*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Mesir: Dār al-Fikr), 91.

¹¹Muhammad Yusuf, *Horizon Kajian Alquran: Metode dan Pendekatan* (Makassar: Alauddin University Press, 2014), 48.

¹²'Abd al-Salām, *Madkhal Islāmī*, 18.

¹³Aḥmad Makkī al-Anṣārī, *Naẓariyāt al-Nahw al-Qur'ānī* (Jeddah: Dār al-Qiblah li al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmīyah, 1984).

Qur'an is. Lubna Abd. Rahman, Arnida A. Bakar, and Wan Azura Wan Ahmad the authors of *Mengenal Bahasa Arab Melalui al-Qur'an* (understanding Arabic through Qur'an),¹⁴ strengthens the assertion that understanding the language of the Qur'an, particularly its grammar, will ease one's understanding of Arabic. Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Anṣārī b. Hishām, *Sharḥ Shudhūr al-Dhabab fī Ma'rifat Kalām al-'Arab*¹⁵. Kamarul Shukri Mat¹⁶, the author of *Perkembangan Awal Nahu Arab*, opines that there has been a development in the science of *Nahw*.

There had been several points outlined by the classical experts of Arabic, which drives contemporary syntactic experts to struggle and establish a theoretical foundation. Hakim Zainal Fardiyuz Abdul Mutalib, the author of *Analisis Sintaksis Penggunaan Kata Nama Jamak dalam al-Qur'an*¹⁷, found the chapter of plural nouns (*ism al-jam'*), which has not been discussed by a great number of *nahw* experts. There has been a dearth of scientific articles discussing this issue specifically, either in the old books or the contemporary ones. Besides, the presence of plural nouns (*ism al-jam'*) in Arabic is scanty, some stated explicitly and implicitly in the Qur'an. Those that are explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an are the words "*qanm, ummah, and khasm*". On the other hand, the implicitly stated in the Qur'an is the word "*jaysb*".

In the late 19th century, Christoph Luxenberg wrote a book entitled *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart des Koran: eine Entbusselung der Koran sprache* (translated into English entitled *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran*). This book, as has been stated by the author, is the continuity of the analysis model coined by Abraham Geiger and other scholars who attempted to prove that the Qur'an derives from the teachings of the previous holy books. Philip K. Hitti, in his book *History of The Arabs* further points out that the Islamic holy book does not only entail the

¹⁴Arnida A. Bakar, Lubna Abd. Rahman, Wan Azura Wan Ahmad, *Mengenal Bahasa Arab Melalui al-Qur'an* (Nilai:Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 2008), 71.

¹⁵Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Anṣārī b. Hishām, *Sharḥ Shudhūr al-Dhabab fī Ma'rifat Kalām al-'Arab*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Muḥammad Muhy al-Dīn (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyah, 1995).

¹⁶Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh, *Perkembangan Awal Nahu Arab* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kamarul Shukri, 2010), 41.

¹⁷Hakim Zainal Fardiyuz Abdul Mutalib, "Analisis Sintaksis Penggunaan Kata Nama Jamak dalam al-Qur'an", dalam *Ilamiyyat*, 37, 1, (2015).

teachings of the previous holy book¹⁸. Similarly, W. Montgomery Watt and H.A.R Gibb assert that the background of the Islamic emergence of the Qur'an is the Arabic milieu, despite many elements of Judeo-Christian absorbed in its formation and development.

Since the 20th century, the rapid development of linguistics has yielded discourse analyses that require justification proven by strong scientific evidence¹⁹. In this century, studies were done by orientalist who moved to embrace a phenomenological approach in reaction to the previous historical approach. W. Brade Kristenses opines that the historical approach cannot understand the absolute characteristics of religion, as for the existing gap between the researcher and the objects investigated that makes religious teachings unidentifiable as contemplated by its believers. Some non-Muslim scholars draw on phenomenological approach like Charles J. Adams who stated that the Qur'an is a divine revelation of God received by Muhammad; William A. Graham who asserts that Qur'an is divine revelation, not written and documented; and Marcel A. Boisard who opines that the Qur'an is a reminder for all human. The Qur'an is a final expression intended by God that assures the authenticity and truth of the previous revelation, yet does not ensure its application due to the expiry.

The use of a phenomenological approach for the study of the Qur'an relatively generates positive outcomes. It is different from a historical approach that argued that the Qur'an is a creative product of Muhammad. The current widely adopted and novel approach is linguistical structuralism. There has been a dearth of research employing this approach. Two prominent scholars deploying this approach include Toshihiko Izutsu (1914-1933) and Richards C. Martin. The complexity of the Qur'anic language causes many scholars to fail to generate a trustworthy research tradition. The uniqueness of the Qur'anic language has made its analysts amazed, even to its adherent.

Arabic syntactic experts have discussed and set rules that require verbs (*fi'l*) to operate in the feminine in two circumstances: first, if the verbs are composed of *ism* *ẓābir* (visible noun), *mu'annath*

¹⁸Philip K. Hitti, *History of The Arabs*, trans: R. Cecep Lukman Yasin dan Dedi Slamet Riyadi (Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2005), 135-173.

¹⁹Muhammad Marwan Ismail & Wan Moharani Mohammad, *Kajian Tata Bahasa Arab Dabulu dan Sekarang* (Nilai: Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 2008), 17.

ḥaqīqī and no pronunciation that connects the verbs. Secondly, if the verbs consist of *ism mustatīr* (hidden noun), and the subject (*fā'il*) serves as both *mu'annath ḥaqīqī* and *mu'annath majāzī*. Other than these two states, verbs can be in feminine or masculine form²⁰.

If the feminine form refers to mean as masculine, the verbs should be changed into masculine²¹. It is known as the theory of *al-ḥaml 'alā al-ma'nā* or *murū'at al-ma'nā*, which means a certain text is directed toward its meaning. This perspective explains that meaning determines its symbols. Certain pronunciation is formalized into feminine because its meaning indicates its plural form. On the other hand, it is changed into masculine because it refers to a small number²². A similar case is also found in the Qur'an.

Apart from al-Sāmurrā'ī, 'Azīzah Fawwāl Babsū also writes *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufaṣṣal fī al-Naḥw al-'Arabī*²³, discussing the principles of grammatical Arabic. The syntactic experts have successfully elaborated them in practice. However, they have not explained why the texts entailing feminine often use verbs in the form of masculine, which is conversely often found in the Qur'an. Nawwāf b. Jazā al-Ḥārithī authoring *Al-Asmā' al-'Āmilah 'Amal al-Fi'l: Dirāsah Naḥwīyah*²⁴ discusses the syntactic problems, which focuses on describing the nouns followed by verbs. The book almost delineates the theory of *al-taḥammul 'alā al-ma'nā*, yet because it focuses on the study of Arabic grammar, the cases in the Qur'an are not discussed. Concerning the arguments in the case of masculine, which serve as feminine and vice versa, these were not explained because the author focused on the nouns that function as verbs (*'amal al-fi'l*). Besides, the *uṣūlī* scholars employ the linguistic rules as their tool of analysis in understanding law in the Qur'an. A book entitled *Al-Baḥth al-Naḥw 'ind al-Uṣūlīyīn* authored by Muṣṭafā Jamāl al-Dīn²⁵ discusses the paramount

²⁰Aḥmad Hāshim, *Mudhakkarat fī al-Naḥw wa al-Ṣarf* (Madinah: Kulfiyat al-Lughah al-'Arabīyah al-Jāmi'ah al-Islāmīyah bi al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, 1409 H), 92.

²¹Fāḍil Ṣālih al-Sāmurrā'ī, *Ma'āmī al-Naḥw* (Oman: Dār al-Fikr, 2000), 134.

²²Ibid.

²³'Azīzah Fawwāl Babsū, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufaṣṣal fī al-Naḥw al-'Arabī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2004).

²⁴Nawwāf b. Jazā al-Ḥārithī, *Al-Asmā' al-'Āmilah 'Amal al-Fi'l: Dirāsah Naḥwīyah*, vol. 1-2 (Saudi: Universitas Islam Madinah, 2010).

²⁵Muṣṭafā Jamāl al-Dīn, *Al-Baḥth al-Naḥw 'ind al-Uṣūlīyīn* (Iraq: Dār al-Rashīd, 1980), 119.

importance of Arabic knowledge in comprehending the Islamic jurisprudence. This book is an attempt to respond to the need; however, with its important role, it does not point out how the rules of the language or the principles of *al-taḥammul ‘alā al-ma’nā* are applied in its texts and variation.

Some Qur’anic exegesis, which focuses on linguistics, has also begun to delineate some linguistic bias as though it violated the normal principles. Due to the absence of the strong epistemological ground of Arabic *al-taḥammul ‘alā al-ma’nā*, the explanation is not completed. Now that the studies of the Qur’an, including its linguistics rules have seen an exponential increase performed by *naḥw* experts on the Qur’an. Al-Anṣārī (1984) in his book, *Naẓariyyat al-Naḥw al-Qur’ānī*, presents a theory of *naḥw* that focuses on the Qur’anic grammar²⁶. The studies concern Arabic *naḥw* lies in the premise that the Qur’an also adds another value to the field of *naḥw* that consequently yields perfect *naḥw* principles with exclusive syntactic-structure verses²⁷. The study on the plural names is a part of previous studies pertinent to the Qur’anic *naḥw* by previous scholars²⁸.

Plural words are for plural meanings, and singular (*mufrad*) words are for singular meanings. However, behind the general linguistic rules, there are exceptions with their collocation to put in the texts. Every text in the Qur’an has its message and meaning according to the context. To put precisely and proportionally the meaning of each Qur’anic recitation, the exegetes (*mufassir*) needs social and linguistic knowledge background in understanding its meaning. The readers should embrace several aspects before constructing the meaning of each verse, such as linguistic structures, socio-economic background, and context. *Mufassir* acts as a detector to understand the text as a sign of meaning (semiotics). The text acts as a symbol of meaning, which requires readers’ semiotic knowledge to understand the whole meaning. As a detector, the interpreter is required to understand the semiotic resources associated with the context in order to interpret the meaning from the text. The

²⁶Zamri Rajab & Kaseh Abu Bakar, “Penggunaan Shahid al-Qur’an dalam Kitab Sharh Ibn ‘Aqil dan Sharh Qatr al-Nada wa Ball al-Sada Bab al-Marfu’at: Satu Kajian Bandingan”, dalam *Gema Online™ Journal of Language Studies*, vol. 11, No. 2(2011), 83-98.

²⁷Kamarul, *Perkembangan Awal Nabu*, 53.

²⁸Mutalib, “Analisis Sintaksis”.

masculine and feminine symbols of the text have their own messages and meanings in each context of their usage in the Qur'an.

The Feminine Words Serves as Masculine

The view of al-Sāmurrā'ī, which explains that if the text formed in feminine and followed by a verb in a masculine, the word should be in the masculine. In other words, the text should be inferior to meaning. It appear in the Qur'an, for example, in the word الضلالة (*al-dalālah*): as in surah al-A'raf [7]: 30, *Fariqan hadā wa fariqan ḥaqqā 'alayhim al-dalālah ittakhadhū al-shayātin awliyā' min dūn Allāh wa yakhsbawn annabum muhtadūn*; also in surah al-Nahl [16]:36, *wa laqad ba'athnā fī kull ummat rasūlan an 'bud Allāh wa ijtanibū al-tāghūt fa minhum man hadā Allāh wa minhum man ḥaqqat 'alayh al-dalālah fasīrū fī al-arḍ fa unzurū kayf kāna 'āqibat al-mukadhibīn*. Related to both verses above, the word حق (*ḥaqqā*) is in the form of the masculine in surah al-A'raf verse 30, while in surah al-Nahl the word is in the form of feminine, marked with *tā' ta'nīth*, حقت (*ḥaqqat*). It shows that once the word الضلالة (*al-dalālah*) mentioned referring on العذاب (*al-'adhāb*), the verbs should be in the form of the masculine. In this, the word الضلالة refers to the context of the hereafter, not the life in the earth. It is different from the case of the verb حقت (*ḥaqqat*), which signifies its original meaning, which is a strayed way (in the world). In this, the word *al-dalālah* shows a misguided process in the world, not in the hereafter. Therefore, once the word denotes its original meaning, it refers to the form of the feminine; and when the word connotes other than its original meaning, it should be in the form of the masculine.

As like the word "*al-dalālah*", the word العاقبة (*al-'āqibah*) used in the Qur'an both in the form of masculine and feminine. If the word *al-'āqibah* used in the form of masculine, then the meaning refers to its allegorical meaning, that is العذاب (*al-'adhāb*). This type of meaning is found in the Qur'an for 12 times²⁹, as like in surah al-An'am [6]:11, *qul sīrū fī al-arḍ thumm unzurū kayf kāna 'āqibat al-mukadhibīn*; Surah Yunus [10]:73, *fa kadhdhabūh fanajjaynāh wa man ma'ab fī al-fulk wa ja'alnāhum kbalā'if wa aghraqnā wa bi al-ladhbīn kadhdhabū āyātīnā fa unzur kayf kāna 'āqibat al-mundharīn*; Surah al-A'raf [7]:83, *wa amṭarnā 'alayhim maṭara fa unzur kayf kāna 'āqibat al-mujrimīn*;

²⁹Muhammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufabras li Alfāz al-Qur'an al-Karīm* (Indonesia: Maktabat Dahlan, 2012), 312.

Surah al-Şāffāt [37]:73, *fa unẓur kayf kāna ‘āqibat al-mundharīn*. The word العاقبة, which is used in the form of masculine كان (kāna), refers to the meaning العذاب (al-‘adhāb): torment in the hereafter, as the word means metaphorical (majāzī) in its usage.

It is different from the case if the word العاقبة refers to another metaphorical meaning that is الجنة (paradise), which then designate the form of feminine. The use of it is found in several verses of the Qur’an, including surah al-Qaṣaṣ [28]:37 and surah al-An‘ām [6]:135. In surah al-Qaṣaṣ, it says: *wa qāla Mūsā rabbī a‘lam bi man jā’a bi al-hudā min ‘indih wa man takūn labū ‘āqibat al-dār innabū lā yuflih al-ẓālimūn*. The verb تكون (takūn) is in the form of the feminine, which means heaven, not the torture. The similar case is also found in the words of Allāh in surah al-An‘ām verse 135: *qul yā qawm i‘malū ‘alā makānatikum innī ‘āmīl fasawf ta‘lamūn man takūn labū ‘āqibat al-dār innabū lā yuflih al-ẓālimūn*. The verb تكون (takūn) in this verse is in the feminine form to mean as the heaven, not the hell.

In addition to the example in the two verses above, there are several cases when the text is feminine, and the intended meaning can be both masculine and feminine. For example the word الصلاة (prayer) in surah al-Anfāl [8]:35, *wa mā kāna ṣalātubum ‘ind al-bayt illā mukā’an wa taṣḍiyah fa dbūqū al-‘adhāb bimā kuntum takfurūn*. The word صلاة (ṣalāh) in this verse denotes a masculine form, even though the pronunciation is in the form of the feminine: the verbs كان is in the masculine form, whereas the noun is in feminine, ṣalāh. It happens because what is meant by صلاة is not prayer in general. The word صلاة means مكاء or صفير (whistles) and also mean تصدية which means تصفيق (applause). This word, صلاة, can also mean طواف (ṭawāf) or دعاء (prayer). The words صفير (whistle), تصفيق (applause), and طواف (ṭawāf) are all in the form of the masculine. It is an argument for why the word signifies the form of the masculine. And it also proves the theory that “the meaning determines the form of text.”

The word صلاة can also mean طواف (ṭawāf). As for Ibrahim once ever prayed “O our Lord, verily I have placed a portion of my descendants in a valley that has no plants near the House of You (Bayt Allāh) to be respected, O our Lord, (that is) so that they establish prayer (QS. Ibrahim [14]: 37).” Based on the text, the word الصلاة can refer to the meaning of prayer (du‘ā) and ṭawāf, as the practice of Muslims pilgrimage in Mecca (Kaaba) is to perform

prayers (*ṣalāh*), prayings (*du‘ā*), and *ṭawāf* around the Kaaba. As Muslims can perform prayer anywhere and perform *ṭawāf* only in Mecca. Thus, the word الصلاة in the text above specifically means a *ṭawāf* as the context of this verse refers to the Ka‘ba.

The word صلاة can also mean as دعاء (prayer), for example, the word of God in surah al-Tawbah [9]:103, *ṣalātak sakanun labum, wa Allāh sami‘ alīm*. The word *ṣalāh* in this verse means *du‘ā* (prayer). It is clear from the use of the word *sakan* (سكن) as *khabar* in the form of masculine³⁰, which follows the feminine word of صلاة as its noun. As the word refers to mean as دعاء, and it is formed in the masculine, thus it determines the text to be masculine in its form, سكن, although the word *ṣalāh* formed in the feminine.

Besides, a similar case also happens in the word “أية.” It sometimes signifies as both masculine and feminine. The case which the word *أية* serves as masculine is like the word of Allāh in Surah Āli ‘Imrān [3]: 13, *qad kāna lakum āyat fī fiatayn iltaqatā fiat tuqātil fī sabīl Allāh wa ukhrā kāfirat yarannabum mithlayhim ra’y al-‘ayn wa Allāh yu‘ayyid bi naṣrihī man yashā’ inna fī dhālik la ‘ibrat li ulī al-abṣār*. The word *أية* in verse serves as masculine, identified with the word كان which is in the form of the masculine. This verb formed as masculine because the word *أية* in this text means as البرهان الدليل (arguments), which regarded as masculine. A different case occurred when the word *أية* serves as feminine, as like in Surah al-An‘ām [6]:4, *wa mā ta’tibim min āyat min āyat rabbihim illā kānū ‘anhā mu’riḍīn*. In this verse, the word *أية* serves as feminine due to its meaning القرآنية الآية, which is feminine words, and therefore the verb تأتي is used. The use of تأتي which is feminine is not because the word *أية* serves as the subject, but as the meaning signifies القرآنية الآية (*al-āyat al-qur’āniyah*), thus it should also refer to the feminine form.

In line with the case above, it was found also in the word of God. In surah al-An‘ām [6]:109, *la’in jā’athum āyat layu’minunna bibā*. In this verse, the word *أية* serves as feminine, because it means المعجزة (miracle); therefore, the verb جاءت used in the form of feminine. The similar case occurs in Surah al-An‘ām [6]: 124, *wa idhā jā’athum āyat qālū lan nu’min ḥattā nu’tā mithla mā ūtiya rasūl Allāh Allāh a‘lam hayth*

³⁰Muhammad ‘Itrīs, *Al-Mu‘jam al-Wāfi li Kalimāt al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Kairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 2006), 554.

yaj'al risālah sayyūb al-ladhīn ajramū saghār 'ind Allāh wa 'adhāb shadīd bimā kānū yamkurūn. In this verse, the word **أية** is used also as feminine, because it contains the meaning of **حجة** (argument); therefore, the verb **جاءت** serves as feminine.

Based on the description above, the word **أية** in both singular and plural forms has various meanings based on their respective contexts. Understanding the context of the discussion of verses could help the reader to understand the meanings that lie within the texts. In this regard, two contexts are important to note in constructing meaning. First, the external context of the texts which could be in particular (micro) and universal (macro). Second, the internal context of semiotic features that connect between texts, contexts, and the structure of sentences. The first context is close to the term of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, while the second is close to the term of *munāsabah*. The *asbāb al-nuzūl* requires a historical approach, while the latter requires a linguistic approach, especially on the *siyāq al-kalām* (the context of the conversation) and linguistic signs (semantics).

The Masculine Words Serve as Feminine

Sometimes, the feminine is formed in the Qur'an when the meaning shows a large quantity, while the masculine is formed when the meaning has less in number³¹. Al-Samurrā'i says, **كان إذا التأنيث يغلب** (Generally *mu'annath* occurs when it signifies a large quantity). The form, for instance, occurs in the words of Allah in surah al-Hujurat [49]: 14: *qālat al-a'rāb āmannā*. In this verse, the verb is in the form of feminine and marks with *tā' ta'nīth* (feminine feature). The verb **قالت** is written in the form of feminine because it is followed by the word **الأعراب**. The word *al-a'rāb* shows the meaning of a large number that is an invisible subject (*mahdhūj*) to mean as **جماعة** (*jamā'ah*). Therefore, the word *qāla* is formed in feminine to be *qālat*. Muḥammad b. Yazīd explains that the letter *tā'* (ت) means **الجماعة تأنيث** (*ta'nīth al-jamā'ah*)³². Thus, the word *qālat al-a'rāb āmannā* contains the meaning *qālat jamā'at al-a'rāb āmannā*. As the theory says when the word signifies a large number of quantity thus, in this context, it refers to the form of feminine.

³¹Al-Samurrā'i, *Ma'ānī al-Naḥw*, 136.

³²Abī Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Ismā'il b. al-Nuḥāshī, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abd al-Mun'im Jalīl Ibrāhīm, vol. 4 (Libanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2009), 144.

Historically, the revelation of the verse related to the Bedouin people who came to the Prophet to get alms by signifying a word that indicates a large number of it. According to al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 H.), the verse descended when a group of Bani Asad b. Khuzaymah arrived in Medina during the dry season. They declared their creed in the absence of their true faith inside their hearts. They came to the Prophet and said, “we come to you, Messenger of Allah, with a heavy burden with our family. We also do not fight you like Banu Fulan who fight, so give us alms”³³. They constantly mention it. Therefore, the verse descends to respond to the situation and give guidance for the Prophet to be proportionate to them. Among other considerations are: 1) a large number of people in the request of the assistance could have an impact on the economic burden; 2) if a large number of people come to claim a faith, it should be clarified. Therefore, to help in the name of humanity needs some consideration of caution for its real circumstances.

Plural Masculine to Mean as Small Numbers

On the contrary, the verb form will be put into masculine when feminine are used to describe a small quantity. For example, in Surah Yūṣuf: 30: *wa qāla niswat fī al-madīnah*. In this verse, the verb, قال, is in the form of masculine because it doesn't end with *tā' ta'mīth*. While in the Arabic rules it says a verb must be in feminine if it fulfills three conditions, as a rule: *يغلب التذكير إذا كان المقصود بالجمع قلة العدد* (the form should be in masculine if the plural to mean as a small number). In this case, the word *نِسْوَةٌ* means a small number of women. According to the rules of Arabic, the word should be written in feminine as it describes in the form of feminine. However, the intended meaning of the word *نِسْوَةٌ* implied a few numbers of women, not in big number, who pointed Zulayhā to persuade Yūṣuf in having sexual intercourse when her husband was not at home. Therefore, the word قال is then formed in the masculine. The sentence *وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ* (and the women in the city said) includes the wives of the officials and prominent person in that city. The sentence means that they do protest against the actions of al-‘Azīz’s wife, because al-‘Azīz

³³Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb Nuṣūl al-Qur’ān*, ed. Kamāl Bāshūnī Zaghāl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1999), 225.

was being a minister in the city and seemed to do nothing to his wife³⁴.

In Surah al-Mumtaḥanah [60]:10, *idbā ja'akum al-mu'mināt mubājirāt fa imtaḥinūhunna*, the verse shows that the verb جاء which is formed in masculine even though the subject has a clear identity of the feminine. The word *mu'mināt* signifies مُهَاجِرَاتٍ (migrant women) in a small number³⁵, which then implies to put the word of جاء in masculine form. Here, the verb جاء which followed by the word مُهَاجِرَاتٍ could function as a tool of detection to understand that the subject is in plural form but not in big amounts.

On the other hand, the verb جاء is formed in feminine, جاءت, although the subject is in the masculine. This happens, for example, in surah al-A'raf [7]:43, *laqad jā'at rusulu rabbina bi al-ḥaqq*. In this case, the word رسل denotes the meaning of a large number of the apostles. It seems that this verse speaks on all messengers beginning from Adam to Muhammad. It can also be interpreted as a group of apostles, لقد جاءت طائفة من الرسل (*laqad jā'at ṭā'ifat min al-rusul*). Thus, the feminine form on its verb refers to the group, not to the subject. Besides, this verse has also designated on the absence of a female apostle, because the texts refer to the number of the masculine. Thus, theologically the verse argues that all apostles are men.

Conclusion

Every single text of the Qur'an has its meaning, which could not be interpreted independently. Based on our investigation above, one should regard not only the single word but also another feature which acquainted within the structure. Therefore, in understanding the context of the verse, there are, at least, two contexts that must be considered: (1) the external context of the text, both in particular (micro) and universal (macro); and (2) the internal context of the text, that is the connection between the text and its editorial arrangement. The first context is close to the term *asbāb al-nuzūl*, which comes from the history and *makelīyah* and *madanīyah* context on a macro basis. The second context is closer to the terms *tanāsub*, *siyāq al-kalām*, and science is done. Sometimes pronunciation can be understood by the

³⁴Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'il b. Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, ed. Sāmī b. Muḥammad al-Salāmah, vol. 2 (Riyad: Dār al-Ṭayyibah, 1999), 47.

³⁵Waḥbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Wajīz 'alā al-Hamish al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr), 551.

desired meaning by seeing the relation with pronunciation in another verse or seeing the context of the conversation (*siyāq al-kalām*) and *tanāsub*.

The theory of *al-ḥaml ‘alā al-ma‘nā* or *murū‘āt al-ma‘nā*, which discussed in this paper, argues on the ability of the reader to identify the meaning of the text. The meaning, according to the theory, should be regarded as the first initiative to understand the text, as the symbol (the form) should be inferior to the meaning. Thus analyzing the text could be best taken by identifying its structure alongside its meaning. In this, the reader should be aware of the type of text, whether it is *majāzī* (allegorical) or *ḥaqīqī* (original meaning). Identifying the text is an important aspect of language set before elaborating the text so that the reader will not mislead in understanding the text. The examples put in our paper have conclusively suggested that the principle of *al-ḥaml ‘alā al-ma‘nā* could help the exegetes to have a better analysis of every single word of the Qur’an within its structure.

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