Construction and Implication of New Covid-19 Pandemic Words
From the Perspective of Qur’anic Asynonimity (al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir)

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ABSTRACT
Covid-19 pandemic has brought out some new words classified as four: Indonesian, English, loan words, and abbreviation or acronym. Those new vocabularies trigger similarities and differences in how Indonesian understand and use them. This study aims to explain the construction and implication of those new words from the perspective of Qur’anic asynonymity (al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir). This study used a qualitative approach involving a library mixed with field research and engaging a survey to 104 respondents (61 educators, 29 students and 14 common people). The analysis reveals two findings as a scientific contribution to the linguistic discipline. On the aspect of language meaning, most of the respondents know the meaning of new Covid-19 pandemic words while showing a variety of understanding. On the aspect of language use, meanwhile, most of the respondents are more familiar with English words such as “Corona, Covid, Covid-19” instead of both Indonesian and loan words like “Wabah, Pagebluk, Pandemi”. Additionally, they have different perceptions in the use of those new words for practical use.

Keywords: Covid-19, language meaning, language use, al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir

1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic has brought up some new words that people are getting more familiar with. Three Indonesian leading news and newspaper websites, detik.com (Widiyani, 2020), kompas.com (Tamtomo, 2020) and liputan6.com (Budi, 2020), released about 70 new words during Covid-19 pandemic.

We classify those words into four: First is Indonesian words like jaga jarak (physical distancing); second is English words like lockdown; third is loan words such as karantina (quarantine) while fourth is an abbreviation or acronym from either Indonesian like PSBB (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar; Large-Scale Social Restrictions) or English like Covid (Coronavirus Disease).

Those new words lead Indonesian people to similarities and differences in understanding and using them altogether. Therefore, this research aims to explain the construction and implication of those new words through qualitative research based on mixed research (library and field) engaging survey to 104 respondents (61 educators, 29 students and 14 common people). Afterward, we analyze the data from the perspective of Qur’anic asynonymity theory called al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir

In short, al-Wujuh means similarity in word and differences in meaning, while al-Naza’ir means different words with the same meaning. One word can have 20 meanings even more and otherwise, different vocabularies may have the same meaning (Arqahdan, 1987; Shihab, 2013). Generally, al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir covers two main aspects, namely language understanding and language use as the following details.
The first aspect of al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir, namely language meaning, has two elements: a) Vocabulary’s meaning. Globally, Qur’anic vocabularies have two categories (Q.S. Ali ‘Imran [3]: 7), namely those with clear meaning (al-muhammat) and those with ambiguous meaning (al-mutashabih). For some, a specific vocabulary can be clear in meaning, while for others, it may be ambiguous. Therefore, according to Nidhal Guessoum, Qur’anic verses must be layered and leveled in line with each person’s reasoning level which leads to impossibility to have a single exegesis or single perspective (Soleh, 2018); b) Meaning similarities and differences. The Qur’an contains some vocabularies which slightly look similar (synonymous) but in fact, are different in meaning (asynonymous). The examples are words shuh dan bukhli (stingy). Indicating the same meaning as being stingy or mean, shuh is far worse than bukhli; because bukhli only means stingy while shuh also refers to being greedy in addition to be mean (al-Qattan, 1995).

The aspect of language use according to al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir also covers two elements: a) Intensity or frequency of use, such as how the Qur’an chooses diction to describe humans. It uses al-nas (241 times), al-insan (65 times), al-bashar (36 times) and Bani Adam (7 times) (Rosidin, 2013). The higher the intensity use of vocabulary, the higher it’s meaning significance. In this context, the significance of humans as a social creature (al-nas) is higher than their position as an individual creature (al-insan); b) Different perception of words in practical use. For example, despite having common meaning as doing jihad, the expression can be different. According to Esposito, non-violence jihad is believed and implemented by the majority of Moslems; while violence jihad (physical war) is believed and implemented by a few extremist organizations such as Al-Qaeda established by Osama bin Laden (Esposito, 2002).

The aspect of both language meaning and use becomes the main reason for selecting al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir as the theoretical perspective of this research. In short, the analysis of al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir serves to explain construction and implication on the meaning of new Covid-19 pandemic words among Indonesian people.

2.2. Prior Research

Although still minimum, the topic of al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir has led to some research in three categories. The first category is from a historical perspective, like research of Wahyudi (2019) concluding that the study of al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir had appeared since the very early Islamic generation. Meanwhile at the contemporary era, this study tends to be applicative even hermeneutic. The second category is from a thematic exegesis (tafsir al-maudu’i) perspective such as research by Saleh and Arsyad (2019) on al-Wujuh wa al-Nazha’ir at the exegesis of the word al-ummah (community) in which the Qur’an mentions it 52 times in 24 Surah (Chapter). The third category is from a thought perspective. For instance, Luqman (2019) criticized textual exegesis which isolates jihad’s meaning solely to physical war (jihad qital) while in fact, from the perspective of al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir, jihad can also mean verbal jihad (jihad qawli) such as preaching and practical jihad (jihad amali) such as doing a good deed.

On the other hand, language study on Covid-19 has also been mushrooming. Zulva (2020) declared that the high enthusiasm about Covid-19 pandemic has led to psychosomatic among Indonesian namely anxiety, frustration, hard to breathe, and dizziness. Meanwhile, Sampurno et al. (2020) examined social media function as the information center on Covid-19 pandemic through various innovative posts ranging from the newest information, health service, testimonies of recovered patients to general motivation in the pandemic era.

Those mentioned studies become a foundational basis for this study on three aspects. First, al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir theory is compatible as the theoretical perspective to examine the complexity of new Covid-19 pandemic words’ meaning. For instance, the words “Coronavirus” and “Covid-19” have similar meanings in one side yet different in another. Second, the meaning complexity of those new words affects the variety of words use among people in practical terms. For example, the word ‘jaga jarak’ (physical distancing) affects how people use different measurements ranging from 1 meter, 1.5 meters, 2 meters, to 6 meters as the standard. Third, we have not yet found any specific research portraying new Covid-19 pandemic words from the perspective of al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir which also becomes a novelty of this research.

3. METHODS

This research examines four categories of new words during Covid-19 pandemic (see Table 1). To observe the aspects of language meaning and use of those mentioned words in Table 1, we did a survey using Google Form spread through WhatsApp Group. We got responses from 61 educators (lecturers and teachers), 29 students (university student and pesantren students or santri), and 14 common people (private workers and public servants). They come from Jombang, Malang, Mojokerto, and Madura in line with the workplaces of the researcher team members, namely Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) Ma’had Aly Al-Hikam Malang, Institut Pesantren KH Abdul Chalim (IKHAC) Mojokerto and Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Madura.
Table 1. Four Categories of New Covid-19 Pandemic Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indonesian words</th>
<th>English words</th>
<th>Loan words</th>
<th>Abbreviation / Acronym words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bersih (clean)</td>
<td>Corona</td>
<td>Epidemi (epidemic)</td>
<td>ODP (Orang Dalam Pemerintahan atau Pasien di Asrama)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuci Tangan (handwashing)</td>
<td>Hand Sanitizer</td>
<td>Isolasi (isolation)</td>
<td>OTG (Orang Tanpa Gejala atau asympomatic person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaga Jarak (physical distancing)</td>
<td>Lockdown</td>
<td>Karantina (quarantine)</td>
<td>PDP (Pasien Dalam Pemantauan atau Patient under Supervision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagebluk (plague)</td>
<td>Physical Distancing</td>
<td>Klaster (cluster)</td>
<td>PSBB (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar atau Large Scale Social Restriction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakai Masker (wear a face-mask)</td>
<td>Rapid Test</td>
<td>Negatif (negative)</td>
<td>COVID (Corona Virus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sehat (health)</td>
<td>Social Distancing</td>
<td>Pandemi (pandemic)</td>
<td>COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangguh (tough)</td>
<td>Suspect</td>
<td>Positif (positive)</td>
<td>PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabah (plague)</td>
<td>Swab Test</td>
<td>Protokol (protocol)</td>
<td>WFH (Work From Home)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. From the Aspect of Language Meaning

The aspect of language meaning covers two elements: a) Words meaning; b) Similarities and differences of words meaning. On the first element, we asked five survey questions:

The first question is about the meaning of Indonesian words such as Bersih, Cuci Tangan, Jaga Jarak, Pagebluk, Pakai Masker, Sehat, Tangguh, and Wabah. Most of the respondents (61 or 58.7%) know the words’ meaning well while another 31 (29.8%) know them enough. Meanwhile, 10 respondents (9.6) slightly know, and 7 respondents (6.7%) less know.

The second question is about the meaning of English words such as “Corona, Hand Sanitizer, Lockdown, Physical Distancing, Rapid Test, Social Distancing, Suspect, and Swab Test.” Most of the respondents, numbering 42 (40, 4%), know the English words’ meaning well while 39 (37.5%) know them enough. Other than those two, 22 respondents (21.2%) slightly know and the rest 7 respondents (6.7%) less know.

The third question is about the loan word meanings like Epidemi, Isolasi, Karantina, Klaster, Negatif, Pandemi, Positif, and Protokol. Most of the respondents (45 or 43.3%) know the loan words’ meaning well while 43 of them (41.3%) know them enough. 17 respondents (16.3%) slightly know and only 2 respondents (4.8%) who less know.

The four question is about the abbreviation or acronym Indonesian word meanings like ODP, OTG, PDP, and PSBB. Most respondents (60 or 57.7%) know them well, while 36 respondents (34.6%) know them enough. Meanwhile, 8 respondents (7.7%) slightly know and the rest 8 respondents (7.7%) less know.

The fifth question is about the abbreviation or acronym of English words’ meaning like COVID, COVID-19, PCR, and WFH. Most respondents (43 or 41.3%) know the words’ meaning well, while 30 respondents (28.8%) know them enough. 22 respondents (21.2%), on the other hand, slightly know the words while 22 respondents (21.2%) less know about them.

In short, responses on “know it well” and “know enough” can be re-categorized into “know” while those with slightly know and less know is turning into “less know.” Based on those two simpler categorizations, the conclusion of the survey result is obvious (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 indicates that most of the respondents admit that they know new Covid-19 pandemic word meanings. Meanwhile, a few of them say that they know less about them.

From the perspective of al-Wujah wa al-Naza’ir, differences in knowledge level among respondents on the language meaning are in line with differences in humans’ reasoning level with some layers or stages. They consist of knowing the thing very well, knowing it well, knowing it enough, less knowing and not knowing at all. In other words, a specific vocabulary can be clear in meaning for some respondents, while others can consider it ambiguous.

Fig. 1. the aspect of language meaning.
Relating to similarities and differences in word meanings, we asked a number of the survey question, namely on the meaning of Corona, Covid and Covid-19; Wabah, Pagebluk and Pandemi; Isolasi, Karantina, and Lockdown. Most of the respondents (58 or 56.3%) said those words have similarities in meaning, while 49 of them (47.6%) said they are different from each other.

From the perspective of al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir, those three-word categories clearly show that words can have similarities in one side while having differences in another. For instance, at the category of words “Corona, Covid and Covid-19,” those three words respectively mean diseases (as synonym); while in more in-depth observation, they have three different meanings (asynonymous). Corona is the name of disease; Covid is the virus causing the Corona, while Covid-19 is a type of Covid firstly reported in 2019. Meanwhile, according to WHO (World Health Organization)’s definition, COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of Corona virus. ‘CO’ stands for Corona, ‘VI’ for virus, and ‘D’ for disease. The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and any type of common cold (Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools, 2020).

It happens the same in the second category among “Wabah, Pagebluk and Pandemi” which means disaster as synonym, yet in a more through comparison, they are asynchronous. Wabah or pagebluk means the spread of a specific disease in a wide area affecting a big number of people; while pandemi is the spread of a new disease in worldwide influencing so many people (Damaledo, 2020).

The category of words including “Isolasi, Karantina, and Lockdown,” has the common meaning as a restriction, while in more in-depth comparison, they are different as isolasi and karantina are on a narrow scale, like isolating Covid-19 confirmed patients from healthy people around; while lock down is in a large scale, such as prohibition to enter a specific area during a certain period time because of any dangerous threats (Dwianto, 2020).

4.2. The Aspect of Language Use

The aspect of language use covers two elements: a) intensity or frequency of use; b) different perceptions on the practical use of words.

On the first element on intensity or frequency of use, we asked one number of survey question, namely the most often used word during the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of the respondents numbering 67 (64.4%) mentioned it was “Corona, Covid or Covid-19”; 36 respondents (34.6%) said it was wabah, pagebluk, or pandemi.

From the perspective of al-Wujuh wa al-Naza’ir, words’ intensity or frequency of use closely relates to each words’ meaning significance. In other words, words “Corona, Covid or Covid-19” are considered having more significant meaning to describe the current situation because they have more specific connotations. This is different from the words wabah, pagebluk, or pandemi with more general connotation meaning.

The result of this question number is further in line with the diction officially used by the Indonesian government, mass organization, mass media, or social media. Official words that the government often uses are “Corona, Covid or Covid-19” as clear from the naming of the government’s official website namely covid19.go.id and government’s special team called Gugus Tugas Percepatan Penanganan Covid-19 which was then replaced to Satgas Penanganan Covid 19 (Ihsanuddin, 2020). Likewise, mass organizations also like to use words “Corona, Covid or Covid-19” like PBNU (Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama; Central Board of Nahdlatul Ulama) through its instruction letter Number 3945/C.I.34/03/2020 about Protocol of the Caring NU on Covid-19 (Mashabi, 2020). The same goes for the news title or popular virtual hashtag in both mass and social media.

On the other hand, the survey results implied that English words are more familiar than Indonesian and loan words. This is in line with a perspective mentioning that globalization and prestige have made people lost their sense of pride to use their national language. This “language crisis” does not only occur among common people but also in governmental staffs, which then leads to the term of Indoglish standing for “Indonesian-English”; a language phenomenon attacking the Indonesian language (Waskita, 2019).

Meanwhile, for the second element, namely different perceptions relating to the use of words in practical terms, we asked three survey questions to respondents.

The first survey question is on similarities and differences among people, both apparatus and common people, in using Covid-19 pandemic words such as PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions), Jaga Jarak (physical distancing), and Pakai Masker (wearing a face mask). Most of the respondents, numbering 61 (58.7%), mentioned that the three are similar while 44 (42.3%) told about finding differences among one another.

Based on both observation and documentation results, people tend to have different perceptions in using certain words such as PSBB and Pakai Masker.

In the first example, PSBB is found different in its implementation according to each local government’s policies. For example, the governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil, introduced PSBB in the maximum, minimum, and middle concept. At practical terms, red zone areas implement maximum PSBB while in non-red
zero areas, PSBB is adjusted between the minimum and the middle levels (Rahim, 2020). Likewise, the East Java governor, Khofifah Indar Parawansa, mentioned that PSBB in Malang Raya is different from that of Surabaya Raya mainly because of local wisdom. Malang Raya PSBB is mentioned to be far more significant due to people’s participation in breaking the spreading line of Covid-19 through the scheme of kampung tangguh or tough village (Aminudin, 2020). On the other hand, people respond to PSBB differentially. The deputy of Prevention at The Indonesian National Agency for Disaster Countermeasure (BNPB; Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana), Lilik Kurniawan, said that villagers are more discipline in implementing PSBB than those living in cities. This is clear from the number of Covid-19 cases in villages which is less than those reported from cities. Other than that, the rate of incidence at the village is far slower (Adilah, 2020).

In the second example, Pakai Masker, both observation and documentation results indicate that people use different face-masks on their types and materials. The official website of alodokter enlists three types of face-masks to fight against Coronavirus: a) cloth mask. As suggested by the Indonesian Ministry of Health, everyone is obliged to use cloth face-mask when going out of houses; b) surgical mask, which is a disposable mask easily available and commonly used by medical staff in doing their jobs; c) N-95 mask which can’t only banish droplets such as saliva, but also other tiny particles at the air which potentially contain the virus. This type of mask is mainly for medical staffs with direct contact to Covid-19 patients, such as doctors and nurses in the specific isolation room of Covid-19 or emergency rooms (Nareza, 2020). Meanwhile, the official website of Liputan6, quoting from the Insider, mentioned eight types of face-mask during Covid-19 pandemic era: a) N99 and N95; b) Disposable surgical mask; c) “Hybrid” Model; d) Three layers silk clothes; e) Dust vacuum filter; f) Towel and bad sheet; g) Scarf or cotton cloth, and h) One-layer cotton mask (Barak, 2020).

The second survey question is on the meaning of practical terms, like Masjid Tangguh (Tough Mosque) or Pesantren Tangguh (Tough Islamic Boarding School). Most of the respondents, namely 37 (35.6%), know the terms’ meaning while 27 respondents (26%) know them well. 29 respondents (27.9%) said they know them enough, while 16 respondents (15.4%) less know about them.

The third survey question is on the implementation of practical terms, such as requirements to comply with so that an institution can get assigned to the status of Masjid Tangguh or Pesantren Tangguh. Most respondents, numbering 35 (33.7%), know the requirements while 17 respondents (16.3%) know them very well. 22 respondents (31.7%) know enough while 20 respondents (19.2%) less know.

The last two mentioned survey questions show that the responses are quite balanced relating to practical terms such as Masjid Tangguh or Pesantren Tangguh. This is obvious from insignificant differences between those who know (64 respondents) and those who know less (45 respondents). The response is far more balanced on the requirements to comply with to get recognized as Masjid Tangguh or Pesantren Tangguh in which 52 respondents know the requirement while 53 respondents less know about it.

The balance of respondents’ knowledge and understanding on language meaning and its use on practical terms closely relates to the absence of SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) which is officially recognized at the national level. For example, this occurs at the concept of Masjid Tangguh and Pesantren Tangguh which only applies locally or regionally instead of nationally.

The regional scale of SOP is clear, among others, from the concept of Masjid Tangguh. For example, based on Masjid Tangguh Semeru, a collaboration program among DMI (Dewan Masjid Indonesia; Indonesian Mosque Council), Majelis Ulama Indonesia, or Indonesian Ulama’ Council (MUI) and Kepolisian Resor Kota Besar (Polrestabes) Surabaya, there are four standards of Masjid Tangguh. First is wani bersih (being brave to be clean) such as providing hand-wash facilities. Second is wani aman (being brave to be safe), such as arranging a prayer line to comply with physical or social distancing standards. The third is wani peduli (being brave to be caring), such as organizing a charity program for those who get affected and the fourth is wani nasihati (being brave to be advising) like giving advice for the congregation to wear face-mask (Besok, Program Masjid Tangguh Semeru Akan Dilaunching, 2020).

5. CONCLUSION

At least, this article contributes two findings for the scientific discourse in the linguistics discipline. Relating to the language meaning, most of the respondents know the meaning of new Covid-19 pandemic words even if having a variety of understanding of both similarities and differences of those new words’ meaning according to reasoning and knowledge level of each. Meanwhile, regarding the aspect of language use, most of the respondents are more familiar with English words such “Corona, Covid or Covid-19” instead of Indonesian or loan words such as “waibah, pagebluk or pandemi.” Additionally, they have different perception and practice on practical terms’ meaning such as wearing face-masks with different type and material.
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