

A Semantic Analysis of the Word "Azaab" in the Holy Qur'an Emphasizing Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relationships

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Abstract

Semantics is the scientific study of meaning, which analyzes the meanings of words in terms of the semantic systems they belong to. One of the most important ways that has attracted the attention of literary critics is reliance on syntagmatic and pragmatic relationships because through the semantic network of a given word, its exact meaning can be obtained by examining the words, in case of the Qur'an in the contexts of ayahs. The word "azaab", i.e. torment, is one of the most frequent words in the Qur'an and in the present research, we tried to answer the question that which words are the most important collocates and substitutes of this word. Taking a semantic perspective on the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes, it can be said that this word has collocated in the Holy Qur'an with words such as "kufr (disbelief)", "zulm (oppression)", "kibr (arrogance)", "nifaq (hypocrisy)", which are factors that bring about inflicting torments on humans. As for the pragmatic axis, the word in question is a near synonym of words such as "khasara (loss)", "habata (annulment of one's works)", "eqaab (consequence)", "naar (Fire (of hell))", and "jazaa' (punishment)", each of which in some ways represent torment. The present descriptive-analytical research thus aimed to investigate the term "azaab", relying on terminological studies and analysis through collocations and substitutions. Accordingly, first, the frequent collocations of the word under discussion were identified and then based on the collocations, the substitutions of this concept embodied as words were addressed.

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