

# Meaning of The Word *Libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]:187 in Michael Camille Riffaterre's Semiotics Application

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## ABSTRACT

The word *libās* can be found in several surahs of the Qur'an. There are various meanings of the word *libās*. For this reason, this study aims to discuss the basic concepts of Michael Camille Riffaterre's Semiotics and how to apply the meaning of the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2] :187. In this research, the method used by the authors was descriptive analysis, classified into qualitative research, which used library research in the form of books, journals, and articles related to the theme of the discussion. The object in this study was heuristic, hermeneutic, and intertextual reading related to the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187. The results showed the meaning of the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187 in Michael Camille Riffaterre's application of semiotics. The first stage used a heuristic theory, where the word *libās* was searched for its meaning, both in terms of language and the Arabic term itself. In this heuristic theory, there is an indirectness of expression. At this first stage, the word *libās* is interpreted as something to wear, clothes, and blankets. The clothes here are something soothing, comfortable, and covering. Through hermeneutics, the second stage was that the word *libās* is interpreted more deeply, not only in lafdziyah but also in *lahiriyah* (outwardly). It is as the word *libās* has a very polite and subtle meaning, namely as wearing, also called intercourse, and clothing that covers, protects, or guards badness (disgrace). The third stage is an intertextual way understood by *asbab al-nuzul* (the revelation of a verse), which includes a deep meaning; it can be interpreted outwardly as an inner livelihood.

**Keywords:** *Meaning of Libās, Semiotics, Heuristics, Hermeneutics, Intertextual*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Holy Qur'an is a special privilege that was given to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. It includes a very large inheritance for all human beings, especially the Islamic religion. In addition, the Qur'an has several special features, including the beauty of its verse structure, which could weaken the literary poets of the Arabs at that time, and none of them could compete with the beauty of the verse structure and content, which is the wisdom of the Qur'an [1]. Furthermore, the beauty of the verse structure is placed as fundamental and rooted, which has a fairly strong and long history as a cultural text of Muslims [2]. The Qur'an also contains signs filled with high literary values [3], [4] and as *ālih likulli zamān wa makān*, which contains several

consequences that, in its interpretation, the Qur'an will always develop with the times and the socio-cultural culture of humans. Therefore, *tafsir* (interpretation) is the fruit of a dialectic between a static text and a context that continues to move dynamically and continues to develop and even change. [5]

One indication of the harmony between the text and the context is the emergence of analysis and expression patterns of the Muslim community compared to the Qur'an; then, it cannot be denied that the current contemporary modern era will begin to emerge new methodologies or approaches in interpreting the Qur'an [6]. In line with the motto carried by Abid Al-Jabiri *almuḥāfadzah 'ala qadīm al-ṣālih wa alakhzu bi al-jadīd al-aṣlāh* (protecting

the old tradition so that it remains good and adopting a new, better tradition) [7], one of which is the semiotic approach. Semiotic is one of the linguistic strategies that discusses symbols, signs, or symbols [8].

Talking about the meaning of the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187, Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotics is a science that discusses signs [9]. The phenomenon of heuristic and hermeneutic pronunciation that can give meaning in a semiotic manner can be done through heuristic and hermeneutic pronunciation or retroactively. This concept should be practiced first to reveal the meaning it contains. Heuristic reading is at the initial level of understanding linguistic meaning, while hermeneutic reading is at the second level to interpret the meaning as a whole. In this reading, the reader better understands what he has read and then revises his understanding. Semiotics is also a socio-cultural system, as literature is a sign system in the social sphere [10], [11]. In this case, the sign aspect has two: the signifier (*signifiant*) and the signified (*signifiance*) [12].

The concept of semiotics was first published by Ferdinand de Saussure through the form of signs, namely the signifier (*signifiant*) and the signified (*signifiance*) [9], [13]. From this theory, later figures developed and became a reference for structuralists [14]. The science of semiotics methodologically can be applied in various text studies ranging from magazines, advertisements, films, media, pictures, music, and others, according to the needs of researchers objectively [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21]. Meanwhile, in linguistics, the sign phenomenon is expressed as a phenomenon of spoken language or the appearance of skill. Language is a point of view from the social aspect of language, which allows a symbolic communication to occur, while speech is the expression or realization of language in speech or writing. To explain a sign, semiotics cannot stand alone but requires several other component aspects, such as syntax, pragmatics, and semantics [22].

The three components are described as follows. First, the syntax is a related component of symbols or signs and their relationship forms. Second, pragmatics is an element that deals with the problem between symbols and the external world they refer to. Third, semantics is a field of study that discusses the problem between users and usage symbols [23]. The interesting thing about semiotics is proposed by Michael Camille Riffaterre, which is most appropriate for analyzing the meaning of a literary work (rhyme) [24].

Furthermore, the Quranic literature or text approach has been found for a long time and is not a

new thing. The literature or text of the Qur'an was found in the pre-Islamic period by Abdullah ibn Abbas (d. 68 Hijri/687 AD) that at that time, literature or recitation of the Qur'an was used to explain several readings of a verse of the Qur'an. It was carried out before the arrival of Islam. Furthermore, the literary tradition of poetry is growing rapidly in the Arab world. The scholars later took a similar form of interpretation after Ibn Abbas, including Abd. Al-Qahir Al-Jurjani and al-Zamakhsyari [25].

The meaning of analysis of the Qur'an using Riffaterre's semiotic theory approach can be done by analyzing the structure of the combination structure of the Qur'anic code. In his semiotics of poetry, he says that a poem (poetry) can be said to be good, not coming from a linguist who analyzes it, but actually from a reader. In addition, the meaning of literary reading can undergo various forms of change: (1) the meaning of poetry has several aspects of meaning: displacing of meaning, distorting of meaning, and creating of meaning; 2) discussion of hermeneutics and heuristics; 3) intertextual relationships [8], [26]. The authors are interested in Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotic theory to apply the meaning of the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187. Through this analysis, it is hoped that it can reveal the deep meaning or message in the text, not only in meaning but also at the level of significance [27].

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Past research has been done on the correlation between the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187 using Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotic theory can be seen in three aspects. *First*, research related to the word *libās* is as research has been done by Maula Sari and Fahrudin [28] and Fahrudin and Risris Hari Nugraha [29]. Both studies are also related to Surah Al-Baqarah as has been done by Taufik Mukmin [30] and Syakirah Rifa'in and Mat Taib Pa [31]. Then, *thirdly*, research related to Michael Camille Riffaterre's theory is carried out by Siti Fatimah Fajrin [32], Luthfi Maulana [33], Muhammad Fajri [34], and Faizetul Ukhrawiyah and Fauziyah Kurniawati [35]. Lots of research related to Q.S. Al-Baqarah and Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotic theory has been carried out. Specifically, however, no research has examined the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187 using Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotic theory.

This research also aims to contribute to intellectual heritage and enrich the study of the perspective of Islamic studies. It is hoped that this paper will provide answers and reveal how the application of Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotics in interpreting the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method applied in this research was to use two primary and secondary research data, with a descriptive analysis method to describe the data from the word *libās* in the Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187. It was by applying the approach of Michael Riffaterre Camille's semiotic theory sources. This research was classified as qualitative research, which used library research. The object in this study was the heuristic, hermeneutic, and intertextual reading related to the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187. [36]

Next, the supporting data were those obtained from dictionaries, textbooks, and others. Researchers used this research to find out the relationship with the theme of the discussion of the meaning of the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187. In Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotics application, the researchers then analyzed the existing research results. Furthermore, this research would apply Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotic theory in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Michael Camille Riffaterre's Semiotics

Riffaterre's theory of semiotics is not much different from that of Roland Barthes' semiotics. Both have something in common, but the difference between the two theories is reading on two levels. Roland Barthes' reading ends with identifying the principle (ideological) at the reading level, while Riffaterre's understanding continues. In theory, he argues that a text is a mosaic quote equivalent to the inclusion of another text called a *hypogram*, while a text that equates it is called a transformation [37]. The most basic assumption about Michael Riffaterre's semiotics is clearly seen through his work *Semiotics of Poetry*. In his work, he stated, "*The shift from meaning to significance necessitates the concept of interpretant, that is, a sign that translates the text's surface signs and explains what else the text suggests.*" This expression can be understood as the interpretation of a meaning that requires an interpretive concept to find the meaning of a more complex and complete sign [38].

The core of his thinking in semiotics is often known by scientists as a dialectic between text and reader. Dialectics is between the mimetic level (linguistic level, the meaning of the signified) and the semiotic level (mystical level, connotative meaning). On the other hand, it is a dialectic between the text and the reader. The difference between meaning and significance is a very convincing contribution. The meaning of a literary work is always related to the topic of discussion that is simple, objective, and general [33]. In his book, *Semiotics of Poetry*, it is assumed that four points need to be considered to produce meaning: (1) indirect expression of poetry,

caused by displacing of meaning, distorting of meaning, and creating of meaning [26]; (2) heuristic understanding and hermeneutic or retroactive understanding [39], [33], [40]; (3) matrix, model, variance [41], [42]; (4) *hypogram* or intertextual relationships [43], [44], [32], [45], [46].

#### Meaning of the Word *Libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187 in Michael Camille Riffaterre's Application of Semiotics

At this stage, the authors try to apply Michael Camille Riffaterre's semiotic theory, which has been described above, to the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah.

س ايل ننه ٓ مكياسنل دا نشفرا لا مابيد ل انا بيلا مكل جا

نَا نُوْنَاتِىٰتٍ مَّتَنُكُمْ مَّا كُنَّا لِيْ اِمْۡلَءُ ۙ نَّوْنَوْنَ س ايل مذن او مكل

مكسف

م الكذء افءو مكيلاء باءف

"It has been made permissible for you to be intimate with your wives during the nights preceding the fast. Your spouses are a garment for you as you are for them. Allah knows that you were deceiving yourselves. So, He has accepted your repentance and pardoned you. So now you may be intimate with them and seek what Allah has prescribed for you" (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187).

#### 1. Heuristic Reading

The first step is to find the meaning according to the convention of the language, or in other words, it is also called the literal meaning or the meaning of *mufrādāt* terms in Arabic.

Clothing in the Big Indonesian Dictionary consists of two: (a) The word "*pakai/wear*," added to the suffix "an," i.e., using. For example, "a child is wearing a white and gray uniform"; it means the word *pakai* means to use; (b) The word "*pakai*" means added or given, for example, "a child makes iced tea with added sugar." It means proving that the word "clothes" is "added" [47].

Furthermore, the word *libās* is the *masdar* form of *lubsan*, which means use. Linguistically, the word *libās* comes from the words *labisa-yalbisulibāsan*, which means a cover, i.e., something closed. In addition to the derivation of the word *libās*, we also find *al-lubsu*, *allabus*, and *al-talbis*, which means clothing or covering [48]. *Libās* can also mean what is used. *Libās* comes from *lam*, *ba'*, and *sin*, of which there are two types of readings: *labisa* and *labāsa*. *Libās* itself is the nominal of the word *labis*, which means to wear [49]. The meaning of clothing in *lafdziyah* is clothing useful for covering the genitals and protecting the body from heat and cold. Meanwhile, spiritually, the meaning of clothing is *sakan* (giving calm) [50]. As for in Arabic, it means *libāsun-walbāsun* (clothing) and *ikhtilat labāsun* (intercourse) [51].

The meaning of *libās* can also be interpreted as clothing, mixing, and covering [52]. The Lisan al-Arab dictionary explains that the word *libās* has the meaning of clothes worn, reassuring, covering, good deeds, shame, mixing, and others [53]. The meaning of *libās*, according to Mujahid, al-Hasan, Ibn Abbas, Qatadah, Muqatil bin Hayyan, Sa'id bin Jubair and Al-Suddi, is *sakan* (calm), while according to Al-Rabi' bin Anas, the word *libās* is interpreted as blanket [54].

In conclusion, from this initial meaning, it can be seen that the word *libās* contains many meanings according to the placement of the word it is used. The heuristic reading of Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187 is an understanding of the meaning of the verse, which is driven by the meaning of *dzhahir* and outward. As above, it also means *sakan* (which means giving peace) and covering, covering the nakedness and covering the body from heat and cold.

## 2. Hermeneutic Reading

Some scholars interpret *libās* as everything that covers something is called *libās* [55]. According to Ibn Katsir in work, the word *libās* is contained in the words of Allah, "*Your spouses are a garment for you as you are for them.*"

According to Ibn Abbas, the goal is *sakan* (a place or tranquility), in the sense that women are a place that can leave serenity for men and as a place that can leave serenity for women. On the other hand, according to Al-Rabi, what includes *libās* in verse has the meaning of blanket, which means that the woman is a blanket for men, and the man is a blanket for women [56].

## 3. Intertextual in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187

Michael Camelle Riffaterre argues that a literary work will not arise in space, likewise a text of the Qur'an, which was revealed in a certain time and space. A text of the Qur'an is sometimes related to *asbab al-nuzul* (the reasons for the revelation of the verse), which can be used to understand the verse in more depth. As it is based on literal reading (heuristic) stated previously, it is necessary to continue with hermeneutic reading based on interpretation to get a deeper meaning.

According to Hamka, in his interpretation entitled *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, he explains that "they are clothes for you, and you are clothes for them." These words contain very subtle, educational, and polite meanings among humans. Because if husband and wife have met in earnest, they wear and even become one body, which is also called intercourse in our language [57]. In his work entitled *Tafsir Fi-Zhilail Qur'an*, Sayyid Qutb explains that "they are clothes for you, and you are clothes for them" clothes are to cover and protectors. Likewise, the relationship between husband and wife is where both cover and protect each other. It is just as Islam fosters humans with all

existing realities to accept each other's formation and nature with all of their existence [58].

According to Quraish Shihab, in his work *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, the word *libās* is a cover for the *aurat* for its users. On the other hand, the *dzhahir* meaning is a fragment that is inappropriate to be shown to others. Thus, a husband and wife are likened by the Qur'an as clothing, so let them have an attachment to take care of each other and cover up ugliness or what is called a disgrace. They should also not expose each other's disgrace because it will negatively impact the husband-and-wife relationship if many people know their problems or bad things [59].

It has also been mentioned that intertextual can be understood as the principle of intertextual relationships. It is a verse that is absolutely inseparable from the rest of the text. Therefore, in addition to providing information on the *asbab al-nuzul* verse, it is necessary to relate it to the verse before and after it.

## History of Asbab Al-Nuzul Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187

Ahmad, Abu Dawud, and Hakim narrated from Muadz bin Jabal that he said, "Indeed, in the past, the believers had intercourse with their wives, ate and drank before they went to sleep. If they were asleep, they would not have intercourse with their wives again. Once upon a time, a man from the Ansar caravan, Qais bin Shirmah, performed the *isyā'* prayer until he fell asleep but had not eaten or drunk anything. The next day, he became restless about it because he fell asleep after the *isyā'* prayer. In addition, at one time, Umar also made a mistake. He had intercourse with his wife after waking up from his sleep. The next day, he met the Prophet Muhammad and then told about the incident he experienced with his wife [60].

Hence, to explain the analysis of this verse, the interpreters should make a connection between the intertextual relationship in analogizing the meaning of a verse with the use of the word being interpreted (*munasabah*). *Munasabah* of this verse cannot be separated from events related to a companion of the Prophet who forbade himself to eat, drink, and even have sex during the night of the month of Ramadan. According to this verse, Allah has a *rukhsah* (lightening) for believers who are married in marital relations. Therefore, Allah gives lightness in intercourse with his wife, eating, and drinking on the night of the fasting month [61,] and it is forbidden during the day, just like eating and drinking [28].

## Editorial Explanation of the Ayat Before and After

The discussion in the previous verse contains the glory of the holy month of Ramadan, namely the revelation of the Qur'an and the obligation to fast during the day. At that time, it was forbidden to eat, drink, and have sex with the wife

during the day until the time for breaking the fast had arrived. However, in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187, there was a violation by a friend, namely Al Qasni (he fell asleep after the Maghrib prayer and woke up after the *isya*' prayer, then ate and drank). In addition, one of the companions of the Prophet, namely Caliph Umar bin Khattab, also made a mistake (he also had intercourse with his wife at night after *isya*' prayer on the night of the month of Ramadan) [60]. However, Allah (SWT) knows what they are doing, so this verse was revealed: *It has been made permissible for you to be intimate with your wives during the nights preceding the fast. Your spouses are a garment for you as you are for them. Allah knows that you were deceiving yourselves. So He has accepted your repentance and pardoned you. So now you may be intimate with them and seek what Allah has prescribed for you. You may eat and drink until you see the light of dawn breaking the darkness of night, then complete the fast until nightfall. Do not be intimate with your spouses while you are meditating in the mosques. These are the limits set by Allah, so do not exceed them. This is how Allah makes His revelations clear to people so that they may become mindful of Him* - Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187.

The verse states that humans are very close to their desires and easily fall into them. Thus, it is further emphasized in the explanation of the verse that follows, containing a prohibition so that humans do not follow their lusts, use wealth in vain, and do bribery contacts between humans. *Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, nor deliberately bribe authorities to devour a portion of others' property, knowing that it is a sin.* - Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 188.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate the meaning of the word *libās* Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187 in Michael Camille Riffaterre's Semiotics application. The first stage used a heuristic theory, in which the word *libās* was searched for its meaning, both in terms of language and the Arabic term itself. In this heuristic theory, there is an indirectness of expression. At this first stage, the word *libās* is interpreted as something to wear, clothes, and blankets. The clothes here are something soothing, comfortable, and covering.

The second stage is through hermeneutics; namely, the word *libās* is interpreted more deeply, not only in *lafdziyah* but outwardly. It is as the word *libās* has a very polite and subtle meaning, namely as wearing or also called intercourse, clothes that cover, protect, or guard against ugliness (disgrace), and clothes as a place or tranquility. Finally, the third stage is in an intertextual way, where *asbab al-nuzul* of the revelation of a verse is understood, including its deep

meaning, both it can be interpreted outwardly and as an inner livelihood (*batiniyah*).

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Recommendations from the research results are to contribute to the development and enrichment of knowledge and scholarship regarding the meaning of the word *libās* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 187.

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