SEMIOTICS IN QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION: THE APPLICATION OF SEMIOTIC THEORY IN THE TAFSIR OF JALALAIN, IBN KATHIR, AND AL-TABARI ON QS. AN-NUR VERSE 35

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates methods of Qur'anic interpretation through a linguistic approach, with a focus on semantics and semiotics—both of which are essential for *mufassirs* (Qur'anic interpreters) in understanding Arabic. The primary objective is to explore how semiotic concepts are applied in interpreting the word نُور (*Nuur*, meaning "light") in verse 35 of Surah an-Nur. This research adopts a library-based content analysis with a qualitative descriptive approach. Semiotic theory is employed to examine the *tafsir* works of Jalalain, Ibn Kathir, Quraish Shihab, and al-Tabari. Semiotics, the study of signs and their meanings, reveals that these *mufassirs* have applied semiotic principles in their interpretations. In *Tafsir Jalalain*, Saussure's semiotic theory is evident in the treatment of نُور, where the *signifier* represents meanings such as light, guidance, and Islam. In *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Roland Barthes' semiotics is utilized, highlighting both the denotative and connotative meanings of the word. In *Tafsir al-Tabari*, Roman Jakobson's communication model is applied, incorporating elements like sender, receiver, and message. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that semiotic concepts are widely integrated into the interpretative practices of *mufassirs* in their analysis of Qur'anic verses.

Keywords: *Semiotics, Tafsir, Surah an-Nur, Interpretation, Linguistics*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji metode penafsiran Al-Qur'an melalui pendekatan linguistik, dengan fokus pada semantik dan semiotika—dua hal yang esensial bagi mufassir (penafsir Al-Qur'an) dalam memahami bahasa Arab. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi sejauh mana konsep semiotika diterapkan dalam penafsiran kata نُور (Nuur, yang berarti "cahaya") pada ayat 35 Surah an-Nur. Penelitian ini menggunakan studi pustaka berbasis analisis konten dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Teori semiotika digunakan untuk menganalisis karya-karya tafsir dari Jalalain, Ibn Kathir, Quraish Shihab, dan al-Tabari. Semiologi, yang merupakan studi tentang tanda dan makna, menunjukkan bahwa para mufassir tersebut telah menerapkan prinsip-prinsip semiotika dalam penafsiran mereka. Dalam Tafsir Jalalain, teori semiotika Saussure diaplikasikan pada kata نُور, di mana signifier (penanda) mewakili makna seperti cahaya, petunjuk, dan Islam. Dalam Tafsir Ibn Kathir, semiotika Roland Barthes terlihat, yang

menyoroti makna denotatif dan konotatif dari kata tersebut. Sementara itu, dalam Tafsir al-Tabari, model komunikasi Roman Jakobson diterapkan, mencakup elemen-elemen seperti pengirim, penerima, dan pesan. Kesimpulannya, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa konsep-konsep semiotika telah banyak diterapkan oleh para mufassir dalam menafsirkan ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an.

Kata kunci: *Semiotika, Tafsir, Surah an-Nur, Penafsiran, Linguistik*

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A. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of linguistic studies, interpreting the Qur'an has become an ongoing task for Muslims. This effort is part of the endeavor to comprehend the divine message, which is characterized as shalih li kulli zaman wa makan—relevant for all times and places.[1] The Qur'an, fundamentally a linguistic text, embodies a symbolic unity of meaning. As a static and passive text, the Qur'an does not verbally present its meaning to the reader; instead, the reader must actively engage in uncovering the meaning contained within. Consequently, new approaches such as linguistic methodologies have emerged in the contemporary era to facilitate Qur'anic interpretation.[2]

Linguistic approaches to Qur'anic studies can be categorized into four main systems: phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.[3] Phonology examines the sounds of language based on their functions, while morphology (ilmu sharaf)[4] explains the transformation of words and the meanings they produce.[5] Syntax (ilmu nahwu)[6] studies sentence structure, including changes in word endings within sentence contexts. Semantics (ilmu dilalah), on the other hand, focuses on the study of meaning, closely linked to the concept of semiotics, the study of signs and the meanings they represent.[7]

Semiotics, as a branch of knowledge, explores the system of signs and their processes of use.[8] Two prominent figures in this field are Ferdinand de

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[1] Ulya, *Berbagai Pendekatan Dalam Studi Al-Qur'an.*, Cetakan I (Idea Press). h. 189

[2] Putra Wahyu Hanafi, *Linguistik Al-Qur'an.*, Cet I (CV. Adanu Abitama, 2020). h. 1-2

[3] Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, *Tekstualitas Al-Quran*, Cet II (LKiS Yogyakarta, 2002). h. 1

[4] Jorjani and Dkk, *Majmou'at Assarf* (Noursabah, 2016).

[5] Sahkholid Nasution, *Pengantar Linguistik Bahasa Arab*, Cet I (CV. LISAN ARABI, 2017). h. 91

[6] Ghani and Amin Aiman, *Nahwu Kafi*, Jilid II (Dar at-Tawfiqiyyah Liltaratsi, 2010). h. 17

[7] Ahmad Mukhtar Umar, *'Ilm Al-Dilalah,* Cet I (Maktabah Dar al-Arabiyah li al-Nasr wa al-Tauzi, 1982). h. 11.

[8] Jafar Lantowa and Dkk, *Semiotika: Teori, Metode, Dan Penerapannya Dalam Penelitian Sastra* (Deepublish, 2017). h. 1

Saussure (1857-1913) and Charles Sander Peirce (1839-1914), who developed semiotic theory independently. Saussure, with his linguistic background, developed semiology, emphasizing the linguistic characteristics of signs, whereas Peirce, with a philosophical background, formulated semiotics, which focuses on logic. Despite their differing approaches, both scholars agree that semiotics revolves around two core elements: signs and meaning.

Numerous studies suggest that semiotics is a relevant approach to analyzing the meaning embedded in the Qur'an. A notable example is Surah an-Nur verse 35, which contains symbolic language with multiple layers of meaning. The word "نُور" (light) in this verse lexically means "light," but through semiotic analysis, this meaning can be explored more deeply. Various interpreters (mufassirun) have provided diverse interpretations of this word, highlighting the role of signs in Qur'anic exegesis. Given this context, the author is intrigued by the extent to which semiotic theory, particularly the concepts of meaning proposed by Saussure and Peirce, can be applied to understanding the word "نُور" in Surah an-Nur verse 35. This study will focus on the application of semiotics in the interpretations provided by classical commentators and how the concept of signs plays a role in symbolic exegesis of the verse.

B. METHOD

The research employs a qualitative descriptive analysis method, focusing on describing and analyzing data in the form of words and sentences.[9] The study utilizes both content analysis and library research, referring to relevant literature such as books and scholarly works related to the chosen theme.[10] The collected data are processed and analyzed to draw conclusions. The primary object of analysis is classical Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), with a specific focus on Surah an-Nur, verse 35. A linguistic approach, specifically semiotics, serves as the theoretical framework.[11] The choice of semiotic theory is grounded in its usefulness in helping the researcher understand how interpreters (mufassirun) apply semiotic concepts to decipher symbolic language in the Qur'an. This research aims to examine how semiotic principles are reflected in the interpretation of verses containing symbolic meanings. The process involves several steps: gathering primary and secondary data, comparing the interpretative approaches of different mufassirun with semiotic theories proposed by prominent figures, and finally,

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[9] Syafrida Hafni Sahir, *Metodologi Penelitian*, Cetakan I (KBM Indonesia, 2021).
[10] Rifa'i Abubakar, *Pengantar Metodologi Penelitian*, Cetakan I (SUKA-Press Sunan Kalijaga, 2021). h 18.
[11] Syafrida Hafni Sahir. Cetakan I (Yogyakarta: KBM Indonesia, 2021). h. 6.

analyzing and describing these interpretations using semiotic theories to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Semiotics

The term semiotics is derived from the Greek word semeion, meaning "sign." As the study of signs, semiotics examines sign systems and their processes of usage.[12] Semiotics can be classified into various types based on the objects of study.[13] First, analytical semiotics focuses on analyzing sign systems, as explained by Peirce, which involves the concepts of ideas, objects, and meanings. Second, descriptive semiotics observes current sign systems, such as dark clouds indicating impending rain. Third, faunal semiotics (zoosemiotics) analyzes signs produced by animals, such as a hen's clucking, which signifies that it has laid an egg. Additionally, cultural semiotics studies the sign systems within societal cultures, while narrative semiotics examines signs in myths and oral traditions (folklore). Natural semiotics focuses on signs generated by nature, and normative semiotics investigates signs embodied in social norms. Social semiotics explores human-generated signs, including word symbols and sentence structures, while cultural semiotics analyzes signs manifested through the structure of language in cultural contexts.

Semiotics, the study of signs and their meanings, has been shaped by several key thinkers who have laid the groundwork for its development as a distinct field of inquiry. Ferdinand de Saussure, a pioneering European linguist, introduced the concept of semiology, which examines the social function of signs within a community.[14] Saussure's model of signification is built around two core components: the signifier (the sound or image representing the sign) and the signified (the concept or meaning associated with it). He emphasized that meaning is not inherent in the sign itself but is established through collective social conventions. Saussure also introduced crucial distinctions in language studies, such as the difference between synchronic (studying language at a specific point in time) and diachronic (studying its evolution over time) analyses. Additionally, he highlighted the roles of syntagmatic (relations within a structure) and paradigmatic (relations between elements outside the structure) in shaping meaning.[15]

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[12] Ambarini and dkk, *Semiotika:Teori Dan Aplikasi Pada Karya Sastra* (IKIP PGRI Semarang Press).

[13] Lantowa and Dkk. h. 2

[14] Alfathoni, Muhammad Ali Mursid, and Dkk, *Pengantar Teori Semiotika* (Media Sains Indonesia, 2022). h. 51

[15] Fatimah and Dkk, *Semiotika Dalam Kajian Iklan Layanan Masyarakat* (Gunadarma Ilmu, 2020). h. 33

Charles Sanders Peirce, an American philosopher, advanced semiotics by framing it within logic and communication theory. His triadic model is built on three interrelated components: the representamen (the form of the sign), the object (what the sign refers to), and the interpretant (the concept generated in the mind of the observer). Peirce's model, commonly associated with communication studies, focuses on how signs convey meaning within communicative processes. A critical aspect of Peirce's theory is the need for a shared ground—a common understanding between the sender and receiver—to ensure the proper interpretation of the sign.[16]

Roland Barthes expanded semiotic theory by introducing two levels of signification: denotation, which refers to the literal or primary meaning of a sign, and connotation, which captures the cultural and ideological meanings that signs acquire over time. Barthes explored how signs operate in myths and ideologies, revealing how cultural constructs appear natural and self-evident, making his semiotics a powerful tool for understanding how media and cultural texts shape public perceptions.[17]

Michael Riffaterre's semiotic model focused on textual interpretation, particularly in poetry. He proposed a two-stage reading process: heuristic reading, which involves a surface-level understanding of the text based on linguistic conventions, and hermeneutic reading, which engages with deeper literary conventions. According to Riffaterre, meaning emerges through an interaction between the matrix (core idea), the model (key sentences), and the hypogram (the underlying text or intertext). This approach highlights the layered complexity of textual interpretation.[18]

Roman Jakobson made significant contributions to semiotic and communication theory, particularly through his model of code-message.[19] He identified six essential elements of communication: sender, receiver, context, code, contact, and message. Jakobson emphasized that for effective communication, both the sender and receiver must share a common code, whether linguistic, social, or cultural. Context, in his view, plays a crucial role, as it shapes how messages are interpreted, ranging from the linguistic to the cultural level.[20]

Algirdas Julien Greimas introduced a narrative semiotics model, focusing on the roles and interactions of actants—key elements such as subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent—within narrative

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[16] Alfathoni, Mursid, and Dkk. h.50
[17] Muhammad Ardiyansyah and Dkk, *Elemen-Elemen Semiologi* (BASASI, 2017). h. 8-10
[18] Lantowa and Dkk. h. 9-11
[19] Rahmawati Wulansari and Dkk, 'Pemikiran Tokoh Semiotika Modern', *Textura*, Vol. 1.01 (2020). h. 53
[20] Rahmawati Wulansari and Dkk. h. 53-54

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structures.[21] Greimas developed the concept of the semiotic square to analyze binary oppositions within texts and offered a model of narrative that includes an initial situation, transformation, and final situation. His work underscores the deep structure of narratives, providing insight into how meaning is constructed and communicated.[22]

Julia Kristeva advanced semiotics through her concept of semanalysis, which examines how signifying processes operate within language. She distinguished between genotext (the potential meanings within a text) and phenotext (the actualized meaning as communicated). Kristeva's theory of intertextuality proposes that all texts reference other texts, creating a network of meanings across cultural and temporal contexts. This idea revolutionized the way scholars think about the interconnectedness of discourse.[23]

Louis Hjelmslev, a Danish linguist, extended Saussure's semiology by developing metasemiotics, a theory that delves deeper into the structure of signs.[24] He proposed a four-part model consisting of expression and content, each of which is divided into form and substance.[25] Hjelmslev's system underscores that both form and substance work together to produce meaning, emphasizing that signs operate within a complex, layered structure.[26]

Michael Halliday introduced social semiotics, a theory that examines language as a social process embedded in cultural contexts. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL) views language as a network of choices that function within specific social situations.[27] His model identifies three key components: field (the activity taking place), tenor (the relationships between participants), and mode (the role of language in communication).[28] This approach highlights the interaction between language and its social environment, making it a practical tool for analyzing discourse in context.

Charles Morris, building on Peirce's work, developed a model known as the three dimensions of semiotics: syntax (the relations between signs), semantics (the relation between signs and their meanings), and pragmatics (the relation between signs and their interpreters).[29] Morris broadened

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[21] D Rusmana, *Filsafat Semiotik* (Pustaka Setia, 2014). h. 166
[22] Rusmana. h. 171-172
[23] Alex Sobur, *Alex. Semiotika Komunikasi* (Remaja Rosda Karya, 2004). h. 86
[24] John Lechte, *Filsuf Kontemporer Dari Strukturalisme Sampai Postmodernitas* (Pustaka Kanisius, 2001). h. 220
[25] Kris Budiman, *Kosa Semiotika* (LkiS, 1999). h. 105-106
[26] Wulansari and Dkk. h. 57
[27] Wulansari and Dkk. h. 59
[28] Inda Nurshadrina, 'Representasi Dakwah Melalui Sejarah Islam: Analisis Semiotika Sosial Buku Mengenal Islam For Beginners Karya Ziauddin Sardar' (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2014). h. 31
[29] Okke K.S Zaimar, *Semiotik Dan Penerapannya Dalam Karya Sastra* (Pusat Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2008). "Semiotik dan Penerapannya dalam Karya Sastra". h. 18

semiotic theory to include animal signs, coining the term zoosemiotics. His framework helps explain how signs function across both human and non-human communication, offering a comprehensive understanding of sign processes.

Together, these thinkers have significantly shaped the field of semiotics, each offering unique perspectives on how signs function within language, culture, and communication. Their contributions continue to provide valuable tools for analyzing texts and understanding the complex relationships between signs and meanings in various contexts.

2. A Semiotic Approach to the Interpretation of the Word نُور in Surah an-Nur Verse 35

In applying the semiotic theories of various scholars to exegesis, the author attempts to align these theories with the interpretative styles of different mufassirun (interpreters). The focus of this analysis is on Surah an-Nur, verse 35, specifically on the word "Nuur" (light). In this verse, the word نُور (Nuur) represents the light of Allah, which is metaphorically described as a niche (mishkat) containing a lamp (misbah) inside a glass vessel (zujajah), which reflects light in multiple directions like a shining star (kawkab). This multilayered depiction of Allah's light is a unique feature of the Qur'an, where messages are conveyed through metaphors (tasybih). According to scholars of bayan (Arabic rhetoric), tasybih is a figurative expression used to explain how one thing shares similar characteristics with another.[30]

This layered description of Allah's light also signifies His greatness and absolute ownership of light. While this verse might initially appear more suited to rhetorical analysis, the author uses a semiotic approach to analyze the symbolic term "Nuur." The word نُور, an isim jamid (a non-derived noun), lexically means light, brightness, or radiance.[31] However, in this context, the word's meaning, as interpreted by various mufassirun, differs from its dictionary definition. The process of interpreting the word "Nuur" in the exegeses of these scholars can thus be examined through the lens of semiotics. In Surah an-Nur, verse 35, Allah states:

اَللّٰهُ نُورُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِّ مَثَلُ نُوره كَمشكوةٍ فِيهَا مِصبَاحٌ المِصبَاحُ فِى زُجَاجَةٍّ اَلزُّجَاجَةُ كَاَنَّهَا كَوكَبٌ دُرِّىٌّ يُوقَدُ مِن شَجَرَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ زَيتُونَةٍ لَّا شَرقِيَّةٍ وَّلَا غَربِيَّةٍ يَّكَادُ زَيتُهَا يُضِىءُ وَلَو لَم تَمسَسهُ نَارٌ ّ نُورٌ عَلٰى نُورٍّ يَهدى اللهُ لِنُوره مَن يَّشَاءُّ وَيَضرِبُ اللهُ الأمثَالَ لِلنَّاسِّ وَاللهُ بِكُلِّ شَىءٍ عَلِيمٌ

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[30] Al-Jarim Ali and Dkk, *Terjemahan Al-Balaaghatul Waadhihah. Bandung,* Cet XIV (Sinar Baru Algensindo, 2017). h. 21

[31] Mahmud Yunus, *Kamus Arab-Indonesia* (PT. Mahmud Yunus wa Dzurriyyah, 2007). h. 473

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Translation: *"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp; the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things."* (QS. an-Nur: 35)

1) Saussurean and Peircean Semiotics in the Interpretation of Tafsir Jalalain

In the analysis of Surah an-Nur, verse 35, using Saussurean semiotics, the word "نُور" (Nuur) is considered an *isim jamid*, a non-derived noun with meanings such as light, brightness, and radiance. According to *Tafsir Jalalain*,[32] this word is interpreted simply as light. In this context, the term نُور functions as the *signifier*, being a tangible, material element. The concept associated with this *signifier*, the *signified*, refers not only to light but also to meanings such as the provider of light, divine guidance, and Islam, based on the interpretation in *Tafsir Jalalain*. According to Saussure, the relationship between the *signifier* (نُور) and the *signified* (the concept of light) is arbitrary, meaning that there is no inherent connection between the two except by social convention.

From a structural, or *syntagmatic*, perspective, when analyzing the verse linearly, we identify the *signifier* نُور as being paired with the *signified* concept of light. On a *paradigmatic* level, which relates to the associations and choices within the language system, the interpretations offered by *Tafsir Jalalain* become more apparent. The *mufassir* (interpreter) understands نُور as not just literal light but also as metaphors for the provider of light, divine guidance, and Islam. This approach showcases how multiple layers of meaning are attached to the word, shaped by both linguistic structure and interpretive tradition.

Thus, through Saussure's semiotics, نُور can be analyzed both *syntagmatically* and *paradigmatically*. Syntactically, نُور is composed of a *signifier* (the word itself) and a *signified* (light). However, on a paradigmatic level, *Tafsir Jalalain* provides further interpretations: نُور refers to the provider of light in the phrase "اَللّٰهُ نُورُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ", it signifies divine guidance in the phrase "يَهْدِى اللّٰهُ لِنُورِه مَن يَّشَاءُ", and it symbolizes Islam in "مَثَلُ نُورِه كَمِشْكٰوةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ". These examples highlight the alignment between Saussure's concept of the sign system and the interpretive framework used in *Tafsir Jalalain*, showing that Saussurean semiotics is embedded in the exegesis.

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[32] Al mahalli. Jalaluddin and As-Sayuti Jalaluddin, *Tafsir Jalalain*, Jilid II. (Sinar Baru Algensindo, 2012). h. 242-243

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From the perspective of Peircean semiotics, the interpretation of this verse in *Tafsir Jalalain* follows a different semiotic process. Here, the word نُور in the phrase "مَثَلُ نُوره كَمِشكوةٍ فِيهَا مِصبَاحٌ" acts as the *representamen* (sign), which is then connected to its *object*—the light of the lamp. This connection gives rise to an *interpretant*, which, in this case, represents Allah's guidance to the believers. Through this triadic relationship of sign, object, and interpretant, the sign's meaning deepens and evolves. The initial relationship between the *representamen* and the *object* (the lamp's light) produces a new *interpretant*, symbolizing divine guidance above the light of faith.

This process demonstrates how the meaning of the word نُور develops through Peirce's semiotic framework, and how it is reflected in *Tafsir Jalalain*. By examining this dynamic, we observe that the triadic structure—*representamen* (نُور), *object* (the lamp's light), and *interpretant* (divine guidance)—forms a new layer of meaning. The relationship between these elements generates fresh interpretations, further enriching the understanding of نُور as presented in the exegesis. This highlights the compatibility of Peirce's semiotic model with the interpretive approach of *Tafsir Jalalain*, showing that Peircean semiotics is actively applied in this particular interpretation.

2) Julia Kristeva's Semiotics in the Interpretation of Tafsir Al-Misbah

In applying Julia Kristeva's theory of *semanalysis* and intertextuality to the interpretation of the word نُور in Quraish Shihab's *Tafsir Al-Misbah* on Surah an-Nur verse 35, it is first necessary to define *genotext* and *phenotext*. The *genotext* refers to the limitless potential of signs that serve as the foundation for actual texts, offering all possible signifying processes. On the other hand, the *phenotext* is the actual text that stems from the *genotext* and conforms to the language of communication.[33] In this case, Surah an-Nur verse 35, which describes the light of Allah, can be seen as the *genotext* because it contains an unlimited range of possible meanings that can be interpreted by anyone, particularly Quraish Shihab. Once these signifiers are articulated by Shihab and transformed into communicative language, they become part of the *phenotext*. This process involves the interpretive journey of the verse as it evolves into a meaningful concept.

According to Kristeva's theory, the meaning-making process is divided into two elements: *signifiance* and *signification*.[34] *Signification* refers to socially constructed meanings, where the sign reflects conventions and social codes. In *Tafsir Al-Misbah*,[35] Quraish Shihab interprets the word نُور in the verse as a reference to Allah, indicating that He is the Owner and Giver of

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[33] Sobur. h. 81
[34] Sobur. h. 86
[35] Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah, Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Lentera Hati, 2002). h. 347

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light. This interpretation remains within the realm of *signification*, as it is firmly rooted in Islamic theology, adhering to established beliefs. *Signifiance*, on the other hand, is a more subversive and creative process, where meanings are boundless, allowing for expressions that push beyond conventional norms, moral codes, and societal expectations.[36]

While Quraish Shihab's interpretation of نُور adheres to the traditional Islamic understanding, his tafsir also allows for the possibility of innovative meanings. In his work, he notes that the word نُور has at least eleven different meanings in the Qur'an. For instance, نُور can signify Islam, a meaning also recognized in *Tafsir Jalalain*. However, Shihab rejects interpretations of نُور that deviate from Islamic creed, such as associating نُور with reason, sensory perception, or knowledge.[37] These interpretations could be considered examples of *signifiance*, as they reflect creative, evolving usages of the term, even though they may conflict with Islamic doctrine.

The meaning of نُور does not stop at this stage. Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, which involves interpreting words through their relationships with other texts, must also be considered.[38] In *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, Quraish Shihab applies this method by referencing similar verses to elucidate the meaning of نُور in Surah an-Nur verse 35. For example, he cites Surah al-Maidah verse 15: "Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book." This intertextual connection reinforces the interpretation that Allah is the source and provider of all light.[39] Shihab further explains that all light originates from Allah, the eternal and unceasing source of illumination, as reflected in Surah al-An'am verse 1: "Praise be to Allah, who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light."

Through this intertextual approach, Quraish Shihab concludes that when the word نُور is attributed to Allah, it signifies that He is the Owner and Giver of light. By applying Kristeva's theory of intertextuality, it becomes evident that the interpretation of the word نُور must be understood within the broader context of its usage in other Qur'anic verses, thereby offering a multidimensional understanding of the term.

In summary, Julia Kristeva's *semanalysis* in this interpretation consists of the *genotext*, represented by Surah an-Nur verse 35; the *phenotext*, represented by the interpretation of the word نُور; *signification*, where نُور is understood as Allah, the Owner and Giver of light; and *signifiance*, where more creative meanings, such as reason and knowledge, are explored but remain subject to religious constraints. It is clear that Quraish Shihab's interpretive

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[36] Sobur. h. 86
[37] Quraish Shihab. h. 344
[38] Sobur. h. 86
[39] Quraish Shihab. h. 346

method aligns with Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, as he draws upon multiple Qur'anic verses to provide a comprehensive interpretation of نُور. Thus, Kristeva's theories of *semanalysis* and intertextuality play a significant role in shaping Shihab's exegesis.

3) Roland Barthes' Semiotics in the Interpretation of Tafsir Ibnu Katsir

The application of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to the interpretation of the word نُور in Surah an-Nur verse 35 in *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*, involves two key stages: the linguistic system and the mythological system. The linguistic system represents the first level of meaning, or denotation[40], which is the relationship between the *signifier* and the *signified* within a sign. At this first level, or denotative meaning, the word نُور functions as the *signifier* with its *signified* being Allah's guidance. According to *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*,[41] the pronoun "ه" (in the phrase نُوره) refers back to Allah, implying that it symbolizes His guidance in the hearts of believers. From the perspective of Arabic linguistic rules, the pronoun must refer to Allah, as the preceding phrase explains that He is the One who provides guidance to the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth. Therefore, at the linguistic level, the word نُور signifies Allah's guidance in the hearts of the believers.

The second stage, the mythological system, refers to the connotative level of meaning. Connotation is the layer of signification where the relationship between the *signifier* and *signified* contains implicit, indirect, and open-ended meanings. This system works by analyzing the context to uncover the deeper meaning of the word نُور as interpreted by Ibnu Katsir. In his tafsir,[42] the word نُور, which at the denotative level means Allah's guidance, also connotes the light within the heart of a believer. The structure of the verse suggests that the light in the believer's heart is like a niche within which there is a lamp. The believer's heart, in its purity, is likened to a lamp made of clear glass, and the divine guidance received from the Qur'an is likened to pure oil, symbolizing the clarity and balance that comes with divine wisdom.

Ibnu Katsir further elaborates by referring to a hadith narrated by Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) describes four types of hearts: the pure heart, which is like a lamp illuminating its surroundings; the sealed heart, which is closed off; the inverted heart, belonging to the hypocrite who knows the truth but rejects it; and the layered heart, containing both faith and hypocrisy.[43] In this hadith, the pure heart of a believer is said to contain a lamp that symbolizes the light of faith. This

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[40] Ardiyansyah and Dkk. h. 8

[41] Ibnu Katsir, 'Al-Misbah Al-Munir Fi Tahzib Tafsir Ibnu Katsir', Cet I, (Sygma Creative Media Corp, 2012). h. 613

[42] Katsir. h. 613

[43] Katsir. h. 616

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description adds a deeper, connotative layer to the meaning of نُور, portraying it as not only Allah's guidance but also the light of faith within the believer's heart.

Building upon this contextual interpretation, the next step is to identify the myth that emerges from the text at the level of code. According to Barthes, myth is a message containing underlying ideology.[44] Through the relationship between the *signifier* and the *signified*, a sign (or signification) is produced. While the contextual meaning of نُور refers to the light within the believer's heart, Ibnu Katsir further explains that this light is an allegory for obedience to Allah.[45] Therefore, Allah equates obedience to Him with light. The initial guidance that Allah places within a believer's heart purifies it, making the heart a reflection of the believer's devotion and submission to Allah's will. The relationship between the *signifier* (نُور), the *signified* (Allah's guidance), and the resulting sign (the light of faith) reveals the mythological layer of meaning: the believer's obedience to Allah.

Through this analysis, Barthes' semiotic theory demonstrates how the denotative and connotative meanings of نُور in Surah an-Nur verse 35 evolve into a myth of obedience to Allah. At the first level of signification, نُور denotes Allah's guidance in the hearts of believers. At the second level, or mythological layer, نُور connotes the light of faith and the believer's obedience to Allah. Thus, the application of Barthes' semiotic theory shows that *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* implicitly employs Barthes' model in interpreting this verse.

4) Roman Jakobson's Semiotics in the Interpretation of Tafsir Thabari

Roman Jakobson introduced a communication model based on linguistic systems, proposing that every verbal or written message involves six elements: the addresser (sender), the addressee (receiver), the context, the code, the contact, and the message. In the interpretation of Surah an-Nur verse 35 in *Tafsir Thabari*,[46] the focus is on the phrase "مَثَلُ نُوره كَمِشكُوةٍ فِيهَا مِصبَاحٌ". According to Jakobson's model, the addresser is Allah, and the addressees are the believers. The code of the message is represented by the word نُور, and the context is linguistic, specifically relating to the term *misykah*, which refers to a lamp's stand with a wick inside, similar to a niche within a wall that has no openings or external outlets. This analogy, which illustrates Allah's light, serves as the message, symbolizing the heart of the believer.

In this framework, the linguistic context explains that the *misykah* is like a hollow in a wall with no opening, representing the open interior, a space in the wall without gaps. The entire metaphor encapsulates the relationship

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[44] Ardiyansyah and Dkk. h. 8-10
[45] Katsir. h. 613
[46] Thabari, *Jami' Al-Bayan an Ta'wil Ayi Al-Qur'an*, Jilid 19 (Pustaka Azzam, 2007). h. 174

between the divine light (نُور) and the believer's heart. The message in this context is the comparison of Allah's light to the light within the heart of the believer. According to *Tafsir Thabari*,[47] the most accurate interpretation of this verse is that the metaphor describes the heart of the believer, illuminated by Allah's light. This light guides them to the straight path, as revealed to them, and they believe in and affirm what it contains. The believer's heart is likened to the *misykah*—a lamp's stand with a wick inside, placed in a niche that allows light to shine through without any obstructions. Thus, theoretically, according to Jakobson's code-message theory, the message concerning the heart of the believer originates from the addresser (Allah) and has a linguistic context. This message is delivered via written contact to the addressee (believers) through the code of the word نُور.

D. CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that semiotic theory, as proposed by key figures like Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Peirce, Roland Barthes, and Roman Jakobson, has been inherently applied by notable Qur'anic interpreters such as Jalalain, Ibnu Katsir, Quraish Shihab, and Thabari. Although these *mufassirun* did not explicitly reference semiotics, their interpretative approaches align with core semiotic principles.

In *Tafsir Jalalain*, Saussure's dyadic model of the *signifier* and *signified* is reflected in the treatment of the word نُور (light), which serves as a *signifier* for multiple *signifieds*, including light, guidance, and Islam. This confirms that Saussurean semiotics underpins Jalalain's exegesis, where linguistic structures are central to meaning-making. Similarly, Peircean semiotics is also present in Jalalain's interpretation through the triadic model of *representamen*, *object*, and *interpretant*. The word نُور acts as the *representamen*, the lamp as the *object*, and divine guidance as the evolving *interpretant*. This demonstrates that the triadic relationships inherent in Peirce's theory are effectively mirrored in the interpretation of light as both physical and spiritual illumination.

In *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*, Barthes' semiotic theory is utilized through the stages of denotation and connotation. The word نُور initially denotes Allah's guidance, while its connotation expands to represent the purity of a believer's heart, embodying obedience to Allah. This layered meaning exemplifies Barthes' notion of myth, where religious devotion is framed as a cultural ideology deeply embedded in the text. Lastly, Jakobson's communication model is clearly evident in *Tafsir Thabari*, where Allah is the sender, the believers are the recipients, and the word نُور serves as the linguistic code. The

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[47] Thabari. h. 174

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heart of the believer, illuminated by divine guidance, functions as the message, transmitted through the written contact of the Qur'an. Thabari's approach aligns with Jakobson's code-message theory, affirming that the communicative structure of the Qur'an reflects Jakobson's linguistic framework.

In conclusion, the application of semiotic theories in these *tafsir* texts highlights how Islamic scholars have, perhaps unknowingly, engaged with semiotic principles in their interpretations of the Qur'an. This underscores the relevance of semiotics as a methodological tool for understanding the multilayered meanings within sacred texts, demonstrating that semiotic frameworks, while developed in modern linguistic and philosophical traditions, have long been employed in classical exegesis to unravel the profound complexities of Qur'anic discourse. The study thus establishes that semiotic theory provides a valuable lens for examining how meaning is constructed and communicated in religious texts, reinforcing the interpretive depth of these seminal works.

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