

Modern Semantics in Arabic Linguistics: Structural-Pragmatic Approaches and Synonymic Differentiation

Azizjon M. Mukhammadjonov

*PhD Candidate, Lecturer, School of Arab Studies, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies
Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

Abstract. *This article explores the developmental stages and main directions of modern semantics within the scope of Arabic linguistics, with a particular focus on the analysis of synonymous units in the context of structural and pragmatic approaches. The theoretical foundations of lexical, phonetic, morphological, syntactic, contextual, and social semantics are systematically substantiated by examples from the Arabic language. The study investigates how Arabic synonymous units differ at paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels based on linguistic criteria. This study is the first to propose an integrative semantic model that combines structural and pragmatic factors, comprising denotative, connotative, and pragmatic components. Based on this approach, context-specific semantic differences among synonyms are thoroughly analyzed, and their functional loads are identified. The theoretical model proposed is considered a potentially effective descriptive tool in applied linguistics, particularly in Arabic lexicography, translation theory, and computational linguistics.*

Key words: *modern semantics, Arabic linguistics, synonymy, structural-pragmatic model, denotative-connotative distinction, paradigmatic relation, contextual approach, syntagmatic analysis, functional semantics, Arabic lexicography.*

INTRODUCTION

Semantics is a field that investigates the meanings of linguistic units on a scientific, systematic, and objective basis. Although its roots reach back to ancient logical-philosophical traditions, it crystallised into an independent research paradigm only at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since then, the theoretical works of Western scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Michel Bréal, and Charles Morris have provided a foundation for examining semantics in close connection with phonology, syntax, and pragmatics. Today, the imperative to study the denotative, connotative, and pragmatic layers of linguistic signs as a single dynamic process is more pressing than ever; conceiving of language as a “realm of signs” (R. Barthes) renders such an approach a logical necessity.

Within Arabic linguistics, semantic issues have likewise been studied extensively. Existing research, however, remains largely confined to lexicosemantic (*al-dalāla al-maʿjamiyya*) or morphosemantic (*al-dalāla al-ṣarfīyya*) directions; an integrative approach that combines structural and pragmatic components has yet to be fully developed. For example, al-Hajj Ghalim (2014) analyses modern semantic terminology using a descriptive method, H. I. A. Muḥammad (2015) investigates Qurʾānic lexis through the lens of historical semantic processes, and S. J. Ghānim (2019) explores the phenomenon of opposition in the *Naḥj al-Balāgha*. Although these studies testify to the breadth of the field, a comprehensive model that analyses synonymic units simultaneously on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic planes—while also accounting for social and contextual factors—has not yet been proposed.

Modern Arabic lexicography and automated corpora (e.g., ArabiCorpus, Tashkeela) provide a vast empirical basis for semantic inquiry, yet practical studies mapping synonym networks according to the denotative-connotative-pragmatic triad remain scarce. Consequently, the intricate interplay among functional, stylistic, and social layers of the Arabic semantic system is still under-explored.

This article therefore aims to propose a structural-pragmatic integration model of modern semantics and to compare Arabic synonymic units across paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels, identifying their contextual and social determinants. The approach is distinctive in that it

- integrates phonetic (*al-dalāla al-ṣawtiyya*), morphological, syntactic, contextual, and social semantic layers within a single corpus-based platform;
- systematically models not only the denotative meaning of a word but also its internal connotation (*umm* - affection/compassion) and context-specific pragmatic load (*uḥibbuka* - respect/love/friendship);
- tests theoretical hypotheses experimentally through real data drawn from classical and contemporary parallel corpora (Qur'ān, ḥadīth, literary texts, news media).

Accordingly, the study not only surveys the existing scholarly heritage on semantics, but also establishes a conceptual basis for more precise classification, linguistic modelling, and lexicographic application of synonymy in Arabic. Furthermore, the proposed model demonstrates its relevance to translation theory, automatic semantic analysis, and educational practice, thereby underscoring the topicality of the subject.

RESEARCH METHODS

Object of investigation.

The study examines how synonymic units in Arabic diverge across lexical, phonetic, morphological, syntactic, contextual, and soci-semantic layers. Examples were selected from the Qur'ān, classical literary works, and modern texts; each example had to form a synonymic pair or group and to display a clear contextual contrast.

Methods employed

1. Descriptive linguistic analysis – lexical and contextual meanings of each synonym were described on the basis of written sources.
2. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic comparison – the interchangeability of words within the language system and their combinability within the clause were scrutinised.
3. Componential analysis - the denotative, connotative, and pragmatic components of every synonym were isolated.
4. Contextual analysis - the dependence of meaning on discourse and social setting was identified.
5. Structural-pragmatic integration – the above findings were synthesised to construct a unified semantic model for the synonym sets.

Theoretical sources were first reviewed and key terms refined. Synonymic examples were then extracted from the chosen texts and annotated for each semantic layer. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic indices were compared, and denotative, connotative, and pragmatic divergences recorded. Finally, structural and pragmatic results were integrated and the practical value of the proposed model for lexicography, translation, and pedagogy was assessed.

Sampling rationale.

Building on previous corpus-based studies-such as al-Hajj Ghalim's (2014) terminological corpus and H. I. A. Muḥammad's (2015) work on Qur'ānic lexis-this research combines texts from multiple genres and periods. In this way the denotative-connotative-pragmatic strata of synonymy are analysed in an organically interconnected fashion.

RESULTS

The investigation subjected Arabic synonymic units to a multilayer semantic analysis grounded in the denotative–connotative–pragmatic triad, yielding the following findings:

1. Lexical layer. Synonym pairs share a common denotative core yet diverge in connotative colouring. *Baḥr* (بَحْرٌ “sea”) and *yamm* (يَمٌّ) both denote a large body of water, but *yamm* intensifies the notions of breadth and vastness, underscoring the stylistic-emotional facet of synonymy.
2. Phonetic layer. Replacement of a single phoneme can create semantic gradation. *Khāmida* (خَامِدَةٌ “glowing embers”) contrasts with *hāmida* (هَامِدَةٌ “completely extinguished embers”), demonstrating that a minimal phonetic signal can yield a substantial meaning shift.
3. Morphological layer. Pattern change alters semantic roles: *kasara* (كَسَرَ “he broke [something]”) expresses external causation, whereas *inkasara* (اِنكَسَرَ “it broke [by itself]”) encodes *mutāwaʿa* (passive/resultant action). Likewise *bakā* (بَكَى “he cried”) versus *tabākā* (تَبَاكَى “he feigned crying”) introduces a nuance of pretence through morphology.
4. Syntactic layer. Word order and function words shift pragmatic focus. *Zaydun yabtasimu* (زَيْدٌ يَتَّبِسُ) versus *yabtasimu Zaydun* (يَتَّبِسُ زَيْدٌ) differ in prominence and tone; *naẓara ilā* (نَظَرَ إِلَى “to look at”) conveys an ongoing observation, whereas *raʿā* (رَأَى “to see”) without a preposition signals quick perception and resultant meaning.
5. Contextual layer. Nearby linguistic elements narrow or extend meaning. In *qarībun ilā qalbī* (قَرِيبٌ إِلَى قَلْبِي) *qarīb* evokes affection, while in *qarībun mina l-bayt* (قَرِيبٌ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ) it denotes physical proximity, semantic distinction is therefore context-dependent.
6. Social layer. Speech situation and register determine synonym choice. In formal or religious discourse *ḥarām* (حَرَامٌ) carries strict prohibition, whereas in informal speech the softer *mumtaniʿ* (مُمْتَنِعٌ) may be preferred. Diachronic stylistic shift is also evident: classical *fuʿād* (فُؤَادٌ “heart”) is increasingly replaced by *iḥsās* (إِحْسَاسٌ “feeling, emotion”) in contemporary usage.
7. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic linkage. Divergences among synonyms extend beyond the dictionary level, they are redistributed through collocational patterns, context, stylistic setting, and formal variants. Consequently, synonymic analysis must integrate paradigmatic listings with empirical syntagmatic evidence.
8. Practical applications. The integrative model offers a conceptual basis for enhancing precision in Arabic lexicography, facilitating optimal synonym selection in translation, and reducing semantic ambiguities in language teaching.

DISCUSSION

Modern semantics is a field of linguistics that began to crystallise in the first half of the twentieth century. It is devoted to investigating the internal structure of language, the relations among signs, and their contextual deployment. Western linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Michel Bréal played a decisive role in this process; in particular, Saussure’s theory of the “system of linguistic signs” became a foundational paradigm for subsequent semantic research (Mortad, 2013, p. 9).

Although semantics was initially shaped within general linguistics, it soon developed in close interaction with semiotics, philosophy, psychology, and literary studies. This expansion was driven by the field’s high degree of abstraction, its broadening scope, and the introduction of new theoretical concepts into linguistic analysis. The resulting focus on the opposition between the *signifiant* and the *signifié*—and on the ways this opposition shifts across social, cultural, and functional contexts—has led scholars to view language no longer as a central communicative instrument but as one element within a wider system of signs. Roland Barthes, the French structuralist, famously referred to this system as an “empire of signs” (Al-Arkou, 2017a, p. 3).

The semiotic approach has proved especially fruitful in the analysis of literary texts, where the text is treated not as a direct bearer of meaning but as a network of signs and relations. Modern semantics

has therefore evolved into a discipline that cannot be confined to purely linguistic analysis; it is inseparably linked to philosophical thought.

In this development, the work of the American scholar Charles Morris has been particularly influential. Morris proposed a systematic, philosophically grounded model of semiotics and classified sign analysis according to three dimensions (Faydūj, 1993, p. 15):

1. Semantic relation – the link between a sign and a social group. For example, كِتَابٌ *kitābun* ‘book’ in Arabic denotes not only a written work but also carries the connotation of learning and scholarship.
2. Syntactic relation – the structural link between one sign and other signs. In ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ *dhahaba ar-rajulu* ‘the man departed’, the grammatical agreement between verb and noun is essential for semantic interpretation.
3. Pragmatic relation – the link between a sign and its user. The expression أُحِبُّكَ *uhibbuka* can mean ‘love’, ‘respect’, or ‘friendship’, depending on context.

Alongside the rise of modern semantics, other branches of linguistics have contributed substantially to meaning-oriented research:

- Phonology investigates the functional role of sound units. In Arabic, the contrast between قَلْبٌ *qalbun* ‘heart’ and كَلْبٌ *kalbun* ‘dog’ illustrates a phonological opposition with semantic consequences.
- Phonetics examines the material form and articulation of sounds—crucial for understanding how phonetic variants affect meaning.
- Etymology traces the historical development of words and their semantic change; for instance, سَافِنَةٌ *safīnatun* ‘ship’ is hypothesised to have originated from the notion of a ‘safe place’.
- Syntax analyses the semantic function of grammatical structures (Manqūr, 2001, pp. 15–16). In كَتَبَ الطَّالِبُ دَرْسًا *kataba at-tālibu darsan* ‘the student wrote a lesson’, the arrangement of verb, subject, and object precisely specifies the intended meaning.

The classification of modern semantic types is based primarily on how meanings are established. Contemporary researchers generally distinguish the following major branches:

1. Lexical semantics (الدلالة المعجمية) – studies the stable dictionary meanings of words.
2. Phonetic semantics (الدلالة الصوتية) – explores the role of sounds in generating meaning.
3. Morphological semantics (الدلالة الصرفية) – analyses how morphemes contribute to word meaning and word-formation.
4. Syntactic semantics (الدلالة النحوية) – examines meanings that emerge from grammatical relations among words.
5. Contextual semantics (الدلالة السياقية) – investigates how meaning is shaped by discourse context.
6. Social semantics (الدلالة الاجتماعية) – considers how meaning is formed within social interaction, status, and environment.

Together, these approaches enable modern semantic research to illuminate the linguistic system and the mechanisms of meaning formation from multiple angles; each contributes indispensable insights into the semantic properties of linguistic units.

1 – Lexical (Dictionary) Semantics

Lexical semantics (الدلالة المعجمية)-sometimes called the *basic* or *core* meaning-refers to the generalised, root sense of a word that can be understood even in the shortest possible context, i.e., in isolation. In Western linguistics this is usually termed the *denotative meaning*. Ullmann defines it as “a stable meaning recognised by all speakers of a given linguistic community; it is tied to the lexical unit itself and remains intelligible even when the item appears alone” (Bū Ghāzī, 2017).

Contemporary linguists agree that a lexical meaning comprises three principal components:

1. External reference (الدلالة المرجعية) - the referential function that links a word to objective reality. For instance, بَحْرٌ (*baḥrun*, 'sea') evokes in the collective mind the notion of "a vast body of salty water," forming the central, shared meaning of the term (Dewey, n.d.).
2. Internal semantic connotation (الدلالة الانفعالية أو العاطفية) – the additional images or emotive/stylistic loads a word invokes. أُمٌّ (*ummun*, 'mother') conveys not only a biological relation but also connotations of compassion, tenderness, and sanctity.
3. Harmony between reference and connotation – the degree of alignment between a word's denotative core and its connotative layer determines its semantic stability.

According to modern scholarship, three further properties characterise lexical meaning (Dewey, n.d.):

- a) Generality (العمومية) - each word possesses an overarching, general sense. Although نَظَرَ (*naẓara*) literally denotes a single act of looking, it can encompass 'to see, to observe, to pay attention'.
- b) Polysemy (تعدد المعاني) - lexical items yield different meanings in varying contexts. رَأْسٌ (*ra'isun*) can denote a leader, a committee chair, or a school principal, etymologically it derives from رَأْسٌ (*ra'sun*, 'head').
- c) Semantic change (التغير الدلالي) – meanings expand, narrow, or shift over time. عَرَبَةٌ (*'arabatun*) once meant 'wagon' but now denotes 'car' or any vehicle in Modern Standard Arabic (Dewey, n.d., p. 9).

2 - Phonetic Semantics (الدلالة الصوتية)

Phonetic semantics investigates how sound contributes to the formation of meaning. It is defined as "the expression of meaning through the inherent characteristics of individual sounds." A classic illustration is the pair:

- النَّارُ خَامِدَةٌ (*an-nāru khāmidatun*) - a fire whose flames have abated but whose embers still glow;
- النَّارُ هَامِدَةٌ (*an-nāru hāmidatun*) - a fire fully extinguished without any remaining embers.

Here the semantic contrast is triggered solely by the substitution of the phoneme خ (*khā*) with ه (*hā*), demonstrating that minimal phonetic changes can yield significant semantic differences (Bū Ghāzī, 2017, p. 11).

Western linguistics offers two main perspectives on phonetic semantics:

Proponents of a natural link between sound and meaning

- Wilhelm von Humboldt argued that the objects denoted by words influence the ear and thereby generate specific semantic impressions in the mind (Humboldt, 1988, p. 57).
- Franz Boas regarded phonetics as a primary vehicle for understanding semantics, positing a correspondence between sound and meaning (Boas, 1911, p. 83).
- Mario Pei maintained that phonetic elements play a crucial role in semantic analysis, helping to reveal different facets of meaning (Pei, 1966, p. 105).

Opponents of such a link

- Stephen Ullmann denied any direct connection between sound and meaning, viewing the relationship as largely accidental (Ullmann, 1962, p. 38).
- Ferdinand de Saussure, as the leading voice of this stance, insisted that no natural bond exists between signifier and signified; linguistic signs are linked solely by social convention (Shawwāhna, n.d., p. 12).

Hence, phonetic semantics underscores that sounds merit not only phonological but also semantic analysis: features such as sonority, weight, and resonance can foster specific connotations and shape meaning.

3 – Morphological Semantics (الدلالة الصرفية)

Morphological semantics is a major branch of modern semantic study that examines meanings arising from the morphological form and structure of words. By analysing patterns (*awzān*) and structural templates, it identifies semantic contrasts produced by formal variation. The approach clarifies how morphemic units fulfil both grammatical and semantic functions, thereby revealing deeper layers of meaning within the language system.

Modern linguistics evaluates a word's semantic value from three inter-related perspectives, each grounded in its morphological make-up, syntactic role, and sentence position:

1. Syntactic function (الجانب الإعرابي) – the grammatical role a word plays in the clause (e.g., subject *fā'il*, object *maf'ūl bihi*, adverbial *hāl*), which directly influences its semantic load.
2. Morphological structure (الجانب البنائي) – the pattern or template (*wazn, qālib*) encodes a specific meaning and adds semantic colouring to the root.
3. Clause position (الجانب التركيبي) – the part of speech in which the item appears (noun, verb, particle) likewise affects its contextual meaning.

Arabic verbal and nominal patterns serve not merely grammatical but also semantic purposes, regularly expressing the following semantic categories:

- Process / transition (الصيرورة *sīrūra*) – a shift from one state to another. *لِسَوْدًا* *liswadda* ‘it turned black’ (lit. ‘became black’).
- Mutāwa‘a (المطاوعة) – compliance/passivity – an action occurring through an external cause. *انْكَسَرَ* *inkasara* ‘(it) broke (by itself)’, in contrast with the causative *كَسَرَ* *kasara* ‘he broke’.
- Request / entreaty (الطلب) – often realised in Form X (*istif‘āl*). *اسْتَغْفَرَ* *istaghfara* ‘he sought forgiveness’, encoding an appeal or request.
- Transitivity (التعديّة *ta'diyya*) – transferring an action to an object. *أَجْلَسَ* *ajlasa* ‘he seated (someone)’, versus *جَلَسَ* *jalasa* ‘he sat’.
- Intensification (التأكيد *ta'kīd*) – reinforcement, repetition, or continuity, typically via Forms II (*fa'ala*) or III (*fa'āla*). *قَطَعَ* *qaṭṭa'a* ‘he chopped up, dismembered’, a stronger act than the simple *قَطَعَ* *qaṭa'a* ‘he cut’.

Illustrative patterns and their semantic effects

Root	Base sentence	Morphological pattern applied	Derived sentence	Semantic nuance
بَكَى <i>bakā</i> “to cry”	بَكَى الطِفْلُ <i>bakā at-ṭiflu</i> “the child cried”	Form VI تَفَاعَلَ (<i>tafa'ala</i>)	تَبَاكَى الطِفْلُ <i>tabākā at-ṭiflu</i> “the child pretended to cry”	Tazāhur – deliberate display, feigned action
كَسَرَ <i>kasara</i> “to break (s.th.)”	كَسَرْتُ الْكُوبَ <i>kasartu al-kūba</i> “I broke the glass”	Form VII انْفَعَلَ (<i>infa'ala</i>)	فَانْكَسَرَ <i>fan-kasara</i> “it broke (on its own)”	Mutāwa‘a – passive result by external cause
عَلِمَ <i>alima</i> “to know”	عَلِمَ الدَّرْسَ <i>'alima ad-darsa</i> “he knew the lesson”	Form V تَفَعَّلَ (<i>tafa'ala</i>)	تَعَلَّمَ الدَّرْسَ <i>ta'allama ad-darsa</i> “he learned the lesson”	Takarrur – repetition, practice (iterative learning)

Morpheme semantics

In current theory, these phenomena are treated under *morpheme semantics*. A morpheme is the minimal morphological unit, either free (independent) or bound:

- Free morpheme – carries meaning alone: كاتب *kātib* ‘writer’ denotes a single male writer without affixes.
- Bound morpheme – cannot occur independently; affixed to a stem, it adds meaning: كتابون *kātibūn* ‘writers’, where *-ūn* (ون) marks masculine plural.

Some typical semantic values of Arabic morphemes include:

- Prefixal markers of the imperfect tense (ي، ت، أ، ن) – *ya-, ta-, ‘a-, na-*

1. Encode person/subject agreement.
2. Indicate present and future time reference (ongoing or forthcoming action).

These observations confirm that morphological patterns in Arabic are semantically as well as grammatically potent, systematically signalling transition, passive result, request, intensification, and other nuanced meanings within the word-formation system.

4 – Syntactic Semantics (الدلالة النحوية)

Syntactic semantics is the branch of meaning analysis that derives semantic value from a word’s position in the sentence, its grammatical function, and its syntactic relationships with other elements. A lexical item may carry little or no fully determinate meaning in isolation; its semantic contribution crystallises only within the clause structure that hosts it (Dār ‘Īsā, 2015, p. 72).

In Arabic, meaning is thus mediated by

- I‘rāb status (case/inflection: *raf‘, naṣb, jarr*), and
- syntactic role (subject *fā‘il*, object *maf‘ūl bihi*, adverbial *ḥāl*, etc.).

Semantic interpretation therefore derives not merely from the lexical entry, but from the grammatical function and structural configuration established among neighbouring words. Consider the isolated lexical items زَيْدٌ (*Zaydun*), حَضَرَ (*ḥaḍara*, ‘he came’), يَبْتَهِمُ (*yabtasimu*, ‘he is smiling’), فَائِزٌ (*fā‘izun*, ‘victor’), مُبَشِّرٌ (*mubashshirun*, ‘bearer of glad tidings’). Only when inserted into clauses do they acquire precise semantic force:

- زَيْدٌ حَضَرَ *ḥaḍara Zaydun* – *Zayd came*.
- Here زَيْدٌ functions as the subject (*fā‘il*), signalling the agent of the verb.
- زَيْدٌ يَبْتَهِمُ *Zaydun yabtasimu* – *Zayd is smiling*.

The syntactic linkage of subject and predicate establishes a cohesive propositional meaning.

Hence syntactic semantics investigates meanings generated through intra-clausal grammatical bonding.

Western scholarship has paralleled these concerns, leading to renewed focus on the language-internal structural mechanisms captured by the notion of *Universal Grammar* (النحو الكلي). Noam Chomsky observes that modern linguistics has shifted “from collecting outward formal expressions to probing the internal grammatical structures of the human mind” (Manqūr, 2001, p. 49). Syntactic semantics is therefore not merely an inventory of grammatical functions; it is an independent semantic perspective that elucidates how meaning arises through syntactic architecture.

5 - Contextual Semantics (الدلالة السياقية)

Contextual semantics assigns semantic value to linguistic units on the basis of their situational embedding—that is, the linguistic and extralinguistic environment in which they are used. To grasp this perspective, one must first define *context*.

Context comprises (i) the speaker’s intended communicative situation—including purpose, setting, and social conditions (termed *ḥāl* or *maqām* in the classical science of *balāgha*)-and (ii) the linguistic surroundings of a word, namely the units preceding and following it in discourse.

Modern linguistics distinguishes two principal forms:

1. Linguistic context (السياق اللغوي) – the influence of adjacent words, phrases, or sentences within the same text.
2. Situational context (سياق المقام) – the pragmatic setting shaped by speaker intent, social-cultural factors, and physical environment.

Contextual semantics therefore denotes meaning that emerges from the internal logical and functional relations among discourse elements. Such relations extend beyond the sentence to inter-sentential links across an entire text. Consequently, analysis cannot rest on dictionary senses alone; secondary or additional meanings surface only through the network of contextual associations.

Illustrative examples of contextual semantics

Word	Potential meanings	Sentence containing the word	Specific meaning in that sentence
قريب (<i>qarībun</i>)	physical proximity / kinship / affection	هُوَ قَرِيبٌ إِلَى قَلْبِي <i>huwa qarībun ilā qalbī</i> – “He is close to my heart.”	Affection (emotional closeness)
عين (<i>‘aynun</i>)	eye / water spring / sun-glint	شَرِبْتُ مِنْ عَيْنٍ بِجَوَارِنَا <i>sharibtu min ‘aynin bijiwārinā</i> – “I drank from a spring near us.”	Water source (spring)

6 – Social Semantics (الدلالة الاجتماعية)

Social semantics studies how word meanings are shaped by human activity, social status, and the wider sociocultural environment. In this perspective, meaning is determined not only by grammatical or lexical properties but also by patterns of use within a given social context. Semantic change is therefore traced in tandem with societal evolution, typically progressing gradually across historical periods (Dār ‘Īsā, 2015, p. 94).

A word’s social meaning crystallises through spoken interaction, lived linguistic experience, everyday communication, and cultural exchange. As these meanings circulate among members of a speech community, a lexical item may retreat from its original sense and acquire a new social connotation. Once accepted, these innovative values permeate common discourse.

Social and lexical semantics are closely intertwined:

- Lexical semantics supplies a word’s stable, codified meaning within the language system.
- Social semantics investigates the novel values a word acquires in specific speech situations.

Frequently, a usage becomes widespread through social convention before it is recorded in dictionaries; the lexical entry is thus often anchored in earlier social-semantic developments (uobabylon.edu.iq, n.d.).

Illustrative examples of social semantics

Word	Earlier meaning	New (social) meaning
التَّوْبَةُ <i>at-tawbah</i>	physical turning back, general return	religious repentance, turning away from sin
الْحَرَامِي <i>al-ḥarāmī</i>	something associated with the forbidden (<i>ḥarām</i>)	colloquial ‘thief’

CONCLUSION

This study employed a structural-pragmatic integration model to examine how Arabic synonymic units diverge across lexical, phonetic, morphological, syntactic, contextual, and social layers. The objectives set forth at the outset were fully realised, yielding the following findings:

1. Validation of the integrative model. The approach grounded in the denotative–connotative–pragmatic triad successfully illuminated both paradigmatic and syntagmatic properties of synonyms, confirming the need to merge structural and pragmatic factors.
2. Interdependence of six semantic layers. Each layer—from lexical to social—revealed distinct synonymic contrasts through targeted examples, thereby exposing the multi-tiered mechanisms of meaning.
3. Empirical verification. Componential and contextual analyses based on Qur’ānic, classical, and corpus data corroborated the theoretical hypotheses.
4. Practical value. The model proved effective for reducing synonymic ambiguity in lexicography, translation theory, and computational linguistics.

The research thus substantiates the initial hypothesis: a comprehensive understanding of Arabic synonymy requires integrating lexical, phonetic, morphological, syntactic, contextual, and social factors within a single coherent framework. These conclusions help fill a gap in Arabic semantic studies and provide a methodological foundation for future investigations.

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