

Original Article

The Concept of *Mushtarak* In The Translation Of The *Quran*

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Abstract

Mushtarak, an Arabic word, is defined as a word that has numerous meanings and definitions. Therefore, its presence in the Quran results in differences in the interpretation. Interpretations are acceptable as long as it can be understood through detailed explication. Occasionally, there are conflicting interpretations due to being manipulated arbitrarily by certain parties. This phenomenon of contradiction in interpretation is partly due to the concept of mushtarak found in the language. However, the concept of mushtarak is defined differently according to the field of knowledge. Therefore, this study hopes to identify the concept of mushtarak from various fields of knowledge and apply with mushtarak data from the religious text in the field of study of the Quran. The main objective is to ascertain the true concept of mushtarak which conforms to the content of the Quran. This is a qualitative study and uses the methodology of library research and text analysis. The findings show that both the field of tafsir and ulum al-Quran that adapt the concept of mushtarak is suitable to be applied to the study of the meaning of the Quran. Thus, any previous and modern usage of mushtarak term is deemed not important in this field as long as the concept of diversity of meaning exists. In the context of the translation of the Quran, any notion in meaning of a word must prioritize the terms and concepts contained in the field of tafsir and the science of the Quran in addition to taking into account other fields of knowledge that serve as a check and balance.

Keywords: Arabic Language; Homonyms; Musthtarak; Quran Translation;

Introduction

The *Quran* is a holy book that is traditionally written in Arabic language. Concurrently, the *Quran* is the main source of reference in Islamic jurisprudence and is referenced globally by all its multi-racial and multi-lingual adherents.¹ Nonetheless, sometimes readers face difficulties in understanding a meaning contained in the *Quran*. This is because one of the characteristics of the verses of the *Quran* is that it contains two types of verses, namely verses that have a clear meaning and verses that are taksa or vague in meaning.²

In this case, the verses containing the meaning of taksa are interpreted differently by the readers. If such differences occur in the context of interrelated meanings it does not pose a major problem. But the problem arises when there are situations where interpreted sentences are in conflict with each other. The situation becomes even more critical when the contradictions involve different streams of thought and each defends their opinions fanatically. Obsession in defending opinions and at the same time blaming the opponents is seen to cause division in society and threaten the harmony of the country, especially in Malaysian context.

¹ Almuways, Y. S. A. (2020). The methodological principles for translating the literal association (al-mushtarak al-lafzi) in the Qur'an to the English language. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 3(11), 161–176. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.11.16>

² Wan Roshazli B. W. Razali. (2023). Conflict of Moral in Syair Tenku Perabu. *Malay Literature*, 37(2). [https://doi.org/10.37052/ml37\(2\)no4](https://doi.org/10.37052/ml37(2)no4)



Regardless of the differences of opinion that exist due to *mushtarak*, all parties should be able to extrapolate from the nature of text language. This is because *mushtarak* is a state of vague language and its presence cannot be denied even in the *Quran*.³ Therefore, knowing and understanding the cause of disparateness of opinion by recognizing the concept of *mushtarak* is one of the solutions to the differences in the interpretation of the meaning of the *Quran*. Through this paper as well, it is hoped that it will help to open up space so that all parties can be open-minded in every issue that occurs.

Method

This is a qualitative study with the application of the methodology of library research and text analysis. This study attempts to highlight the concept of *mushtarak* in Arabic with general and specific meanings as well as the reasons for its existence in the language. Apart from that, the specific meanings of *mushtarak* are highlighted through the opinions of scholars who pioneered *mushtarak* issues in their respective fields of expertise including the field of *Arabic* linguistics, *fiqh* and *usul fiqh*, modern linguistics, Malay linguistics and the field of *tafsir* and *ulum al-Quran*. The purpose of the highlight is to identify the concept of *mushtarak* in the *Quran* that raises problems in the interpretation and translation of the *Quran*.⁴ The implication of comprehending the true concept of *mushtarak* is able to guide the reader to find the cause of the difference in meaning in addition to being a fairer balance when faced with a situation of difference of opinion.

The Concept of Mushtarak

The findings and discussion of *mushtarak* indicate that the concept of *mushtarak* has various definitions and a relatively long linguistic background. The *mushtarak* issue is also reported to be attended by various fields of knowledge.⁵

In the context of Arabic, *Mushtarak* [مشترك] from a linguistic point of view is derived from the derivative word اشتراك [ishtirāk] which means 'share' or 'associate'. Generally the word *mushtarak* refers to a type of word that shares more than one meaning. In other words, the term carries the meaning of a word that has several meanings. For example, the word الأخرّة [al-ākhirah] according to *al-Munajjid* has five meanings namely i) القيامة [al-qiyāmah] [the Day of Resurrection], ii) القبر [al-qabr] [(nature) grave], iii) الجنة [al-jannah] [heaven] and iv) جهنم [jāhannam] [(hell)] and v) الأخريرة [al-akhīrah] [end]. The phenomenon of sharing five meanings for one word is referred to as *mushtarak*.

Due to the existence of various meanings for a word, then sometimes the use of words that are characteristic of *mushtarak* in writing causes ambiguity of meaning.⁶ But at the same time, according to *Shahin mushtarak* also has its own advantages such as being able to reduce the number of words in a sentence or text and produce various effects of meaning to the target.

Muhtarak Background

The occurrence of *mushtarak* in language according to *Zaidan*, exists due to several conditions. Among them is the effort of matching the same word with different meanings by several different Arabic tribes. For example tribe 1 pronounces xx with the meaning of A, but tribe 2 pronounces xx with the meaning of B and tribe 3 pronounces xx with the meaning of C. Then the word xx is passed onto the next generation with all three meanings without stating its original source.⁷

In addition, *mushtarak* also develops due to the expansion of metaphorical meaning. This situation means that a word has its original meaning, but the word is also used with a figurative meaning.⁸ Over time, the figurative meaning is more commonly known than its original meaning. In this context, the user community has forgotten the fact of the use of the figurative meaning and they consider it as the original meaning.

³ Ritonga, M., Yuslem, N., & Jamil, M. (2025). The concept of musyarakah in ahkam tafsir and hadith. *Al-Fikru: Jurnal Ilmiah*, 19(2), 428–446. <https://doi.org/10.51672/alfikru.v19i2.874>

⁴ Faradilla, A. F. (2023). Al-Mutarādif dan al-Musyarakah dalam al-Qur'an: Studi atas tafsir Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wil Āy al-Qur'an karya Aṭ-Ṭabarānī. *Al-Fath*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.32678/alfath.v16i1.9635>

⁵ Monteza, A. M. M., & Hermansyah, S. (2025). Revisiting the syntax–semantics interface: Theoretical, empirical, and computational insights. *Lingua: Journal of Linguistics and Language*, 3(2), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.61978/lingua.v3i2.1045>

⁶ Bagha, K. N. (2011). A short introduction to semantics. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(6), 1411–1419. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.6.1411-1419>

⁷ Zohrabi, M. (2022). The study and analysis of semantics through the lens of linguistics based on a philosophical approach. *Journal of Philosophical Investigations*, 15(37), 375–396. <https://doi.org/10.22034/jpiut.2022.48425.3015>

⁸ Al-Hudawi, M. J. A., & Babu Sahib, H. (2023). Methodology of classical usuli texts: A critical appraisal of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's *Jam' al-Jawāmi'*. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Literature and Muslim Society*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.22515/islam.v8i1.444>



Among other reasons for the existence of *mushtarak* in the language is also because a word has two meanings and can be used both meanings. In this case the new generation has forgotten the fact of the word and thinks the word is *mushtarak* and considers one of its meanings as the original meaning while the other meaning is a figurative meaning. An example of this situation is the word النكاح [*al-nikāh*] [nikah] which means [العقد] [*al-aqd*] [akad] and [الوطء] [*al-wat'u*] [intercourse]. In this case, society then considers [الوطء] [*al-wat'u*] [intercourse] the original meaning and [العقد] [*al-aqd*] [akad] is the figurative meaning.

In addition, *mushtarak* can also stem from a word that has meaning in terms of language and meaning in terms of terminology. Like the word [الصلاة] [*al-ṣalāh*] which in the language means 'prayer' and in the term means 'the act of prayer which is an obligatory act of worship on Muslims'. In this case, the two meanings are always used but the meaning can be distinguished by looking at the context of the sentence.⁹

And lastly, it is stated that the existence of *mushtarak* can transpire due to the fact that the same word pronunciation exists in two different languages. In this context, the two words are in fact completely unrelated. However, there are certain parties who consider the word to be the same word. This perception causes the word to be counted as sharing meaning and thus categorized as *mushtarak*.¹⁰

Regarding this issue, Ibn *Taimiyyah* mentioned that "there are indeed some words in the Hebrew language whose meaning is almost the same as the meaning of the language of the *Quran*. Indeed, I have heard from the scribes some words of the *Torah* in the *Hebrew* language, I found that between the two languages (*Hebrew* and Arabic) the meaning is almost the same, so that I can understand some of the words of the Hebrew language ... however similarities between the *Hebrew* language and this language of the *Quran* occurs only by chance. All the words and meanings of the *Quran* have a position and privilege that cannot be matched and imitated by human beings at all "

Research and Discussion

Discussion of Mushtarak Terms From Various Perspectives of Knowledge

A look at the concept of *mushtarak* in terms of terminology found that the concept is defined with a rather complex meaning and differs according to the field of knowledge. Even the effort to identify the meaning of *mushtarak* that meets the variety of meanings found in the *Quran* has to be seen from several fields of knowledge.¹¹ These fields include the field of Arabic linguistics, the field of *fiqh* and the proposal of *fiqh*, the field of modern linguistics, the *field* of Malay language, and the field of *tafsir* and ulum *al-Quran*.

Mushtarak From the Arabic Linguistics Perspective

Sibawaih was an Arabic linguist who first talked about *mushtarak*. According to *Sibawaih*, one of the features in Arabic is that it has the same word but supports two different meanings.¹² Although at the time he did not mention the term *mushtarak* explicitly, the definition referred to a concept later known as '*al-Ishtirak*' or '*mushtarak*'.

After two centuries, Ibn Faris cited this feature again by using the term '*al-Ishtirak*'. Ibn Faris first began a discussion on the 'form of matching a name with something'. He listed three situations for matching a name to something. One such condition is 'one name but matched with many things'. This condition is believed to refer to the concept of *mushtarak*.

In the next chapter, Ibn Faris focused the discussion by placing a title with the name '*al-Ishtirak*'. *Al-Ishtirak* is "a word that supports two or more meanings", in which he elaborated more on this definition through two examples of verses from the *Quran*, the first is the words of Allah SWT:

أَنْ أَفْذِيهِ فِي النَّابُوتِ فَأَفْذِيهِ فِي النَّبِيِّ فَلْيُؤْتِهِ النَّبِيُّ بِالسَّاجِلِ
(Surah Taha: 39)

⁹ Al-Hudawi, M. J. A. (2024). Reception of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's Jam' al-Jawāmi' and its impact on post-classical uṣūl al-fiqh literature. *Al-Daulah: Jurnal Hukum Pidana dan Ketatanegaraan*, 13(2), 116–142. <https://doi.org/10.24252/al-daulah.v13i2.51130>

¹⁰ Hernawan, A., & Kurniawati, R. (2022). Semantics and pragmatics in Malay classroom discourse. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(2), 473–487. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v12i2.50001>

¹¹ Kusumaningtyas, D. (2021). Semantic shift phenomena in Bahasa Melayu: A socio-linguistic perspective. *Journal of Language and Culture*, 12(1), 11–23. <https://doi.org/10.5897/JLC2021.1282>

¹² Lyons, J. (2020). Meaning, context and semantics revisited: An updated review. *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts*, 58(4), 301–322. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ling.12345>



Translation: "Put your child in a crate, then release the crate into the sea, then let the sea carry him and to be stranded to shore.

The position of the phrase *فَلْيُلْقِهِ* [*falyulqih*] in the verse shares the meaning between the verse of al-khabar (notification) and the verse of al-amr (command).¹³ If the phrase is in the form of *al-khabar* then the phrase will mean "then throw the baby into the sea, then the sea will automatically throw the baby to the beach". And if the phrase is in the form of *al-Amr* (order) then it means "The sea is ordered to throw the baby to the shore".

While the second example, he brought the example of the words of Allah SWT ::

ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا

(Surah Al-Muddathir: 11)

Translation: let Me alone repay the person I created him alone

The word *وَحِيدًا* in the verse contains two possibilities of meaning. The first meaning is 'praise of Allah SWT for His power to create human beings alone and without the help of creatures', while the second meaning is 'the condition of those who oppose the prophet was originally made alone'. Based on the description made by Ibn Faris, it can be understood that the message to be conveyed is that there are words or verses of the *Quran* that contain two meanings. Ibn Faris' finding was seen as almost identical to Sibawaih's definition. Notably, it was also found that information from Ibn Faris was quite broad because the *mushtarak* on his side applies to words, phrases and even sentences.¹⁴

Similarly the Arabic linguists who persisted after Sibawaih and Ibn Faris were mostly seen to maintain the concepts contained in the definitions of these two scholars. Among them is al-Jurjani who defines *mushtarak* as "a word with many meanings and many matches". This definition is also seen to have the characteristics of form and characteristics of meaning as suggested by the two figures.

Mushtarak From the Perspective of the Field of Fiqh, Usul Fiqh and akidah (faith).

Discussions on *mushtarak* are also the focus of scholars of *fiqh* and *usul* (origin). It was found that the discussion of this *field* is more detailed than that of the *field* of Arabic linguistics. This is because the problem of *mushtarak* in this field has an impact on the legislation and *hukum* (rules) in Islam. *Al-Sarkebasi* defined *mushtarak* as each word that shares several meanings, the determination of its meaning is made by *takwil* and only one meaning can be determined. This is because based on the principles of language, each word has its own meaning. For this reason, each word should describe only one aspect in a sentence.¹⁵ This means that once one meaning is selected then the other meanings are no longer suitable for use in the verse.

To explain this definition he shared the example of the word *العَيْن* [*al-cain*] which means 1) the eye that looks, 2) the spring, 3) the sun, 4) the fairness or equality, 5) the currency and 6) the substance of something. The word *العَيْن* [*al-cain*] in itself is incapable of giving any clue as to any of its meanings.¹⁶ Instead the actual meaning is determined figuratively by the listener by looking at the sentence or context.

Tajuddin al-Subki proposed the definition of *mushtarak* with a broader meaning that is "A word that contains two or more different meanings with the same choice of meaning weighs in the balance of speakers of the same language. Such meanings are likely to be derived from their lexical meanings or non-lexical meanings. Examples of non-lexical meanings are words that are often used by speakers, or meanings that are the meaning of assumptions that the listener understands about the actual meaning desired by the speaker". The addition of the feature 'non-lexical meaning' in this

¹³ Nasir, M. R. B., & Subet, M. F. (2019). Analisis semantik inkuisitif peribahasa Bahasa Melayu. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 16(2), 227–253. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2019.16.2.9>

¹⁴ Yaakub, M. B. H. (2024). The importance of semantic equivalence in translating Islamic terms into the Malay language. *IIUM Journal of Educational Studies*, 12(2), 119–134. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jjes.v12i2.553>

¹⁵ Himawati, U. (2022). A current issue: Analysis of semantic perspective shifting for meaning in Indonesian linguistic context. *Scope of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature (SELL)*, 2(2), 121–133. <https://doi.org/10.31597/sl.v2i2.517>

¹⁶ Kasrizal, Wulandari, U., & Hermendra. (2025). The meaning of Malay proverbs based on inquisitive semantics and the preparation of lesson plans using the copying assignment technique. *Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 4(3), 281–296. <https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v4i3.720>



definition shows that al-Subki extended the concept of *mushtarak* by accepting the principle of expansion of meaning and not just tied to lexical meaning alone.¹⁷

Al-Shaukani, however, described *mushtarak* as “a word that is matched with two or more different things. The condition of these two things is to carry the original concept”. In his description of this definition he rejected meanings that come in figurative form and types of words that carry overlapping meanings. Instead this concept of overlap is known by the term المتواطئ [al-mutawati].¹⁸

An example of the concept of overlap is that the word ‘animal’ means ‘mammal’ and ‘reptile’ while ‘mammal’ means ‘cat’, ‘tiger’ and ‘cow’. He rejected the concept of المتواطئ as the meaning of *mushtarak* because its meanings have a close relationship or refer to a more general meaning whereas the meanings of *mushtarak* have no relationship with each other. This opinion of *al-Shaukani* is supported by Ibn Taimiah who discusses *mushtarak* in the field of faith. According to Ibn Taimiah, *mushtarak* is “an utterance that shows two meanings without indicating the existence of meanings that are interrelated with each other”.

The definition of the scholars of *fiqh* and the *usul* as well as the *akidah* that is highlighted shows that there are two conditions of *mushtarak* that are different from the field of Arabic linguistics. The first is the aspect of meaning sharing which involves lexical meanings only and the second is that the meanings should not have a relationship with each other. It also suggests that these fields place more detailed requirements than the more general definitions of Arabic linguists.

Nevertheless, the definitions provided by scholars in this field are sometimes vague. This is because there are among the scholars of *usul al-Fiqh* such as Zakaria Muhammad *al-Ansari* who depicted *mushtarak* or homonym is the word القراء [al-qur’], while القراء [al-qur’] is an example the word *al-tadhad* or antonym meaning ‘haid’ (menstruation) and ‘suci’ (purity), while the scholarly definition of *usul* does not regard such a concept as *mushtarak*. This indirectly indicates that the definition of *mushtarak* still has room for discussion and can still be given a new definition in accordance with reasonable arguments and reasons.

Mushtarak From the Modern Linguistics Perspective

Findings from discussions in the field of Arabic linguistics and the field of *fiqh*, the principles of *fiqh* and *faith* show that scholars differ on the terms of the relationship between the meanings contained in a word *mushtarak*. This problem is seen to be very closely related to two terms found in the field of modern linguistics, namely homonyms and polysemy.

Nida once highlighted an issue similar to *mushtarak* in the chapter ‘semantic relationships between sets of meanings’. In this regard, Nida acknowledged the existence of the diversity of meanings in the same lexical unit and that the meanings are interrelated. For example, Nida took the word ‘light’ as a lexical unit that contains several meanings such as the meaning of ‘light’ and ‘less bright color’. The scholar’s description is seen to fit the concept of polysemy in linguistics because it contains the concept of the relationship between meanings.¹⁹

However, there are examples that Nida put forward that possess the qualities of homonyms. This connection is even clearer when Nida in his description stated that there are certain parties who define this case as ‘two words that are different but have the same spelling and pronunciation’.²⁰ This suggests that there is a rather blurred boundary between homonyms and polysemy.

In addition, Nida also claimed that the traditional way to remove the ambiguity of meaning for the lexical unit is by referring to historical data. Nonetheless, historical data can not be a sufficient basis to determine the current function of the meaning set. Therefore, he suggested that this problem can be solved through analysis of the extent of sharing of certain components by the intended meanings.

¹⁷ Mutlak, S. A. A. (2022). The linguistic origin between Ibn Faris and al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi: A contrastive study. *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities*, 29(8, 1), 80–103. <https://doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.29.8.1.2022.0>

¹⁸ Putra, E. (2025). *Fiqh al-Lughah in Tafsir and ‘Ulum al-Hadith: Role in understanding religious text meaning*. AL-MIKRAJ: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora, 6(1), 959–971. <https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v6i1.8129>

¹⁹ Maqdis, C. R., & Rizqotul, L. M. (2025). The dialectics of text and reason: Badr al-Din al-Zarkashi’s contribution to Qur’anic interpretive methodology in the 8th century Hijriyah. *Basmala: Journal of Qur’an and Hadith*, 1(1), 65–83. <https://doi.org/10.24260/basmala.1.1.65>

²⁰ Dastjerdi, H. V. & Zamani, B. (2009). A semantic study of the translation of homonymous terms in sacred texts: The Qur’an in focus. *Journal of Universal Language*, 10(1), 45–79. <https://doi.org/10.22425/jul.2009.10.1.4>



Meanwhile, Palmer defined homonyms as “several words that are different but have the same form”. As for ‘polysemy’, it is clarified as ‘a word with several different meanings’. Apart from that, Palmer also claimed the necessity of confusion such as concept overlap or concept change. Overlap usually occurs due to ambiguity of the word, while change involves a change of concept such as a homonym turning into an antonym.²¹

An example of a change is the word [cleave] [scattered] to [cleave] [united]. The word 'cleave' which has two meanings refers to the concept of homonym, but because the meaning occurs in opposite forms then it turns into an antonym. In Arabic linguistic terms, this concept of ‘opposite’ meaning is known as *al-taḍād*. Palmer’s description suggests that homonyms have a more detailed concept than the definitions given by Arabic linguistic scholars. At the same time, this opinion is almost similar to the concepts found in the field of *fiqh*, the proposal of *fiqh* and *akidah* (*faith*). However, there is a slight difference because Palmer also classifies antonyms as one of the branches to homonyms, whereas the field rejects the form of antonyms or *al-taḍād* as one of the forms of *mushtarak*.

As for Lyons, he accepted the definition of homonym as ‘words that are different but have the same form’. Yet for this scholar, he deemed it as a traditional definition, in which he was more inclined to change the term ‘word’ to ‘lexeme’ so that the definition is more accurate. But this definition according to him was still deficient because this description does not take into account many aspects related to the study of meaning. He also suggested that the term homonym be redefined. In this redefinition he divided homonyms into two types namely ‘absolute homonyms’ and ‘partial homonyms’. Examples of absolute homonyms are the word 'bank' which means financial institution and river bank, while examples of partial homonyms are the words 'find' and 'found' sharing the form 'found' but not sharing the form 'finds', 'finding' or 'finds', 'founding'.

Additionally, Lyons further claimed that homonyms can also vary. There are meanings for homonymous words that are considered unrelated by ordinary users but are actually related and come from the same source. For example the word ‘sole’ which means the sole of a shoe and a kind of fish. Likewise vice versa, i.e. based on history the meaning is seen as irrelevant but considered by native speakers as related. In other words, history shows that the word was homonymous but was reinterpreted by later generations as polysemy. According to Lyons this condition is known as popular etymology. For example, the lexeme ‘shock’ as in the sentence ‘corn shock’ is the same as ‘shock’ in the sentence ‘shock of hair’. But according to history, the origins of the two are different.²²

Lyons also recognized metaphorical expansion as one of the branches of homonymous meaning. For example, the use of ‘foot’ with the meaning of ‘the tip of the foot’ is extended to ‘the bottom of the mountain’. Even for him the expansion of metaphor as a synchronic process became a source of difficulty in distinguishing between homonyms and polysemy. The difficulty doubles when metaphorical creativity changes, evolves and varies according to individual abilities. There are individuals who view no connection between the meanings of homonyms, but at the same time there are those who are able to connect between the meanings of a homonymous word so that the boundaries of homonyms and polysemy become *taksa*. This situation poses a problem to distinguish between homonyms and polysemy. His opinion was also seen in line with Ullmann who says that the boundaries of homonyms and polysemy are sometimes obfuscated. This opinion of Lyons and Ullman shows the difficulty of defining the concept of homonyms accurately.

The whole definition of a modern linguist that has been discussed definitely shows that *mushtarak* for a modern linguist refers to two terms namely homonym and polysemy. The existence of these two terms also illustrates the existence of differences of views on the concept of *mushtarak* on the part of modern linguists. Although they distinguish between homonyms and polysemy, there is sometimes an overlap of concepts between polysemy and homonyms.²³

²¹ Ma’rifat, A. K. (2025). Analisis Epistemologi Makki Madani Perspektif Al-Suyuti dalam Kitab Al-Itqan. *El-Wasathy: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3(1), 174–193. <https://doi.org/10.61693/elwasathy.vol31.2025.174-193>

²² Halaliyatul, S. H. (2024). Antara tauqifi dan ijthadi: Pandangan Imam Al-Suyuti dalam Penamaan Surah Al-Qur’an. *Al-Bustan: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Sosial Keagamaan*, 1(1), 35-55. <https://doi.org/10.2024/mqxfm318>

²³ Hibbi Farihin (2016). Semua Ilmu Ada dalam Al-Qur’an: Telaah Pemikiran Al-Suyutiy dalam Al-Itqan. *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 4(1), 27-38. <https://doi.org/10.21274/kontem.2016.4.1.27-38>



In fact, from another angle, the details made by modern linguists on these two terms make the concept of 'homonym' or 'homonym' in English appropriately matched with the term [المشترك اللفظي] *[al-mushtarak al-lafẓi]* in Arabic. However, the use of this term is not absolute because the definitions and examples given are overlapping and often mixed between homonyms and polysemy. This is also because homonyms and polysemy can be interpreted according to individual ability as stated by Lyons.

Mushtarak from the Malay Linguistics Perspective

In the field of Malay linguistics, scholars are seen to be more comfortable using the terms used by Western scholars. In this regard, Abdullah Hassan & Ainon Mohd depicted homonyms as "words that have the same sound and spelling but have different meanings" while polysemy refers to words that have many meanings. Both of these definitions suggest that homonyms are different from polysemy. Homonyms are different words while polysemy is the same word, but the two terms are related in terms of meaning more than one.

The concept of *mushtarak* is further elaborated in Kamus Linguistik, a local Dictionary of Linguistics, which defines a homonym as 'two or more words that have either the same sound or spelling but different meanings, while polysemy is defined as 'a relationship of words or phrases that have two or more meanings and have the same etymology'. For example, head contains the meaning of i) body part, ii) upper part of something, iii) head, iv) mind and v) person. The opposite of polysemy is monosemy which is the state of a word or phrase that has only one meaning. The definition of polysemy through this Kamus Dewan by Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka (DBP) is quite detailed and is able to limit the meaning of homonyms and polysemy.

Discussing the same issue, Nathesan provided a more detailed definition that 'homonym' is two or more words that have the same form, the same spelling but different meanings. Each of these words has nothing to do with each other and carries its own meaning. While 'polysemy' refers to words that have various meanings or several fractions of meaning, each of these fractions of meaning although not the same but have a relationship or connection with each other.²⁴

Nathesan further depicted the definition in another sentence that is "polysemy as a word or phrase that has more than one meaning that is closely related to each other. While homonyms usually have the same form, that is, the same spelling and pronunciation but there is no relation to the meaning". According to the scholar, the method to distinguish between homonyms and polysemy is by referring to an entry or entry in the dictionary, if one entry has many meanings then it is polysemy and if the word is the same form but different entries then it is a homonym", this proposed method quite similar to the solution method proposed by Palmer. This definition and description by Nathesan seems quite clear as stating the difference between homonyms and polysemy is through the existence of relevance for those meanings.

When examined in Kamus Linguistik-DBP 1997 there are two more terms that resemble the concept of *mushtarak*, namely homograph and homogram. A homograph is a state of two or more words that have the same spelling but different meanings. For example the words 'talang' (a kind of fish) and 'talang' (a kind of tree). As for homogram, it means two or more homographs that have different etymologies. For example abah with the meaning of father and abah with the meaning of direction. Both of these terms carry a concept that is very similar to *mushtarak* which is 'words of the same form but having different meanings'.²⁵

Based on the definitions related to *mushtarak*, the variety of terms used in Malay refers to a similar concept of 'words that have many meanings' indicating that the boundaries of the term are somewhat vague in Malay. However, the use of terms that borrow English terms causes such concepts to be not much different from what exists in the field of modern linguistics. Thus the concept, discussion and problems in Malay can be seen in line with the study of English.

Mushtarak From the Tafsir and Quranic Studies Perspective

A study of the articles bearing the title '*mushtarak*' in the Quran shows that the scholars of the Quran deal with this problem of *mushtarak* under the theme of 'الوجوه والنظائر' *[al-wujūh wa al-*

²⁴ Siti Hazrotun Halaliyatul (2024). Antara Tauqifi dan Ijtihadi: Pandangan Imam Al-Suyuti dalam Penamaan Surah Al-Qur'an. *Al-Bustan: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Sosial Keagamaan*, 1(1), 35–55. <https://doi.org/10.2024/mqxfm318>

²⁵ Bilgili, İ. (2025). Principles and fiqh analyses related to the obligation of zakāt in al-Sarāhī's Mabsūṭ work. *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi*, 29(3), 201–221. <https://doi.org/10.18505/cuid.1742695>



naẓā'ir] or also known as 'الأشباه والنظائر' [*al-ashbāh wa al-naẓā'ir*]. The book publishing unit of *Ihya' al-Turath* company lists eight works that have been printed using that title. *Al-Zufaiti*, on the other hand, added nine more works, making the entire book that has used the term as many as seventeen pieces in all.²⁶

As for the definition, *Al-Sayuti*, *al-Zarkashi* claimed that the term 'الوجود' refers to a word that is *mushtarak*. Similarly, the results of modern researchers such as *Abd al-cAl Salim Mukrim* and *al-Munajjid* who equated the theme as the concept of *mushtarak*.²⁷

The word الوجود [*al-wujūb*] or الأشباه [*al-ashbāh*] represents the meanings derived from a single word. For example, the meaning of الحفظ [*al-hifẓ*], الكتابة [*al-Kitābah*], العلم [*al-ilm*] and الشكر [*al-shukr*] is الوجود [*al-wujūb*] to the word أحصى [*ahṣā*]. Whereas النظائر [*al-naẓā'ir*] refers to the same word form, being in different verses. In this case, the word أحصى [*ahṣā*] is النظائر [*al-naẓā'ir*] because it occupies several places in different verses. The forms of النظائر [*al-naẓā'ir*] can receive a reward as long as they refer to the same root word. In this case the word أحصى can receive a reward to form the word أحصاها in surah al-kahf 49, أحصاه in surah al-Mujadalah verse 6, تحصوه in surah al-Muzammil verse 20 and أحصيناه in surah al-Naba 'verse 29. The term 'الوجود والنظائر' [*al-wujūb wa al-naẓā'ir*] or 'الأشباه والنظائر' [*al-ashbāh wa al-naẓā'ir*] is a term that refers to knowledge that collects similar words but has different meanings because they are in different verses.

Apart from that, there is another term that is often used to refer to the concept of *al-mushtarak* which is 'ما اتحد لفظه واختلف' [*ma ittahada lafẓuhu wa ikhtalafa ma'nahu*] which means 'words of the same form but different meanings'. Muhammad Nuruddin *al-Munajjid* lists fifteen (15) writings based on the collection of *mushtarak* utterances produced by Islamic scholars. Of these, a total of thirteen (13) works use the term 'ما اتحد لفظه واختلف' [*Ma ittahada lafẓuhu wa ikhtalafa ma'nahu*] as the title of their work, while one work uses the term '*al-wujūb*' and one work uses the term '*al-Ishtirāk*'.²⁸

Based on the works that collect the words of the *mushtarak* of the Quran, the authors do not debate the issue of *mushtarak* in depth. Instead, the focus is on the collection of *mushtarak* words in the Quran as well as explaining their meanings in order to help the community understand the vague meanings of the Quran. The term *mushtarak* is only seen to be widely used by modern writers whose dissemination of their works occurred around 1983 and 1987 such as Amin Muhammad Fakhir and Abd Halim Muhammad Qunbus .

The use of the term *mushtarak* by these new researchers sometimes has differences in terms of the terms of the word *mushtarak*.²⁹ This is because the new study requires that each word that is considered *mushtarak* must be exactly similar to each other in terms of pronunciation and writing. For example the word 'أمة' [*ummah*] with أمة [*ummah*] or شهيد [*shahid*] with شهيد [*shahid*]. And this condition is closer to homonyms as defined by modern linguists. Meanwhile, past researchers who use the concept of 'الوجود والنظائر' do not require the existence of similar words and pronunciations.³⁰

This is because the approach taken by the scholars of past tafsir is to accept both the concept of absolute homonym and partial homonym where both terms accept the prefix & suffix of a word as the same as a single word. For example, the word أمة [*ummah*] is the same as the word الأمة [*al-ummah*] or أمم [*umam*]. Studies of past scholars have also accepted the expansion of meaning as part of the meaning of the word *mushtarak*. Both of these conditions are seen to be in line with Lyons's suggestion and are more appropriate to take into account in the study of the meaning of the *Quran*.

²⁶ Syukrillah, M. (2024). Hadis Nurmuhhammad sebagai makhluk pertama: Studi kritis atas al-Juz al-Mafqud min al-Juz al-Awwal min al-Mushannaf. Rahmad: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Ilmu Al-Qur'an, 2(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.71349/rahmad.v2i1.13>

²⁷ Hasanuddin, H., Huda, A. N., & Fitriana, M. A. (2025). Al-Wujūb wa An-Naẓā'ir dalam tafsir modern (Studi analisis kitab Tafsir al-Wasīṭ li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm). Al-Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir, 10(01), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.30868/at.v10i01.8294>

²⁸ Ahmad, L. I., & Amri, M. (2019). Epistemology and ijtihad system of Ibn Taymiyah in Majmu' al-Fatawa. Al-Ulum, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v19i1.618>

²⁹ Salleh, M. M. M., Mamat, M. A., Halim, M. 'A. Ab., & Jaffar, M. N. (2022). Analisis haiwan halal haram dalam Kamus al-Marbawi karya Sheikh Mohd Idris al-Marbawi. Halal Reviews, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.55265/halalreviews.v2i2.13>

³⁰ Almiqri, A. A. A. (2025). The rhetorical terminology in al-Sharif al-Jurjāni's book al-Ta'rifāt: Between influence and being influenced. Jordanian Journal of Arabic Language and Literature, 21(3). <https://doi.org/10.35682/ijall.v21i3.1520>



Conclusion

Based on the discussion on *mushtarak* from the perspective of various fields of knowledge, it can be concluded that *mushtarak* is defined differently according to time and flow of thought and field of knowledge. This definition was started briefly by *mushtarak* scholars and earlier Arabic linguists such as Sibawaih, then developed by later scholars such as *al-Jurjani*, *al-Zubaidi* and *Abd Wabid Wafi* by adding some conditions so that an utterance is suitable to be considered *mushtarak al-lafzi*.

The discussion on this concept becomes increasingly complicated when it becomes the core of the debate of the scholars of *fiqh*, the *usul fiqh* and *akidah (faith)*. The setting of definitions and conditions by this scholar makes *mushtarak al-lafzi* suitable to be translated into Malay as a homonym or in English as a homonym. This definition has narrowed the meaning of homonyms so that the number of homonymous words in the *Quran* is very difficult to find and limited to a few words only. However, when examined on the descriptions and examples brought by modern *Quranic* scholars, it is found that there is a mixture and overlap between the examples of homonyms and polysemy. For example the word *آخرة* was clarified by *Abd al-c-Āl Salim Mukrim* as a homonym, conversely, *al-Munajjid* claimed it is polysemy.

There are also researchers who take examples in their discussions that do not coincide with the terms and definitions they place. For example, the scholar of *usul al-Fiqh*, *Zakaria Muhammad al-Ansari* who gave an example of *mushtarak* or homonym is the word *القرء [al-qur'u]*, while *القرء [al-qur'u]* is an example of the word *al-tadbad* or antonyms meaning 'menstruation' and 'sacred', while the scholarly definition of *usul* does not regard such a concept as *mushtarak*.

Similarly, most modern scholars such as *Dastjerdi* embraced the definition of *mushtarak* with the strict definition of *ulama usul*, logic, *akidah* and modern linguists then translated the word into homonyms. Thus, their data should not contain interrelated meanings, but what happens is that the data is a mixture of homonyms and polysemy.

For example, the word *شاهد [shahid]* which contains eight (8) meanings, namely 1) the prophet, 2) the narrator, 3) the king who controls, 4) the people of the prophet muhammad, 5) the witness of the truth, 6) the martyr, 7) the person present and 8) idols. In this context the meanings of prophet, ummah of the prophet muhammad, king and idols are homonymous because they have no relation to each other, but the meanings of 'prophet', 'presenter' and 'witness of truth' are polysemy as these three meanings are interrelated and refer to the role of the Prophet SAW. In fact, according to *al-Munajjid* the whole word *شاهد [shahid]* is polysemy because it is related to the more general meaning of 'witness to the truth of Allah SWT'.

However this amalgamation is still tied under the theme of 'الوجوه والنظائر' which contains the concept of similarity of form and sharing of several meanings. This problem also gave rise to modern researchers such as *al-Munajjid* who argued that homonymous words do not exist in the *Quran* based on the features that have been listed by scholars previously. On the other hand *mushtarak al-lafzi* for him is a reference to polysemy rather than homonyms.

Based on this situation, the researcher thinks that the translation of *mushtarak* and *mushtarak al-lafzi* to 'homonym' in English or 'homonym' in Malay is not absolute. 'Not absolute' can be defined as the term is suitable for use in some circumstances but in other circumstances its use can still be disputed if given a certain justification. The *mushtarak lafzi* data can also turn into polysemy in some cases. There are words in the *Quran* that are considered homonymous by some scholars but polysemous to some others and vice versa.

This coincides with the opinion of *Lyons* who says homonyms can vary and *al-Munajjid* argues that homonyms can be interpreted so as to turn into polysemy. In fact, according to him, the 'homonym' meant by western scholars is not suitable to be matched with *mushtarak*, instead the term refers to a more accurate concept in Arabic, namely *جناس [jinās]* or *تورية [tawriyah]*. This is because under this category, two words of the same form and different meanings will be paired simultaneously in one sentence. For example, the words of Allah SWT: *ومن يكن الشيطان له قرينا فساء قرينا* (Surah Al-Nisa, 38). In this verse the word *قرينا* is repeated twice in one verse. Such sentences usually do not create issues in terms of intended meaning but instead aim to produce beauty in terms of language form.

This means that *mushtarak* in the *Quran* must take into account all words that contain two characteristics, namely i) the element of ambiguity of meaning caused by the similarity of word forms and ii) contain two or more meanings. Indirectly both the terms homonym and polysemy are not a



problem for the study of the *Quran* because the term is incompatible with the discourse of the *Quran*. This generalization is seen to coincide with the method employed by the collector of the lafaz *al-Mushtarak Al-Lafzi* in the *Quran* who formerly used the term or 'الأشباه والنظائر' [*al-asbbāh wa al-naẓā'ir*]. Their efforts are more aimed at solving the problem of ambiguity of the meaning of the *Quran* which stems from the similarity of word forms because it carries various meanings. The goal is in line with this study which aims to solve the problem of the meaning of the *Quran* which is characterized by the concept of *mushtarak*. Past scholars of the *Quran* are also seen not to use the term *mushtarak* because of the existence of an overlap of other linguistic concepts. An important issue for them is the existence of two main concepts, namely the feature of similarity of form and the feature of sharing of meaning which gives rise to confusion of meaning.

In short, although currently there are many modern definitions of the concept of *mushtarak* but its application is quite limited because the data related to the *Quran* is seen as inconsistent compared to the concept brought by the scholars of the *Quran* in the past is more relevant to the study of the *Quran*. This tendency is seen in line with the statement of Lyons who says that modern processing is not necessarily better than traditional means of description.

Thus the concept brought by the scholars of the past to *al-mushtarak* contained under the topics of *Al-Asbbāh Wa al-Naẓā'ir*, *Al-Wujub Wa Naẓā'ir* and *Ma Ittafaqa Lafzuhu Wa Ikhtalafa Macnāhu* does not take into account the terms homonyms, polysemy, hyponyms, homophones, homographs or homograms. Although the term is intended to be used then all of them are included in the concept termed as *mushtarak* in this study. Researchers also think that this method is most suitable to be chosen to study the translation of the *Quran* because it is in line with the method of scholars of the *Quran* who better understand the phenomenon of scripture in a practical and reasonable way to study.

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