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Polygamy in The Qur'an: An Integration of Classical Interpretation and Modern Linguistic Analysis

تعدد الزوجات في القرآن: دمج التفسير الكلاسيكي والتحليل اللغوي الحديث

Moch. Iqbal^{1*}, Ahmad Fihri², Fitri Zakiyah³,
Muhammad Choirin⁴, Hashim Hassan Hashim Osman⁵

^{1,3}Department of Arabic Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

²Department of Islamic Education, Universitas Prof. Dr. Hamka, Indonesia

⁴Department of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia

⁵Department of Call and Seerah, International University of Africa, Sudan

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Studies on the theme of polygamy in Surah An-Nisa' verses 3 and 129 have mostly been conducted from legal and social perspectives, while linguistic analysis of the verse's linguistic structure—which is crucial for its meaning—is still rare. Therefore, this study places the discussion within the framework of Arabic linguistics and Qur'anic semantics by re-examining the function of one of the theories in *Nahwu*, namely *ism maushūl*, the syntactic structure, and the pragmatic implications of the verse. **Methods:** This study employs a descriptive-analytical literature review method to identify the main syntactic elements, examine semantic relations, and interpret the meaning of the text in the verse, drawing on classical and modern Arabic linguistic theories. **Findings:** The results show that the use of *ism maushūl* "mā" in the verse on polygamy does not refer to women personally, but rather to certain social conditions that form the basis for the permissibility of polygamy. When examined linguistically, the verse emphasizes the existence of a "fair" condition that is pragmatically almost impossible to fulfill, so that polygamy is understood as an exception, not a recommendation. **Research Implications:** These findings demonstrate the importance of a linguistic approach in understanding legal verses and correcting common misconceptions about polygamy. This research also fills a gap in the study of Qur'anic linguistics.

KEYWORDS:

Arabic linguistics, Qur'anic semantics, polygamy, Surah An-Nisā', *ism maushūl*

المخلص

الغرض: ركزت معظم الدراسات التي تناولت موضوع تعدد الزوجات في سورة النساء، الآيتين 3 و 129، على المنظورين القانوني والاجتماعي، بينما لا يزال التحليل اللغوي لبنية الآية اللغوية -وهو أمر بالغ الأهمية لفهم معناها- نادرًا. لذا، تضع هذه الدراسة النقاش ضمن إطار اللسانيات العربية وعلم دلالات القرآن الكريم، وذلك بإعادة النظر في وظيفة أحد النظريات في علم النحو، ألا وهو الاسم الموصول، والقواعد النحوية، والدلالات التداولية للآية. **المنهج:**

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Correspondence:

Moch. Iqbal

Email:

moch.iqbal@umy.ac.id

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تستخدم هذه الدراسة منهج مراجعة الأدبيات الوصفية التحليلية لتحديد العناصر النحوية الرئيسية، ودراسة العلاقات الدلالية، وتفسير معنى النص في الآية، بالاستناد إلى النظريات اللغوية العربية الكلاسيكية والمعاصرة. **النتائج:** تُظهر النتائج أن استخدام الاسم الموصول "ما" في الآية المتعلقة بتعدد الزوجات لا يشير إلى النساء شخصيًا، بل إلى ظروف اجتماعية معينة تُشكل أساسًا لجواز تعدد الزوجات. عند دراسة الآية لغويًا، يتضح أنها تؤكد على وجود شرط "عادل" يكاد يكون من المستحيل عمليًا تحقيقه، بحيث يُفهم تعدد الزوجات على أنه استثناء، وليس توصية. **الدلالات البحثية:** تُبرز هذه النتائج أهمية المنهج اللغوي في فهم الآيات الشرعية وتصحيح المفاهيم الخاطئة الشائعة حول تعدد الزوجات. كما يُسهم هذا البحث في سدّ ثغرة في دراسة اللسانيات القرآنية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللسانيات العربية، الدلالات القرآنية، تعدد الزوجات، سورة النساء، الاسم الموصول

1. Introduction

Polygamy is a frequently debated issue in Islamic studies, from legal, social, and sociocultural perspectives. Polygamy is a form of marriage in Islamic teachings. Etymologically, polygamy is a derivation from the word *apolus*, which means "many", and *gamos*, which means "wife" or "partner". Meanwhile, terminologically, polygamy can be understood as a situation where a husband has more than one wife. So, a polygamous husband can have two to four wives simultaneously ¹.

If we examine both classical and modern fiqh literature, we find that polygamy has been analyzed primarily through a review of Islamic law, the history of the Prophet Muhammad's practice, and its social implications for Muslim society ². The studies used in this Fiqh literature emphasize only the normative and historical aspects, such as the legal permissibility of polygamy in The verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa', the condition of widows and orphans after the Battle of Uhud, which killed many male Muslim soldiers, and the principle of material justice that must be met for wives in polygamous marriages ³.

While these historical and legal studies are important to discuss, most of these studies tend to be merely descriptive and fail to explore the linguistic dimensions of the Quran that underlie the permissibility of polygamy in Islam ⁴. We can say that

¹ B F Adryanto, "Tafsir Maudh'ui Muhammad Quraish Shihab Dan Siti Musdah Mulia Terhadap Poligami," *Al-Syakhsyiyah: Journal of Law & Family* ..., 2022.

² Alean Al-Krenawi, "Polygamous Marriages: An Arab-Islamic Perspective," in *Couple Relationships in a Global Context*, 2020, 193–205, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37712-0_12.

³ Zulyadain Zulyadain and Wely Dozan, "The Interpretation Shift of Polygamy Verses in Surah An-Nisā'(4): 3 and Its Contextualization In the Contemporary Era (Interpretation Studies in the Classical, Medieval, Modern-Contemporary Era)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 30, no. 2 (December 2022): 169–85, <https://doi.org/10.24014/JUSH.V30I2.18361>.

⁴ Mokh. Fatkhur Rokhman, Khoirul Umami, and Muhammad Naufal Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā'

previous literature has not provided a systematic analysis of the language structure, meaning, and pragmatics of verses, so that the understanding of polygamy in the Qur'an only looks at it from a legal perspective, without highlighting how the language of the Qur'an intrinsically has an influence on the formation of social, ethical, and moral norms ⁵.

If the text of the Qur'anic verse is examined through syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic approaches, there is considerable potential to uncover the internal structure of the verse that governs interpersonal relationships in Islam, including the practice of polygamy ⁶. For example, the use of *ism maushūl* (the conjunction) "mā" in The verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa' can be analysed syntactically or through grammar to understand the logical relationship between certain social conditions and the permissibility of polygamy ⁷.

If studied from a semantic perspective, the meaning of the word and the context in the use of *ism maushūl* "mā" emphasizes the permissibility of polygamy, provided it is for the good of the family and social welfare, not merely for personal gain or the fulfilment of sexual desires ⁸. On the other hand, a pragmatic analysis emphasizes how the verse regulates interpersonal interactions, the mental readiness of the wife, and emotional justice within the household ⁹. If these two perspectives are combined, we will find that linguistic studies can bridge the gap between normative legal studies and classical interpretations, presenting the Holy Qur'an as a text that regulates social life norms through language in a rational and ethical manner ¹⁰.

Judging from most studies discussing polygamy in the Quran, these studies are still primarily descriptive and historical in nature. There are some studies which do not investigate sources prostituting the reasons of introducing a polygamous marriage by the personality of Prophet Muhammad SAW and social benefits to widows and orphans and Fiqh's equal treatment for wives. Nevertheless, most of these research papers do not base their conclusions on any formal linguistic model

[4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach," *HERMENEUTIK* 18, no. 1 (June 2024): 1, <https://doi.org/10.21043/HERMENEUTIK.V18I1.15778>.

⁵ Halima Ibrahim Bature and Babangida Abba, "The Concept and Ethics of Polygamy in Islamic Teachings," *International Journal of Education Effectiveness Research* 7, no. 8 (March 2025), <https://doi.org/10.70382/HIJEER.V06I8.017>; Gintare Sereikaite Motiejune, "Polygamy in Islam: A Study on Its Religious Justifications and Empowerment of Women Within Islamic Teachings," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 4, no. 1 (January 2025): 59–74, <https://doi.org/10.23917/QIST.V4I1.6948>.

⁶ Muhammad Mukhtar, Mardia Mardia, and Andika Aminuddin, "Study of the Thinking of Muhammad Syahrur and M. Quraish Shihab about the Concept of Polygamy (QS. An-Nisa/4:3)," *Lisan Al-Hal: Jurnal Pengembangan Pemikiran Dan Kebudayaan* 17, no. 1 (2023): 22–32, <https://doi.org/10.35316/lisanalhal>.

⁷ Rahmi Rahmi, "Poligami: Penafsiran Surat An Nisa' Ayat 3," *Kafa'ah: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Gender* Vol. V, no. No. 1 (2015): 114–28.

⁸ Motiejune, "Polygamy in Islam: A Study on Its Religious Justifications and Empowerment of Women Within Islamic Teachings."

⁹ Alfandi Ilham Safarsyah, Hasman Zhafiri Muhammad, and Tommy Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2 (2023).

¹⁰ Sofiyullahi Kamaldeen Kamaldeen, "Polygamy: A Restricted Opportunity in Islam," *Journal of Humanities* 13, no. 18 (2020): 2020.

or model theory such as arabic grammar theory, syntactic models and the semantic-pragmatic analysis to say nothing of contemporary linguistic exegesis methodology¹¹. This is a scholarly deficit, as polygamy has been analyzed in terms of law and history but not viewed from the Quranic Language-Base as a system having "norm-providing-and ethics-imposing function" emulating linguistic theory or Qur'anic discourse studies level. Thus, the statement that "no linguistic work has been devoted to this topic" must be backed up by a literature review proving what are logically prior methodic and theoretical weaknesses in previous studies¹².

This research is needed to fill this gap by emphasizing an interdisciplinary linguistic analysis of Surah An-Nisa', verse 3, combining syntax, semantics, and pragmatics with classical exegesis and contemporary perspectives. This approach enables us, as readers, to comprehend the verse more fully, where the language of the Qur'an should be understood not only as conveying normative commands, but also as regulating social norms and fostering good morals. By examining the use of the *isim maushūl* and the sentence structure in the verse, the aim of this study is to discover further how the Qur'an regulates the practice of polygamy in accordance with the logic of humanity, justice in the household, and ethics, while at the same time expanding the theoretical understanding of the linguistic function in the holy text¹³.

This research, in order to reach these ends, has the following main aims. The first step is the seeing of syntactic structure of verse and logical connection between socio-cultural conditions and the commandment of polygamy¹⁴. Second, it examines the *ism maushulu* and other key words in its structure (including operations of those neighbor with it) and how these impact on the family's objective conditions and welfare¹⁵. Third, the pragmatic aspects of the verse: communication and emotional unbalance in a situation where the wife is prepared mentally and emotionally, and also an implicature on reciprocity between feelings are also analyzed. Fourth, linguistic findings are compared with scriptural exegeses to determine how the Quran linguistically converges upon or diverges from historical and legal interpretations¹⁶. Within this framework, the research not only answers descriptive questions about the law of polygamy but also confirms the linguistic, theoretical, and methodological significance of contemporary Quranic studies¹⁷.

¹¹ Bature and Abba, "The Concept and Ethics of Polygamy in Islamic Teachings."

¹² Zulyadain and Dozan, "The Interpretation Shift of Polygamy Verses in Surah An-Nisā'(4): 3 and Its Contextualization In the Contemporary Era (Interpretation Studies in the Classical, Medieval, Modern-Contemporary Era)."

¹³ Rokhman, Umami, and Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā' [4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach."

¹⁴ Rahmi, "Poligami: Penafsiran Surat An Nisa' Ayat 3."

¹⁵ Mukhtar, Mardia, and Aminuddin, "Study of the Thinking of Muhammad Syahrur and M. Quraish Shihab about the Concept of Polygamy (QS. An-Nisa/4:3)."

¹⁶ Rokhman, Umami, and Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā' [4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach."

¹⁷ Motiejune, "Polygamy in Islam: A Study on Its Religious Justifications and Empowerment of Women Within Islamic Teachings."

Thus, this research is expected to make significant academic contributions in two main dimensions. First, from a Quranic linguistic perspective, this research demonstrates how syntax, semantics, and pragmatics can be used to understand social imperatives rationally and ethically¹⁸. Second, from a polygamy study perspective, this research offers a deeper understanding of the historical, social, and human motivations behind the Prophet Muhammad's actions, supported by an analysis of the Quranic language. From this, we can see that the practice of polygamy is not only viewed as a legal norm, but also as a complex sociolinguistic phenomenon¹⁹. Therefore, this interdisciplinary approach opens up space for further research in examining other verses that are also related to social and moral norms, namely by using systematic modern linguistic methods and integrating classical interpretative, semantic and pragmatic perspectives²⁰.

2. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research design. This approach was chosen because the objects of study are two verses of the Quran (Surah An-Nisa', verse 3 and verse 129), which are analysed through relevant primary and secondary sources within the disciplines of Arabic linguistics and Quranic language studies²¹. As a textual analysis tool, the method gives researchers the ability to explore syntactic structure, semantics and pragmatics of the verses in deep with reference to traditional and modern theories of Arabic language. What is more a library approach also provides the researchers to compare the traditional interpretations with those of modern linguistic findings²².

The data in this research are: Quranic verses as the primary data, and some linguistic references and tafsir books as secondary data²³. The linguistic sources were selected for their authoritative and academic significance, taking from classical Arabic grammar works such as Sibawayh's *Al-Kitāb*, Ibn Hishām's *Mughni al-Labīb* and *Sharḥ Qaṭr al-Nadā* to modern linguistic references on semantic theory, syntax, and discourse analysis down to authoritative dictionaries like *Lisān al-'Arab* and *al-Mu'jam al-Wasiṭ*²⁴. Furthermore, this study also refers to major tafsir works such as *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, *al-Qurṭubī*, *Ibn 'Āsyūr*, and *Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī* as comparative material

¹⁸ Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

¹⁹ Kamaldeen, "Polygamy: A Restricted Opportunity in Islam."

²⁰ Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

²¹ Zulyadain and Dozan, "The Interpretation Shift of Polygamy Verses in Surah An-Nisā'(4): 3 and Its Contextualization In the Contemporary Era (Interpretation Studies in the Classical, Medieval, Modern-Contemporary Era)."

²² Sam'ani Sam'ani, "Maghza Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Interpretation Concept As a Counter of Polygamy Pragmatism," *Religia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 25, no. 2 (October 2022): 135-48, <https://doi.org/10.28918/RELIGIA.V25I2.817>.

²³ Najmeh Mohayei et al., "Stylistics of Surah An-Nisa Based on Linguistic, Literary and Intellectual Analysis," *Journal of Quran Stylistics* 14, no. 2 (2021): 55-78.

²⁴ Mohammed H. AlAqad, Mohammad Amin Hawamdeh, and Kais Kadhim, "Reframing the Semantic and Pragmatic Aspects of Pun Words in the Holy Quran from Arabic into English," *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities* 4, no. 1 (January 2023), <https://doi.org/10.58256/RJAH.V4I1.884>.

to ensure alignment between linguistic analysis and the interpreters' understanding²⁵.

Data were collected through a process of identifying linguistic elements contained in the verses, such as key words and phrases, clause structures, syntactic relations, and grammatical forms that determine meaning²⁶. The researchers wrote *i'rāb* analyses of verses sourced from numerous sources, tracing word roots, lexical meanings, and semantic relationships between linguistic elements²⁷. Each linguistic finding was then compiled and categorized based on the type of analysis required: syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, or Qur'anic discourse analysis²⁸.

Several interrelated stages were followed in the analysis. The first stage is syntactic analysis, which includes determining the grammatical function of each word in the verse, identifying subject-predicate relations, and analysing the conditional and answer-conditional structures that form the basic pattern in Surah An-Nisa' verses 3 and 129²⁹. The second stage is semantic analysis, which focuses on lexical and contextual meaning using the theory of *dalālah* in Arabic linguistics, including *dalālah al-muṭābaqah*, *al-tadammun*, and *al-iltizām*³⁰. The third stage is a pragmatic analysis that looks at the communicative purpose of the verse, the implicature that is inferred from its linguistic construction, and how the conditional structure is used to limit the permissibility of polygamy³¹. The fourth stage is a discourse analysis of the Qur'an, which examines the meaningful relationship between verses 3 and 129 as a unified argument about justice in family relationships³².

To determine the validity of the linguistic interpretation, this study uses several evaluative criteria. The meaning and structure described must be consistent with the grammatical and linguistic rules applicable in the Arabic scholarly tradition³³. The semantic interpretation must also be in harmony with the general use of words in the context of the Quran³⁴. Furthermore, the pragmatic meaning of the verse must align with the communicative purpose and rhetorical direction of Surah An-Nisa', which generally emphasizes social justice³⁵.

²⁵ Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

²⁶ Mohayei et al., "Stylistics of Surah An-Nisa Based on Linguistic, Literary and Intellectual Analysis."

²⁷ Farida Repelita Waty Kembaren et al., "Translation of Arabic Polysemy in the Holy Quran: A Comparative Analysis," *Scope: Journal of English Language Teaching* 9, no. 1 (November 2024): 177–84, <https://doi.org/10.30998/SCOPE.V9I1.20772>.

²⁸ Kamaldeen, "Polygamy: A Restricted Opportunity in Islam."

²⁹ Rahmi, "Poligami: Penafsiran Surat An Nisa' Ayat 3."

³⁰ Kembaren et al., "Translation of Arabic Polysemy in the Holy Quran: A Comparative Analysis."

³¹ Sam'ani, "Maghza Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Interpretation Concept As a Counter of Polygamy Pragmatism."

³² Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

³³ Kembaren et al., "Translation of Arabic Polysemy in the Holy Quran: A Comparative Analysis."

³⁴ Zulyadain and Dozan, "The Interpretation Shift of Polygamy Verses in Surah An-Nisā'(4): 3 and Its Contextualization In the Contemporary Era (Interpretation Studies in the Classical, Medieval, Modern-Contemporary Era)."

³⁵ Rokhman, Umami, and Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā' [4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach."

Then, all analysis results were verified through source triangulation, which involved comparing linguistic findings with classical and modern interpretations, as well as linguistic literature on the Qur'an, to ensure accuracy and precision of meaning ³⁶. By using this systematic methodology, this study aims to ensure that linguistic analysis is not merely descriptive but also constitutes an adequate scientific approach to explore and expand the discussion of the Quranic message on polygamy in greater depth and objectively ³⁷. This methodological approach can also complete the previous studies that have not utilized linguistic tools to understand verses related to polygamy ³⁸.

3. Results And Discussion

Marriage and Polygamy from an Islamic Perspective

Marriage in Islam is viewed as a *sunnah* (religious custom) that holds significant value in building human life. Marriage is not simply an emotional relationship between a man and a woman, but also a social, moral, and spiritual institution clearly regulated by Sharia ³⁹. The Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized the importance of marriage for Muslims, even stating that those who refuse to marry without a valid reason can be reminded to return to the righteous path (Faris, 2024). This demonstrates that Islam views marriage not only as an individual right but also as a social obligation that supports the stability and well-being of society. Marriage provides a space for family formation, provides protection for women, and facilitates the continuation of generations, thus having broad moral and social impacts ⁴⁰.

In Islamic law, marriage forms a formal legal bond between a man and a woman, encompassing mutually binding rights and obligations. The rights of husband and wife are regulated to create balance, protection, and harmony in the household. Islam emphasizes that the purpose of marriage is to create *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (affection) between husband and wife, as emphasized in the Qur'an Surah Ar-Rum verse 21. In this context, marriage becomes a means to achieve higher spiritual and social goals, namely building a harmonious family and a prosperous society ⁴¹.

Polygamy, as part of marriage in Islam, has clear and conditional rules. Polygamy is not obligatory, but it is permitted under the condition of '*adl*' (justice) towards all wives ⁴². The classical Islamic jurisprudence explains that a husband who wishes to marry more than one wife must be able to fulfill the principle of justice in

³⁶ Mohayei et al., "Stylistics of Surah An-Nisa Based on Linguistic, Literary and Intellectual Analysis."

³⁷ Rokhman, Umami, and Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā' [4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach."

³⁸ Kamaldeen, "Polygamy: A Restricted Opportunity in Islam."

³⁹ A I Cahyani, "Poligami Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam," ... : *Peradilan Dan Hukum Keluarga Islam*, 2018.

⁴⁰ Muhamad Ismail, Robitho Alam Hadi Faisal, and Zainur Zainur, "Marriage and Divorce in Islamic Law: Sociological Implications for Modern Muslim Societies," *Journal of Islamic Law El Madani* 4, no. 1 (February 2024): 25–37, <https://doi.org/10.55438/JILE.V4I1.142>.

⁴¹ Ismail, Faisal, and Zainur.

⁴² Mukhtar, Mardia, and Aminuddin, "Study of the Thinking of Muhammad Syahrur and M. Quraish Shihab about the Concept of Polygamy (QS. An-Nisa/4:3)."

terms of income distribution, nighttime, attention, and other social responsibilities ⁴³. The verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa' emphasizes that permission for polygamy is granted under certain conditions, particularly to provide protection for widows, orphans, and women in need, so that the practice of polygamy has a strong social and humanitarian basis ⁴⁴.

According to Nasaruddin Umar, the concept of polygamy (*ta'addud al-zaujāt*) in Fiqh is generally understood as a husband having two to four wives concurrently. Polygamy cannot be known with certainty when it first appeared. For thousands of years, before the arrival of Islam, polygamy had become a tradition that was considered normal ⁴⁵.

The history of polygamy before and after the arrival of Islam shows that this practice existed in Arab society, but Islam established regulations limiting the practice to prevent injustice. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself practiced polygamy not out of lust, but for social, political, and humanitarian reasons ⁴⁶. His marriages to certain women, including widows and women with social responsibilities, were intended to provide protection, reward social services, and strengthen the solidarity of the Muslim community. Thus, polygamy in Islam is always linked to the goals of social welfare and justice, not merely the fulfilment of personal needs ⁴⁷.

From a moral and ethical perspective, Islam emphasizes that the practice of polygamy must consider the mental readiness of the wife, the emotional well-being of the family, and the stability of the household. The command to practice polygamy in Surah An-Nisa', verse 3, uses the term *maushūl li ghair al-'āqil* (the conjunction for something that has no sense), indicating that polygamy must be rational, objective, and consider real conditions, rather than arbitrary ⁴⁸. This demonstrates that the Quran not only provides normative permission but also guides Muslims to uphold the principles of justice, social welfare, and humanitarian responsibility in every act of marriage and polygamy ⁴⁹.

Furthermore, marriage and polygamy, from an Islamic perspective, also have broad social dimensions. Marriage helps build social networks, strengthens solidarity between families, and creates protection mechanisms for women and children.

⁴³ Bature and Abba, "The Concept and Ethics of Polygamy in Islamic Teachings."

⁴⁴ Rokhman, Umami, and Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā' [4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach."

⁴⁵ Nur Afni Khafsoh, Rukmaniyah Rukmaniyah, and Karina Rahmi Siti Farhani, "Praktik Poligami Di Indonesia Dalam Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab, Hussein Muhammad, Dan Nasaruddin Umar (the Practice of Polygamy in Indonesia within the Perspectives of M. Quraish Shihab, Hussein Muhammad, and Nasaruddin Umar)," *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 16, no. 2 (April 2022): 475–94, <https://doi.org/10.14421/JSR.V16I2.2307>.

⁴⁶ Motiejune, "Polygamy in Islam: A Study on Its Religious Justifications and Empowerment of Women Within Islamic Teachings."

⁴⁷ Rokhman, Umami, and Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā' [4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach."

⁴⁸ Rahmi, "Poligami: Penafsiran Surat An Nisa' Ayat 3."

⁴⁹ Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

Polygamy, when practiced fairly, serves as a social tool to protect the well-being of vulnerable groups while maintaining overall societal stability. Historical, Islamic, and linguistic perspectives emphasize that marriage and polygamy in Islam are not simply private acts, but integral parts of a structured social and ethical system ⁵⁰.

Therefore, an understanding of marriage and polygamy in Islam must be multidimensional. Legally, marriage is a formal bond that confers rights and obligations; morally, the purpose of marriage is to create peace and compassion; socially, marriage and polygamy serve to protect the vulnerable and strengthen community solidarity; and linguistically, the language of the Quran provides rational, just, and ethical guidance for the responsible practice of polygamy. This holistic approach enables Muslims to understand marriage and polygamy as just, beneficial, and recognized institutions within the context of human life ⁵¹.

The Prophet Muhammad's Motivation for Polygamy: Historical, Social, and Humanitarian Perspectives

The Prophet Muhammad's polygamy is often misunderstood when viewed solely from the perspective of personal desire or sexual urges. However, the history of his marriages demonstrates that every act of polygamy was undertaken with profound historical, social, and humanitarian considerations. After the death of Khadijah, the Prophet Muhammad SAW did not immediately remarry for several years. This indicates that his motivation for polygamy was not simply driven by desire, but rather by mature ethical and social considerations. His marriage to Saudah binti Zam'ah, for instance, was carried out to provide protection for widows who faced loneliness and social pressure, so that the Prophet Muhammad SAW practiced polygamy as a form of social and humanitarian responsibility ⁵².

From a historical perspective, the Prophet Muhammad's polygamy is closely related to the situation of Muslim society in the early Hijrah. The Battle of Uhud, which killed many Muslim men, left many widows and orphans socially and economically vulnerable. Verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa' was revealed in this context, permitting polygamy as a means of protection for those abandoned by martyred husbands ⁵³. The Prophet's marriages to women such as Hafsa bint Umar bin Khattab and Zainab bint Khuzaimah can be understood as a direct implementation of this verse, where polygamy was used to meet social and humanitarian needs, not simply for personal gratification ⁵⁴.

⁵⁰ Mukhtar, Mardia, and Aminuddin, "Study of the Thinking of Muhammad Syahrur and M. Quraish Shihab about the Concept of Polygamy (QS. An-Nisa/4:3)."

⁵¹ Kamaldeen, "Polygamy: A Restricted Opportunity in Islam."

⁵² Motiejune, "Polygamy in Islam: A Study on Its Religious Justifications and Empowerment of Women Within Islamic Teachings."

⁵³ Rokhman, Umami, and Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā' [4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach."

⁵⁴ Sam'ani, "Maghza Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Interpretation Concept As a Counter of Polygamy Pragmatism."

The social motivation behind the Prophet's polygamy is also reflected in his concern for the emotional well-being of his wives ⁵⁵. The Prophet chose not to marry women who were too jealous or mentally unprepared for polygamy, as explained in the narrative about the Ansar women. This demonstrates the Prophet's concern for the psychological well-being of his wives, ensuring that the practice of polygamy did not cause discord in the household. This principle emphasizes that polygamy must be practiced rationally, taking into account mental readiness, and minimizing interpersonal conflict, thereby achieving social and humanitarian goals ⁵⁶.

Furthermore, the Prophet's polygamy also had political and strategic dimensions. Marriage to certain women not only protected them personally but also strengthened social ties between various Muslim groups, including *muhajirin* (those who migrated from Mecca to Medina) and *anshar* (the Medinan community who helped and accompanied *muhajirin*) ⁵⁷. His marriage to Umm Salamah, the widow of Abu Salamah, for example, not only provided protection for a widow but also strengthened social and political ties between the families of the Companions and the newly formed Muslim community. From this perspective, the Prophet's polygamy served a broad purpose, encompassing humanitarian, social, and political stability within Muslim society at the time ⁵⁸.

The humanitarian motives behind the Prophet's polygamy are also evident in his choice of wives, who exhibited social concerns, such as Zainab bint Khuzaimah, known as the "Mother of the Poor" for her concern for orphans and the vulnerable. The Prophet's marriage to Zainab was not for personal gain, but rather as a token of appreciation for her social dedication and to ensure the protection of those in need. Thus, each of the Prophet's polygamous practices was contextual, rational, and social, separating humanitarian motives from often misunderstood sexual urges ⁵⁹.

Overall, the Prophet's motivation for polygamy can be seen as a combination of historical, social, and humanitarian considerations. Historically, the practice emerged as a response to the plight of early Muslim society, including widows and orphans left behind by martyred husbands ⁶⁰. From a social perspective, polygamy is used to protect women and strengthen relationships between Muslim groups. From a humanitarian perspective, polygamy is practiced with consideration for the mental readiness of the wife, her emotional well-being, and the social contribution of the prospective new wife. By comprehensively understanding these motivations, the Prophet Muhammad's polygamy is no longer viewed as an individual act focused on

⁵⁵ Motiejune, "Polygamy in Islam: A Study on Its Religious Justifications and Empowerment of Women Within Islamic Teachings."

⁵⁶ Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

⁵⁷ Rahmi, "Poligami: Penafsiran Surat An Nisa' Ayat 3."

⁵⁸ Rokhman, Umami, and Hakim, "Reconstructing the Meaning of Polygamy in the Context of Gender Relations: Study of Surah an-Nisā' [4]: 3 Using the Ma'nā-Cum-Maghzā Approach."

⁵⁹ S Ropiah, "Analisis Kritis Poligami Dalam Islam (Alasan Pro Dan Kontra Poligami)," *Al-Afkar: Journal For Islamic Studies*, 2018.

⁶⁰ Zulyadain and Dozan, "The Interpretation Shift of Polygamy Verses in Surah An-Nisā' (4): 3 and Its Contextualization In the Contemporary Era (Interpretation Studies in the Classical, Medieval, Modern-Contemporary Era)."

personal satisfaction, but as a practice that prioritizes justice, social welfare, and humanitarian responsibility ⁶¹.

Furthermore, this historical and social study provides a crucial foundation for understanding the contemporary implementation of polygamy. By emulating the Prophet's principles, polygamy can be understood as an act that must consider objective, social, and ethical aspects. This emphasizes that polygamy, although permitted in Islam, should not be carried out carelessly, but should take into account the principles of justice, family welfare, and broader social benefits ⁶².

The Concept of Justice in Polygamy: A Fiqh and Linguistic Perspective

Justice is a fundamental principle that is the main requirement for the practice of polygamy according to Islamic teachings. In the context of Islamic jurisprudence, the justice of polygamy is material and can be measured objectively, including the division of nighttime, maintenance, and equal treatment for all wives ⁶³. This principle of justice ensures that a husband can distribute the rights of his wives equally, so that no one feels neglected or disadvantaged. This material justice serves as a concrete measure that can be applied practically, in contrast to emotional justice, such as love or affection, which is subjective and immeasurable. In this regard, Islamic jurisprudence emphasizes that justice is an obligation that must be carried out according to one's ability, and any shortcomings in the emotional aspect will be accounted for before God ⁶⁴.

The practice of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is a concrete example of how this principle of justice is put into practice ⁶⁵. Although he loved Aisha (RA) more than his other wives, he divided nighttime hours, attention, and household responsibilities fairly. Aisha (RA) herself emphasized that the Prophet Muhammad SAW exercised justice to the best of his ability, and he sought God's protection so that any shortcomings in compassion would not be attributed to him (Narrated by Abu Daud, Ahmad, Tirmidhi, and Nasa'i) ⁶⁶. This demonstrates that justice in polygamy encompasses legal, social, and ethical dimensions, where material distribution is an objective measure, while emotional justice is a spiritual responsibility that must be protected.

⁶¹ Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

⁶² Kamaldeen, "Polygamy: A Restricted Opportunity in Islam."

⁶³ Fauzi Rahmat Pamula, Sayehu Sayehu, and Nafan Torihoran, "Polygamy in Islamic Law: A Meta-Analysis and Systematic Review," *Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 2, no. 01 (June 2025): 11-22, <https://doi.org/10.63731/JHK.V2I01.21>.

⁶⁴ A Supangat, "Konsep Adil Dalam Poligami Menurut Hukum Islam," *At-Tawazun: Journal of Islamic Economics and ...*, 2020.

⁶⁵ Marliana Ulfa, Norhayati Abu Bakar, and Muhammad Faizal Abd Rahman, "Analysis of Muhammad Shahrur's Thoughts on the Concept of Justice in Polygamy: A Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Law," *Al-Muqaranah: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab Dan Hukum* 2, no. 2 (September 2024): 85-93, <https://doi.org/10.55210/JPMH.V2I2.449>.

⁶⁶ Rahmin T. Husain et al., "Polygamy in the Perspective of Hadith: Justice and Equality among Wives in A Polygamy Practice," *Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 23, no. 1 (July 2019): 93-104, <https://doi.org/10.29300/MADANIA.V23I1.1954>.

From a linguistic perspective, this principle of justice is also reflected in the structure and wording of Surah An-Nisa', verse 129. This verse emphasizes that a husband must strive to be as just as possible, especially in terms of time, sustenance, and attention to his wife. The linguistic structure of this verse contains words that limit the practice of polygamy to conditions under which justice can be upheld. For example, conjunctions and sentence structure serve as rational constraints on polygamy, preventing it from being practiced arbitrarily without regard for objective capabilities and social benefits. This grammatical analysis confirms that the language of the Quran serves as both legal instruction and a source of ethical and social guidance ⁶⁷.

Semantic studies reveal that the principle of justice in this verse extends beyond material aspects to encompass social and humanitarian contexts. For example, justice requires a husband to consider his wife's mental well-being, her psychological impact on him, and the overall well-being of the family. This aligns with the social context of the Prophet's time, where marriage was established to protect widows, orphans, and women in need ⁶⁸. Therefore, understanding justice in polygamy cannot be separated from the sociocultural context in which this verse was revealed.

A pragmatic approach adds another dimension to the concept of justice. Pragmatics emphasizes that justice is not only about the distribution of material goods, but also about maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships. For instance, a husband who is able to manage emotions and conflict within the household, pay attention to his wife's feelings, and balance his own interests has fulfilled the principle of justice. In this regard, Surah An-Nisa' verse 129 serves as a linguistic and ethical guide, emphasizing the need for caution and rational consideration in the practice of polygamy ⁶⁹.

This integration of Islamic jurisprudence and linguistics demonstrates that the principle of justice in polygamy is multidimensional. From a fiqh perspective, justice can be measured through the distribution of material rights and responsibilities ⁷⁰. From a linguistic perspective, the sentence structure and word choice in the Quran provide rational boundaries and ethical guidelines for husbands. Meanwhile, from a pragmatic perspective, justice also involves social and emotional aspects, such as the

⁶⁷ Sugiyarni Sugiyarni, "Semantic Analysis: The Fair in Surah an-Nisa, Verses 3 and 129," in *Annual International Conference on Islamic Education for Students*, vol. 1 (IAIN Salatiga, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.18326/AICOIES.V1I1.227>; Miratul Hayah Binte Abdul Lateef, "The Prominent Drawbacks of Misunderstanding the Concept of Justice on Polygamy Between Verse 3 and Verse 129 (Surah An-Nisa') & Selected Misconceptions on The Topic," in *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Quran as Foundation of Civilization (SWAT 2023)* (FPQS, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 2023), 4-5.

⁶⁸ Hafiz Fazale Haq Haqqani and Muhammad Mushtaq Ahmed, "Polygamy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): A Research Analysis of Critics' Objections in the Light of Dr. Adil Salahi's Book 'Muhammad: His Character and Conduct,'" *Al-ISRA* 3, no. 2 (December 2024): 01-11.

⁶⁹ Lateef, "The Prominent Drawbacks of Misunderstanding the Concept of Justice on Polygamy Between Verse 3 and Verse 129 (Surah An-Nisa') & Selected Misconceptions on The Topic."

⁷⁰ A. Kumedi Ja'far, Rudi Santoso, and Agus Hermanto, "A Sociohistorical Study of Polygamy and Justice," in *Proceedings of the 1st Raden Intan International Conference on Muslim Societies and Social Sciences (RIICMuSSS 2019)*, vol. 492 (Atlantis Press, 2020), 338-42, <https://doi.org/10.2991/ASSEHR.K.201113.064>.

wife's mental readiness, interpersonal relationships, and family well-being. This multidimensional approach demonstrates that the practice of polygamy in Islam is not simply a normative rule, but rather an action that must be carried out with full awareness of social obligations, objective capabilities, and the holistic principle of justice.⁷¹

Furthermore, linguistic analysis also demonstrates novelty in polygamy research. By combining Fiqh, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic perspectives, we can understand Surah An-Nisa' verse 129 not only as a legal basis but also as a rational, ethical, and social guide. This allows for a more comprehensive interpretation, connecting the language of the Quran with concrete practices in domestic life and social welfare. This approach opens up opportunities for interdisciplinary research, combining exegesis, linguistics, and sociolinguistics to understand polygamy holistically and contextually⁷².

Linguistic Analysis of The verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa': Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics

The verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa' discusses the permission of polygamy in Islam, but this verse possesses a very complex depth of meaning when analysed from a linguistic perspective. One important aspect that has attracted the attention of experts is the use of the term "*ism maushūl*" in the verse. In Arabic, *ism maushūl* functions as a relative conjunction connecting two clauses or phrases and has different meanings depending on the context in which it is used⁷³. In this verse, the word "*mā*" is used as *ism maushūl li ghair al-'āqil* (the conjunction for something that has no sense), emphasizes that the command to permit polygamy applies only rationally and conditionally, not freely or arbitrarily. From a syntactic perspective, the sentence structure of this verse establishes a strict logical relationship between social conditions, the husband's responsibilities, and the principle of justice, so that the command to permit polygamy cannot be separated from its concrete and objective context⁷⁴.

The syntactic analysis shows that the wording of this verse is designed to limit the literal interpretation of polygamy. The conjunction *ma* directs the husband's actions to consider the objective circumstances and needs of the first wife, orphans, or widows left behind by the husband. In other words, the syntax of this verse functions as a limiting mechanism, linguistically preventing the practice of polygamy from becoming an unlimited right. The classical interpreters, such as Al-Qurtubi, explain that this structure emphasizes social constraints: a husband may only marry

⁷¹ Lateef, "The Prominent Drawbacks of Misunderstanding the Concept of Justice on Polygamy Between Verse 3 and Verse 129 (Surah An-Nisa') & Selected Misconceptions on The Topic."

⁷² Sugiyarni, "Semantic Analysis: The Fair in Surah an-Nisa, Verses 3 and 129."

⁷³ Sugiyarni.

⁷⁴ Lateef, "The Prominent Drawbacks of Misunderstanding the Concept of Justice on Polygamy Between Verse 3 and Verse 129 (Surah An-Nisa') & Selected Misconceptions on The Topic."

another woman if he is able to treat her fairly and ensure the welfare of the family, thus functioning as a legal instrument integrated with social ethics.⁷⁵

From a semantic perspective, *li ghair al-'āqil* has a very rich meaning. This word not only indicates the object of the action but also emphasizes rationality, consideration of the benefit, and the objective conditions that must be met before polygamy can be practiced. Modern semantic analysis highlights that the use of this word emphasizes that the woman chosen as a second or third wife must bring good to the family, for example by assisting a childless first wife, caring for sick family members, or making other social contributions. This semantic meaning broadens the understanding that polygamy is not simply a matter of personal satisfaction, but rather a rational and beneficial social practice⁷⁶.

Furthermore, a pragmatic perspective highlights the interpersonal relationships and social context governed by this verse. Pragmatics emphasizes that any practice of polygamy must consider the mental readiness of the first wife, the potential for emotional conflict, and the overall family dynamics. This verse uses a language structure that subtly conveys ethical and moral principles, so that polygamy should not be practiced if it would disrupt household harmony. This aligns with the Qur'anic principle that marriage aims to create tranquillity (*sakinah*) in the household, as affirmed in Surah Ar-Rum [30]:21⁷⁷. Pragmatic analysis shows that the language of the Qur'an functions not only as normative instruction but also as an ethical guide that regulates social and emotional relationships between family members⁷⁸.

The integration of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics demonstrates that Surah An-Nisa verse 3 possesses a holistic depth of meaning. The syntax establishes logical structure and objective boundaries, semantics affirms rationality and social benefits, while pragmatics ensures emotional balance and interpersonal interactions. Classical exegesis emphasizes the social and historical context, while grammatical analysis highlights the use of relative conjunctions and sentence structure. Modern analysis, on the other hand, connects linguistic meaning to contemporary social implications. Thus, this multidimensional linguistic approach renders this verse as a rational, ethical, and social instruction, conveyed through carefully crafted and precise language⁷⁹.

So, this linguistic analysis emphasizes the novelty of the research by systematically combining classical, grammatical, and modern approaches. The classical exegesis provides the historical basis, while grammatical analysis

⁷⁵ Haqqani and Ahmed, "Polygamy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): A Research Analysis of Critics' Objections in the Light of Dr. Adil Salahi's Book ' Muhammad: His Character and Conduct.'"

⁷⁶ Sugiyarni, "Semantic Analysis: The Fair in Surah an-Nisa, Verses 3 and 129."

⁷⁷ Haqqani and Ahmed, "Polygamy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): A Research Analysis of Critics' Objections in the Light of Dr. Adil Salahi's Book ' Muhammad: His Character and Conduct.'"

⁷⁸ Ulfa, Bakar, and Rahman, "Analysis of Muhammad Shahrur's Thoughts on the Concept of Justice in Polygamy: A Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Law."

⁷⁹ Haqqani and Ahmed, "Polygamy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): A Research Analysis of Critics' Objections in the Light of Dr. Adil Salahi's Book ' Muhammad: His Character and Conduct.'"

demonstrates the precision of language and the limitations of the command. In contrast, modern semantics and pragmatics emphasize the social, psychological, and ethical implications of polygamy. This approach demonstrates that understanding the Qur'an cannot be limited to legal interpretation but must be analysed through linguistic dimensions encompassing syntax, semantics, and pragmatics to produce a comprehensive and contextual understanding ⁸⁰.

Comparison of Classical, Grammatical, and Modern Analysis of Interpretation

The classical interpretation of verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa' emphasizes the historical, social, and legal context behind the revelation of the verse (*asbab al-nuzul*). Classical exegetes such as Al-Qurtubi and Al-Tha'labi explain that this verse was revealed after the Battle of Uhud, when many men were killed in battle, leaving their wives as widows and their children as orphans in need of protection. In classical exegesis, polygamy is seen as a rational socio-cultural solution to maintain social and family welfare. The exegetes emphasized that polygamy must be practiced fairly, not only in terms of the distribution of property but also in terms of care, responsibility, and the protection of wives' rights. Therefore, classical exegesis viewed polygamy as a concrete social teaching relevant to the conditions of Arab society at that time ⁸¹.

Moreover, the principle of *maslahah*, or benefit, also echoes within classical understandings in terms of polygamy. For instance, the marriages of the Prophet with widows and women who had social responsibilities, such as taking care of orphans, are understood in terms of concrete applications of this verse. Al-Qurtubi offers an explanation that this verse does not give unconditional license for polygamy but restricts the practice of polygamy to conditions where the husband can do justice and protect women at risk. The classical interpretations invariably stress that polygamy is not for the gratification of personal desires but rather for a socially beneficial action ⁸².

The grammatical approach highlights the linguistic structure of the Quran, particularly the use of the *ism mausul* and relative conjunctions in the verse. In verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa', the use of the *ism mausul li ghair al-'aql* indicates specific restrictions on the practice of polygamy. Grammatical analysis emphasizes that these conjunctions are neither general nor flexible, but rather provide rational guidance for husbands to act according to their abilities and circumstances. For example, the use of *ma* indicates that polygamy is permitted only when there is an objective need, such as helping a childless first wife or caring for a sick relative. In other words, the

⁸⁰ Basharat Hussain and Abdul Majeed Dar, "Literary and Linguistic Excellence of The Qur'an: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Scientific Research (IJAMSR)* ISSN 2581, no. 4281 (2019): 82.

⁸¹ Ilyas Daud, "The Meaning of Justice in the Qur'an and the Implications of Islamic Law on Polygamy Permits: Harmonization of Islamic Law and Positive Law with the Maqasidi Tafsir Approach," *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 9, no. 1 (April 2025): 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.29240/ALQUDS.V9I1.11356>.

⁸² Zulyadain and Dozan, "The Interpretation Shift of Polygamy Verses in Surah An-Nisā'(4): 3 and Its Contextualization In the Contemporary Era (Interpretation Studies in the Classical, Medieval, Modern-Contemporary Era)."

syntactic structure of the verse limits the practice of polygamy and ensures that the principles of justice and rationality are maintained ⁸³.

The grammatical analysis also emphasizes the role of conjunctions in establishing logical relationships between phrases in the verse. The word "mā" indicates that the command to permit polygamy is conditional and not a free right for the husband. This sentence structure implicitly emphasizes that polygamy must be in accordance with practical abilities, social responsibilities, and the ability to uphold justice. This type of analysis demonstrates that the Quran uses language as a tool to simultaneously uphold social, legal, and ethical norms, rather than simply providing abstract normative instructions ⁸⁴.

Modern approaches, which encompass semantic and pragmatic analysis, complement the previous two approaches by highlighting the meaning of the words and the social implications of the verse. Modern semantic analysis emphasizes that *ism maushūl li ghair al-'āqil* contains rational meaning and social benefits: the practice of polygamy should benefit the family, for example, by assisting an infertile first wife, caring for sick family members, and maintaining social welfare. From a pragmatic perspective, this verse also emphasizes interpersonal interactions, such as the mental readiness of the first wife, the social impact, and the contribution of the prospective second wife to the family. This approach emphasizes that polygamy must consider social, psychological, and ethical relationships, so that its practice is not measured solely by formal law ⁸⁵.

By combining these three approaches, Surah An-Nisa verse 3 possesses a holistic depth of meaning. The classical exegesis provides historical and social context, while grammatical analysis highlights linguistic structure and syntactic constraints. Modern analysis, on the other hand, reveals semantic meaning and practical implications. These three perspectives complement each other to provide a comprehensive understanding of polygamy, demonstrating that this practice is not a husband's discretionary right, but rather an act that must be undertaken with full awareness of social obligations, objective capabilities, and principles of justice ⁸⁶.

Furthermore, this comparison also paves the way for interdisciplinary research. By combining classical exegesis, grammatical analysis, and modern studies, research can explain how the Qur'an establishes social, ethical, and legal norms simultaneously through its linguistic structure, word meanings, and pragmatic context. This understanding shows that the Qur'an not only provides normative commands but also guides human action with rational, ethical, and social principles of sentence, which are applied in every word and structure ⁸⁷.

⁸³ Hussein Abdul-Raof, "Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis," in *Culture and Civilization in the Middle East* (Routledge, 2019).

⁸⁴ Abdul-Raof.

⁸⁵ Zulyadain and Dozan, "The Interpretation Shift of Polygamy Verses in Surah An-Nisā'(4): 3 and Its Contextualization In the Contemporary Era (Interpretation Studies in the Classical, Medieval, Modern-Contemporary Era)."

⁸⁶ Abdul-Raof, "Text Linguistics of Qur'anic Discourse: An Analysis."

⁸⁷ Mohammed Hashim Kamali, "Maqasid Al-Shariah and Maslahah in Islamic Law: Applications in Family and Social Contexts," *Traditional Hikma*, 2020.

Linguistic Novelty of the Research

This study presents a novelty in Quranic linguistics, particularly in Surah An-Nisa verse 3, which discusses polygamy. This novelty lies not only in its focus on linguistics but also in its multidimensional approach, which combines syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, as well as comparisons with classical exegesis and grammatical analysis⁸⁸. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the verse, as it examines not only the legal and historical aspects but also how the language structure of the Quran guides Muslims in practicing polygamy in a just, rational, and contextually relevant manner. In other words, this study presents a more holistic and interdisciplinary linguistic perspective, rarely found in previous research⁸⁹.

Syntactically, this research highlights the use of *ism mausul li ghair al-'āqil* in the verse, which indicates rational limitations on the practice of polygamy. This syntactic analysis emphasizes how the sentence structure of the verse establishes a strict logical relationship between social conditions, the husband's responsibilities, and the principle of justice⁹⁰. Linguistic novelty emerges when this study integrates syntactic analysis with classical exegesis, highlighting the harmony between linguistic structure and Islamic legal principles. Thus, this study makes a new contribution to understanding how the language of the Quran functions as both normative and ethical guidance in social practice, extending beyond legal interpretation⁹¹.

From a semantic perspective, this study emphasizes the meaning and context of the use of *ism maushūl*, as well as its implications for the selection of a second or subsequent wife. Semantic analysis shows that the verse not only permits polygamy in general but also emphasizes the principle of *maslahah* (benefit), meaning that polygamy should only be practiced if it brings good to the family, such as helping a childless first wife or caring for a sick family member⁹². The novelty of this research lies in how the researcher connects semantic meaning with the social and humanitarian context, resulting in a more contextual linguistic interpretation than previous research that focused solely on the legal or historical aspects of polygamy⁹³.

This research also emphasizes the pragmatic dimension in its linguistic novelty. The pragmatic perspective highlights interpersonal relationships, the wife's mental

⁸⁸ Mahfud and Muhammad Qudwah I'tishom Billah, "Tafsir Ayat Ahkam Surah An-Nisa Ayat 3: Etika Poligami Dan Hikmahnya Dalam Syari'at Islam," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (September 2022): 18–26, <https://doi.org/10.58363/ALFAHMU.V1I1.1>.

⁸⁹ Saidah Fiddaroin, "Polygamy in the Qur'an: A Thematic and Contextual Interpretation Based on Asbab Al-Nuzul," *Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 10, no. 2 (November 2025): 211–27, <https://doi.org/10.18326/MILLATI.V10I2.4192>.

⁹⁰ Saeed Ullah and Khurram Shehzad Zafar, "Linguistic Accommodation in the Holy Quran: Pragmatic Strategies for Diverse Audiences in the Quranic Language," *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)* 8, no. 3 (July 2025): 590–601, <https://doi.org/10.63878/JALT1012>.

⁹¹ Ali Albashir Mohammed Alhaj, "A Contrastive Linguistic Study of Cultural and Stylistic Problems Encountered in Translating Quranic Culture-Bound Words into English: Polygamy as a Model," *ELTS Journal* 9, no. 4 (2022): 1–8.

⁹² Saiddaeni Saiddaeni, "Ethics of Care and Gender Equality in Islamic Teachings: Quran An-Nisa 3," *Journal of Gender and Social Inclusion in Muslim Societies* 4, no. 1 (2023): 52–59.

⁹³ Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

readiness, the psychological impact, and family well-being ⁹⁴. The verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa' uses language that subtly provides ethical and moral guidance, so that polygamy cannot be practiced arbitrarily ⁹⁵. The novelty of pragmatics in this study lies in its emphasis on social interaction and the influence of Quranic language in regulating interpersonal relationships, which serves as a meeting point for linguistics, classical exegesis, and sociolinguistics ⁹⁶.

Furthermore, this study presents methodological novelty by conducting cross-disciplinary comparisons: first, by examining classical exegesis that emphasizes the historical, legal, and social context; second, by analyzing the grammatical and syntactic structure of the verse; and third, by connecting semantic meaning and pragmatic implications with the contemporary social context ⁹⁷. This combination provides a comprehensive perspective rarely attempted before, enabling this study not only to broaden insights into Quranic linguistics but also to provide a foundation for interdisciplinary research linking exegesis, linguistics, and sociolinguistics ⁹⁸.

So, the linguistic novelty of this study lies in a number of important aspects. First, it emphasizes the integration of classical exegesis and grammatical analyses with modern perspectives to understand verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa' ⁹⁹. Second, it gave a broad syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analysis that connects the language of the Quran to the practice of polygamy in a fair and contextual manner ¹⁰⁰. Third, it shed light on the social, psychological, and humanitarian dimensions of using language in the Quran and thus provided a multidimensional perspective rarely discussed in the previous literature ¹⁰¹. And fourth, it opens up space for developing an interdisciplinary linguistic methodology which can integrate language, exegesis, law, and sociology to provide a far-reaching understanding of the Quranic text ¹⁰².

Overall, this study broadens the horizon of Qur'anic linguistic studies by emphasizing that Qur'anic language is not merely a means of conveying normative

⁹⁴ Hassan Badr Hassan, "A Pragmatic Analysis: Implications of Lexical Choices in Translating Quranic Rhetoric," *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 11, no. 3 (June 2020): 1, <https://doi.org/10.7575/AIAC.ALLS.V.11N.3P.1>.

⁹⁵ Abdullah Abdullah and Andi Lala, "The Polygamy Concept in the Qur'an Perspective," *Law Development Journal* 5, no. 4 (January 2024): 667-73, <https://doi.org/10.30659/LDJ.5.4.667-673>.

⁹⁶ Alhaj, "A Contrastive Linguistic Study of Cultural and Stylistic Problems Encountered in Translating Quranic Culture-Bound Words into English: Polygamy as a Model."

⁹⁷ Fiddaroin, "Polygamy in the Qur'an: A Thematic and Contextual Interpretation Based on Asbab Al-Nuzul."

⁹⁸ Muh Barid Nizarudin Wajdi et al., "Understanding the Quran Holistically: Interdisciplinary Study of Language and Linguistics," *BASA Journal of Language & Literature* 3, no. 1 (May 2023): 11-17, <https://doi.org/10.33474/BASA.V3I1.19596>.

⁹⁹ Mahfud and Billah, "Tafsir Ayat Ahkam Surah An-Nisa Ayat 3: Etika Poligami Dan Hikmahnya Dalam Syari'at Islam."

¹⁰⁰ Waheed A. Bamigbade and Lawan Dalha, "The Pragmatics of the Rhetorical Question in Selected (English) Qur'an Chapters," *Language and Semiotic Studies* 6, no. 4 (December 2020): 103-25, <https://doi.org/10.1515/LASS-2020-060406/XML>.

¹⁰¹ Saiddaeni, "Ethics of Care and Gender Equality in Islamic Teachings: Quran An-Nisa 3."

¹⁰² Wajdi et al., "Understanding the Quran Holistically: Interdisciplinary Study of Language and Linguistics."

commands, but also a structured, rational, ethical, and social guide ¹⁰³. The novelty confirms that linguistic analysis of Qur'anic texts can provide new insights into social, legal, and ethical practices, thus bridging the gap between classical exegesis and contemporary linguistic research ¹⁰⁴.

4. Conclusion

This study confirms that polygamy is allowed in Islam, though it should not be implemented in a general or arbitrary way. The Qur'an and Islamic jurisprudence establish rigid conditions, especially with respect to the principle of material justice between wives and children, in addition to the social and humanitarian purposes of polygamy, not sexual ones. The Prophet Muhammad SAW practiced polygamy during his lifetime to shelter the widows and orphans of husbands who had fallen in battles, as well as to cement the bonds of social cohesion within nascent Muslim society. That explains that polygamy in Islam has strong moral, social, and ethical dimensions and can therefore not be perceived only from a normative legal standpoint.

From a linguistic perspective, this study highlights the use of *ism maushūl* in Surah An-Nisa', verse 3, specifically "*mā*" (that) used for *li ghair al-'āqil* (the conjunction for something that has no sense). Syntactic analysis shows that the use of this conjunction emphasizes rational limitations on the practice of polygamy, specifically that it must take into account the objective conditions of the family and social interests, not just the personal preferences of the husband. This shift in understanding stems from a purely legal norm to a linguistic interpretation that integrates linguistic structure, semantic meaning, and pragmatic context. Therefore, this verse serves as an ethical guideline embedded in language, regulating social interactions and the husband's moral responsibilities towards his wife and family.

Semantic analysis confirms the understanding that polygamy must be carried out with rational consideration and for the good of the family. The *ism maushūl* (conjunction) found in verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa' provides understanding and emphasis that a second or subsequent wife is chosen not based on the husband's personal attraction or preference, but based on her positive contribution to the family, such as helping the first wife, caring for sick family members, being able to provide offspring that cannot be obtained from the first wife, or providing other social benefits. Therefore, the text of the Qur'an semantically conveys the principle that polygamy is an act that has social and rational value, not merely an expression of sexual desire. This study also shows the linguistic uniqueness in understanding that the Qur'an uses grammatical mechanisms to maintain the principles of justice and expediency.

From a pragmatic perspective, this research highlights the interpersonal relationships that are regulated in the verse. Polygamy is not only legally regulated

¹⁰³ Ullah and Zafar, "Linguistic Accommodation in the Holy Quran: Pragmatic Strategies for Diverse Audiences in the Quranic Language."

¹⁰⁴ Safarsyah, Muhammad, and Pratama, "Understanding Polygamy Laws in the Qur'an: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Amina Wadud and Jasser Auda."

but also considers the wife's mental readiness, emotional well-being, and household harmony. The Prophet Muhammad SAW refused to marry women who were jealous or could not tolerate polygamy, so the practice of polygamy was carried out rationally and ethically, in accordance with the principles of peace and emotional balance in the household. This confirms that the language of the Quran pragmatically functions as a socio-emotional guideline, guiding human behavior in the context of interpersonal and family relationships.

The theoretical significance of this research lies in the integration of classical exegesis, grammatical analysis, and modern linguistic perspectives. This research demonstrates that the *ism maushūl* functions as an indicator of normative and rational boundaries and emphasizes that the practice of polygamy should bring social good and benefit the family. This opens the possibility that the Quran systematically employs linguistic structures to regulate social norms, justice, and moral action. In other words, this study emphasizes that linguistic analysis of the Quran can provide deeper insights into how language shapes social and ethical practices.

From a methodological perspective, this study emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach that combines interpretation, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. This approach enables a more contextual and rational understanding of the Quranic text, linking the linguistic structure with the social and ethical objectives of the commandment on polygamy. This method also opens up space for the development of more comprehensive linguistic studies of the Quran, which go beyond legal or historical interpretation to highlight how language shapes human behavior in a social context.

This research also has practical implications. By understanding the language of the Quran syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically, Muslims can practice polygamy with full awareness of the principles of justice, welfare, and social ethics, so that polygamy does not cause emotional or social harm within the family. Through this linguistic approach, the principles of justice and rationality can be concretely applied instead of merely being based on legal theory or historical norms.

This research suggests that further semantic analysis of other verses discussing polygamy may be warranted, based on pragmatic and sociolinguistic approaches, focusing on how the linguistic structure of the Quran influences social and moral behavior. This approach is expected to yield broader linguistic generalizations and strengthen theoretical contributions to contemporary Quranic studies, interpretations, and normative understandings of the practice of polygamy.

Furthermore, this research indicates that legal norms, ethics, and social rationality are inherently integrated into the language of the Quran. Polygamy, which is allowed under verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa', is not a mere normative permission but an instruction wrapped up in a rational, just, and ethical linguistic structure that gives clear directions to the social and moral practices of Muslims. This confirms that an interdisciplinary linguistic approach can provide new insights into understanding the social and moral functions of Qur'anic language, which have been rarely systematically explored before.

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