

Meaning Of Words *Ālu* in Al-Qur'an: Toshihiko Izutsu's Semantic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The word *ālu* in the Qur'an indicates the meaning of people who have a close relationship or family (Qarabah). The term *ālu* is mentioned 31 times in the Qur'an. Each verse contained in various surahs certainly has a different meaning, so it requires in-depth understanding. The disclosure of the meaning of *ālu* will be analyzed by the author using the Qur'anic semantic approach developed by Toshihiko Izutsu. According to Izutsu, Qur'anic semantics is an attempt to reveal the Qur'anic worldview (*weltanschauung*) through semantic analysis of key vocabulary or terms in the Qur'an. This research process involves investigating the basic meaning and relational meaning of the word *ālu* using syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an was revealed by Allah SWT with ease so that it can be memorized and understood, because of its function as a guide to life for mankind. Therefore, understanding the verses of the Qur'an is an important need. However, the interpretation of these verses often differs from one mufasir to another. This is due to the fact that tafsir, which is revealing hidden things or *kasyf*, is highly dependent on the capacity of human thought *qadra thaqati al-basyariyyati*. The ability to think, analyze, and understand varies from one mufasir to another, so it is natural that the results of their interpretations are also different.

Differences in the interpretation of the Qur'an do not mean without rules. The scholars have compiled various principles that serve as guidelines for understanding the verses of the Qur'an, such as the rules of *tasyri'* (law), and the rules of *aqaidiyyah* (creed), and one of the most important is the rules of *Lughawiyah* (language).

In the history of Qur'anic interpretation, the Prophet Muhammad was the first interpreter. He received direct guidance from God through revelation, thus clearly understanding the meaning behind the verses of the Qur'an. When the companions did not understand a verse, they asked the Prophet directly, and this learning process continued until near the death of the Prophet Muhammad. The interpretation of the Qur'an for Muslims is an effort that continues from time to time. An interpreter tries to explore the meaning and message of the Qur'anic text and explain things that have not been understood according to human abilities, although this understanding is relative and cannot reach absolute certainty. In addition, the understanding of God's message in the Qur'an also changes according to the conditions of the times. God's message is understood differently, according to the needs of Muslims at various times. Islamic scholars have developed various models of interpretation since the beginning of the discipline of tafsir until the contemporary era.

One model of interpretation is the literary approach. Initially, this approach arose because of the expectations of literary scholars and lovers who viewed the Qur'ān as absolute beauty. The Qur'ān's communicative style attracted the attention of Arabic literary scholars. This attention eventually triggered some contemporary scholars to approach the Qur'ān as a text. In the context of communication, the revelation of the Qur'ān involves God as the active communicator, the Prophet Muhammad as the passive receiver, and the Arabic language as the communication code. This paper aims to analyze the meaning of the word *Aalu* in the Qur'an which has different meanings from one verse to another, although all indicate the meaning of *Qarabah* (close relationship).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a library research method to analyze the meaning of the word *ālu* in the Qur'an with a semantic approach developed by Toshihiko Izutsu. This study aims to examine and interpret the meanings contained in the word *ālu* through analyzing Qur'anic texts, some classical and contemporary commentaries, as well as literature related to Qur'anic semantics. This approach includes the collection of Qur'anic verses that mention the word *ālu*, as well as the study of various commentaries to understand the variations in its meaning. Furthermore, a semantic analysis was conducted using Toshihiko Izutsu's approach, where each word was analyzed based on its basic and relational meanings in the context of the verses. The study also involves syntagmatic analysis to look at the word *ālu* in relation to other words in the text, as well as paradigmatic analysis by comparing the word with its synonyms or antonyms in the Qur'ān. The main source in this study is a book by Toshihiko Izutsu, with the original title *God and Man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung* (Izutsu, 2002), with its translation, *The Relation between God and Man: A Semantic Approach to the Qur'an*, translated by Agus Fahur Husein, which is an important reference in understanding the Qur'anic semantic analysis method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic analysis: Conceptual Reflection

Toshihiko Izutsu is one of the scholars who developed the semantic analysis method in the study of the Qur'an. According to him, semantics is not just an analysis of word structure or etymological studies related to the original meaning of words. More than that, semantics must be understood as an analysis of key terms in a language to explore the worldview (*weltanschauung*) of the people who use it. This view not only emphasizes language as a means of communication and thinking, but also as a way to understand and interpret the reality around us. Izutsu asserts that the concept of *weltanschauung* is a study of the nature and structure of a nation's worldview through methodological analysis of key concepts that have formed and crystallized in the language.

In order to avoid narrowing in understanding the concept of al-Qur'anic *weltanschauung*, Toshihiko Izutsu tries to let the Qur'an explain its own concepts independently. In this case, the method used by Izutsu is to collect important words that represent the main concepts such as Allah, Islam, prophet, faith, disbelief, and others, then analyze the meaning of these words in the context of the Qur'an. These important words are referred to by Izutsu as key terms. This concept shows that not all words in a language have

the same role in forming the basic structure of the ontological view derived from the vocabulary. Of course, this is no easy task. Every word in the Qur'ān is not simple. Each word is separate from the others, but there is a strong relationship between the words, and the true meaning is derived from the whole system of word relationships.

In his book, Izutsu explains that every word in the Qur'an has a basic meaning and a relational meaning. The basic meaning of a word can be likened to lexical meaning, while relational meaning is close to contextual meaning. When a word is used in a particular sentence or concept, its meaning changes according to its position and relationship with other words in the sentence structure. Toshihiko Izutsu applies this distinction using the example of the word *kitāb*. Lexically, *kitāb* means 'book', but in the context of the Qur'an, this word has a much more significant meaning as a religious symbol enveloped by sanctity. In the Qur'an, *kitāb* is often taken to mean the Qur'an itself as it is closely associated with words such as Allah, revelation, *tanzīl*, and prophet. However, *kitāb* can also refer to the Torah and the Gospel when associated with words other than Allah, revelation, *tanzīl*, and prophet, such as in the context of *ahl*. Therefore, the term *ahl al-kitāb* refers to a group that possesses the holy books of the Torah and the Gospel.

Therefore, words in the Qur'an must be understood in relation to other words around them. This means that the relational meaning plays a more important role than the basic meaning. In fact, the meaning formed through this relationship can shift the basic meaning of the word. This phenomenon signifies the emergence of a new meaning for a word. The semantic approach developed by Izutsu covers a wide range of studies and continues to grow. Whereas semantics initially focused only on the meaning of texts, modern-contemporary semantics emphasizes the relationship between language and thought, with particular attention to the interpretation of the world that surrounds it.

Basic Meaning of the Word *ālu*

The basic meaning explained by Izutsu in his book leads to the word contained in the word itself which is always contained wherever the word is. The search for meaning begins by looking for the basic word found in the dictionary (lexical). The word *ālu* in the Qur'an generally means close relationship or *Qarabah*, where the word *ālu* is mentioned in several places in many verses in the Qur'an which between one verse and another sometimes has different meanings.

Imam Ibnul Qayyim in his book *Jalaaul Afham*, reveals the opinion of linguists regarding the meaning of the word *أَلٌ*. It is said that *أَلٌ الرَّجُلِ* means himself as in the salawat *اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ* then the meaning of *Aalu Ibrahim* here is the Prophet Ibrahim himself, because the salawat is addressed to the Prophet, while his family is also included. And among the meanings of *Aalu* are followers, and also family or relatives.

Relational Meaning of the word *ālu*

Relational meanings are connotative meanings that are added to existing meanings by placing the word in a particular context. The new meaning that emerges from a word depends on the sentence in which the word is used. Izutsu divides this relational meaning into two types of analysis, namely syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis.

Syntagmatic Analysis

Syntagmatic analysis is a method that focuses on understanding the meaning of a word based on its position in a sentence, taking into account the words that come before and after

it. The meaning of a word is influenced by the context of the words around it, so this analysis is important to determine the exact meaning. In this case, a phrase like *ālu* can be better understood by paying attention to the words that surround it in the sentence to derive a deeper meaning, and this is found in the Qur'ān. In a book on Qur'anic semantics, entitled *Al-Wujuh Wannadzair Fii Al-Qur'an Al-Kariim* by Shaykh Muqotil Ibn Sulaiman (died 150 AH) explains that the word *ālu* has 3 *Wajh* or meanings:

a. Means people or followers

The first meaning of the word *ālu* in the Qur'an is a people or followers who have a king or superior to follow, as in Surah Al-Qomar : 41, Allah's Word about Pharaoh:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النَّذْرُ (41)

"And indeed, a warning has come to the people of Fir'aun". (QS. Al-Qomar: 41)

That is the followers or the people of Fir'aun, and they are the *Qibthi* tribe (native tribe of Egypt).

Then Allah's word to the angel, :

...أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ (46)

"...Enter Fir'aun and his people into a very severe punishment!" (QS. Ghafir: 46)

What is meant in this verse is Pharaoh and his people from the Qibthi tribe who were among the stiff-necked.

In another verse it is also mentioned, :

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ... (28)

"And a believer among the family of Pharaoh who hid his faith said,...". (QS. Ghafir: 28)

In this verse, it is mentioned about one of the people of Fir'aun who apparently believed in Allah and hid his faith.

b. Meaningful family in the household

The second meaning is family in the household (*father, mother, child*). As Allah's word about the punishment inflicted on the people of Luth, and all of them were exposed to this punishment except for his two daughters, as Allah SWT mentioned in His Word:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ نَّحْنُ نُحْيِيهِمْ بِسَحَرٍ (34)

"Indeed We sent against them a storm of stones (which fell on them), except for the family of Luṭ. We saved them before daybreak," (QS. Al-Qomar: 34)

And in Surah Al-Hijr it is also mentioned, :

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ آلَ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلُونَ (61)

"So when the messenger came to the family of Luṭ,". (QS. Al-Hijr: 61)

And also still in the same letter, it is mentioned that Allah saved all the family of the Prophet luth except his wife,

إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (59) إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ فَقَدَرْنَا إِنَّا لَمِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ (60)

"except the families of Luṭ. Surely we shall save them all, except his wife; we have decreed that she shall be among those who are left behind (with the rest of the disbelievers)." (QS. Al-Hijr: 59-60)

c. Meaning Distant descendant

The third meaning is one's descendants, even if they are far down the line. In the Qur'an Surah Al-Imran it is mentioned, :

((إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ...))

"Surely Allah has chosen Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham..." (Al-Imran:33)

The meaning of Aalu Ibrahim here is the descendants of Prophet Ibrahim namely Ismail (his son), Ya'qub and 12 of his descendants who became Prophets or called *Al- Asbath*.
(..وَأَلَّ عِمْرَانَ..)

"...and the family of Imran..." (QS. Al-Imron: 33)

The meaning is the descendants of Imran later, namely the Prophets Moses and Aaron whom Allah chose them to continue the prophetic message. Therefore in the last word of this verse it is mentioned that the heir to the relay of the message comes from their descendants.

Paradigmatic Analysis

Paradigmatic analysis is an analysis that compares a word or concept with another word or concept that is similar (synonym) or opposite (antonym). In this analysis, the relationship between words is studied based on how they can be substituted or interchanged in a particular context without changing the basic meaning of the sentence.

a. Synonyms of the word *Aalu* in the Qur'an

The word *Aalu* as previously explained means closeness or *Qarabah*, and this word actually has synonyms in the Qur'an. The word *Aalu* has three similar words, namely *Ahl*, *Qoum*, and *Dzurriyyah*.

1) *Al-Ahl*

The word *Al-Ahl* means family, household, or a certain group, similar to the word *Aalu* which has the meaning mentioned, for example in the Qur'an :

...إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا (33)

"Verily, Allah intends to remove sin from you, O ahl al-bayt, and to cleanse you as cleanly as possible." (QS. Al-Ahzab :33)

In this verse Allah SWT mentions Ahlul bait which is the family of the Messenger of Allah SAW, who is privileged by Allah SWT through this verse.

2) *Al-Qoum*

Means People, nation, or social group sometimes used to refer to the extended family or community of a Prophet. For example:

..قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا.. (128)

"Moses said to his people, "Seek help from Allah and be patient". (QS. Al-A'raf: 128)

This verse shows the commendable leadership attitude of Prophet Moses, by inviting his people to pray and be patient with the cruelty of Fir'aun and his army.

3) *Dzurriyyah*

Means descendants, children, or generations that come from a family. For example:

... قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي.. (124)

"He (Allah) said, "Surely I have made you the leader of all mankind." He (Ibrahim) said, "And (also) of my children and grandchildren?" (QS.al-Baqarah: 124)

This verse shows the hope of Prophet Ibrahim that his descendants will become caliphs on earth to make improvements and enforce the teachings of monotheism.

b. Antonyms of the word *Aalu* in the Qur'an

There are three antonyms of the word *Aalu* that the author found, namely *Aduw*, *Gharib*, and *Fard*.

1) *Aduw*

In the context of a family or group the word (عدو) *Aduw* means an enemy or one who is on the opposite side of the family. It is often used in the Qur'an to denote those who are hostile to a particular Prophet or people, as Allah SWT says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ...

"O you who believe! Do not take My enemies and your enemies as friends." (QS. Al-Mumtahanah: 1)

In this verse, (عدو) *Aduw* refers to the enemies of Allah and the Muslims. Although the verse does not directly mention آل (*Aalu*), the context speaks of the relationship between Muslims and their enemies who could be from the same family background. This verse shows that family ties cannot outweigh faith and loyalty to Allah.

2) *Gharib*

The word (غريب) *gharib*, which means a stranger or someone unknown, can also be considered the opposite of آل (*ālu*) in a broader context. آل refers to someone who belongs to the family, while (غريب) is a person who is outside the family, a person who is unknown or not bound by blood or relationship.. Allah Almighty says:

...فَجَاءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَمْشِي عَلَى اسْتِحْيَاءٍ قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ. (25)

"Then came to Moses one of the two women walking shyly, she said: "My father has called you." (QS. Al-Qashash: 25)

In this story, Moses was a stranger (غريب) in the land of Madyan. Although he was eventually accepted by the woman's family, he was an outsider at first. This illustrates how someone who is not part of the آل or family, is considered a (غريب) (stranger) until accepted.

3) *Fard*

In some contexts, the opposite of آل (*ālu*) can also be interpreted as فرد (*Fard*) which means an individual, a person who is alone or separate from a family or group. آل refers to a family unit or offspring, while *fard* indicates a person who is separate from the group or has no connection with the family, as Allah says:

وَكُلُّهُمْ آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا (95)

"And they will all come to Him on the Day of Resurrection individually". (QS. Maryam: 95)

In this verse, (فردًا) (*Fardan*) means that every human being will come to Allah on the Day of Judgment on their own, with no group, family, or offspring accompanying them. This indicates that family ties will not save anyone before Allah, and everyone will be judged as an individual (فرد).

CONCLUSIONS

The interpretation of the word "*ālu*" in the Qur'*ān* shows that every word in this holy book has a deep meaning and cannot be understood simply. The author views that this semantic approach developed by Toshihiko Izutsu can help us to understand that key words in the Qur'*ān*, such as "*ālu*", must be seen in context. The meaning of this word can differ depending on how it is used in different verses, whether it refers to family, people, or descendants. In addition to its basic meaning, "*ālu*" also has relational meanings that depend on the surrounding words in a sentence. In some verses, "*ālu*" can mean followers or people, while in others, it can mean close family or distant descendants. This flexibility of meaning

reflects how rich and complex the Qur'ānic language is, as well as the importance of understanding each word in its broader context to get its true message. With this approach, we can see that Qur'anic interpretation never stops evolving. The understanding of the sacred verses continues to change and is adapted to the times. Therefore, it is important for us to continue to explore the meaning of the Qur'an in a relevant and contextual way, so that as academics as well as Qur'anic researchers, we can better understand the *words of Allah* more deeply, and spread their benefits to the general public.

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