Semantic Dynamics of Arabic: Evolution of Meaning Over Time

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Abstract

Research on the Semantic Dynamics of Arabic: Evolution of Meaning Over Time focuses on changes and developments in the meaning of words in Arabic over time. Arabic, as one of the oldest and richest languages in the world, is experiencing semantic transformation which is influenced by cultural, social, religious factors and technological developments. This study highlights how historical and situational context influences the expansion, narrowing, or even radical changes in the meaning of words in classical to contemporary Arabic. By utilizing historical linguistic semantic approaches, this research analyzes changes in meaning at the lexical level, as well as how the evolution of meaning helps shape the identity and communication dynamics of Arab society. The findings of this research show that Arabic remains adaptive to changing times, although it still maintains essential aspects of its meaning structure related to tradition and religion.

Keywords: Semantics, Arabic, Evolution of Meaning, Change of Meaning

A. INTRODUCTION

The development of Arabic language semantics is a rich historical tapestry that is intricately woven with changes in society and contacts with other languages. The difference between Classical Arabic and its dialects, as noted by Kees Versteegh, shows how meanings have changed over time as a result of cultural and political circumstances (Kees, 1997). The emergence of modern Arabic, especially in the nineteenth century, demonstrates linguistic shifts that reflect evolving Western perspectives, which in turn influenced new linguistic practices and notions (Ami, 1987). Additionally, the study of Arabic sociolinguistics shows how identity and language maintenance, especially in varied places like Israel and North Africa, are important factors in the evolution of meanings (Yasir, 1995). The dynamic aspect of Arabic semantics is highlighted by the interaction of historical occurrences, technological developments, and cultural exchanges; hence, in order to completely comprehend the language's depth, academics must investigate these stages.

The investigation will focus on the historical context, linguistic influences, and contemporary applications that shape Arabic semantics today. By analyzing seminal texts, we can trace the path of meaning changes and identify patterns that reveal the underlying principles of semantic evolution. Through this exploration, we can better appreciate the richness and adaptability of the Arabic language.

The study will encompass various linguistic periods, examining key texts and their interpretations. It will highlight how religious, political, and social factors have influenced semantic shifts. Additionally, the impact of globalization in recent decades will be analyzed, showcasing how modern Arabic incorporates new meanings (Agung Prasetiyo, 2022). By understanding these factors, we can elucidate how Arabic remains a living, evolving language.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Arabic Semantics

Meaning is an interesting issue in everyday life. (Pateda, 2010). Semantics or in Arabic is called علم الدلالة is one part of the scope of linguistics. Linguistics is the scientific study of language through regular observations that can be empirically proven to be true or not and refers to a general theory about language structure. (Nasution, 2017).

The etymological definition of semantics is "semantic" (Indonesian) which is absorbed from English, namely meaning the study of meaning. In some Arabic literature this discipline is referred to by various terms, namely: علم الدلالة and علم المعنى or سيمانتيك : as a strengthening word from English (semantic) or French (semantique). The term semantics first appeared in 1883 AD by a French scientist named Breal through his article entitled “Le Lois Intellectuelles du language”.

In the definition of semantic terminology "A system and investigation of meaning and significance in a language or language in general. In terms of terminology, semantics is a system and investigation of meaning and significance in a language or language in general. "Verhaar said, semantics is a "theory of meaning".

Several definitions are also given by Arabic paralinguists, including the following:

بأنه دراسةالمعنى، أوالعلم الذي يدرس المعنى، أوذلك الفرع من علم اللغة الذي يتناول نظريةالمعنى

(Umar. 1982)

"Semantics is the study of meaning, or the science that studies meaning, or is a branch of linguistics that studies the theory of meaning."

إنه دراسة المعنى أو العلم الذي يدرس المعنى أو ذلك الفرع من علم اللغة الذي يتناول نظرية المعنى أو ذلك الفرع الذي يدرس الشروط الواجب توافرها في الرمز حتى يكون قادرا على حمل المعنى

(Hidayatullah. 2017)

The study of meaning or science that discusses meaning Branch of linguistics whose object of study focuses on the theory of meaning Branch of linguistics that examines the conditions that must be fulfilled by a symbol so that it can have meaning

Semantic Types

Below we will explain the types of meaning. According to Verhar, there are two types of meaning, namely lexical meaning and grammatical meaning

Lexical Meaning

According to Kridalaksana, what is meant by lexical meaning is: "The meaning of language elements as symbols of objects, events and so on." (Kridaleksana. 2001) Pateda, defines lexical meaning, namely: "A word when it stands alone, whether in the form of a word or a form of affixation whose meaning is more or less fixed, as can be read in a particular language dictionary. It is said to stand alone because the meaning of a word can change once the word is in a sentence. (Pateda. 2001) From the two definitions above, although there are no differences between each other, the author tends to use the theory of lexical meaning proposed by Kridalaksana. Because for the author, the definition of lexical meaning that he puts forward is easier to understand. In other words, lexical meaning is the basic meaning of each word before the word is used in a sentence. Therefore, this is essentially what is called meaning (lexical meaning). (Nasution, 2017)

Grammatical Meaning

According to Pateda, grammatical meaning is the meaning that arises as a result of the function of the word in the sentence (Pateda. 2001). Kridalaksana defines grammatical meaning as the relationship between language elements in larger units; for example the relationship between words and other words in a phrase or clause (Kridaleksana. 2001). According to Djadjasudarma, grammatical meaning is meaning that concerns intra-language relationships, or meaning that arises as a result of the function of words in sentences. (Djajasudarma. 1993)

Chaer said that grammatical meaning is the meaning that arises along with grammatical processes, such as affixation, reduplication, composition or sentenceization. (Chaer. 20015) Like the affixation of the prefix ber with the basic word clothes, it gives rise to the grammatical meaning 'to wear or wear clothes'. The basic composition process of satay based on chicken gives rise to the grammatical meaning of 'ingredients', etc. Likewise, the syntactic process, the words younger brother, kicking, and ball, become the sentence younger brother kicking the ball gives rise to grammatical meaning; Adik means 'doer'. Another example of the affixation process is the prefix ber- with the basic word clothes giving rise to the grammatical meaning "to wear" or wear clothes"; with the basic word horse giving birth to the grammatical meaning of "riding a horse".

Change of Meaning

Forms of Meaning Change. According to Samsuri, there are three forms of meaning change, namely addition, subtraction and replacement. (Nasution. 2017). As explained below

Meaning of Addition or Expand

According to Chaer, what is meant by a change in meaning in the form of addition or expansion is a phenomenon that occurs in a word or lexeme which initially only has one meaning, but then due to various factors it becomes to have another meaning.

Meaning of reducing or narrowing

According to Chaer, what is meant by reduced/narrowed meaning is a symptom that occurs when a word initially has a fairly broad meaning, but then changes to become limited. Like the word pandeta, which originally means 'a person with knowledge.' But in Indonesian, the word pastor has narrowed its meaning to 'Christian religious teacher'. Like the sentence: "Pastor Tomson is leading mass at the Jakarta Cathedral Church.

Replacement of Meaning or Total Change

According to Chaer, what is meant by total change is a complete change in the meaning of a word from its original meaning, even though it is possible to find elements of connection between the original meaning and the new meaning. Munsyi gave an example, that in Indonesian now Gapura means 'gate.' This word comes from the adjective form /gafûr/ meaning 'very forgiving.' going to the Demak Mosque automatically obtains forgiveness of sins for the religion that was previously embraced. Thus, there has been a total change in meaning.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative research. It is called qualitative because according to Bogdan and Taylor in Kaelan (Kaelan, 2010) it is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of words, notes related to meaning and understanding.

When doing library research, especially when it comes to Arabic semantics, it is critical to make good use of primary and secondary data sources. While secondary materials, such as a wider range of literature, improve the theoretical framework and contextual understanding of the research, primary sources, such specialized works on Arabic semantics, offer direct insights into the subject matter. Effective library utilization has been linked to higher student accomplishment, according to the Library Impact Data Project, which emphasizes the value of libraries as resources for academic success (Graham, 2013). Furthermore, because libraries maintain and preserve a wide range of digital material and guarantee its accessibility for future research, their role in data curation is becoming increasingly important (Heidron, 2011). The incorporation of interconnected databases, like those from the Biblioteca Nacional de España, further illustrates how libraries may offer abundant bibliographic resources to meet a variety of research needs (Daniel. 2013). For thorough research in Arabic semantics, it is therefore essential to utilize both primary and secondary sources from library data.

Researchers can use a variety of data gathering and analysis strategies to investigate word changes and meanings in Arabic when studying Arabic semantics. Understanding semantic shifts in Arabic requires a detailed examination of textual data that preserves the original material's syntax and lexicon, which can be achieved by applying a linguistics-based coding approach as outlined by Franzosi (Sara, 2002). Furthermore, content analysis can be used to learn more about cultural ideas and practices that shape language development, especially in contemporary

situations (David, 1988). The difficulties in gathering data, particularly when dealing with particular populations like teenagers, emphasize how crucial it is to modify techniques to take contextual and developmental elements into consideration (Carol, 2001). To guarantee compliance and respect for the original content creators, ethical issues in data collecting, especially when using online resources, must be taken into account (Gove, 2006). In the end, an all-encompassing strategy that incorporates these methods can produce insightful results in the semantics of Arabic research.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The interaction of religion and culture, which determines linguistic expressions and meanings, has a significant impact on the evolution of Arabic terms in the modern day. Arabic nouns' semantic shift, especially in the setting of the Al-Qur'an, shows how linguistic and social cultural elements influence meaning transformation and enable a more thorough comprehension of the text (Aan, 2020). Arabic's historical background also demonstrates its flexibility to new cultural trends, which was further accelerated by the Arab nahda in the 19th century as a reaction to Western influences (Mohamed, 1986). This was especially evident throughout the Abbasid period and the fall that followed. Modern Arabic's evolving syntax and grammar, particularly in the media, also point to a change in the language's conventional conventions, in line with modern ideals and social developments (A., Gully, 1993). Overall, Arabic's growth demonstrates its adaptability and ability to capture the complex interplay between language, religion, and society (Sharron, 2013).

The evolution of Arabic vocabulary is significantly influenced by the blending of cultural elements and religious significance, which shapes how words are perceived across different communities. This dynamic interpretation is further accelerated by technological advancements that facilitate the rapid dissemination of new meanings, as seen in the integration of Arabic dialects in social media, where Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Arabic Dialects (AD) intermingle, creating diverse usages that may diverge from classical interpretations (Fatiha, 2014). Additionally, globalization fosters linguistic exchange, altering meanings and promoting the adaptation of dialectal Arabic to MSA for translation purposes, thereby enhancing lexical coverage (Hassan, 2013). The impact of popular culture, particularly through media and art, plays a crucial role in reshaping Arabic terms, introducing contemporary connotations that reflect current societal values and norms (Jim, 2014). This adaptive nature of language underscores its responsiveness to social, cultural, and technological changes, highlighting the intricate relationship between language and its evolving context (Søren, 2008).

Language evolves throughout time, especially in multilingual settings, and new expressions that appeal to younger people are frequently incorporated, which can change or weaken the original meaning of some terms (Anne, 2016). Sociolinguistic studies have demonstrated this pattern, e.g., in northeast Scotland, where glottal substitution is rapidly adopted and where younger speakers increasingly prefer new forms over traditional ones. These

changes emphasize the need for constant communication within communities to strike a balance between the acceptance of linguistic innovation and the preservation of traditional meanings. In addition, comprehension of these relationships is necessary for efficient communication in a plural society since it maintains cultural continuity and closes the gap between traditional and contemporary interpretations. In the end, the relationship between language change and cultural identity highlights how important it is to accept linguistic progress and make necessary adjustments while maintaining a feeling of legacy.

Studying the dynamic relationship between religion and culture improves our understanding of modernity and legacy, especially when it comes to Arabic language. Modern Arabic's development shows how linguistic changes are entwined with cultural identity and social meaning, reflecting shifting views on and reactions to the West (Amy, 1987). Heritage Arabic speakers frequently juggle several identities, figuring out how to fit in with their local social networks and communicating in both Arabic and English. Given that many heritage speakers find it difficult to use their language types responsibly, this negotiation emphasizes the sociolinguistic competence needed to express oneself effectively in a variety of circumstances. Moreover, a deeper comprehension of these dynamics is required due to the continual redefining of culture and identity in heterogeneous communities. This enables a more nuanced interpretation of texts and promotes a sense of belonging among speakers. In the end, this investigation deepens our understanding of the range of viewpoints found in the Arabic language.

Discussion

The Influence of Religion and Culture on Changes in the Meaning of Arabic Words in the Modern Era. Arabic is one of the world's oldest languages and has a rich cultural and religious history. The Islamic faith and the local way of life in regions where Arabic is spoken have had a significant impact on the evolution of this language. The semantics of Arabic words have changed, nevertheless, over time. The meanings of several Arabic terms have evolved in tandem with social, cultural, and international developments over the modern age. This essay will examine how, particularly in the contemporary day, religion and culture impact alterations in the meaning of Arabic terms.

In Arabic, there are a few examples of words that are often used interchangeably. For example, the word " الطهارة" is equivalent to "الختان" and the word "الحريم" to "النساء." Kemudian The term "aljabar" refers to a mathematical tool that uses tanda-tanda and huruf-huruf to illustrate or describe angles. extracted from BA using the term "الجبر" /al-Jibru/. word meaning "الجبر" which means “Certainty the occurrence of qada and laws ordained by Allah”. Thus, In the process of absorption, meaning or change occurshan totally on that word. Because there is no similarity in meaning in both languages.

The Arabic language developed and spread largely as a result of Islam. Arabic holds a special place in Muslim culture because it was the language used for the revelation of the Koran. The impact of religion on the Arabic language can account for a number of factors, such as:

Classical Arabic, which is used in the Qur'an, is inherently flawed because it is a sacred language for Muslims. But in daily usage, a few phrases from the Qur'an change significantly as a result of reading outside of the religious context. For example, the word "jihad" in the Qur'an refers to "business" or "perjuangan," both in the physical and spiritual realms. However, it has undergone changes over time and is now considered a "perang" in some contemporary contexts. In this way, religion uses Arabic language to ensure adherence to traditional norms. However, when religious beliefs spread across the modern society, language adaptations frequently occurred to accommodate changing contextual factors.

Culture also upholds the crucial principle of minimizing the shift in the Arabic language's morphology. Within the modern Arab society, which is increasingly connected to the global society, many words are undergoing transformations. A few religious factors that are influencing this change are as follows:

Modernization and Globalization

Globalization and interaction with the outside world have brought many loan words from other languages into Arabic, especially in the fields of technology, science and lifestyle. For example: The word "telfaz" (تلفاز) comes from the word "television" in English and has undergone adaptation in Arabic. Apart from that, many traditional words have had their meaning expanded due to globalization. For example, the word "mujtama" (مجتمع), which means "society", now refers not only to local communities but also includes digital communities or global society.

Technology and Social Media

Utilizing technology and social media in Arab countries has also resulted in dramatic changes to kosakata. New words emerged, while old words were modified to meet the demands of modern communication. For example, the term "sahafa" (صحافة), which originally meant "pers" or "journalism," is now used in digital media contexts and news reporting. "Likes" on social media are posted silently without interruption and become part of daily chatter.

E. CONCLUSION

Like all languages, Arabic is subject to dynamic changes in meaning as a result of social context, time, and the demands of the speaking community. Words can undergo semantic development in Arabic by expanding (ta'ammuq), narrowing (takhshish), or completely changing (taqlib ma'na) their original meaning. This dynamic is influenced by the following factors:

1. Cultural and Historical Influences: New phrases and concepts were introduced into Arabic through contact with various cultures and languages, such as during periods of Islamic expansion and colonization. These influences were subsequently incorporated into Arabic language.
2. The Social and Technological Context: As a result of globalization and the advancement of modern technology, new terms are coined and existing ones are expanded to better suit current needs.

3. Religion and Literature: Arabic, the primary language of the Koran, has a strong religious component. As such, interpretations of the language are frequently shaped by religious beliefs and current understandings of classical literature.

Overall, Arabic's semantic dynamics show how closely language, culture, and social development are related—word meanings change and adapt to suit the needs of the moment without losing their unique linguistic identity.

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