

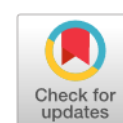
Critical Study of Ambiguity and Distortion of Meaning (Study of Surah al-Baqarah)

¹Alya Putri Septianti, ²Ita Nurmala, ³Muhammad Ariiq Kurniawan, ⁴Wati Susiawati

¹alyaseptianti@gmail.com, ²nurmalaita9@gmail.com, ³Ariq1892@gmail.com,

⁴Wati.susiawati@uinjkt.aca.id

¹²³⁴Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Indonesia



ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history

Received:

Revised:

Accepted:

Keywords

Critical study,

Ambiguity,

Distortion of meaning.

*Corresponding Author

This article discusses the ambiguity and distortion of meaning contained in Surah al-Baqarah. In semantic studies, ambiguity or vagueness of meaning can be caused by several things, including the general nature of words or sentences, which are never one hundred percent homogeneous. Meanwhile, distortion occurs due to a lack of knowledge or the actions of any individuals who want to understand the verse according to their wishes and want to stimulate other people to deviate from understanding the meaning of the verse of the Qur'an. It is hoped that this article will minimize errors in understanding the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. This prompted the author to research the ambiguity and distortion of the meaning of the verses of Surah al-Baqarah. Using qualitative descriptive methods, researchers systematically describe the ambiguity and distortion of the meaning of verses. In the article, it was found that three verses of Surah al-Baqarah contained ambiguity in meaning, namely 220, 223, and 228, and five verses of Surah al-Baqarah contained distortions of meaning, namely 190-193, 255.

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](#) license.



1. Introduction

The Qur'an contains facts that the Qur'an conveys to us with certainty and no doubt because it was accepted mutawatir. It is good to see the clarity of the meaning and essence. Thus, the context of the interpretation of the Qur'an is included in the category of *zhanny* al-Qur'an because of the relationship between humans and social roles. So, there is often ambiguity and distortion of the meaning of verses due to various interpretations and a lack of knowledge of these interpretations. Distortion of meaning in the Qur'an can occur due to a lack of knowledge or the

actions of individuals who want to understand the verse according to their wishes and want to stimulate other people to deviate from understanding the meaning of the Qur'an.

For example, the *IQNA* (Egypt) news page reported in January 2019 that there was a distortion of the verse about the hijab in the film "The Guest," which was immediately criticized by Khalid Al-Jundi, a prominent Egyptian figure. This distortion of meaning is likely to occur in the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an (Al-Arabi, 2019). Distortion of the meaning of the term *jihad* in the Qur'an is also widespread, with some individuals even deliberately provoking and indoctrinating radical Islamic ideas. For example, in September 2005, a series of cartoons appeared in Danish newspapers depicting the Prophet Muhammad wearing a turban shaped like a bomb with a burning fuse inscribed with the shade. This was immediately protested by Islamic countries, which were prosecuted for religious blasphemy (Hassner, 2011).

Scholars differ on many issues relating to the Arabic language's use, meaning, and uses. This difference significantly influences the results of the provisions of Sharia laws and the differences between jurisprudence experts. The differences between Islamic jurists and *fiqh* experts can be explained in two main ways: differences regarding the authenticity and level of the text, differences in the interpretation of the text, and differences in understanding its wisdom. Both of these are related to linguistic problems, especially ambiguity.

The study of ambiguity and distortion of meaning can be described in three articles. The first article, "Analysis of the Ambiguity of Meaning Contained in the Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah," was written by Salman Jufri, Elisa Devi Sari, and Rizky Fadliyah Nurkhasanah. Based on the analysis and discussion of ambiguous sentences in Surah al-Baqarah, they connect with translation. In semantic studies, ambiguity or vagueness of meaning can be caused by several things, including the general nature of words or sentences, words or sentences never being homogeneous, etc. (Jufri et al., 2023).

The second article is "The Influence of Arabic on the Determination of Islamic Law (Analysis of Musytarak/Ambiguous Vocabulary in the Qur'an)" by H. Kamaluddin Abunawas. Based on the analysis and discussion, Arabic, as the language used by the al-Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet SAW, has a broad pronunciation, meaning, and very diverse expression patterns, making it possible for Islamic legal experts to understand different texts of both. If a religious text contains an ambiguous word, it will predominantly cause differences among Islamic legal experts in determining the meaning intended by that word. Among the examples are differences in the meaning of the *quru'*, which influences the *ijtihad* of the ulama (Abunawas, 2012).

The third article is entitled "Deconstruction of the Radical Paradigm in the Qur'an," written by Lub Liyna Nabilata. Based on the analysis of the discussion, the emergence of radicalism is caused by errors in understanding the verses on war and *jihad*. First, the war verses are

interpreted as justification that acts of violence and terrorism are justified in the Islamic religion. Second, the verses of *jihad* are interpreted as resistance against all enemies of Islam, namely *Jihad*. Radicalism, which leads to acts of violence, is contrary to religious values. This is the same as distorting the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, namely twisting facts and rules (Nabilata, 2019).

The author was inspired to review these three studies related to similar discussions, titled "Critical Study Ambiguity and Distortion of Meaning (Study of Surah al-Baqarah)". This research aims to find several verses in Surah al-Baqarah that have ambiguity or distortion of the meaning of the verse. With this article, it is hoped that readers can avoid mistakes in understanding the meaning of Qur'an verses.

This article was written based on the argument that ambiguity and distortion of meaning influence the interpretation of verses so that the authenticity of the Qur'an as the word of Allah is questioned, which results in doubts about the truth of the Qur'an. This is the same as the *Mu'tazilah* opinion, which states that the Qur'an is a creature. That is where there must be an explanation, and we must refer back to our book of interpretation and scholars who are authoritative in their field. We must not just follow the opinions of orientalist whose thoughts are not justified.

2. Method

A qualitative descriptive method was used to determine this research method because this research aims to systematically describe the ambiguities and distortions of the meaning of verses. Based on the problem formulation and research objectives that the researcher has determined, the data in this study are the ambiguities and distortions contained in the verses of the Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah, which found three ambiguous verses (220,223, 228) and five distorted verses (190-193, 255). The primary data in the research is the interpretation of Qur'an surah al-Baqarah, which has ambiguity and distortions in the meaning of the verse.

There are two types of data sources used in this research, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are here: researchers use the holy book Al-Qur'an, the Ma'ani dictionary, and the Tafsir books. The secondary sources are books or other scientific works that support and are related to the research object.

The data collection technique used in research uses the framework of filtering and collecting data using a literature study, namely by collecting all the appropriate information in various literature. The steps are as follows: (1) Collecting data sources (2) Marking verses that contain ambiguity and distortion of verses (3) Looking for appropriate theories that suit the problem to be discussed (4) Identifying verses that contain ambiguity and distortion of Surah al-Baqarah (5)

Record and classify the original meaning of the verse of Surah al-Baqarah (6) Analyze any data that corresponds to the ambiguity and distortion of the verse of Surah al-Baqarah.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Ambiguity and its Relation to the Qur'an

According to Suwarna, ambiguity is a word with a double meaning that can indicate a different intention behind its statement (Suwarna, [2022](#)). Abdul Chaer defines ambiguity as a symptom of double meaning due to different grammatical interpretations. Meanwhile, Kridalaksana defines it as a construction characteristic that can be interpreted differently. For example, if we hear the statement, "Fitri's mother's father has died", various interpretations of the meaning arise, whether what is meant is that Fitri's mother's father has died or Fitri's father and mother have died. Everything is still in question (Jufri et al., [2023](#)).

Ambiguity in communication can occur using both spoken and written language. Ambiguity is the double meaning of a sentence spoken by the speaker so that it is doubtful or not understood by the listener. Ambiguity arises when we, as listeners or readers, have difficulty grasping the meaning of what we read or hear. Ambiguity can arise in various variations of writing or speech. Kempson mentions three primary forms of ambiguity: phonetics, grammatical, and lexical (Trismanto, [2018](#)).

a. Phonetic Ambiguity

Ambiguity at the phonetic level rises due to the mixing of the sounds of the language being pronounced. If the words that form a sentence are pronounced too quickly, their meaning can be doubted. For example: "Man, tuku wedhus!", becomes "mantuku wedhus" (Adriana, [2019](#)).

Phonetic ambiguity occurs when the speaker pronounces his speech. Therefore, the listener can ask the speaker to repeat what he said to avoid ambiguity.

b. Grammatical Ambiguity

Grammatical ambiguity is related to the relationship between closely intertwined words, so the way of expressing it is no longer related to the field of morphology or words but is related to two or three words (Adriana, [2014](#)).

Grammatical ambiguity arises at the morphological and syntactic levels. At this level, ambiguity can be seen in two alternatives. The first alternative is ambiguity caused by grammatical word formation events at the morphological level (profess morphemics), which results in changes in meaning. The second alternative is ambiguity in similar phrases. Each word that forms a phrase is clear, but the combination means that its meaning can be interpreted in more than one sense.

c. Lexical Ambiguity

Concerning language, ambiguity occurs because the way of understanding the words lexically is not initially considered a problem. What is meant by the lexical aspect is that a word in its meaning already has a primary meaning, which is implicit or explicit. So, the word has an interpretation that no longer has the same meaning. As a result, we can interpret what is taxing or ambiguous because the meaning contained is unclear.

At the lexical level, ambiguity can be seen from two sides. *The first* aspect is the symptoms of polysemy. Examples of the word *haram* in Indonesia include forbidden food holy. *The second* aspect is homonyms, namely words that sound the same. For example, in Indonesia, *bisa* means can or poison. *Pukul* means clock or tap. This second aspect does not create ambiguity when used in context.

The shift in meaning from the lexical translation is carried out to avoid ambiguity in the meaning of the translated text. The word *a'yun* is in the plural form of the word *ainun*. Based on the word formation process in Arabic, the word *'ainun* is the masdar noun of the word *'âna*, which lexically means flowing or flowing. The word *'ainun* lexically means eye, but in the translation text, the word *'ainun* is not translated using the lexical translation; instead, it is translated with the activity carried out by the word or its synonym (Ahya, 2017).

Translation using a literal or lexical approach can cause ambiguity in meaning, for example in Surah al-Fatihah verse 7:

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

"(namely) the path of those to whom you have given favor, not (the path of) those who are angry, nor (the path of those) who are misguided." (QS. al-Fatihah: 7)

If translated lexically: "the path of those you have blessed, not those you resent, nor those who have gone astray." So, the translation will contain ambiguity in meaning,(2015، منير).

Ambiguity is also a characteristic and unique characteristic of the Arabic language in the Qur'an. The scholars agree regarding the advantages and uniqueness of the Arabic language of the Qur'an, which other languages do not have. Arabic is the broadest and richest language in terms of the language, the description, and the content. It was even discovered and researched by world language experts that Arabic has 25 million vocabulary words and many ambiguous words (Adriana, 2014b).

The ambiguity of meaning in the Qur'an occurs because of things that are *musytarak* (dual meanings), such as the words Qur'an (which can be interpreted as holy and can also be

interpreted as menstruation). Likewise, words that can be interpreted as essential and majazi, such as "*lamasa*", can mean touching and *jimak*. Meanwhile, external factors are causes that come from outside the Qur'an, such as the interpreter's subjective condition, which is supported by socio-cultural and political factors (Mawardi, [2018](#)).

Gharabah (strangeness) in the structure of sentences in the Qur'an does not indicate ambiguity. However, this is proof of the miracle of the Qur'an. In the book "Introduction to Qur'anic Science Studies", it is stated that there are three kinds of aspects of the miracle of the Qur'an, namely: linguistic aspects, scientific aspects, and *tasyri'* (legal) aspects (Al-Qaththan, [2006](#)).

3.2. Definition of Distortion

In general, distortion can be interpreted as a deviation in meaning. For example, something that is distorted will experience a change from its original form, such as an object, image, thought, or idea. Distortion can occur in various fields, such as economic distortion, cognitive distortion, communication, or message distortion. Likewise, there will be communication when conveying information. Communication is an interactive process for connecting from one party to another, which initially takes place very simply, starting with several abstract ideas or thoughts conveyed using language in the form of visual code, sound code, or written code.

A message contained in the Qur'an that is conveyed by a *mufassir* (expert of interpretation) in written form can also distort the message or meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. This means changing the meaning or meaning of information or message, which intentionally or unintentionally changes the content of the information (Batubara, [2015](#)).

Distortion of the meaning of Qur'an verses is closely related to studying the interpretation of Qur'an verses. This distorted interpretation of the Qur'an is nothing new. Since the early days of Islam, when Muslims began to divide into groups, which gave rise to many *bid'iyah* groups, such as *mu'tazilah*, *qadariyah*, *jabariyah*, *syi'ah*, *khawarij*, *murji'ah*, and so on, interpretations of the Qur'an emerged by adapting to their views and desires.

For example, by arguing that they were purifying the Aqidah of monotheism towards Allah, the *Mu'tazilah* rejected the existence of Allah's attributes. They also interpreted *mutasyabihat* verses, such as *istawa' ala arsy*. They claim that Allah has supreme power. Meanwhile, the *Ahlussunnah* or *Ashabul Hadith* (the understanding of the guidance of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions), *Salafush Salih* (the righteous ones, is the name of the Islamic generation that existed from the beginning of Islam until the fourth or fifth-century Hijriyah the companion, *tabi'in*, and *tabi'at tabi'in* and two or three generations after them) groups, and this is also what Muhammadiyah holds, do *tafwidh* to Allah—namely surrendering the essence of meaning and understanding to Allah following His majesty and power (Muhammadiyah, [2009](#)).

This understanding refers to Imam Malik's statement about the meaning of *istawa 'ala arsy*. He emphasized that *al-istiwa' ma'lum, yakni ma'lum al-ma'na, wal kaifa majhul* (how the form and method of Istiwa cannot be known), *was su'aalu anha bid'ah* (as for asking about it is bid'ah, meaning forbidden (Abdullah, [1998](#))).

3.3. The Danger of Distortion: the Meaning of the Qur'an

The danger of distortion of the meaning of the Qur'an in terms of the science of tafsir is *tafsir bi al-ra'yi, al-madzmum*, or can also be called *tafsir bil hawa*, in the form of superficiality and the deflection of acid, changes in the laws of worship, muamalah or *ahwal syahsiyyah*, or in the form of Sufi practices filled with heresy. However, it can be said that they still recognize the authenticity of the Qur'an as God's revelation. We can see this in the interpretations of the *Syi'ah, Mu'tazilah, Ahmadiyah*, etc. These groups are *bid'iyyah* groups, which the majority of Muslims believe to be heresy. However, they still recognize the authenticity of the Qur'an as the word of Allah revealed to Muhammad SAW, only that their interpretation is *mulhid* and *mulgha*.

Meanwhile, supporters of al-Qur'an hermeneutics from liberal circles not only carry out *ilhad* in understanding and studying the Qur'an, they no longer believe in the authenticity of the Qur'an as the word of Allah. They accused the Qur'an of being the work of Muhammad SAW. They view the manuscript of the Quran as having many problems, so the Quran needs to be re-edited following developments in thought. Because the Qur'an is seen as a cultural product, with hermeneutics, everyone is free to understand the Qur'an according to their thoughts.

A *mufassir* is very strongly related to writing and reading, so it is necessary to take the methodological and hermeneutical approaches used by mufassir in their interpretations. When comparing *mufassir*, the focus needs to be on how a mufassir articulates and contextualizes the text of the Qur'an, efforts to understand how a mufassir reads and writes, and appreciation of hermeneutical methodology. This is especially important in discussions regarding the syntax of the Qur'an and the meaning of its words (Burge, [2015](#)).

Hermeneutics, a source of liberalization of the interpretation of the Qur'an, is more dangerous than the *ta'wil al-ba'id* or *tafsirul hawa* above. If the Ahmadiyah understanding of the meaning of the prophet's *khataman* has been deemed heretical, even the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Decision Association declared it to be an infidel, then, in fact, the hermeneutics of the Qur'an, which has resulted in the total liberalization of the interpretation of the Qur'an is more than that because this method gives rise to disbelief in the truth of the Qur'an. They are leaving the pillars of faith, and the framework of Islam. In fact, not only disbelievers but also confer because they are against and hostile to the Qur'an.

There are several solutions to the problem of distorting the meaning of Qur'an verses related to the study of interpretation:

1. Mufasssir must have the correct aqidah
2. Clean from the desires and fanaticism of groups or factions.
3. Interpret first the al-Qur'an with the al-Qur'an.
4. Look for interpretations of the *sunnah*.
5. Review companion opinions (if no interpretation is found in the *sunnah*).
6. Checking the opinion of the *tabi'in* (generation after the companions).
7. Knowledge of Arabic in all its branches.
8. Knowledge of the main sciences related to the Qur'an, *Ushul Fiqh*, and other Islamic sciences.
9. Mawhibah science is the knowledge that is freely given by Allah to his chosen servants without having to be sought (Nirwana, [2018](#)).

3.4. Examples of Ambiguity in Surah al-Baqarah

| | <i>Surah of Qur'an</i> | <i>Explanation</i> |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>QS. al-Baqarah verse 220</p> | <p>فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ ۗ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ ۗ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ</p> | <p>The ambiguous word تُخَالِطُو is fi'il mudhari' in the plural form mudzakkar, تخالط-تخالط-تخالطو in the <i>Ma'ani</i> dictionary means mixed up. This word is ambiguous because it has the meaning of mixing, moving, disturbing and there are three different interpretations namely the <i>Al-Misbah</i> interpretation, which means a concern, the <i>Al-Azhar</i> interpretation, which means mingling, and the Ministry of Religious Affair interpretation, which means sexual intercourse According to <i>Asbabun nuzul</i> or the causes behind the revelation the verses of Qur'an, this verse originates from the revelations of</p> |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| | | <p>Surah al-An'am : 152 and Surah an-Nisa': 10 concerning caring for the assets of orphans, which is understood as not touching their food and drink even if there are leftovers. It burdened them, and they told the Prophet. Then it was revealed a better way to mix their food and their drink of the orphans.</p> |
| <p>QS. al-Baqarah verse 223</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأَتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ وَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلْقَوُهُ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ</p> | <p>The ambiguous word حَرْثٌ The explanation in the Arabic language dictionary is garden work so that the plants have benefits. This word is ambiguous because it means planting, fields, profits from the fields, and harvest. There are three interpretations, namely the <i>Al-Misbah</i> interpretation, which means fields. The <i>Al-Azhar</i> interpretation which means rice fields. The Ministry of Religious Affairs interpretation means gardens. According to <i>Asbabun nuzul</i>, or the causes behind the revelation, the verses of Qur'an. This verse relates to the opinion of people at that time that having sex with their wife from behind was wrong. So this verse came down, which condemns these attitudes and assumptions. In this verse, Ibn Abbas says, '<i>al-harts</i>' means the place of conceiving</p> |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| | | <p>children. His Word (فَأْتُوا حُرَّتَكُمْ أَنْى شِئْتُمْ) means you can interfere with it as you wish, from the front or from behind, but stick to one way (namely through the genitals).</p> |
| <p>QS. al-Baqarah verse 228</p> | <p>وَأَمْطَلَّتْ يُرَبِّصَنَّ بِأَنْفُسِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ....</p> | <p>The ambiguous word قُرُوءٍ as explained in the <i>Lisanul Arab</i> dictionary, has the meaning of reproduction. The word is ambiguous because it means menstruation and holy, and there are three different interpretations, namely the <i>Al-Misbah</i> interpretation, which means holy (Kamaluddin, Page. 130). <i>Tafsir Al-Azhar</i> which means holy, and <i>Tafsir</i> from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which means menstruation (Salman,dkk,2023, Page.65). According to <i>Asbabun nuzul</i> or the causes behind the revelation of the verses of Qur'an, Asma' bint Yazid bin as-Sakan al-Anshaariyyah said that her husband divorced her during the time of Rasulullah saw. At that time, divorced women did not have any idea.</p> |

3.5. Example of Distortion in Surah al-Baqarah

In the Qur'an, there are verses about war, and it also contains the command to 'kill'. However, what we have to know is the context of the order. For example, the verse of the Qur'an contains

the command of *dzohiriyah* (text) to kill polytheists and infidels. One of them is QS. al-Baqarah verses 190-193. Allah SWT says:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (١٩٠) وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ (١٩١) فَإِنْ آتَيْتُمْوُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (192) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ آتَيْتُمْوُ فَلَا عُدُونَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ (193)

Meaning: "And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, (but) do not exceed the limits, because indeed Allah does not like those who exceed the limits. And kill them wherever you find them, and expel them from the place where they have expelled you (Mecca); and slander is more dangerous than murder, and do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque, unless they fight you there. If they fight you (in that place), then kill them. Such is the reward for the disbelievers. But if they stop, then indeed Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful. And fight them until there is no more slander, and religion belongs to Allah alone. If they stop, then there will be (no more) hostility except against the wrongdoers." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 190-193)

If we only look at it from the text, terrorists in the name of Islamic jihad are indeed mobilizing their actions to destroy non-Muslims around us. It absolutely must be killed, and this interpretation is the emergence of an understanding of radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia (Hutchins, 2017). Meanwhile, radicalism and terrorism are violent Islamic ideas that began to emerge in Indonesia after the New Order (Nabilata, 2019). It has been explained in the interpretation of surah al-Baqarah verses 190-193, according to Imam As-Suyuthi in *Tafsirul Jalalain*, that the meaning, in brief, is the order to fight the infidels who are fighting Muslims (*kafir harbi*). It is not a form of revenge but to uphold the religion of Allah. It also proves that Muslims do not cross the line by starting war first because that is not permitted by Allah (Muhammad al Misri al Maliki, 1995).

If you look at the *asbabun nuzul* surah al-Baqarah verses 190-193. Abu Hayyan, in his interpretation, narrated *asbabun nuzul* from al-Baqarah verses 190-193; here is the history.

قال ابن عباس: نزلت لما صد المشركون رسول الله صم عام الحديبية، وصلحوه على أن يرجع من قابل فيحلوا له مكة ثلاثة أيام، فيرجع لعمره القضاء، وخاف المسلمون أن لا تفي لهم قريش ويصدوهم ويقاتلوهم في الحرم وفي الشهر الحرام، وكرهوا ذلك.

Meaning: "Ibn Abbas said: This verse was revealed regarding the polytheists preventing the Messenger of Allah (saw) (going to Baitullah to perform Umrah) in the year the Hudaibiyah

agreement was implemented. The polytheists asked the Prophet peace be upon him to return next year, so that they would allow the Prophet saw to visit Baitullah for 3 days. Then the Prophet Muhammad SAW returned (the following year) to perform the Umrah Qadha, but the Muslims were worried that the Quraisy would not keep their promise and would obstruct them again, and fight them on the Haram land and in the Haram month as well. Muslims didn't like it, then this verse came down" (Hayyan, [1432](#)).

It was narrated from Abu Bakr Ash-Siddiq that the first verse was revealed:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ (سورة الحج: 39)

Meaning: *it has been permitted (to fight) for those who are being fought because in fact they have been wronged. And indeed, Allah Almighty helps them.*

Muslims in this verse are ordered not to enter war unless the enemies take the initiative first by using weapons. Therefore, Rasulullah SAW fought those who fought him (Imani, [2003](#)). If *jihad* is defined as loss of life or terrorism, then Allah swt reminds them that what is within them, such as disbelief in Allah, polytheism, and turning away from His path, is greater, bigger, and more heinous than murder..

Slander directed at believers in religion with various forms of harassment and torture to make them apostate is an old method used by disbelievers against believers (Rahmadhani, [2024](#)). Slander is a greater sin than murder because murder is a criminal act against the human body and life. At the same time, slander is a criminal act against human conscience, spirit, and thinking. This crime is more severe than the previous one (Qardhawi, [2009](#)).

In a fatwa, the Standing Committee for Scientific Research and the *Fatwa* of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia rejected the translation of the Qur'an with a literal translation because it would affect the reader's understanding and allow for distortion of meaning. Based on this fatwa, Muhammad Talib emphasized the invalidity and prohibition of literal and lexical translation (*Challenging the State: Exegetical Translation in Opposition to the Official Religious Discourse of the Indonesian State*, [2015](#)).

Next, there will be deviations in the meaning of words in the Qur'an if you understand them only lexically—for example, the meaning of the word *chair* in QS. al-Baqarah:255.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ أَحْيَى الْقِيُومُ هَ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ (255)

Meaning: *"Allah, there is no God (who has the right to be worshipped), but He who lives eternally and continuously takes care of (His creatures); not sleepy and not sleeping. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. No one can intercede with Allah without His permission. Allah knows what is before and behind them, and they know nothing from Allah's knowledge except what He wills.*

Allah's seat covers the heavens and the earth. And Allah does not find it difficult to look after both of them, and Allah is Most High, Most Great."

The chair verse comes down through a series of stories when the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, received *zakat* in the form of many dates. The dates were placed in the mosque's foyer because there was not enough space at his house to store them, so Abu Hurairah was sent to look after them. A little boy (demon) came and took the dates that night. When asked, with a sad face, he admitted that he was the child of a poor person, and then Abu Hurairah let him go out of pity. On the third night, Abu Hurairah prepared a pole to tie him up because of the Prophet's warning when Abu Hurairah let go of the child on the first night. When he was about to be tied up and handed over to the Prophet, the child was told the prayer for safety (*ayat kursiyyu*) and its benefits so that he would be released (Einboden, 2009). However, he did not mention the sound and told the Prophet to ask about it. When Abu Hurairah asked, that is when the angel Gabriel delivered a revelation in the form of a verse of chairs (Awaluddin, 2020).

Suppose you understand the word chair only from a lexical and text perspective. In that case, there will be a deviation from one's monotheism because thinking about and considering God is the same as thinking about and considering creatures/material things. Therefore, studying it from trusted tafsir books is necessary to avoid this.

The generally understood linguistic meaning of the word chair is something that is leaning on and sat on. This word is translated into Indonesian according to this meaning. The word *Kursiy* in this meaning is found in QS. Shad verse 34:

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَانَ وَأَلْقَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ أَنَابَ

Meaning: "And indeed We tested Solomon and We made (him) lie on his chair as a body (weak because of illness), then he repented."

Paying attention to the context, the word *Kursi* can also mean *majazi*. The purpose of transferring the meaning of *al-kursiy* from its literal meaning to another is to not give the impression that Allah is material (Shihab, 2007).

There are several opinions about chairs. According to Thabrani and Al-Hakim, some argue that this chair means knowledge, but this opinion is weak. Some think the chair is where God's feet rest (Pink, 2015). The following is as narrated by Al-Hakim in the book *Al-Mustadrok* from Ibn Abbas *radhiyallahu 'anhu* that he said, "Al-Kursi is the place of the two feet, while Al-Arsy no one can attribute it." It shows the perfection of the majesty of Allah SWT and the breadth of His power. If the chair encompassed all the heavens and the earth, then how great would the 'arsy, bigger than the chair (Anam, 2022). Abed Rahman Al-Sa'di explains in his book that this verse gives the news

that His essence is high above His throne, Most High with His imposition on all His creatures, and most high with the perfection of His nature (Zakaria, 2015).

Regarding the word of Allah, that Allah resides in the 'Arsh, 'Ashari believes this reality is true. Because 'Arsy is the highest sky, which is proven when someone raises both hands upwards in prayer. According to him, if Allah resides on the 'Arsy, it means that Allah controls the 'Arsy, as the Mu'tazilites say, and has the connotation that Allah also controls something else, such as mastering the grasslands. Control of the grassland means the same as the form of control of His creatures. Apart from that, there is no difference between the pure 'Arsy and the shelter of Allah with seven layers of earth. If so, Allah only resides on the 'Arsy alone (Zakaria, 2015).

Meanwhile, Islamic scholars interpret the word chair as the power of Allah. Some argue that the word chair is a picture, an example of the majesty and greatness of God. *Al-Zamahsari, Al Qoffal*, and others followed this opinion. Meanwhile, Suyuti believed that the meaning of the chair in the verse should not be interpreted literally so that Allah's substance is the same as a bodily creature because Allah is the most Pure of all things that creatures can do (Suyanto, 2013).

Furthermore, when the word Allah's chair covers the heavens and the earth, there are those who equate the chair with the throne even though the two are different. As mentioned in a history. Abu Dzar said: I heard the Messenger of Allah say:

مَا السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ فِي الْكُرْسِيِّ إِلَّا كَحَلَقَةٍ مُلْقَةٍ بَارِضٍ فَلَاةٍ فَضُلُ الْعَرْشِ عَلَيَّ الْكُرْسِيِّ كَفَضْلِ تِلْكَ الْفَلَاةِ عَلَيَّ
تِلْكَ الْحَلَقَةُ

Meaning: "There are no seven heavens compared to (Allah's) chair except like a ring thrown on a field and the size of the Throne comparison of a chair is like a field compared to a ring." (Raehanul, 2023).

This discussion aligns with the explanation of *yadullah* (God's hand) in the Qur'an. Suppose it is interpreted lexically for people who do not understand the science of *balaghah*. In that case, there will be a deviation from monotheism because it conveys the meaning of *jism* to Allah. In fact, in the creed of *Ahlu as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (group of tafsir, hadith, and fiqh) they believe that Allah is not *jism* (something that has volume or physical form) (Ahmad, 2020). Here is one verse that discusses *yadullah*:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ

"In fact, those who pledge allegiance to you (Muhammad), in fact they only pledge allegiance to Allah. God's hand is upon their hands." (QS. Al-Fath: 10)

The verse above discusses the strength of the Muslims' agreement by giving allegiance (shaking hands) to the Prophet Muhammad as if it were a direct allegiance to Allah. This meaning is expressed in the term, "The hand of Allah is in the hands of those who pledge allegiance to the Prophet". It would be very absurd if this verse were interpreted literally as the position of God's

hand over the hands of the Prophet Muhammad and Muslims. There is no benefit whatsoever from explaining the position of Allah's hand (in the physical sense) with the pledge of allegiance by Muslims to the Prophet.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion of the ambiguity and distortion of the verses of Surah al-Baqarah and their relationship with translation, the researcher can conclude as follows:

After conducting research, the author found several words that were ambiguous. These words are (تخالط) in verse 220, (حرث) in verse 223, and (قروء) in verse 228. These words contain ambiguity because they have various meanings, giving rise to different translations and interpretations.

Meanwhile, several words were also found that were distorted in their meaning. This verse is verse 190-193, which discusses the meaning of jihad, interpreted as war in Ibn Kathir's interpretation. Currently, some individuals who want to destroy the image of Islam interpret it as terrorism. Moreover, it is also found in verse 255, which discusses *Kursiyyu* and *Arsy*. These two words have different meanings. The word *Kursiy* in Ibn Katsir translation is interpreted as a chair without adding any semantic explanation. So that ordinary people can interpret the chair the same as an actual chair. Meanwhile, suppose the word *Kursiy* is attributed to Allah. In that case, it cannot be believed in a literal sense because there will be a deviation in a person's monotheism by equating Allah with a creature. Based on the author's direct experience in the research process, there were limitations experienced in the data collection process in the form of an international journal regarding the distortion of the meaning of the Surah al-Baqarah 255 (ayat kursi).

References

- Abdullah, N. bin. (1998). *Al-Risalah Fi I'tiqad Ahlisunnah Wa Ashabil Hadits Wa Al-Aimmah*. Dar al-Ashimah.
- Abunawas, H. K. (2012). *Pengaruh Bahasa Arab Terhadap Penetapan Hukum Islam (Analisis terhadap Kosa Kata Musytarak/Ambigu di dalam Al-Qur'an)*.
- Adriana, I. (2014a). Implikasi Ambiguitas Teks-Teks Al-Qur`An Dalam Istinbâth Hukum Islam. *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial*, 7(2), 201-216. <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v7i2.324>
- Adriana, I. (2014b). Implikasi Ambiguitas Teks-Teks Al-Qur`An Dalam Istinbâth Hukum Islam. *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial*, 7(2), 201-216. <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v7i2.324>

- Adriana, I. (2019). Menerjemah Teks Ambigu Dalam Al-Qur'ân (Sebuah Upaya Memahami Konsep Ambiguitas dalam Istimbâth Hukum). *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial*, 3(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v3i1.2592>
- Ahmad, A. W. (2020). Makna 'Yadullah' Bukanlah Tangan Allah dalam Arti Fisik. <https://nu.or.id/ilmu-tauhid/makna-yadullah-bukanlah-tangan-allah-dalam-arti-fisik-1-s4o4r> diakses 10 Desember 2023
- Ahya, A. S. (2017). *Perubahan Referen Dalam Penerjemahan Al Quran Ke Dalam Bahasa Indonesia (Sebuah Telaah Semantik)*. 5(3).
- Al-Arabi, A.-Q. (2019, February 24). *Petisi Peradilan untuk Menghentikan Pemutaran Film Anti-Qurani di Mesir*. <https://iqna.ir/id/news/3472917/petisi-peradilan-untuk-menghentikan-pemutaran-film-anti-qurani-di-mesir> (2019)
- Al-Qaththan, S. M. (2006). *Pengantar Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an* (Cet ke-1). Pustaka Al-Kautsar.
- Anam, H. F. (2022). Penafsiran Alquran Di Youtube: Telaah Atas Penafsiran Ustadz Abdul Qadir Jawas Terhadap Ayat Kursi Bercorak Ideologis. *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies*, 1(1), 78–91. <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v1i1.526>
- Awaluddin, A. F. (2020). *Kandungan Ayat Kursi Dengan Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter (Telaah Tafsir Tahli>Li>)*. 1.
- Batubara, A. K. (2015). Distorsi Pesan Dalam Perpustakaan. *Jurnal Iqra*, 09.
- Burge, S. R. (2015). The Search for Meaning: Tafsîr, Hermeneutics, and Theories of Reading. *Arabica*, 62(1), 53–73. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700585-12341336>
- Einboden, J. (2009). The Early American Qur'an: Islamic Scripture and US Canon. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 11(2), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2009.0002>
- Hassner, R. E. (2011). *Blasphemy and Violence*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23019512>
- Hayyan, A. A.-A. (1432). *Juz. 2 البحر المحيط*. Darul Fikr.
- Hutchins, R. (2017). *Islam and Suicide Terrorism*. 9(11).
- Imani, A. K. F. (2003). *Tafsir Nurul Qur'an*. Al-Huda.
- Jufri, S., Sari, E. D., & Nurkhasanah, R. F. (2023). *Analisis Ambiguitas Makna yang Terkandung dalam Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah*. 4(1).
- Mawardi, M. (2018). Subjektivitas Dalam Penafsiran Al-Quran: Fenomena Tafsir Bercorak Sektarian. *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alquran dan Tafsir*, 3(1), 157. <https://doi.org/10.32505/tibyan.v3i1.483>
- Muhammad al Misri al Maliki, A. bin. (1995). *Hasyiyah al shawi 'ala tafsir al jalalain Juz 1*. Dar al Kutub al Ilmiah.
- Muhammadiyah. (2009). *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah*. PP Muhammadiyah.
- Nabilata, L. L. (2019). Dekonstruksi Paradigma Radikal dalam Al-Quran. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*, 3(1), 45–66. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jish.31.2840>
- Nirwana, A. (2018). *Penyimpangan Penafsir Dari Zaman Klasik Hingga Zaman Now*. 9(1).
- Pink, J. (2015). 'Literal Meaning' or 'Correct 'aqīda '? The Reflection of Theological Controversy in Indonesian Qur'an Translations. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 17(3), 100–120. <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2015.0213>
- Qardhawi, Y. (2009). *Ringkasan Fiqih Jihad*. Pustaka Al-Kautsar.
- Raehanul, B. (2023, September 23). *Apa Itu Kursi Allah*. <https://muslim.or.id/32468-apa-itu-kursi-allah.html>
- Rahmadhani, F. (2024). Al-Fitnah Al-Kubra Roots Sectarianism In Islam. *El-Ghiroh*, 22(1), 77–85. <https://doi.org/10.37092/el-ghiroh.v22i1.720>
- Shihab, M. Q. (2007). *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur'an Kajian Kosakata*. Lentera Hati.
- Suwarna, D. (2022). Ambiguitas Sebagai Persoalan Bahasa Dan Tanda Baca. *Media Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya Wahana*, 28(1), 618–623. <https://doi.org/10.33751/wahana.v28i1.5222>

- Suyanto. (2013). *Landasan Teologis Pengawasan Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Perspektif Al Qur'an (Kajian Terhadap Ayat Kursi Tentang Pengawasan)*. 1(No.2).
- Trismanto, T. (2018). Ambiguitas Dalam Bahasa Indonesia. *Bangun Rekaprima*, 4(1), 42. <https://doi.org/10.32497/bangunrekaprima.v4i1.1118>
- Zakaria, A. (2015). *Tekstualisme Dalam Tafsir Teologi (Perspektif al-Sa'di tentang Sifat Allah dalam Al-Qur'an)*. 2(No.2).
- تحدي الدولة: التفسيرية الترجمة في المعارضة إلى الخطاب الديني الرسمي للدولة الاندونيسية / *Challenging the State: Exegetical Translation in Opposition to the Official Religious Discourse of the Indonesian State*. (2015).