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INTEGRATION OF FIQH AL-LUGHAH AND ARABIC SEMANTICS IN THREE DIMENSIONS OF MEANING

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Abstract

The study of meaning in Arabic has developed within two major traditions: *fiqh lughah* as a classical linguistic heritage and Arabic semantics as a modern linguistic discipline. However, a systematic integration of both traditions into a comprehensive analytical framework encompassing lexical, grammatical, and contextual meanings remains underdeveloped. This article aims to: (1) explain the epistemological relationship between *fiqh lughah* and Arabic semantics; (2) analyze the three dimensions of meaning in Arabic; and (3) formulate an integrative framework applicable to the interpretation of Arabic texts, particularly religious texts. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using library research design, drawing on relevant classical and contemporary sources. The findings reveal that *fiqh lughah* and Arabic semantics are conceptually interconnected in understanding meaning. Lexical meaning provides the foundational layer through root systems and derivational patterns; grammatical meaning narrows interpretation through i'rab and syntactic structure; while contextual meaning determines the final interpretation through situational, cultural, and historical analysis. The integration of these three dimensions forms a gradual and circular meaning-construction model that enhances interpretative accuracy in Arabic texts.

Keywords: *Fiqh Lughah; Arabic Semantics; Lexical Meaning; Grammatical Meaning; Contextual Meaning; Text Interpretation.*

Abstrak

Kajian makna dalam bahasa Arab berkembang dalam dua tradisi besar, yaitu fiqh lughah sebagai warisan keilmuan klasik dan semantik Arab sebagai pendekatan linguistik modern. Namun, integrasi keduanya dalam satu kerangka analisis yang

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sistematis terhadap makna leksikal, gramatikal, dan kontekstual masih belum dirumuskan secara komprehensif. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk: (1) menjelaskan relasi epistemologis antara fiqh lughah dan semantik Arab; (2) menganalisis tiga dimensi makna dalam bahasa Arab; dan (3) merumuskan kerangka integratif yang dapat diaplikasikan dalam interpretasi teks Arab, khususnya teks keagamaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan desain kajian literatur (library research) terhadap sumber klasik dan modern yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa fiqh lughah dan semantik Arab memiliki kesinambungan konseptual dalam memahami makna. Makna leksikal berfungsi sebagai fondasi melalui sistem akar kata dan derivasi; makna gramatikal memberikan batasan melalui sistem i'rab dan struktur sintaksis; sedangkan makna kontekstual menentukan interpretasi final melalui analisis situasional, kultural, dan historis. Integrasi ketiga dimensi ini membentuk model pemaknaan bertahap dan sirkular yang meningkatkan ketepatan interpretasi teks Arab.

Kata Kunci: *Fiqh Lughah; Semantik Arab; Makna Leksikal; Makna Gramatikal; Makna Kontekstual; Interpretasi Teks.*

INTRODUCTION

Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an and Hadith, possesses a high degree of semantic complexity at the lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels (Boulesnam & Boucetti, 2025; Seyidov, 2024). Such complexity requires an analytical approach to meaning that goes beyond dictionary definitions, since understanding textual messages often depends on syntactic structure, inter-clausal relations, and the situational and historical contexts surrounding language use. In contemporary Qur'anic studies, contextual interpretation has gained increasing prominence because it enables readers to grasp the ethical intent and discursive objectives of the text (maqāṣid) without reducing meaning to literalist readings that overlook contextual dynamics (Calis, 2022; Pakeeza & Bushra, 2022; Wahyuningsih, 2025). Similarly, contextualist approaches emphasize that interpretation is inherently context-bound: meaning emerges from the interaction between text, linguistic structure, and the socio-historical horizon of both the interpreter and the interpretive community (Auda, 2021; Gubman & Anufrieva, 2024; Weinberger, 2026).

Within the classical Arabic linguistic tradition, *fiqh al-lughah* developed as a discipline concerned with a profound understanding of language, including word origins, semantic shifts, synonymy, polysemy, antonymy, and rhetorical nuances that shape interpretation. From its earliest formulations, this tradition recognized that meaning is not merely lexical but also determined by usage and context (*siyāq*), particularly when linguistic forms allow multiple interpretations. In contrast,

modern Arabic semantics (*ʿilm al-dalālah*) has constructed more systematic analytical categories to classify meaning across different levels, distinguishing lexical meaning, grammatical meaning (arising from syntactic relations), and contextual meaning (influenced by situational, cultural, and historical factors). Contemporary scholarship increasingly highlights the centrality of contextual meaning (*dalālah siyāqiyyah*) as a prerequisite for accurate discourse comprehension, especially in religious texts, where neglecting context may result in interpretive error (Setyawan, 2022). Studies on Qur'anic discourse further confirm that contextual indicators function as a crucial mechanism for resolving ambiguity and preventing misinterpretation caused by decontextualized readings (Kerfaoui, 2024; Khaled & Al-Oodani, 2024; Lee et al., 2025).

At the level of internal linguistic structure, Arabic is characterized by a rich derivational morphology based on the root–pattern system. This system is highly productive yet potentially ambiguous, as a single root may generate multiple derived forms with distinct semantic nuances and grammatical functions. Psycholinguistic research demonstrates that Arabic speakers and learners gradually develop abstract representations of morphological patterns, which significantly contribute to meaning construction and selection (Asadi et al., 2025; Issa, 2023; Shahbari-Kassem et al., 2025; Tallas-Mahajna et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the argument that semantic analysis in Arabic must integrate lexical foundations (roots and derivations), grammatical constraints (syntactic functions guiding structural relations), and contextual determinants (linguistic and socio-historical context) in order to avoid reductionist interpretations.

Furthermore, contemporary pragmatic theory emphasizes that meaning does not solely derive from what is explicitly stated, but also from implicit content, presuppositions, and inferences shaped by communicative context. Meaning is thus often the result of negotiation between linguistic form and contextual assumptions, including speaker intention and shared background knowledge (Moldovan, 2023). This framework is particularly relevant for explaining why purely textual or literal readings may fail to capture the intended meaning of discourse, especially in texts rich in rhetorical strategies and implicit communicative cues such as religious scriptures.

Despite the shared concern with meaning, *fiqh al-lughah* and modern Arabic semantics are frequently treated as separate domains. *Fiqh al-lughah* is commonly regarded as a classical philological and lexicographical tradition, whereas Arabic semantics is considered a modern linguistic discipline. This separation has contributed to the absence of an operational analytical model that systematically integrates the conceptual richness of the classical heritage with the structured

categories of modern semantics. In interpretive practice—particularly in the reading of religious texts—analysis often remains confined to a single dimension: relying exclusively on lexical meaning without considering grammatical constraints, or emphasizing syntactic structure while overlooking socio-historical context. Such tendencies underscore the methodological need for an integrative framework that enables simultaneous and systematic multi-dimensional semantic analysis.

Accordingly, the research gap addressed in this study lies in the lack of an operational, integrated analytical framework that synthesizes the conceptual insights of *fiqh al-lughah* with the categorical structure of modern Arabic semantics in examining lexical, grammatical, and contextual meaning within a coherent interpretive process. Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of context in interpretation (Auda, 2021; Calis, 2022) and reaffirmed the role of *siyāq* in Qur'anic discourse (Khaled & Al-Oodani, 2024; Setyawan, 2022), they have generally not formulated a step-by-step analytical procedure that explains how lexical meaning is constrained by grammatical structure and ultimately determined by contextual considerations.

The novelty of this study, therefore, lies in proposing a three-dimensional integrative framework of meaning—lexical, grammatical, and contextual—that synthesizes the classical tradition of *fiqh al-lughah* and modern Arabic semantics within a gradual and circular analytical model. In this framework, lexical meaning constitutes the foundational layer through root–derivation systems; grammatical meaning functions as a constraining and filtering mechanism through syntactic relations and inflectional markers (*iʿrāb*); and contextual meaning serves as the final determinant of interpretation through analysis of linguistic, situational, cultural, and historical context. This integrative model is expected to enhance interpretive precision in Arabic texts, particularly religious texts, while contributing theoretically and methodologically to the development of Arabic semantic studies.

T his study aims to: (1) explain the epistemological relationship between *fiqh al-lughah* and Arabic semantics; (2) analyze the characteristics of lexical, grammatical, and contextual meaning in Arabic; and (3) formulate an integrative three-dimensional framework of meaning as a model for Arabic text interpretation. Beyond these objectives, this article is expected to make several scholarly contributions. Theoretically, it seeks to reconstruct the relationship between classical Arabic linguistic thought and modern semantic theory by demonstrating their conceptual continuity rather than disciplinary separation. Methodologically, it proposes an operational analytical procedure that can be systematically applied in the interpretation of Arabic texts, thereby offering a structured alternative to fragmentary or single-dimensional readings. Practically, the framework may inform

the development of Arabic language pedagogy and interpretive studies by promoting a balanced integration of lexical analysis, grammatical structure, and contextual awareness. In doing so, the study contributes to strengthening interdisciplinary dialogue between classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary linguistic inquiry.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach employing a library research design to construct an integrative analytical framework of meaning in Arabic. A qualitative paradigm is appropriate because the purpose of this research is conceptual and interpretive rather than statistical, aiming to synthesize classical *fiqh al-lughah* and modern Arabic semantic theory into a coherent analytical model. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring conceptual structures, interpretive paradigms, and theoretical integration (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Furthermore, literature-based research enables systematic identification, evaluation, and synthesis of existing scholarship in order to generate new conceptual insights (Snyder, 2019). The study relies on textual and documentary sources, including classical works in Arabic linguistics, foundational literature in semantic theory, and recent international publications addressing contextual interpretation, Arabic morphology, discourse analysis, and pragmatics.

Data were collected through systematic literature tracing using academic databases such as Scopus-indexed journals, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords included “Arabic semantics,” “fiqh al-lughah,” “contextual meaning,” “root–pattern morphology,” “Qur’anic discourse,” and “pragmatics.” The selection process followed purposive sampling, meaning that sources were chosen based on their conceptual relevance, scholarly credibility, and contribution to the three dimensions of meaning under investigation. This approach aligns with literature review methodology that emphasizes relevance, rigor, and theoretical contribution in selecting scholarly materials (Snyder, 2019). Classical sources were incorporated to represent foundational perspectives, while contemporary studies ensured engagement with current debates in linguistic and interpretive theory.

Data analysis was conducted through qualitative content analysis to identify, compare, and synthesize key concepts related to lexical (*dalālah muʿjamiyyah*), grammatical (*dalālah naḥwiyyah*), and contextual (*dalālah siyāqiyyah*) meaning. Content analysis allows systematic categorization and abstraction of conceptual themes from textual data. Concepts derived from classical and modern sources were examined comparatively to determine epistemological continuity and methodological divergence. Based on this synthesis, the study formulates a three-

dimensional integrative framework conceptualizing interpretation as a gradual and circular process in which lexical meaning establishes the initial semantic range, grammatical structure constrains interpretive possibilities, and contextual analysis determines final meaning selection. To enhance analytical rigor, theoretical triangulation was employed by engaging multiple disciplinary perspectives, including classical Arabic linguistics, modern semantics, and pragmatics (Carter, 2014). As the research is entirely text-based, no human participants were involved, and ethical considerations are limited to proper academic citation and scholarly integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Epistemological Continuity Between *Fiqh al-Lughah* and Arabic Semantics

The findings indicate that *fiqh al-lughah* and modern Arabic semantics should not be treated as separate epistemological domains, but rather as historically continuous approaches to meaning. Classical discussions of polysemy (*ishtirāk*), synonymy (*tarāduf*), antonymy (*aḍdād*), and figurative expression (*majāz*) reflect a sophisticated awareness of semantic relations and contextual dependency long before the emergence of modern semantic theory. The classical emphasis on *siyāq* as a determinant of meaning aligns closely with contemporary contextualist approaches in Qur'anic interpretation (Calis, 2022; Khaled & Al-Oodani, 2024).

Modern semantics, particularly within pragmatic and discourse-oriented frameworks, reinforces the principle that meaning is dynamically constructed through interaction between linguistic form and contextual inference (Moldovan, 2023). Recent interdisciplinary studies in Qur'anic hermeneutics further emphasize that interpretive validity depends on integrating textual structure and contextual awareness rather than privileging literal readings (Auda, 2021). This continuity suggests that the integration proposed in this study is not an artificial synthesis, but a methodological reconstruction of an already implicit epistemological coherence.

Lexical Meaning and the Root–Pattern System

The analysis confirms that lexical meaning (*dalālah muʿjamiyyah*) constitutes the foundational semantic layer. Arabic's root–pattern morphology generates semantic networks in which a triliteral root produces multiple derivations sharing a conceptual core. Psycholinguistic research demonstrates that morphological patterns play a crucial role in semantic processing among Arabic speakers (Tallas-Mahajna et al., 2023). This supports the classical *fiqh al-lughah* assumption that root-based analysis provides access to underlying semantic fields.

However, lexical meaning in Arabic rarely functions as a fixed denotative unit. Instead, it provides a semantic range that requires further specification. Contemporary semantic theory recognizes this phenomenon as lexical underspecification, whereby words encode potential meaning that must be resolved by syntactic and contextual cues (Gasparri & Marconi, 2024). Thus, lexical meaning should be understood as a necessary but preliminary stage in interpretation. This finding reinforces the need to move beyond dictionary-based interpretation and toward a multi-layered semantic analysis.

Grammatical Meaning as Structural Constraint

Grammatical meaning (*dalālah naḥwiyyah*) emerges from syntactic configuration and inflectional marking (*iʿrāb*). Arabic case endings and syntactic relations determine agency, objecthood, possession, emphasis, and temporal orientation. Changes in grammatical case can alter propositional structure and therefore semantic interpretation.

Recent linguistic research highlights that morphosyntactic structure significantly constrains semantic composition (Belletti, 2023). In Arabic specifically, agreement, case marking, and word order interact to guide interpretation and reduce ambiguity. This confirms that grammatical structure functions as a filtering mechanism, narrowing the lexical semantic range established in the first stage.

Moreover, grammatical meaning illustrates the interaction between morphology and syntax in meaning construction. As noted in contemporary semantic theory, compositional meaning arises from structured relations rather than isolated lexical units (Blache et al., 2026; Pleyer et al., 2024; Saleem & Ahmad, 2025). This aligns with the classical Arabic understanding that *iʿrāb* is not merely formal ornamentation but a semantic determinant.

Contextual Meaning and Pragmatic Determination

Contextual meaning (*dalālah siyāqiyyah*) ultimately determines final interpretation. Context operates on multiple levels: immediate co-text, situational context, cultural symbolism, and historical background. Studies on Qur'anic discourse confirm that contextual indicators are essential for resolving ambiguity and selecting among grammatically viable meanings (Khaled & Al-Oodani, 2024).

Contemporary pragmatics further supports this view by demonstrating that meaning is often inferential and context-sensitive (Moldovan, 2023). Meaning selection involves pragmatic enrichment, presupposition recognition, and discourse coherence. In religious texts, metaphorical and symbolic expressions particularly depend on shared cultural schemas and interpretive traditions.

Furthermore, contextualist hermeneutics emphasizes that interpretive accuracy requires situating textual meaning within broader socio-historical frameworks (Calis, 2022). Without such integration, interpretation risks either literalism or anachronism. Therefore, contextual meaning serves as the decisive stage in semantic selection.

The Three-Dimensional Integrative Model

Based on these findings, this study formulates a three-dimensional integrative model of meaning. Interpretation proceeds through three interdependent stages: lexical range identification, grammatical constraint application, and contextual determination. However, the process is not strictly linear; it is iterative and circular. Contextual insight may prompt re-evaluation of grammatical structure, which in turn may refine lexical assumptions.

This model synthesizes classical semantic awareness in *fiqh al-lughah* with structured categorization in modern semantic and pragmatic theory. It demonstrates theoretical continuity between Islamic linguistic heritage and contemporary linguistics, while offering a structured analytical procedure for Arabic textual interpretation.

The integration contributes theoretically by bridging classical and modern epistemologies of meaning, methodologically by proposing an operational interpretive framework, and practically by informing both Arabic linguistic pedagogy and Qur'anic interpretive studies.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that *fiqh al-lughah* and modern Arabic semantics represent epistemologically continuous approaches to meaning rather than separate intellectual traditions. The findings confirm that meaning in Arabic operates through three interdependent dimensions: lexical, grammatical, and contextual. Lexical meaning establishes the initial semantic range through the root–pattern system and derivational structures; grammatical meaning constrains interpretive possibilities through syntactic relations and inflectional markers; and contextual meaning determines the final selection of interpretation through linguistic, situational, cultural, and historical factors. The study further shows that interpretation is not a linear process but a gradual and circular one, in which contextual insight may reshape grammatical analysis and refine lexical understanding. The proposed three-dimensional integrative model provides a structured analytical procedure that synthesizes classical semantic insights with modern linguistic theory.

Theoretically, this research contributes to bridging classical Islamic linguistic scholarship and contemporary semantic inquiry by reconstructing their conceptual continuity within a unified analytical framework. It demonstrates that the semantic sensitivity found in *fiqh al-lughah* anticipates key concerns of modern semantics and pragmatics, particularly regarding polysemy, contextual dependency, and structural constraint. Methodologically, the study offers an operational model for Arabic text interpretation that may reduce the risks of single-dimensional readings based solely on lexical or grammatical analysis. Practically, the framework has implications for Arabic language pedagogy, Qur'anic studies, and broader Islamic scholarship, encouraging a balanced integration of morphological, syntactic, and contextual awareness in textual analysis.

Nevertheless, this study is limited by its conceptual and literature-based design. The proposed model has not yet been empirically tested through applied textual analysis across diverse genres or through experimental linguistic research. Future studies may expand this framework by conducting corpus-based analysis of Qur'anic or classical Arabic texts to evaluate the model's analytical effectiveness. Empirical investigations into how native speakers or advanced learners process lexical, grammatical, and contextual meaning could also provide cognitive validation for the integrative approach. Additionally, interdisciplinary research combining Arabic linguistics with discourse analysis, cognitive semantics, and digital humanities tools may further refine and operationalize the three-dimensional model proposed in this study.

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