

Synonymy in the View of Early Arabic Linguists: A Descriptive, Inductive and Analytical Study

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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of synonymy, a subject of significant interest among Arabic linguists and scholars of the principles of jurisprudence ('*usul al-fiqh*) due to its importance in understanding subtle differences between words with similar meanings. The objective is to uncover the true stance of early Arabic linguists on synonymy and determine whether there was disagreement among them. Anyone who reviews the scholars' research on this topic will find that they prove the disagreement between early Arabic linguists, which can be summarized in three directions: proving synonymy, denying it absolutely, and proving it with

some conditions. Document analysis is the particular qualitative approach employed in the present study. The data is gathered using a library-based approach, citing synonymy research, recording the views of early linguists, and then verifying them with their writings or other sources from the same time. A descriptive, inductive approach is employed in the process of data analysis. The study concludes that early linguists did not deny synonymy, as there is no contradiction between the existence of differences among many synonymous words and proving their synonymy. Even if they differ in other contexts, two terms are considered synonymous when they convey the same meaning in a particular context. Differences in other contexts do not negate

their use to indicate the same meaning. This study is expected to contribute to revealing the truth of the opinion of early Arabic linguists on the phenomenon of synonymy and to contribute to enriching this topic so that it is accessible to the academic scientific community and those interested in linguistic and *usul al-fiqh* studies.

Keywords: Arabic language; Convergence of meanings; Early Linguists; Linguistic differences; Synonymy.

Introduction

Man's need for others is instinctive, he cannot live independently from his fellow man, therefore the man is social by nature (al-Isnawi, 1999; Ibn Amir Haj, 1983) and to achieve cooperation between them and meet mutual needs, there had to be a means by which they could identify with each other what is in their souls, and from here came languages which are: "*sounds by which each people express their purposes*" (Ibn Jinni, 1990; al-Jurjani, 1983) or they are: the words established for meanings. The indication of these words to meanings is from the establishment of the establisher (al-Isnawi, 1999). The Arabic language is: what the Arabs established as regards specific words to indicate specific meanings, whether they were a revelation from Allah or termed by them. The indication of words to meanings is situational in all cases, so they used the word sky, the word earth, and the word water to indicate specific meanings. For instance, they used the word *qur'u* for menstruation and purity, the word *al-Jawn* for black and white, and the word *salim* for bitten and unharmed, to mention a few (Al-Sayuti, 1998).

It is widely recognized that the relationship between words and meaning is the foundation of linguistic research, and all linguistic studies are centered on them.

Muslim linguists, interpreters, jurists, and scholars of the principles of jurisprudence are interested in the meaning and its issues. This is due to its impact on understanding Islam, its doctrine and rulings, with a correct understanding. Therefore, you find that they have detailed research on this matter, establishing the rules for understanding the meanings of the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the meanings they bear, so that these rules prevent what is not part of Islam from infiltration (Mahmoud, 2020; Adam, 2021).

Synonymy is a prominent language phenomenon extensively examined by ancient and contemporary academics, linguists, authors, and researchers. It is essential for attaining an appropriate comprehension of Islamic scriptures and other linguistic materials by elucidating the nuanced distinctions between words with similar meanings. An examination of prior research on this subject indicates that scholars have concentrated on either affirming or refuting the presence of synonymy, underscoring divergent perspectives among early linguists. This has prompted several researchers to endeavor to reconcile the perspectives of individuals accused of rejecting synonymy with the accounts revealing that they referenced distinct terms conveying the same meaning without acknowledging any discrepancies. Therefore, this research seeks to reveal the genuine perspectives of early linguists about this phenomenon: Did early linguists exhibit any dissent over the existence of synonymy? Does the existence of variations among some synonymous terms undermine their categorization as synonyms?

Synonymy in Language

Language dictionaries state: "*Raddaf: Radf*: what follows something is its *radf*, and if something follows after something it is

taraduf, and the plural is: *rudaafā*” (al-Farahidi, 2003). (*Radafa*) *Ra*, *Dal*, and *Fa* are one consistent root, indicating the following something. So *taraduf*: succession. *Radif*: the one who follows you. *Al-Radeef*: the one who accompanies you. It is said: A matter befell them, so something greater than it followed them; meaning that something greater than it followed the first. *Radf* denotes the location where the person behind you is seated. (Ibn Faris, 1979; Şentürk, 2022).

Derivatives of the word ‘*Radf*’ have been mentioned in the Holy Quran with its linguistic meaning. Allah Almighty said: “When you sought help from your Lord, and He answered you, Indeed, I will reinforce you with a thousand angels, following one another” [Al-Anfal: 9]. “Following one another” means following one another, in other words, the coming of something after another one, like people who follow one another on beasts. “*Muradiffin*” means that this was done to them, and its meaning is that the Almighty made the Muslims ride behind each other and supported them with others” (al-Razi, n.d). Almighty Allah said: “Say: Perhaps some of what you are hastening will follow you” [al-Naml: 72], meaning: what you are hastening will follow you and catch up with you (al-Baydawi, n.d; Baqer & Kazem, 2023).

It was also mentioned in its linguistic meaning in the Sunnah: On the authority of Abd al-Rahman bin Abi Bakr al-Siddiq, may God be pleased with them both, he said: “*The Prophet, may God bless him and*

grant him peace, ordered me to ride Aisha behind and take her to al-Tan'im” (al-Bukhari, 1993), meaning: ride her behind on the back of camel (al-Harawi, 2001). Synonymy in language is defined as succession, akin to one individual riding after another, resulting in a sequential style of riding. (Almujahed, 2024).

Synonymy in Terminology

Sibawayh (1988) said: “*Know that among their words is, the difference between two words due to the difference in meanings, and the difference between two words and the meaning is same, and the agreement between two words and difference in meanings*”. Al-Shafi'ai (1938) said when talking about the necessity of understanding the methods of the Arabic language in discourse to understand the Holy Qur'an: “*And you call one thing by many names*”. These texts are the oldest that have reached us about this linguistic phenomenon, for which the word synonymy was not used at that time as a term to indicate it. Then, after that, the expressions of scholars differed, both ancient and modern regarding the meaning of synonymy in terminology.

The researcher divided the early linguists into two categories for the sake of accuracy: the early linguists who discussed this phenomenon before the use of the term "synonymy" and the later linguists who discussed this phenomenon after the term "synonym" was introduced (Figure 1). Then the opinion of modern linguists shall be mentioned.

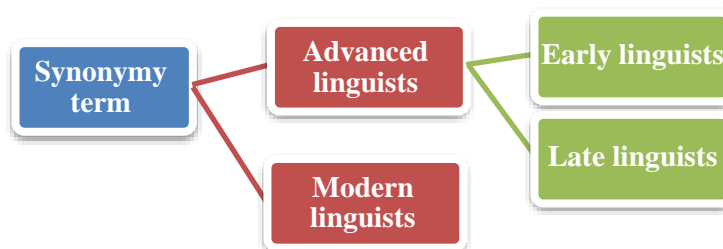


Figure 1. Perception of synonym terms among linguists

Synonymy among Early Linguists

The first recorded reference to the phenomena of synonymy, a term specifically developed for this concept, is attributed to Sibawayh, who characterized Arab speech concerning sound and meaning. *"The difference between two words and the meaning is one like he went and departed"*. Al-Asma'i (1984) wrote a book called: *"Ma Ikhtalaf Alfazuhu wa-Ittafaqat Ma'aniyuh"*. Qutrub (1984) in his *'Kitab al-Ad-daad'* said: *"The difference between the two pronunciations that has the same meaning"* Al-Mubarrad (1994) said:

"As for the difference between the two pronunciations while the meaning is the same, such as 'jalasa' and 'qa'ada' and the saying 'Burru' and 'hantoti' and 'dhiraa'a' and 'saa'ada'." As such, the synonyms according to early linguists, is different words that indicate same meaning. They did not explicitly deny or prove the existence of differences between them, and no one disputes this matter in the second century AH (Anis, 1992; Busharib, 2016). Then you find in their speech not mentioning the differences as you find them sometimes differentiating between synonymous words (Table 1).

Table 1: Some synonymous words

ذهب ((Dhahaba) Go	انطلق (Intalaqa) Go
عَيْر ('Aayr) Donkey	حمار (Himār) Donkey
ذئب (Dhi'b) Wolf	سَيْد (Siyd) Wolf
ثعلب (Tha'alab) Fox	سَمْسَم (Samsam) Fox
جاء (Jā'a) Arrive	أتى (Atā) Arrive
جلس (Jalasa) Sat	قعد (Qa'ada) Sat
بُر (Burru) Wheat	حنطة (Hintah) Wheat
ذراع (Dhirā'a) Forearm	ساعد (Sā'id) Forearm

Al-Mubarrad (1994) mentioned that among the speech of the Arabs is the difference between the two words that have the same meaning, and he gave examples of that through the terms *'jalasa'* and *'qa'ada'*, *'Burru'* and *'hantoti'*, and *'dhirā'u'* and *'sā'id'*, so he did not mention differences between them. He distinguished between the law and the method in the Almighty's saying: *"For each of you We have prescribed a law and a method"* [al-Ma'idah: 48]. The law is for the beginning of something, while the method is for most of it and its breadth. It is said: that a person started something if he began it. The wear and tear of a garment are if it becomes wide, so the thing is connected to the other, and if they go back to one thing, then in one of them there is a difference between the other

(al-'Askariy, 1997).

The matter remained like that until Ibn al-'Arabi said: *"Every two letters that the Arabs used to mean one meaning; in each of them there is a meaning that is not in the other; perhaps we know it and it informs us about it, and perhaps it is unclear to us, so we do not force the Arabs to be ignorant of it. He said: All names are for a reason; the Arabs have specified what they have specified, we know some reason, as we didn't for some"* (Ibn al-Anbariy, 1987; Khoder & Ghani, 2023). Tha'lab (1956) and al-Sayuti (1998) followed him. This phenomenon was mentioned by the authors of the books of anecdotes, dictations, and councils: such as Abu Zaid al-Ansari, Ibn al-'Arabi, Tha'lab, and others (al-Bakri,

2001).

Synonymy among later Linguists

At this stage, the term synonym began to be used to express this phenomenon. It was mentioned by the philosopher al-Farabi (died 339 Hijrah) in his book *'Al-Huroof'*: *"Likewise, words are made to be different words in terms of being words only, just as meanings have different meanings, so synonymous words are obtained"* (1990). Al-Bakri (2001) suggested that the term was transferred from him to Ibn al-Sarraj and from him to Abu Al-Hasan al-Roumani, a student of Ibn al-Sarraj and author of the book *'Al-Alfas Al-Mutaradifah'*.

The researcher does not agree with this opinion, as al-Farabi studied grammar with Ibn al-Sarraj, and the researcher of the book *'al-Huroof'* suggested that he wrote the book to respond to al-Sirafi after his debate with Matta, which took place in the year 320Hijrah, i.e. after the death of Ibn al-Sarraj (al-Farabi, 1990).

Ibn al-Sarraj (1972) mentioned this term in his book, *'Risalat Al-Ishtiqaq'*, saying: *"If the meaning is followed by different names, it is not like when it differs and the wording is the same before the single meaning has two, each of which is known after they do not share in any of them another meaning. Languages may have overlapped, and it is possible that this expansion occurred to occur in rhymes (Ryme that depends on the similarity between the vowel sounds only or the consonant sound). Don't you see that if the poet is using a "sin" rhyme, he says "jalasa," and if he is using a "dal" rhyme, he says "qa'ada".* So, it is possible that the term was transferred from Ibn al-Sirraj to al-Farabi as it was transferred to al-Rummani.

This term was mentioned by Qudamah bin Ja'afar in his book *'Jawahir Al-Alfaz'* (1985) saying: *"Al-'irdaaf: is that if it is intended to indicate a meaning, then the*

specific word used to indicate that meaning itself is not used, but rather a word that is its counterpart and dependent on it, in order for the mention of the dependent to indicate the followed". What the researcher prefers is that the use of the word synonymy as a term to express different words to indicate one meaning appeared at the end of the third century AH and the beginning of the fourth century AH, and we cannot be certain who was the first to use it.

After that, no change occurred in the term synonymy, as it was mentioned by Ibn al-Anbariy (1984), al-Sirafi (2008), Ibn Faris (1997), Ibn Jinni (1990), al-'Askariy (1997), and al-Asfahani (n.d). This period is characterized by academics, such as Al-Sirafi and Ibn Jinni, who endorsed synonymy without addressing the distinctions between the terms, in contrast to others who refuted or differentiated between synonyms. Ibn Al-Anbariy, Ibn Faris, and Al-Asfahani criticized those who failed to distinguish between synonymous terms, which led Al-'Askariy to compose his work on *al-Furwq al-lughawiyah*. He elucidated the distinctions among several synonyms; in his analysis, he was both accurate and erroneous. In conclusion, synonymy is technically: different words that indicate one meaning. Some were satisfied with that and others stated that each of the synonyms has a meaning that the other does not have.

Synonymy according to modern Linguists

It is noted that modern linguists do not agree on a single definition of synonym. According to Ramadan Abdul Tawab (1999), it is: *"Words that have the same meaning and are interchangeable with each other in any context"*. This definition is quoted from Ullman in his book: *'The Role of the Word'* (Ullman, 1972). As for Hakim Al-Ziyadi (1980), he defined it by saying: *"different words that indicate one meaning*

individually". Hanwn (2010) defined it by saying: "using one word in place of another word in some phrases and sentences; because they share some same part of the meaning, and they differ from each other except for that part". According to Germain and Leblon (1997), synonymy is: "two words that can be exchanged with each other in all contexts or uses, not in one expression or use without another expression or use". Contemporary researchers convey the perspectives of Western linguists regarding this matter, leading some to identify various forms of synonymy and novel criteria for determining word synonymy, including the potential for interchangeability in all contexts, while others accept interchangeability in specific sentences and phrases. (Ali, 2022; Baqer & Kazem, 2023; Ahmad, 2024) Some of them stipulate complete matching, and some of them are satisfied with sharing part of the meaning (Abdul Qader, 2021; Khoder & Ghani, 2023).

The researcher believes that this issue is related to the reality of the Arabic language used, and has no relation to the reality of other languages, so the research is about the existing Arabic language used, preserved in the speech of the Arabs, poetry, prose, the Qur'an and Sunnah. To reach an accurate definition of this phenomenon, it is necessary to look and extrapolate to the reality of the Arabic language, and the words of those who cite their words only. In fact, this phenomenon exists among Arabs (Aqel, 2019), as Arabs speak by their nature and use different words to denote one meaning. "Abu Zaid said: I said to an Arab: What is al-Muhannati'? He said: al-Mutakaki'. I said: What is al-Mutakaki'? He said: al-Muta'azif. I said: What is al-Muta'azif? He said: You are foolish" (Ibn Duraid al-Azdi, 1987). Whether there are differences between these words or not, in both cases, the Arab uses different words to

express one meaning. The issue is related to the Arabic language in general, not to any of the languages of the Arabs (al-Sayuti, 1998). Although the Arab tribes did not live in isolation from others, and they were connected and took words from each other, so it is not strange that there are different words to express one meaning among an Arab tribe.

The Arabs do not conform to any technical constraints in their language usage, since it comprises, terminology developed by people within the Arab community. The meanings of these terms vary according to the many facets of life they encounter, leading to descriptions shaped by individual perspectives, which results in a plethora of words and meanings (Ibn Jinni, 1990; Al-Rafi'i, 1941; Aqel, 2019). Certain terms originate from other tribes, leading each tribe to perceive the languages of others, therefore adopting and enhancing their lexicon for enjoyment and enrichment. Certain descriptive phrases ultimately transform into conventional facts via extensive use, therefore becoming integral to the language's etymology (Al-Ziyadi, 1980; Kharmanda, 2003; Almujaheed, 2024).

The second sort of synonymy, a more limited category with fewer terms conveying identical meanings, is almost universal across all languages. In Arabic, its origin is rooted in the diverse circumstances stemming from the multitude of tribes. For instance, the term 'Mudyah' is used in the Daws language, whilst 'al-Sikyn' is utilized by others. In such instances, one word does not have to possess heightened significance relative to the other, since both terms are formulated to convey a singular meaning without an increase in importance unless one examines the etymology and underlying rationale. This differs when both terms denote a scenario in which divergence is acceptable, such as '*jalasa*'

and '*qa'ada*' (Al-Rafi'i, 1941; Al-Munjid, 1997; Ishaq & Obaid, 2022).

Based on the above, the definition chosen for synonymy by the researcher is different words that indicate the same and one meaning, whether there are differences between them or not. It is not a condition that they convey the same meaning in all contexts. Whenever the two words indicate the same meaning in a specific context, they are synonymous, even if there are differences between them in other contexts. The existence of differences between them in other contexts does not negate their use to indicate the same meaning.

Methodology

The scientific method that the researcher will adopt is the qualitative method; because the study is related to opinions and ideas, which are the opinions of early Arabic linguists on the phenomenon of synonymy such as Sibawayh, Al-Mubarrad, Ibn al-Anbariy, etc, before the term *taraduf* began to be used to express this phenomenon. The data related to the research are texts and linguistic vocabulary that cannot be explained by numerical and statistical methods and are not subject to them and require observation, analysis, and contemplation to interpret them. Therefore, the basis for collecting information was through the library method, by referring to books, publications, research, and articles that presented the opinions of early Arabic linguists on the phenomenon of synonymy, and mentioning the arguments of those who deny and those who prove this phenomenon. As for the basis for analyzing information in order to reach the truth of the opinion of early Arabic linguists on the phenomenon of synonymy, the descriptive method and inductive method were both adopted. These methods provide a very correct and profound grasp, allowing the researcher to conclude the subject of

research with evidence.

Results and Discussion

First, there was no disagreement about the occurrence of synonymy between different languages (al-Sayuti, 1998) and there was no disagreement about this phenomenon in the second century AH (Anis, 1992; Busharib, 2016). The first person to be known as a source of denying it was Ibn al-'Arabi (al-Ziyadi, 1980; al-Munjid, 1997; Farouk et al, 2021). Whoever reviews the scholars' discussions on the phenomenon of synonymy will find that most of them convey the disagreement between scholars, ancient and modern, on this phenomenon.

Proving the phenomenon of synonymy, this concerns most scholars, headed by Sibawayh, Qutrub, al-Asma'I, Ibn Salam, Ibn Jinni, and among the modern scholars: Ibrahim Anis (Kharmanda, 2003; Munir, 2020; Said Mahmoud & Wan Chik, 2024). Denying the phenomenon of synonymy, the most prominent of those to whom that was attributed among the early scholars are Ibn al-'Arabi, Tha'lab, Ibn Faris, Ibn Dastuyeh, and Abu Hilal al-'Askari. Among the modern scholars who deny synonymy are: Aisha Bint al- Shati', Professor Hafni Nasif, and Ahmed Mukhtar Omar (Bint al-Shati' 1971; Abdul Tawab, 1999; Adam, 2021; Baqer & Kazem, 2023).

Moderation in proving the phenomenon of synonymy, this trend is represented by scholars of Usul, the most prominent of whom is: al-Fakhr al-Razi. Among the early linguists to whom this is attributed are: Abu Ali al-Farsi (al-Ziyadi, 1980; Kharmanda, 2003), and among the modern scholars are: Subhi Saleh, Hakim Malik Al-Ziyadi, Ali Al-Jarim, Ramadan Abdul Tawab, and others (al-Ziyadi, 1980; Abdul Tawab, 1999; Kharmanda, 2003; Bu Shashiya, 2020). These scholars have set conditions for synonymy including the potential for

exchange across all contexts, with some individuals content with exchange in specific words and phrases, some requiring perfect equivalence, and others accepting a partial sharing of meaning. (Munir, 2020; Abdul Qader, 2021; Ishaq & Obaid, 2022).

Those who prove the occurrence of synonymy have provided some evidences where it is not rationally impossible, and assuming its occurrence does not necessarily entail its impossibility (al-Razi, 1997; al-Amidi, 2016; al-Armoui, 1996). The actual existence of this phenomenon in the speech of the Arabs (Arabic language), as the Arabs use different words to express the same meaning, and this matter is taken for granted in several languages. It is also proven in one language (al-Munjid, 1997; Ishaq & Obaid, 2022). There was no disagreement about this matter before the emergence of Ibn al-‘Arabi's statement as mentioned above. The semantic development in linguistically talking; the meanings of words change from one meaning to another one to meet one meaning, hence synonymy occurs (al-Ziyadi, 1980; Kharmanda, 2003; Almujaheed, 2024). This is a summary of the evidence of those who prove synonymy.

The evidences for those who denied this phenomenon, may include the statement of the reasons for naming; every name has a reason, whether we know it or not (Ibn al-Anbariy, 1987; al-Sayuti, 1998; Almujaheed, 2024). The claim of synonymy contradicts the wisdom of the linguistic establishment of the word, because *“the name is a word that indicates the meaning of the indicator of indications, and if the thing is indicated once and is known, then the second and third reference to it wouldn't be useful. The originator of the language is wise and does not bring in it what is not useful”* (al-‘Askari, 1997; Aqel, 2019 Almujaheed, 2024). The claim of synonymy necessitates the multiplication of language with what is

not useful, and this is contrary to rational reasoning (al-Askari, 1997; Almujaheed, 2024). This is the summary of the evidence of those who deny synonymy.

The moderates, adopting a neutral position on the occurrence of synonymy, reconciled the data from both proponents and opponents of the phenomenon. The evidence presented by those who established synonymy is irrefutable. Conversely, the evidence from those who refuted synonymy prompted them to exercise caution in evaluating any terms said to be synonymous. They established criteria that enabled them to govern the assessment of synonymy, maintaining the unique characteristics of each term for accurate expressiveness while using terms with like meanings. (al-Ziyadi, 1980; Abdul Tawab, 1999; Kharmanda, 2003; Bu Shashiya, 2020).

By examining the evidence of all groups, the researcher noted that the words of those who prove synonymy are related to the speech of the Arabs and not to any of the languages of the Arabs. The reality is that the Arabic language is a mixture of ‘dialectal’ languages, and not a single language. Therefore, denying synonymy in a single language has no basis, as there is no single language distinct from the rest of the languages of Arabs (al-Rafi‘i, 1941). The languages of the Arabs are interfered with, and scholars only know the languages of the Arabs in some words. Then, the Arabic language in which Arabic literature was written and in which the Qur’an was revealed is an intertwined language shared by all Arabs, whether we say: it is the language of the Quraysh or the people of Hijaz, or we say that it is more general than that (al-Ziyadi, 1980; Kharmanda, 2003).

-Those who prove synonymy expressed this phenomenon by extrapolating the reality of the Arabs’ use of words to

indicate meanings, saying: “*Know that among their speech is the difference between two words due to the difference in meanings. The difference between two words and the meaning is one, and the agreement between two words and the difference in meanings and naming one thing by many names.*”

The issue here is not about the originator and the origin of the establishment of the word, as they did not say that the originator established different words to indicate the same meaning. Rather, the issue is about the Arabs’ use of words to indicate meanings, and thus, talking about the origin of the establishment, the originator, and the reason for the naming which does not indicate the denial of the phenomenon of synonymy, meaning that the Arabs use different words to indicate the same meaning. The origin of the establishment, if known, can indicate differences between these synonymous words, but it does not deny them.

Employing reasonable, logical reasoning to refute synonymy is erroneous. The Arabic language and its rules-grammar, morphology, and many linguistic phenomena such as synonymy, homonymy, and contrast—are determined by the expressions of its speakers in poetry and prose before the language's degradation. All Arabic sciences are comprehended only via this methodology, namely through the language reality in actual usage (al-Ziyadi, 1980; al-Munjid, 1997; Mahmoud, 2020).

Furthermore, these rational, logical arguments rest on the notion that language is divinely revealed rather than conventional, a position that is not widely accepted. Even if we were to accept that language is divinely revealed, the claim that synonymy is merely useless padding and repetition is also unfounded. Synonymy offers numerous benefits, including

“expanding the circle of expression and multiplying its means,” which is referred to by rhetoric scholars as fascination, thus facilitating the scope of poetry, prose, and various rhetorical forms (al-Shawkani, 1999; Ahmad, 2024).

Thus, there is no justification for rejecting synonymy in the Arabic language. Arabic is a composite of many languages, with data indicating that Arabs often use various terms to convey the same meanings. Moreover, the motivations for naming, as well as the investigation into the etymology of words and the associated rational and logical justifications, do not accurately represent the linguistic reality in practice. This indicates that these characteristics do not invalidate the presence of several terms that signify a singular meaning. Moreover, the advantages of synonymy are well-documented.

Above all, those who examine the words of the early Arabic linguists such as Sibawayh, Al-Mubarrad, Ibn al-Anbariy, etc, before the term *taraduf* began to be used to express this phenomenon will find that there is a consensus regarding the phenomenon of synonymy among them, even among those who are attributed with denying it. Ibn al-‘Arabi's statement, often cited as evidence against synonymy, asserts: "Every two letters that the Arabs use for one meaning possess a meaning that is not found in its counterpart; perhaps we are aware of it, or perhaps it remains unclear to us, and we do not accuse the Arabs of ignorance regarding it. All names are given for a reason; the Arabs have specified what they have specified; some reasons we know, and some we do not" (Ibn al-Anbariy, 1987).

In this statement, there is no outright denial of synonymy; rather, he acknowledges that the Arabs employed two letters for one meaning, indicating that each word holds a unique meaning not shared by its

counterpart. His comments on the reasons for naming further suggest that there is no contradiction in recognizing that different words can convey the same meaning. This is supported by his references to various words that he explicitly states share a single meaning. On the authority of al-Abbas Ahmad bin Yahya, he said: Ibn Al-‘Arabi recited to me: “*wa Mawdi`ai Zabn*. An old man from his companions said to him: “This is not how you recited to us; rather, you recited to us: “*wa Mawdi`ai Diyqi*” Ibn Al-‘Arabi responded: “Glory be to Allah! You have been our companions for such and such a time, and you do not know that Zaban and distress are the same. Allah Almighty said, and He is the Most Generous in speech: ‘Say: Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful. Whichever you call upon, to Him belong the best names” [Al-Isra: 110]. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “The Qur’an was revealed in seven languages, all of which are healing and sufficient” (Ibn Jinni, 1990; al-Ziyadi, 1980)

Imam Tha‘lab is recognized for his alignment with Ibn al-‘Arabi, contending that specific words may express identical meanings while affirming their synonymy. The reference to al-Taj al-Subki's assertion underscores a misattribution of Tha‘lab's position on synonymy. Tha‘lab, in his book "Majalis Tha‘lab" presents instances demonstrating that many idioms may denote a single notion, such as "*the Sawada of his heart*" and "*the jaljalan of his heart*," highlighting their same meaning.

Ibn Faris contends that while Arabic has many names for the same item, these phrases may convey similarities without suggesting that the meanings are completely disparate. He references his instructor, Abu al-Abbas Tha‘lab, to substantiate this perspective. Ibn Faris contends that while the phrases may not be

wholly distinct, each might have certain implications, as shown by his examples of synonymous terms such as "*Hassan al-Mu'tis*" and "*al-Ra'if*" for "nose," and "*Jayid al-Mifsal*" and "*al-Miqwal*" for "tongue" (Ibn Faris, 1970).

Overall, both scholars contribute to a nuanced understanding of synonymy, suggesting that while words may have shared meanings, they can also carry distinct implications within their usage.

On top of this, he stated that synonymy is a feature that does not exist in other languages, saying: “If we needed to express the sword and its descriptions in the Persian language, we would not be able to do so except with one name. In Arabic, however, we have many descriptions of the sword سيف, as well as of the lion الأسد, the horse الحصان, and other entities that have synonymous names. So where does this stand in comparison to other languages, in terms of the breadth that the Arabic language possesses? Among the concepts that cannot be fully transferred are the descriptions of the sword, the lion, the spear, and other synonymous names. It is well known that the Persians do not have more than one name for the lion, while we have one hundred and fifty names” (Ibn Faris, 1997). All those attributed with denying synonymy, you will find in their speech mention of different words that indicate one meaning (al-Ziyadi, 1980; al-Munajjid, 1997; al-Bakri, 2001).

Accordingly, the researcher does not see that early linguists deny synonymy, as there is no contradiction between their acknowledgment of synonymy and the existence of differences among many synonymous words. Based on this, the researcher disagrees with Al-Ziyadi (1980) when he stated: “Those who deny synonymy acknowledge it practically,” nor with Sheikh Al-Munjid (1997) who said:

“Those who deny synonymy only deny complete synonymy, based on the historical perspective of vocabulary, and they differentiate between levels of language use, semantic accuracy, and general communication.” The key issue is that there is no contradiction between the existence of differences among many synonymous words and the acknowledgment of their synonymy by ancient Arabic linguists.

Conclusion

According to early Arabic linguists, synonymy consists of different words that indicate the same meaning, regardless of any differences between them. These words do not need to convey the same meaning in all contexts. Whenever two words signify the same meaning in a specific context, they are considered synonymous, even if they differ in other contexts. There is a consensus on the existence of synonymy across different languages, and this phenomenon was recognized as early as the second century AH. The first individual who denied this concept was Ibn al-‘Arabi. In his statement: "Every two letters that the Arabs have assigned to one meaning; in each one of them there is a meaning that is not in its companion," he does not deny synonymy. Instead, he acknowledges that Arabs assigned two letters to one meaning, noting that each of the synonymous words has a unique meaning not found in the other, based on his discussion of naming conventions. Those who are said to deny synonymy often reference different words that indicate the same meaning, suggesting that early linguists did not reject the concept of synonymy. Therefore, the researcher disagrees with Dr. Al-Ziyadi's claim that “those who deny synonymy acknowledge it only in practice,” as well as Sheikh Al-Munjid's assertion that “those who deny synonymy only reject complete synonymy,” which is based on a historical perspective of vocabulary that distinguishes

between levels of language use, semantic accuracy, and general communication. In conclusion, the researcher finds no contradiction between the existence of differences among many synonymous words and the acknowledgment of their synonymy by early Arabic linguists.

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