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Abstract

As a multi-layered analysis, the present study aims not only to investigate how meaning is created in the Holy Qur'an, but also to examine the types of clusters and processes in the selected texts. It also aims to compare the Arabic version of the Holy Qur'an and its English version in order to assert that it provides not only a micro-level, but also a macro-level description of the text by determining and interpreting the occurrence and frequency of a number of gender-based linguistic elements in both Meccan and Madinan surahs. The study adopts a triangulation of approaches and methods of analysis; namely, the corpus-based approach, the Transitivity theory in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and Sara Mills' framework of Feminist Linguistics, which enable the researcher to investigate the occurrence and frequency of some gender-based linguistic elements. This would create a strong impact on the reading and interpretation of the texts of the study. From the linguistic perspective, the study not only provides a qualitative analysis of the linguistic elements of the texts, but also follows a quantitative approach in order to seek the accuracy of the results by means of a corpus linguistic tool which is a software concordance programme called AntConc (version 4.1.4, 2022). Results indicated that there was a preponderant use of male-based clusters in comparison to the female-based ones. Moreover, material transitivity processes were found to be the most frequently used types of processes in the texts. By means of a t-test, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the frequency rate of the male-based clusters in comparison to the female-based ones, confirming their equal distribution in the texts.

Keywords: Corpus Linguistics, Discourse, Gender, The Holy Qur'an, Transitivity

ملخص البحث:

تقدم الدراسة الحالية تحليلاً متعدد المستويات ، كما أنها تهدف ليس فقط إلى اكتشاف كيفية إنشاء المعنى في القرآن الكريم ، ولكن أيضاً فحص أنواع المجموعات والعمليات اللغوية في النصوص المختارة. كما تهدف إلى مقارنة النسخة العربية من القرآن الكريم بنسخته الإنجليزية من أجل التأكيد على أنه لا يقدم فقط المستوى الجزئي ، ولكن أيضاً وصفاً على المستوى الكلي للنص من خلال تحديد وتفسير حدوث و تواتر عدد من العناصر اللغوية القائمة على النوع الاجتماعي في كل من السور المكية والمدنية. وتتبنى الدراسة تقديم مقاربات وأساليب التحليل ؛ وتعتمد على نظرية الانتقال في اللسانيات الوظيفية النظامية لهالداي ، والإطار المقدم من سارة ميلز لللغويات النسوية ، والتي تمكن الباحث من التحقيق في حدوث وتكرار بعض العناصر اللغوية القائمة على النوع الاجتماعي. هذا من شأنه أن يكون له تأثير قوي على قراءة وتفسير نصوص الدراسة. فمن المنظور اللغوي ، لا تقدم الدراسة فقط تحليلاً نوعياً للعناصر اللغوية للنصوص ، ولكنها تتبع أيضاً نهجاً كمياً من أجل البحث عن دقة النتائج عن طريق أداة لغوية للمجموعة وهي عبارة عن برنامج توافيق برمجي يسمى أنت كونك (الإصدار 4.1.4 ، 2022). وأشارت النتائج إلى وجود استخدام مرجح ومتكرر للتجمعات القائمة على الذكور بالمقارنة مع المجموعات القائمة على الإناث. علاوة على ذلك ، وعن طريق اختبار t ، تم استنتاج أنه لا يوجد فرق كبير بين معدل تكرار المجموعات القائمة على الذكور مقارنة بتلك القائمة على الإناث ، مما يؤكد التوزيع المتساوي في النصوص.

الكلمات المفتاحية - لسانيات الجسد ، الخطاب ، الجنس ، القرآن الكريم ، التجاوز

Introduction

The world is changing rapidly and the technological developments are having a significant impact on all fields of study and areas of specialization. In this regard, linguistics as an area of language study and analysis has been interrelated with the computer assistance which provides a number of tools that facilitate the processing of the received information. Text analysis is considered an effective method for examining gender discourse; that is, it would contribute to the clarification of the gender relations in a text. Accordingly, it would help researchers to explore and evaluate the frequency of the word choices in the text. A text is typically an instance which carries indications and manifestations of its context. Alamari (2020) cited what Hasan (2005) stated about Systemic Functional Linguistics which "prioritized the societal aspect in language and described language as having a social semiotic property" (p.56).

A. Significance of the Study

The present study contributes to the religious discourse analysis of the Holy Qur'an by investigating the meaning construction by means of the lexico-grammatical application of the transitivity processes of the gender-based clusters of the selected verses in both Meccan and Madinan surahs. As a result, it is an attempt to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the most frequently used gender-based lexical items in the Holy Qur'an?
2. What are the most frequently used types of the transitivity processes in the Holy Qur'an?
3. What is the relationship between the male-based and female-based clusters used in the Holy Qur'an?

B. Theoretical Frameworks

The present study is based on the principles of Halliday and Mathiessen (2014) theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics which defined language as “a system of meanings, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be realized”. It is about the actual use of language and it aims to seek an account of how language is used, and shows three meta-functions of language; namely, the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textural meta-functions. The ideational meta-function is realized by the transitivity theory which reflects how language is used to produce a variety of different functions, and among which it is firstly used to express and share peoples' experiences, thoughts, and attitudes of both the outer world and the inner world of his own consciousness. The transitivity system divides the clause into three components; namely, the process which is expressed by the verb phrase; the participants who carry out the process; and the circumstances realized by the prepositional and adverbial phrases Accordingly, in the transitivity system, the world of experience can be represented through six processes; namely, the material process (MP), the mental process (MeP), the relational process (RP), the behavioural process (BP), the verbal process (VP), and the existential process (EP).

The study is also based on Sara Mills (1995) framework of feminist stylistics which highlights three levels of analyzing a text; namely, at the word level, at the clause level, and at the discourse level, asserting that gender can be implied in texts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language, in the view of Halliday and Mathiessen (2014) theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), is considered a social semiotic system which aims to provide meaning-creation resources. This view integrates the functional feature of language with the social perspective of its context, in which interpersonal relationships are enacted. Alaifi (2020) cited how Halliday (2003) defined language as “a semiotic system which is the greatest source of power” (p.2). Alamiri (2018) cited how Fontaine et al. (2013) defined the SFL theory as a comprehensive one, rather than of grammar, which contributes in presenting “an account of how language enables human beings to communicate with one another in the way they do” (p.95). He also cited how Halliday and Mathiessen (2014) defined the grammar of a language “not as an inventory of structures, but a resource for making meaning, in which explaining something is based not on how it is structured, but in showing how it is related to other things” (p.49).

Fernandez (2018) cited how Young (2009) argued about a text which is understood as “the way through which a culture unfolds in its social context”. Besides, Halliday and Mathiessen (2014) claimed that languages are “organized according to specific functions or meta-functions”.

Accordingly, there are three sets of systems of lexico-grammatical choices; namely, textual, ideational, and interpersonal, which provide speakers or writers with three levels of meaning of a text. Fernandez (2018) cited how Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) defined the three systems of language as The first system (i.e. textual) is the thematic structure that expresses the way texts flow, their organization, what is explicit or implicit in the text, what is new and what is already known, and the cohesiveness and coherence of the text. The second system (i.e. interpersonal) is the mood, and it expresses the interactional meaning. The third system (i.e. ideational) is called transitivity and expresses the representational meanings.

Zhang (2017) cited how Fowler (1996) defined transitivity as “the foundation of representation: it is the way the clause is used to analyze events and situations as being of certain types”. Halliday and Mathiessen (2014) claimed that there are three components of transitivity; namely, the process, participants in the process, and circumstances within the process.

Atoke (2021) cited how Mills (1998) defined feminist stylistics as “a critical analytical approach which provides insight and awareness of underlying messages, allowing for a detailed analysis of texts thereby uncovering how texts represent and describe women”. Al-Nakeeb (2018) cited how Mills (1995) claimed about a feminist stylistic analysis in which “there lies a vocabulary to describe what is going on in texts and what is going on in the readers themselves when they read” (pp.1-2). The latter added that this analysis is based on “how women and men are constructed at a representational and at an actual level” (p.3).

The Holy Quran, regarded as the oldest book-length production of classical Arabic, is a compact text which is made up of a collection of interrelated text units. Alaufi (2020) cited what Scott (2013) stated about the religious language which is “based on the standard theory of interpreting that language, the ‘face value’, in which God is central and the property of holiness in religious language” (p.viii).

METHODOLOGY

A. Corpus

The corpus of the present study is made up of a number of 1100 verses from both Meccan and Madinan surahs. The total number of Meccan surahs in the Holy Qur’an is 86; whereas the total number of Madinan surahs is 28. The collected data are described in Table 1 as follows:

Table I. The data

Text	No. of pages	No. of words
Arabic	625	32.426.741
English	839	156.804
Total	1.464	189.230.741

B. Analytical Tools

From the linguistic perspective, the present study employs two analytical tools which are based on Halliday’s Transitivity theory as well as Mills’ framework of Feminist Stylistics. Both tools enable the researcher not only to segment the English and Arabic texts of the Holy Qur’an into gender-based clusters, but also to identify the types of transitivity processes which are realized by a number of lexical elements in both texts. As for the corpus-based linguistic approach, another tool was employed, which is one of the most prominent and friendly-user freeware corpus analysis toolkits for concordancing. It is called AntConc (4.1.4) which was created and developed by Laurence Anthony in 2022.

C. Procedures

Based on the frequent readings of the Holy Qur’an, the researcher examined the verses which are based on gender and found that some linguistic elements are frequently used in both texts. In order to implement a more objective quantitative approach, the researcher employed the AntConc application in order to handle the texts of the study. After uploading both texts to the tool, the researcher started making use of one of its features; namely, Key Words, which enabled the researcher to obtain a list, which is made up of 6625 words, of all frequently used linguistic elements. After filtering this list in order to obtain only gender-based words, a shorter 66-word list was created.

D. Data Analysis

The analysis of the texts in the study has three stages. The first stage is based on the word level of the analysis which would focus on the gender manifestation in the Holy Qur’an, which can be observed in the use of individual lexical elements such as generic nouns and proper names. Table 2 demonstrates the gender-based list of the most frequently used words in both texts.

Table II. Gender-based list of the most frequently used words in both texts

Word	Word	Word	Word	Word	Word
Aunt	Boy	Breast	Brother	Child	Daughter
Father	Female	Husband	Male	Man	Maternal
Mother	Paternal	pregnant	Sister	Son	Uncle
					Womb
Total					19

Table 3 demonstrates all the male proper names mentioned in both texts.

Table III. A list of the male proper names in the selected texts

Role	Names				
Prophet	Adam	Idris	Noah	Al-Yasa	Saleh
	Ayub	Jesus	Shoaib	Dawud	Ishaq
	Sulayman	Ismail	Yahya	Harun	Lut
	Yusuf	Hud	Muhammad	Ibrahim	Musa
	Yunus	Zakariyya	Luqman		
Non-Prophets	Azar	Azir	Al-Samiri	Abu-Lahab	Pharaoh
	Haman	Imran	Jalut	Qarun	Talut
	Satan	Zayd	ibn		
		Harithah			
Total					35

Table 4 demonstrates all the female proper names mentioned in both texts.

Table IV. A list of the female proper name in the selected texts

Role	Names				
The only woman directly mentioned	Maryam or Mary				
The women of Paradise	Asyiah	Khadija	Fatimah		
The mothers	Mother of Moses	Mother of Jesus	Mother of Isaac		
The wives	The wife of the Pharaoh of Egypt	The wife of Ibrahim (Sarah)	The wife of Abu Lahab	The wife of Prophet Lut	The wife of Prophet Noah
Total	12				

The second stage is based on the clause level of the analysis which was a fundamental step to determine the clusters of the most frequently words in order to investigate all the collocated words which reflect meanings and ideas. As four-word clusters, they fall into two types; namely, male-based and female-based. In the clause, they occur either on the right or left of the key word. Based on the t-test results, there was no significant difference between the male-based clusters and the female-based ones. Table 5 demonstrates the types of male-based clusters, cluster tokens, and their percentages in each of the two texts in the study.

Table V. Male-based cluster types and cluster tokens in each text

	Word	Cluster types	%	Cluster tokens	%	Freq.	%
Male-based	Boy	10	0.05	10	0.04	5	0.06
	Brother	135	0.75	146	0.72	73	10.12
	Father	188	1.04	217	10.82	109	15.11
	Husband	34	0.18	34	0.16	17	2.35
	Man	1179	65.50	1312	65.43	374	51.87
	Male	30	0.16	34	0.16	17	2.35
	Paternal	8	0.04	10	0.04	5	0.06
	Son	202	11.22	228	11.37	114	15.81
	Uncle	14	0.07	14	0.06	7	0.09
	Total		1,800		2,005		721
Female-based	Aunt	9	0.12	10	0.13	5	1.31
	Daughter	67	9.51	74	9.76	37	9.76
	Female	48	6.81	52	6.86	26	6.86
	Girl	47	6.67	52	6.86	26	6.86
	Maternal	8	0.11	10	0.13	5	1.31
	Mother	95	13.49	102	13.45	51	13.45
	Sister	38	5.39	38	5.01	19	5.01
	Wife	199	28.26	208	27.44	104	27.44
	Woman	193	27.41	212	27.96	106	27.96
Total		704		758		379	
Total (male-based & female-based)		2,504		2,763		1,100	
Sig. (2-tailed)		.391		.380		.418	

As a transitivity analysis, the researcher started identifying the types of the process patterns of the clusters in the different clauses, identifying the associated participants and the roles which those participants play in the 1100 gender-based verses of the Holy Qur'an. Table 6 presents all the words that appear in the male-based clusters in the texts of the study.

Table VI. Examples of the words associated with the male-based clusters in the Holy Qur’an

Key word	Transitivity Processes in the cluster						Associated lexical items in the cluster
	<i>MP</i>	<i>VP</i>	<i>RP</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>MeP</i>	<i>EP</i>	
Boy	concealed						aged, graced, in the city, of their own
Brother	Bestow, bequests, grant me strength, keep us apart, build houses, receive, bury, slay, send, forsake, toil, embraced	Said, listened,	Are dearer,	Cried, forgive, make peace	Admit, see inheritance, do not despair, do not grieve, fear God,	Seize, die childless,	Joseph, Aaron, Moses, bag, naked corpse, pack, shirt stained, aggrieved, dead, a band of
Father	Pray, return to, bade, worship, serve, take, devise, invent, married, honouring, follow, inherited, unveiled	Say, call, reply, hear,	Was an honest,	Implore forgiveness, fear, forgive,	Feel, understand, know, ,	Die,	Azar, Abu Lahab, aged, righteous, the faith of, enlightened,
Husband	Remarry, discord, met, do well, declare, fasting as penalty, inherit, treat, change, take	Saying, speak,		Agree to waive, please your wives,			Accusation, well-advanced, death, ill-treatment, unlawful, divorce, true believers, on oath, faithful, rich provision, justice to wives
Man	Invent, found, does, pray, turns, taught, did his bidding, create, renounce, touch, honouring, seek refuge, divided themselves, commit,	Said, accuse his wife, greet, calls out, replied, converse,	Are evildoers, are not aware, are present, are rightly guided, are tempted by, are unbeliever,	Show kindness, fear, assault,	Forget, have no knowledge, have no faith, believing,	Keeps, grow old,	Foolish, penitent, righteous, quarrelsome, wicked, ignorant, free, tender-hearted, generous, rich, thoughtful, from clots, from dry clay, steadfast, thankful, divorced, blessed with, skilled, in distress, hardship, prudent, hypocrites, of knowledge, of old, good, unclean, believers

Key word	Transitivity Processes in the cluster						Associated lexical items in the cluster
	MP	VP	RP	BP	MeP	EP	
Male	Inherit, witness, share	Hears,					Parts, slaves, attendants, unlawful, forbidden
Paternal							Aunts, uncles, sisters, daughters
Son	Adopted, seek, cruelly slaughtering, endowed, serve, stood apart, disobey, adopted, submit,	Said, replied, preach,		Favoured,	Know,	Was drowned,	Steadfast, glory, in his old, of Abdullah, of Adam, of God, of Joseph, more righteous, intention
Uncle							Abu Talib, the Prophet's, maternal, paternal,

Table 7 presents all the words that appear in the female-based clusters in the texts of the study.

Table VII. Examples of the words associated with the female-based clusters in the Holy Qur'an

Key word	Transitivity Processes in the cluster						Associated lexical items in the cluster
	MP	VP	RP	BP	MeP	EP	
Aunt							Maternal, sisters, daughters
Daughter	Married, spare, adopt, foist, choose				know		Birth, fruit idolatory, glory, Mary, step daughter
Female	Give, make, bear, cast, adorn	Call,		Conceive,	Is borne no female,		Female deities, parts, slaves, endeavours, cattle female, pregnant, infant, offspring, forbidden, the names
Girl	Divorce, marry	Announced,		Force,	Is better than		Delight punishment, gentle, slave, birth, believing, infant, newborn, buried alive, unwanted,
Maternal							Aunts, uncles, daughters

Material processes are the most dominated and frequently used process in both male-based and female-based clusters of the study.

RESULTS

Based on the linguistic analysis of the texts, results indicated that there are three categories of verses which are realized by a wide range of clusters. The first category includes those verses which present a number of male-based clusters, but because they express general verdicts in the Holy Qur'an, they were meant to be addressing both genders. For example, there are a number of clusters (approximately 51% of all male-based clusters) which are associated with the word man because such verdicts are generalized to all human beings, and not specific to men only. These verdicts are related to God's rewards of good deeds, punishment for bad deeds, inheritance, and descriptions of heavenly blessings. The second category is related to some social issues of which only men have authority, such as marriage and divorce. Women are not directly addressed in the verses of the Holy Qur'an except Mary or Maryam. The only instance in which women are directly mentioned is when they remarry their former husbands. The third category includes all the verses in which women are oppressed by men and are not the participants or agents of any actions even though they have equal rights as men. Accordingly, in answer to the first research questions, the most frequently-used gender-based words are male-based.

Moreover, results indicated that in all female-based clusters, words like "mother, father, son, daughter, child, aunt, uncle" are presented. This reflects that all women are represented in the Holy Qur'an as leaders or role models with a significant role in the family. The lexical items in the male-based as well as the female-based clusters include both positive and negative connotations, confirming that whether men or women, they could be pious or impious, young or old, commanding or timid, insightful or ignorant, righteous or vicious, fertile or childless, and domineering or dominated. In answer to the second research questions, all transitivity processes were realized in the texts, with varying proportions, confirming a higher rate on the part of the male-based clusters in comparison with the female-based ones.

CONCLUSION

The study employing a comprehensive approach contributes to the description and interpretation of meaning in the Holy Qur'an as a religious text. By integrating both frameworks from Systemic Functional Linguistics and Feminist Stylistics, the study also presents a multi-layered analysis of the different clusters mentioned in the texts as well as the different types of transitivity processes. By means of the corpus linguistic tool, quantitative accuracy was achieved.

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