

DENOTATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS IN THE POEM *UḤIBBUKI UḤIBBUKI WA HĀDHĀ TAWQĪĪ* BY NIZAR QABBANI

Nadira Nurul Fattia^{[1]*}, M. Ulfat Thaariq^[2]

^[1] ^[2] Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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As a literary work that uses a lot of figurative language, poetry is famous for the denotative and connotative meanings it produces. Regarding this phenomenon, the article analyzes the denotative and connotative meanings in the poem *Uḥibbuki Uḥibbuki wa Hādhā Tawqīī* by Nizar Qabbani. The study aims to examine how the poet employs connotative language to depict feelings of longing emotionally and profoundly. Connotative language in modern Arabic poetry, including Qabbani's works, functions not only as an aesthetic tool of communication but also as a medium for expressing complex emotions and cultural values. The research method used is qualitative descriptive with a library research approach. Data were collected through documentation techniques by identifying words or phrases in the poem related to the theme of longing. The primary source consists of the original Arabic text of the poem and its translation, while secondary data were obtained from literature discussing Arabic literary traditions. The analysis was conducted through four stages: identifying diction related to longing, classifying the meanings into denotative and connotative categories, analyzing them based on Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning, and interpreting the meanings within the emotional and cultural context of Arab society. The results show that there are six dictions with denotative meanings and six with connotative meanings. According to Nizar Qabbani, literal meaning is insufficient to express the depth of emotion; thus, connotative language serves as the primary medium to convey intense longing in a way that is both expressive and representative of the Arabic poetic tradition. This study has implications for the field of poetic stylistics studies, especially Arabic literature, because it strengthens the evidence of the richness of Arabic language used in poetry, especially the romantic genre.

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*Corresponding author. Email: 24201011003@student.uin-suka.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

One of the ways a person expresses their thoughts and experiences is through literary works (Sari et al., 2021). A literary piece such as the poem *Uḥibbuki, Uḥibbuki wa Hādhā Tawqī'i* by Nizar Qabbani stands out for the emotional richness conveyed by the poet (Nazar, 2024). Poetry is not merely a text, but a complex medium for expressing and evoking emotions (Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 2022). Therefore, it is not surprising that poetry often contains words whose meanings are difficult for readers to grasp (Adibta et al., 2024). The use of words with implied or figurative meanings frequently makes it challenging for readers to understand the message the poet intends to convey fully (Nafinuddin, 2020). In analyzing meaning, denotative refers to the dictionary meaning, while connotative refers to the value that emerges in communication and depends on the context of the word (Fauziyah & Ilmi, 2020). For this reason, the researcher is interested in analyzing the denotative and connotative meanings in the poem, particularly in the parts that depict longing, in order to explore why Nizar Qabbani chose to use connotative expressions and how they reflect the emotions he aimed to communicate to the reader (Jr, 2024).

Longing in poetry is a form of deep emotional expression and is often conveyed through poetic language in the tradition of Arabic literature (A'yun, 2018). This social fact illustrates that the use of connotative meaning in literature plays a vital role in representing various forms of emotion such as longing that are difficult to express through direct (denotative) language alone (Dan et al., 2022). Therefore, it requires a style of language capable of reflecting the depth of such emotional experiences. Through connotation, Nizar Qabbani portrays love and longing as part of life experiences that represent the existential realities of human beings. Thus, poetry becomes a bridge between personal expression and the collective consciousness of readers.

Research on the poetry of Nizar Qabbani has been conducted extensively. An article entitled "*Makna Denotatif dan Konotatif dalam puisi Khubzun Wa Khasis Wa Qamar karya Nizar Qabbani (Kajian Semantik)*" by Muhammad Rizki Hidayatullah provides insights into the denotative and connotative meanings found in that poem (Hidayatullah, 2023). This was followed by a study by Ratna Kusumastuti and Mardjoko Idris titled "*Tema-Tema pada Puisi Anāwa Al-Nisā' Karya Nizar Qabbani (Kajian Semantik)*", which revealed the presence of both denotative and connotative expressions in the poem (Kusumastuti & Idris, 2024). However, no previous research has been found that specifically examines the denotative and connotative meanings in Nizar Qabbani's poem *Uḥibbuki, Uḥibbuki wa Hādhā Tawqī'i*. Therefore, the author is interested in analyzing this particular poem through the lens of semantics, using Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning as the analytical framework (Leech, 1981). Leech's classification of linguistic meaning has greatly influenced the linguistic community and has contributed to the advancement of semantic studies in a more systematic and effective manner (Afzal & Zaki, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the use of denotative and connotative meanings in the poem *Uḥibbuki, Uḥibbuki wa Hādhā Tawqī'i* by Nizar Qabbani, with a specific focus on the sections that depict longing. In addition, the research seeks to reveal how the use of connotation contributes to the emotional intensity of the poem and represents the aesthetic tradition of Arabic poetry. The author also aims to explore why Nizar Qabbani prefers the use of connotative language over direct meaning. Thus, this study is expected to offer new insights into how symbolism in Qabbani's poetry reflects the broader tradition of Arabic literary expression.

The argument proposed in this study is that Nizar Qabbani uses connotative meaning to depict longing because he seeks to convey emotional depth that cannot be adequately expressed through denotative meaning alone. This choice is influenced by the cultural background of Arabic literary tradition, which values the beauty of symbolism in language, as well as Qabbani's personal preference for a poetic style capable of creating strong emotional resonance. Thus, the connotative meaning in this poem is not merely a literary ornament, but an essential element for communicating profound emotional experiences.

METHOD

A qualitative descriptive approach was chosen as the method for this study to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings in the poem *Uḥibbuki, Uḥibbuki wa Hādḥā Tawqī'i* by Nizar Qabbani. The focus of this research is to uncover meanings that reflect the emotional depth of longing, based on Geoffrey Leech's semantic theory (Leech, 1981). The primary data consist of the original Arabic text of the poem and its translation, while the secondary data are obtained from literature related to Arabic literary traditions. Data collection was carried out through documentation techniques to identify words or phrases in the poem, as well as library research to strengthen the theoretical framework.

The data analysis was carried out in four stages: identifying words or phrases that express longing, classifying the meanings into denotative and connotative categories, analyzing them based on Geoffrey Leech's semantic theory, and interpreting how these meanings reflect longing by the Arabic literary tradition (Khoiriyah, 2024). The results of the analysis are presented in the form of a narrative description that connects excerpts from the poem with deeper semantic dimensions to demonstrate how Nizar Qabbani creates powerful emotional expressions through his use of language.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the author found several pieces of data based on the observation-and-note method, which contain both denotative and connotative meanings in the poem *'Uhibbuki, 'Uhibbuki Wahadza Tauqi'i* by Nizar Qabbani. Among them are six words with denotative meanings and six words with connotative meanings. The explanations are as follows:

Table 1. The Denotative and Connotative Meaning Data

No	Poem Text	Translation	Denotative and Connotative Meanings
1	يا سمكاً يسبح في ماء حياتي	O fish that swims in the waters of my life.	سمكاً
2	يا آخر وطن أولد فيه وأدفن فيه ...وأنشر فيه كتاباتي	O, last homeland where I was born... I shall be buried in you and publish my writing with in you	وطن أولد
3	يا ناراً تجتاح كياني	O fire that envelops my soul	يا ناراً
4	يا أيتها الوردة .. والياقوتة	O rose... and ruby..	الوردة
5	يا ثمرأ يملأ أغصاني	O fruits that fill my branches,	أغصاني

Data 1

يا سمكاً يسبح في ماء حياتي

O fish that swims in the waters of my life

Denotatively, the word “fish” (سمكاً) refers to cold-blood edvertebrate animals that live in water, breathe through gills, and generally have scaly bodies and use fins to move and maintain balance. This definition is found in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI) as well as classical Arabic dictionaries such as Lisān al-'Arab or al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ. In this sense, the meaning of the word “fish” is objective and scientific, explaining the biological and ecological characteristics of the creature. However, in the world of literature, a word does not always stop at its literal meaning. The word “fish” can undergo a shift in meaning or an extension of the association into a deeper symbol or metaphor. In Arabic and Indonesian poetry or literary expressions, poets often use natural words to convey complex and deep emotions. When the word “fish” is used in poetry, it can be a symbol of longing, deep love, or a strong emotional attachment between two individuals. In this case, the poet uses the natural association that fish cannot live without water as an illustration that he cannot live without his lover.

Connotatively, the poet symbolizes the figure of a lover or a loved one as a “fish” that lives in “water”, and this gives a rich layer of meaning to emotions and symbolic meaning. In classical and modern Arabic culture, water is not only understood physically as an element of life, but also has high spiritual and cultural value (Ridho & Priyoyudanto, 2024). Thus, when a person is described as a fish that can only live in water, its metaphorical meaning becomes so profound: the existence of a lover is not only a complement, but the main condition of the poet's emotional and spiritual survival. This image contains a connotation of dependence that is not a weakness, but an expression of the totality of love that is integrated with life. In classical Arabic poetry, this kind of nature symbolism is very common, where natural objects such as water, fish, birds, or the moon are used to describe relationships between human beings, especially in the context of love, longing, or loss. Therefore, the use of the word “fish” in this context is not something superficial, but rather a reflection of the complexity of the poet's inner experience as well as the symbolic richness in the Arabic and local literary traditions.

Data 2

يا آخر وطن أولد فيه وأدفن فيه... وأنشر فيه كتاباتي

O, last homeland where I was born... I shall be buried within you

Denotatively, the term “homeland” (وطن أو ولد/watan uwlidu) refersto a person's birth place, as defined in the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Dictionary) as “the place of one's birth or origin and the place where one feels a sense of belonging.” However, in the context of poetry or literary works, this term often transcends its literal meaning and enters the connotative realm, which is more emotional and symbolic. In the poem being analyzed, the poet equates his beloved with the *homeland*, implying that the beloved represents a source of security, a place of refuge, and a core of personal identity. This suggests that, for the poet, the relationship with the beloved is not merely ordinary love, but rather the center of his very existence. The word “buried” that appears in the

poem does not simply refer to physical death, but implies the poet's willingness to make love his final resting place, the place where he surrenders his entire life and meaning. Thus, love here is seen as both the ultimate destination and the place of return for a meaningful existence.

In Arab culture it self, the concept of *homeland* (*al-watan/الوطن*) holds a profound significance as a symbol of emotional attachment to one's place of origin, encompassing language, culture, history, and collective identity (Baking, 2024). When an Arab poet compares a beloved to the homeland, he is not merely expressing love, but also articulating a deep longing to return to and unite with the source of his life's meaning. This comparison carries a strong emotional layer, as it creates a connection between the beloved and a spiritual homecoming. In other words, the beloved becomes a symbol of deep-rooted attachment, representing the foundation of identity and the place where the soul feels complete. Therefore, the use of connotative diction such as "*homeland*" in poetry does not merely beautify the language but also builds an emotional bond between the poet and the reader, reinforcing an inner resonance of longing, attachment, and the need to return to something essential in human life (Ihkm & Meskipun, 2024).

Data 3

يا ناراً تجتاح كياني

O fire that envelops my soul

Denotatively, the word "fire" (ناراً) in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language is interpreted as a physical element that produces heat and light due to combustion, and is often associated with destruction and danger. Nevertheless, in literary contexts, especially in classical and contemporary Arabic poetry, the meaning of this word has undergone a profound connotative expansion. "Fire" becomes a symbol of burning emotions, especially love and longing (Charteris-Black, 2017). The feeling of love in poetry is often described as something that burns the poet's heart, creating a sensation that is both painful and intoxicating. In this framework, love not only touches the emotional side of humans warmly and gently, but can also destroy and scorch the soul that is unable to control its turmoil. Therefore, fire becomes an effective poetic metaphor for conveying the intense and profound complexity of human feeling.

In the tradition of Arabic poetry, especially in love poems (*'udhrī*) and Sufistic poetry, the metaphor of fire is very predominantly used to describe longing that transcends physical boundaries. Sufi poets such as Ibn al-Fārid and Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah, for example, used the symbol of fire not only to symbolize worldly love, but also divine love that scorches the ego and purifies the soul (Fitriani, 2021). In this context, fire is not merely destructive, but rather a spiritual force that burns all forms of material attachment and brings man to union with the Divine. Therefore, in Sufistic poetry, fire has an ambivalent dimension as a symbol of suffering as well as enlightenment. Thus, the meaning of the word "fire" cannot be separated from the cultural and spiritual context in the treasures of Arabic literature, where it becomes a symbolic bridge between the world of human emotions and a transcendental dimension beyond the reach of ordinary reason.

Data 4

فأشواقي وصلت لحدود الهذيان

My longing... has reached the limit of delirium

Denotatively, the word “delirium” (الهذيان) in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language refers to a condition of disturbance of a person's consciousness or mental sanity, usually accompanied by chaotic speech, confusion, and loss of control of the mind. However, in the context of poetry, the meaning of this word cannot be limited to its literal meaning only. Based on Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning, especially the meaning of connotation, the word “delirium” contains amore complexemotional aspect, namely, as an expression of the intensity of a very deep sense of longing. The poet does not simply declare that he longs for someone, but describes the longing as an almost unbearable psychological condition, beyond the limits of rationality and consciousness. With this choice of words, the poet wants to show that the longing He experiences is no longer just an ordinary turmoil of the heart but has developed into an existential disorder that envelops his entire consciousness. The word “delirium” became a symbol of extreme emotional peaks, indicating that longing for a lover has penetrated the boundaries of logic and invaded the psychic space completely.

In the classical and modern Arabic poetry traditions, the expression of longing often not only represents the poet's personal feelings, but also serves as a means of conveying human suffering to loss, separation, and alienation (Stetkevych, 2021). Nizar Qabbani, as a modern poet who explores the themes of love and women extensively, continues this legacy in a distinctive way (Asqi & Febriani, 2021). He describes longing not only as a gentle sadness, but as an intense and destructive inner shock. In the poem in question, the use of the word “delirium” suggests that longing has reached a dimension that the common sense can no longer control, as if the poet were in a transcendental state that blurred the boundary between reality and hallucinations. This reinforces Leech's approach that connotations contain emotional power that transcends lexical meaning, so the poet's choice of diction creates a powerful aesthetic and psychological effect for the reader. Thus, the poem not only communicates the poet's heart, but also emphasizes that the experience of longing can be a form of deep inner suffering.

Data 5

يا أيها الوردة .. والياقوتة

O rose... and rubies...

In the above ba'it, denotation of the word rose (وردة) in the KBBI dictionary has the meaning of a herbaceous plant of the Rosaceae tribe, covering hundreds of types, growing upright or climbing, the stems are thorny, the flowers are multi-colored, such as red, white, pink, dark red, fragrant smell. However, the word rose there also has many implicit meanings (connotations) such as the poet symbolizes his lover as someone who has extraordinary beauty, very beautiful both physically and mentally. In addition, the word rose can also be interpreted as a form of conveying a poet's feelings of affection or deep love to his lover (Zhou & Guo, 2020). Even the word rose also symbolizes the lover as something precious and unique in his life. Therefore, Nizar Qabbani uses the word

rose in his poem because the figure he loves and cherishes cannot be expressed and described if he simply uses the meaning of denotation.

In the Arabic literary tradition, especially in *qasidah cinta or madih* (praise), such an allusion is called *tasybih*, which is a form of analogy or direct comparison between two objects that have certain similarities. Roses, with all their symbolism of fragrance, elegance, and fragile beauty, are often used to describe lovers, laudable figures, or even certain spiritual conditions. Poets use this *tasybih* not only to flatter, but also to strengthen the aesthetic and emotional impression that they want to convey to the listener or reader. This shows how classical Arabic poetry is not only a literary work, but also a means of emotional communication and high expression. Therefore, the use of “rose” in this poem is not merely a decoration, but part of the construction of deep and touching meaning, which has been a hallmark of the beauty of Arabic literature throughout history (Sujarwoko, 2023).

Data 6

ثمراً يملأ أغصاني

O fruits that fill my branches

In the verse, the word “my branches” (أغصاني) according to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) has a denotative meaning referring to the branches of a tree; the parts of the tree trunk that grow outward to the side with twigs and leaves. However, connotatively, the poet does not merely use this literal meaning but transforms it into a symbol rich with meaning. In the context of the poem, “branches” represent parts of the poet’s self that are inter connected with feelings and the soul, growing and developing thanks to the presence of the beloved. The branches symbolize fragments of the poet’s identity that are always awaiting the presence of the beloved as fruits that complete, beautify, and give meaning to life. This implies that without the presence of the beloved, the branches seem to lose their function and existence. The beloved’s presence as the fruit not only enriches but also enlivens the branches, creating a harmony and a complete unity between the poet and the beloved.

One of the main themes in Arabic love poetry, especially in the *ghazal* genre, is how poets often portray the lover as something essential and life-changing, like a very vital element of nature, like fruit for a flourishing tree. In the *ba’it*, the words chosen imply that the lover is not only an object of love, but also serves as an element that fills the emptiness and emptiness of the poet’s life, as if it were an irreplaceable source of life and hope. This image is very typical of the Arabic poetic tradition that likes to use the metaphor of nature to express various nuances of feelings, ranging from deep longing to sweeping sadness, to overwhelming happiness. Through the use of natural elements such as water, trees, and fruits, the poet can affirm the lover as an integral part of his survival and his emotions as well as an absolute existential need (Jahro & Namang, 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the poem *Uḥibbuki Uḥibbuki wa Hādhā Tawqī’ī* by Nizar Qabbani, it was found that the poem contains various layers of meaning

through the use of denotative and connotative meanings that are strategically presented to describe the longing of the poet for his lover. Denotative meanings serve as literal meanings that are explicitly expressed in the dictionaries of poetry, while connotative meanings provide symbolic and emotional dimensions that go beyond those literal meanings. This approach reflects the depth of emotional experience that is difficult to express directly through literal meaning, so the use of connotative language styles becomes an effective instrument for Nizar Qabbani to convey the intensity of longing more deeply and broadly. In addition, according to the author, the existence of connotative meanings provides a wide interpretive space for readers, allowing them to carry out subjective readings that refer to their personal experiences, thus creating a more intimate emotional attachment between the reader and the text of the poem. This strategy also demonstrates Nizar Qabbani's ability to utilize the Arabic literary tradition, which is rich in symbolism and metaphors, as well as contribute to the preservation and enrichment of the literary heritage.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author contributed to data collection, analysis, and draft article writing. The second author contributed to the data collection process, the process of translating relevant source texts from Indonesian into English to ensure the accuracy of the right meaning and context in the analysis, and made corrections to the entire content of the paper, both in terms of substance and language, to improve the final quality of this article academically and editorially.

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AUTHORS' SHORT BIODATA

Nadira Nurul Fattia is a Master's Student at the Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta. His research includes the fields of linguistics and literature, especially semantics and literary psychology. Email: 24201011003@student.uin-suka.ac.id

M. Ulfat Thaariq is a Master's Student in the Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta. His research includes the fields of linguistics and literature, especially semantics and semiotics. Email: 24201011003@student.uin-suka.ac.id