

**Expansion and Metaphor in  
Semantic Evolution of the Holy Qur'anic  
Words Emphasizing the Opinions of Allameh Tabatabai'e**

**Zahra Salimi<sup>1</sup>**

**Sayyed Mohammad Mirhosseini<sup>2</sup>**

**Ahmad Pashazanous<sup>3</sup>**

**Abdolali Al-e Buye Langeroudi<sup>4</sup>**

**Abstract**

Understanding phrases and words used in the Holy Qur'an is one step in comprehending this holy book. Interpreters should thus rely on the meanings of words to offer and explain their opinions and interpretations and should consider semantic relationships among words. However, can the superficial meaning of words or the meanings of words in their usage be considered as the basis of perception or those meanings can include the used meanings? We addressed this question drawing on *Tafsir Al-Mizan*, noting that Allame Tabatabai'e believes that the Holy Qur'anic words are not vague because the Holy Qur'an is the book of guidance and hence needs to be clear in meaning and free of any complicity. This paper is specifically an attempt to survey the semantic evolution of words from Allame Tabatabai'e's point of view and to prove that although semantic evolution of words entail more than one meaning for a given word, there is still a strong relationship between the evolved meaning and the original one. In fact, the evolved meaning is still closely connected to the original meaning. In other words, through methods and processes like using metaphors, covering abstract

---

1. Corresponding author: PhD Student of Arabic Language and Literature, Imam Khomeini International University; Email: zahrasalimi1998@yahoo.com

2. Associate Professor, Imam Khomeini International University; Email: sm.mirhossyni@gmail.com

3. Associate Professor, Imam Khomeini International University; Email: a-alebooye@yahoo.com

4. Associate Professor, Imam Khomeini International University; Email:ahmad\_pasha95@yahoo.com

rather than concrete meaning, and semantic expansion or contraction, a given word has acquired a new implication which is based on its original and old meaning. Analyzing the status of the semantic evolution of words in *Tafsir Al-Mizan* is what the present descriptive-analytical study intended to do in its attempt to shed light on this key aspect of interpretation and to highlight the outstanding position of this Shia interpretation. Words such as “*ajal, al-suht, akhbat, rih, etc.*” are some examples of words carrying meanings different yet relevant to their original meanings through semantic evolution. This point has not been neglected by Allame Tabatabai'e in his articulate and scholarly expressions while interpreting the ayahs. Paying attention to changes in words' references underlines the point that Qur'anic words are not limited to their superficial meaning but encompass the spirit of meaning as well.

**Keywords:** Al-Mizan, semantic evolution, semantic expansion, metaphor