



The Phenomenon of Tadz Tadhad (Antonyms) in the Qur'an

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ABSTRACT

The Qur'an, as the divine revelation to Prophet Muhammad, employs Arabic language, necessitating a deep understanding of Arabic linguistics, including semantics ('ilm al-dalālah). This study explores the phenomenon of *tadhadh* (antonyms) in the Qur'an from a semantic perspective, aiming to identify and analyze antonymic word pairs and their implications in Qur'anic discourse. Using a qualitative approach with library research methods, the study examines Qur'anic verses, classical and modern linguistic sources, and scholarly works on Arabic semantics. The findings reveal five types of antonyms based on *Al-Khammas*' classification: (1) absolute antonyms (*taḍād ḥādd*), (2) graded antonyms (*taḍād mutadarrij*), (3) converse antonyms (*taḍād 'aks*), (4) perpendicular antonyms (*taḍād 'amūdī*), and (5) straight-line antonyms (*taḍād imtidaḍī*). Examples from various Qur'anic verses illustrate how these antonyms enhance rhetorical and theological depth. The study underscores the importance of semantic analysis in Qur'anic exegesis, contributing to broader linguistic and interpretive studies of the Qur'an.

Keywords: Qurán, Tadhadh, Arabic Linguistics, 'ilm al-dalālah



INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an, regarded as the holy scripture of Islam, is not only a sacred text but also a complex linguistic work with layered semantic and rhetorical dimensions (Annisa, 2025). In the development of linguistics and discourse analysis, the study of the Qur'an has expanded beyond theological concerns to include linguistic and literary perspectives. Revealed in Arabic, the Qur'an's meanings are deeply intertwined with the cultural characteristics and linguistic structures of the Arabic language (Erdy, 2025). This cultural influence is inseparable from the language of the Qur'an, shaping its unique semantic features.

In the Islamic scholarly tradition, the study of meaning in language is known as '*Ilm al-Dalalah* (Dalalah Science), which systematically examines the meanings of words and grammatical elements based on phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, and contextual factors (Fajar & Sobari, 2022). A central focus of Dalalah Science is the study of semantic relations, including synonyms, antonyms, polysemy, hyponymy, and homonyms, which are crucial for understanding the dynamic meanings of words in the Qur'an that often exhibit plurality, contrast, or complementarity depending on context (Hizbullah et al., 2024). Among these, *tadhādh* (antonymy) is particularly significant. *Tadhādh* refers to the relationship between words with opposite meanings, serving not only as a semantic contrast but also as a rhetorical and conceptual device that deepens the delivery of divine messages (Taufiq et al., 2023). For instance, pairs such as *hayāt* (life) and *mawt* (death), or *nūr* (light) and *zulmāt* (darkness), go beyond lexical opposition to embody ideological and theological dualities within the Qur'anic worldview (Ashidiqi et al., 2023).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of antonyms in reinforcing meaning and rhetorical power in Qur'anic verses. Ashidiqi et al. (2023) analyzed the use of *tarādūf* (synonymy) and *tadhādh* in Surah Al-Wāqi'ah, demonstrating how antonymic pairs create a conceptually and theologically cohesive field of meaning. Similarly, Mahfudi (2024) examined *tadhādh* in Surah Al-Hadīd using Ali Al-Khūlī's theoretical framework, classifying 32 antonym pairs from 21 verses into five types: binary, cyclic, affinity, perpendicular, and partial antonyms. However, these studies have limitations, such as restricted surah coverage and insufficient integration of traditional semantic theory with modern linguistic methods, leaving a gap for more



comprehensive semantic analyses within the framework of Dalalah Science.

Focusing specifically on antonymy is particularly meaningful for Qur'anic discourse because oppositional word pairs function as foundational conceptual tools that shape the theological logic and rhetorical structure of the revelation, more so than synonyms or polysemy which often emphasize similarity or multiplicity of meaning. This study aims to fill the identified gap by analyzing the phenomenon of *tadhādh* in the Qur'an through the lens of Dalalah Science, elucidating how the Qur'an constructs a system of meaning via semantic opposition and how these oppositions contribute to the formation of profound and layered messages in the sacred text. By integrating traditional semantic approaches with contemporary linguistic insights, this research seeks to enrich Arabic linguistic scholarship, especially in Qur'anic semantics, and to provide a robust analytical framework that supports deeper understanding in linguistic interpretation and exegesis.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs an interpretive paradigm to understand the meaning and essence behind the linguistic phenomenon of *tadhādh* (antonymy) in the Qur'an. The approach used is qualitative through library research, allowing for in-depth exploration of authoritative texts (Adlini et al., 2022). The research setting is textual, with primary and secondary data sources drawn from books of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), Arabic dictionaries, works by Arabic linguistics scholars (such as 'Ilm al-Dalālah), academic journals, and credible Qur'anic translations. The participants in this study are the texts themselves, selected purposively based on the depth of their discussion regarding semantics and antonymy in the Qur'an.

The data used consists of qualitative textual data, including primary data (Qur'anic verses containing antonyms) and secondary data (supporting literature such as books, journals, and scholarly commentaries). Data collection was conducted through documentary study, involving stages of source identification, selection, and in-depth exploration. The data were then analyzed using qualitative content analysis and semiotic analysis, following procedures of data reduction, data presentation in narrative and tabular forms, and verification and conclusion drawing aligned with the theoretical framework of 'ilm al-dalālah (the science of meanings).



Trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation to enhance credibility, systematic procedural descriptions for dependability, and textual evidence-based tracing of findings for confirmability. Although context-specific, the findings are expected to be transferable to other studies in Qur'anic linguistics. Ethically, this research adhered to academic principles by avoiding plagiarism through proper citation, using credible sources, and demonstrating respect for the sacred text of the Qur'an through an objective and scholarly approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Tadhad

A critical analysis of the definition of tadhad (antonymy) in Arabic reveals fundamental differences with the concept of antonym in modern linguistics. According to the language, tadhad is derived from the word *against* which means rejecting, opposite, or contradictory. Meanwhile, according to the term tadhad, it is a word that has a double meaning but is the opposite between one meaning and another meaning (Scott, 2020). Opposite is not interpreted as meant by modern linguists by the existence of two words that are different in pronunciation and have opposite meanings. Such as (a) short the opponent is tall (b) beautiful the opponent is ugly. However, what is meant by tadhad is a word that is used in two opposite meanings (Kolintama, 2022).

The fundamental difference between tadhad and modern antonyms lies in the nature of the semantic opposition. What is meant by antonyms are two different words that have meanings that challenge each other (Fitrah et al., 2024). An example is the word *Short* which has the opposite meaning of the word *Panjang*, or the word *Indah* which has the opposite meaning of the word *Jelek*. While tadhad is a word that gathers two contradictory meanings. Like the *lafadz Goal* means white and means black and *lafadz Big deal* means great and means contempt (Apriwanto, 2019). It is part of *Musytarak al-Lafzhi*, it is even mentioned that tadhad is a special form of *musytarak lafzhi*, 2 this is due to the uniqueness contained in the tadhad, which in one word contains two opposite meanings.

Tadhad in the Eyes of Arab Linguists

As mentioned above, *al-adldâd* is a special part of *al-musytarak al-lafdzi*. From here, differences of opinion among Arab linguists arose regarding this matter. There are two very



significant different opinions on al-adldâd in the treasure trove of Arabic linguistic studies.

1. Traditional Arabic Linguists

For traditional Arabic linguists, al-adldâd is the same word with conflicting meanings. Traditional Arabic linguists have begun their discussion of al-adldâd since 216 AH, namely by Asma'î, Ibn As-Sukit, Abu Hatim; Ibn Al-Anbarî; Abu Thayyib; Ibn ad-Duhhan; and As-Shaghani. Among the books written by these traditional Arabic linguists, the most famous is the book al-Adldâd by Ibn al-Anbarî which summarizes more than 400 types (Nazilla, 2025a).

One of the arguments of the group of scholars who argue that there is tadhâd is the one put forward by Ibn Anbari. According to him, words in Arabic reinforce each other, and sometimes there is a new meaning that appears in one word (Anis, 2023a). Looking at the argument put forward by Ibn Anbari, it is very natural that in one word there are two opposite meanings, because there is one of these two meanings that comes or is accepted by the language user when the word he is observing already has a meaning first.

2. Linguistic Arab Modern

Modern Arabic linguists consider al-adldâd to be two different words with contradictory meanings. Meanwhile, among the modern Arabic linguists who oppose the existence of al-adldâd are as follows: Tsa'lab, Al-Qalî, Ibn Durayd, according to him the condition of al-adldâd should use the words of two meanings in one language, not different languages/dialects (Nazilla, 2025b). Their argument centers on the dynamism of the Arabic language that allows for diametrical expansion of meaning as a manifestation of expressive richness.

In contrast, modern linguists reject the existence of tadhâd based on strict philosophical-linguistic arguments. Ibn Durustuwaih, because from the beginning he opposed the existence of al-musytarak al-lafdzi (homonym), while this al-adldâd was part of al-musytarak al-lafdzi (homonym), he automatically rejected the existence of al-adldâd (Musyarofah, 2024). This rejection is not just a factual rejection, but is based on the premise that one linguistic symbol cannot validly represent two mutually negating meanings. According to him, in essence, the word that contains al-adldâd does not exist. If there is a word with two contradictory meanings, then neutralization or elimination of differences



must be held, so that the two meanings for a word have no resistance.

These matters related to al-adldâd are included by him in a special chapter, not a chapter of al-musyarak al-lafdzi, and he compiled them in the book Ibthâl al-Adldâd. This book does not come to us today, because there are many errors. Therefore, his opinion is difficult to accept because the basis or reference is unclear. Al-Qalâ. Ibn Durayd, according to him, the condition of al-adldâd should use the words of two meanings in one language, not different languages/dialects.

In order for a word to be said to be tadhâd (antonym), the scholars set the following conditions:

- 1) That the two opposite meanings of words must remain in the speech of the Arabs.
- 2) That the same word is used in two opposite meanings, without any change.
- 3) That one of the two opposite meanings of the word must not be the Qur'an

Factors of Emergence of Tadhâd

Antonyms or At-Tađâd have cause and effect that underlie the occurrence of antonyms.

Among the reasons for the emergence of the phrase At-Tađâd:

- a) First, the original meaning of a word is used in a general meaning that is opposite, some people forget the use of that meaning so they suspect that it is part of a word that has two opposite meanings.
- b) Second, the change in the meaning of a word from the original meaning to the meaning of majazi for the reason of tafa'ul (hoping for goodness).
- c) Third, the conformity between two words in one shighat sharfiyah (form of word change)
- d) Fourth, the difference between the Arab tribes in using a word, such as the word used by the Himyar tribe and the Mudlar tribe, has a difference between the two tribes (Asyifah, 2022).

Partition of Tadhâd

Al-Khammas classifies antonyms into 5 (five) types (Anis, 2023b) that is:

- 1) Antonim Mutlak (ضاد حاد)

Two words that have different meanings. That is, the two words that have opposite meanings are absolutely absolute. Example:

Woman	أنثى	><	Man	ذكر
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Die	ميت	><	Live	حي
Wrong	خطأ	><	True	صحيح
Big	كبير	><	Small	صغير

2) Antonim Bertingkat (تضاد متدرج)

A cascading antonym, which means that in 2 opposite words, there are still levels/levels. That is, the meaning of words that are opposite to each other is still relative. Example:

- سهل (easy) is the opposite of صعب (difficult); but between 'easy' and 'difficult' there is still a certain level of ease or difficulty.
- بارد (cold) is the opposite of حار (hot); between 'hot' and 'cold' there is still a certain level.

For example: فاتر (warm nails), دافئ (warmest), ساخن (warm).

3) Opposite Antonyms (تضاد عكس)

The two meanings of two opposite words are commonplace. This type of antonym is an antonym that complements each other from one word to another.

Mother	أم	><	Father	أب
Wife	زوجة	><	Husband	زوج
Sell	باع	><	Buy	اشترى
Teach	علم	><	Learn	تعلم

4) Sideline Antonyms (تضاد عمودي)

If the antonyms (opposite) words consist of a directional vocabulary. Opposite vocabulary according to a deviating line is called a sideline antonym. For example, north (north) opposes east (east), south (South) Opposite west (west), west (Western) Counterwords north (North).

Timur	شرق	><	North	شمال
West	غرب	><	Selatan	جنوب
North	شمال	><	West	غرب

5) Antonym of Straight Line (تضاد امتدادي)

If the opposite vocabulary (antonym) is based on a straight line (against the



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direction). For example north(north) opposites south, east(east) opposite word west(west), Top(above) oppose under (below). This antonym is extensional (straight line) so it is only one direction.

South	جنوب	><	North	شمال
West	غرب	><	East	شرق
Under	تحت	><	Above	فوق

From some of the divisions of tadafh (antonyms) above, it can be seen that tadafh has various types in Arabic. So that the words of tadafh will be found in various Arabic readings or there are some listed in the Qur'an.

The Phenomenon of Tadzhad in the Qur'an

Yes	Letters/Verses	Fill	Types of Antonyms
1.	Luqman/17	يُبَيِّنُ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَإِنَّهُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأَمْوَرِ	Absolute and storied antonyms
2.	Luqman/22	أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَاحْسُنُوا يَوْمًا لَا يَجِزِي فَالَّذِي عَنْ وَلَدَهُ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَازٍ عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَعْرَنُكُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَعْرَنُكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغَرُورُ	Opposite Antonyms
3.	Ar-rum/23	وَمِنْ أَيْتِهِ مَنَّا مُكْمِنُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَإِنْتَعَوْكُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ	Sideline Antonyms
4.	Ar-rum/54	الَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعَفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعَفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعَفًا وَشَيْئًا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّمُ الْقَدِيرُ	Stratified Antonyms
5.	Yusuf/ 26-27	قَالَ هِيَ رَأَدْتُنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي وَشَهَدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ فَمَيْسُهُ قَدْ مِنْ قُلْ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَذِيْنِ (26) وَإِنْ كَانَ فَمَيْسُهُ قَدْ مِنْ دُنْيَ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّدِيْقِينَ (27)	Sideline Antonyms (against direction)

In surah Luqman verse 17 there are antonyms, namely in the word command (rule), and Forbade(prevent), other than the word known (goodness) and Denier (disobedience). Word order and ForbadeBoth use the form of the word command (fiil amr). This word uses an antonym of the type Absolute Antonym (Sharp contrast) This is because the opposite of these two words is absolute and not gradient. While the next antonym is the word known and DenierBecause these two words are adjectives or adjectives, two words fall



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into the category of multi-level antonyms.

While in surah Luqman verse 33 of the Qur'an tends to use the opposite type of antonyms/ Upset opposite. We can see that there are 4 words that are antonyms, namely in the word Father (parents) – child (boy), generator (a person who is born 'child') – Father (parents). Word Father and child It is included in the type of conversense because the two are interrelated and cannot be separated, when talking about parents, there must be children. The same goes for the word Father and generator It is also inseparable, because it is impossible for a person to be born but no one gives birth. Therefore, all words in this verse use the antonym of the polar type / conversense. Verse 33 contains news about the Day of Resurrection on the Day of Resurrection, on the Day of Resurrection a father cannot help his son. And vice versa, a child cannot help his parents.

In Surah Ar- rum verse 23 there is an antonym form in the word Evening and daytime. Word daytime which has the meaning of daylight with a straight line antonym with the word evening which means night. It does not include tiered antonyms because there are no levels in day and night. It is the same with morning which has a straight line antonym with the afternoon.

In Surah Ar-rum verse 54 there is a type of tiered antonym or tadhad mutadarrij, which is in the word weakness which has the meaning of weak and power which has a strong meaning. Because the words strong and weak are relative, and there are certain levels of strength and weakness. It is not categorized as amudy or imtidady because it does not include the direction or rotation of time.

In surah Yusuf in verses 26-27 there are reversible antonyms or antonyms that are in the opposite direction, as the saying before and the word contrive. Both words contain reversible antonyms because the word "back" and the word "front" are words in opposite directions. This antonym does not belong to the antonym of movement, because it is in the opposite direction, not in a directional movement.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that several tadhad phenomena in the Qur'an can be seen. So that we can know and expand our understanding of the relationship between words in language, but also reveal the deeper meaning of the words of tadhad in the verses of the Qur'an.



The Urgency of Understanding Tadhad (Antonyms) in the Quran

Even though antonyms in the study of the Quran reap differences of opinion among scholars. However, in practice, antonyms still contribute to understanding the Quran, as follows:

1. The concept of the relationship of the meaning of the Quran verses is more or less due to the redaction of the Quran which contains many forms of anatomy (Lestari, 2019). This view is that the linguistic concepts in the Quran are more complex and the linguistics in them are more complete than others.
2. The use of antonyms in the study of the Quran as a sign of the greatness of the miracles of the Quran, if the verses of the Quran are chanted, the meaning will be clear, but if it is read again, other meanings will be found that are different from the previous reading and so on so that various kinds of meanings can also be found that remain relevant over time.
3. As an approach in studying the Quran. So that understanding antonyms in the Quran can be found in the diversity of pronunciations which are at the same time accompanied by antonyms. (Abrar, 2021). This is also a clue that in understanding the content of the verses of the Quran, not only have reasonable verses that have similar recitations but also use opposite recitations but are still in the same discussion. Trying to understand the content of the Quran will feel a little easier using this method, while still being relevant to the verse to be looked for antonyms. Because not all verses in a single letter can be found antonymsical recitations at once

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the phenomenon of tadhad (antonymy) in the Quran is not merely a linguistic occurrence but a profound representation of the semantic complexity of the sacred text, carrying significant theological and hermeneutical implications. Tadhad functions as a semiotic mechanism that enriches the rhetorical and philosophical dimensions of Quranic discourse through structured oppositions of meaning. An in-depth analysis of Al-Khammas' classification shows that the five types of antonyms absolute, graded, relational, axis, and continuum work synergistically to build an interconnected network of meanings within the Quranic semantic ecosystem. These tadhad patterns not only reflect lexical oppositions but also serve as conceptual instruments framing dualistic realities in the Quranic worldview, such as life-



death, light-darkness, and truth-doom.

The primary implication of this study lies in its contribution to Qur'anic hermeneutics, where understanding tadhad provides a powerful analytical lens to navigate semantic ambiguity and multistability of meaning in tafsir, especially in verses containing paradoxes or apparent contradictions. This finding strengthens the theory of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* by demonstrating how high semantic density through the mechanism of tadhad constitutes one dimension of the linguistic miracle of the scripture. Methodologically, the study underscores the importance of integrating traditional semantic approaches (*'ilm al-dalālah*) with modern linguistic frameworks to build a more comprehensive analysis of the Qur'anic text. It also emphasizes the urgency of developing tadhad-based hermeneutics as an exegetical approach that utilizes semantic opposition as an entry point to understanding the structure of Qur'anic meaning, while encouraging Qur'anic semantic research to explore how tadhad patterns shape the conceptual architecture and theological logic of revelation.

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