

TOSHIHIKO IZUTSU'S SEMANTICS ON THE MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION OF THE QUR'AN IN ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Qur'anic verses for multicultural values using Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic approach and to present pedagogical illustrations, informed by student reflections, that show how semantic awareness may emerge in Arabic language learning contexts. The study adopts a conceptual-qualitative research design that emphasizes textual interpretation and pedagogical reflection rather than the empirical evaluation of instructional effectiveness. Conceptual semantic analysis based on Izutsu's framework is applied to selected Qur'anic verses through four interrelated layers of meaning: basic meaning, relational meaning, historical meaning, and worldview (Weltanschauung). The analysis demonstrates that multicultural values, such as diversity, justice, dialogue, social cooperation, and recognition of religious plurality, are constructed through relational networks of meaning linking key concepts, syntactic structures, and discourse patterns. Pedagogical illustrations drawn from reflective student accounts suggest that semantic-oriented engagement with Qur'anic texts can foster contextual, relational, and ethical awareness in Arabic language learning.

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Keywords:

Toshihiko Izutsu; Multicultural Education; Semantics, Arabic language Learning.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل آيات قرآنية في ضوء القيم التعددية الثقافية باستخدام المنهج الدلالي لتوشييهيكو إيزوتسو، وتقديم أمثلة تربوية، مستمدة من تأملات الطلاب، توضح كيفية نشوء الوعي الدلالي في سياقات تعلم اللغة العربية. تعتمد الدراسة تصميمًا بحثيًا مفاهيميًا نوعيًا يركز على التفسير النصي والتأمل التربوي بدلاً من التقييم التجريبي لفعالية التدريس. يُطبق التحليل الدلالي المفاهيمي، القائم على إطار إيزوتسو، على آيات قرآنية مختارة من خلال أربعة مستويات مترابطة من المعنى: المعنى الأساسي، والمعنى العلائقي، والمعنى التاريخي، والرؤية العالمية. يُبين التحليل أن القيم التعددية الثقافية، كالتنوع والعدالة والحوار والتعاون الاجتماعي والاعتراف بالتعددية الدينية، تُبنى من خلال شبكات علائقية من المعنى تربط المفاهيم الأساسية والبنى النحوية وأنماط الخطاب. تشير الأمثلة التربوية المستمدة من روايات الطلاب التأملية إلى أن التفاعل الموجه نحو الدلالة مع النصوص القرآنية يمكن أن يعزز الوعي السياقي والعلائقي والأخلاقي في تعليم اللغة العربية.

كلمات أساسية: توشييهيكو إيزوتسو؛ التربية التعددية الثقافية؛ سيمانتيك، تعليم اللغة العربية.

Introduction

Increasing cross-cultural interactions have further emphasized the need for multicultural education that instills values of tolerance, respect for differences, and peaceful coexistence.¹ In the context of a pluralistic Muslim society, education based on sacred texts such as the Qur'an has great potential as a normative basis for shaping inclusive attitudes.² However, for the multicultural values in the Qur'an not to remain merely normative idealism, an interpretive approach is needed that is capable of exploring the conceptual meaning of the Qur'an deeply and comprehensively.³ This is where a semantic approach is needed, particularly Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic approach.

Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic approach has been widely accepted by Muslim scholars, even though he is not a Muslim.⁴ Izutsu's semantic analysis covers basic meaning, relational meaning, historical meaning, and worldview (*weltanschauung*). Still, it begins with the determination of key concepts.⁵ Izutsu offers a semantic analysis that takes the Qur'an as its primary object of study while deliberately avoiding dogmatic influence.⁶ Thus, Izutsu's semantic approach can be an important basis for interpreting the multicultural values of the Qur'an because his analysis of meaning does not stop at lexical definitions, but also highlights the relationship between concepts in the *weltanschauung* (worldview) of the Qur'an.⁷

When multicultural values such as ethnic and linguistic diversity, religious differences, primordial diversity, justice, equality, dialogue, and tolerance appear, a picture emerges that diversity is not a threat, but rather a value structure desired by God as the basis for human relations. In Izutsu's perspective, key concepts such as *ta'aruf*, *'adl*, *qist*, *rahmah*, and *ukhuwwah* are part of a network of meanings that form an ethos of peaceful coexistence. Qur'anic multicultural values are not merely

¹ Arfaton Arfaton et al., "Implementation of Multicultural Education as a Means of Forming Characters of Tolerance and Mutual Respect," *Jurnal Eduscience* 12, no. 2 (2025): 377–91, <https://doi.org/10.36987/jes.v12i2.6819>.

² Abdullah Saeed, *Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-First Century* (Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315870922>.

³ Ach Fakhurrozi et al., "The Development of an Inclusive Social Science Based Contextual Interpretation Model: A New Approach to Address Contemporary Challenges in Quranic Studies," *Al-Insyiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 10, no. 2 (2024): 249–85, <https://doi.org/10.35309/alinsyiroh.v10i2.303>.

⁴ İsmail Albayrak, "The Reception of Toshihiko Izutsu's Qur'anic Studies in the Muslim World: With Special Reference to Turkish Qur'anic Scholarship," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): 73–106, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2012.0038>.

⁵ Mokhalad Naji Kamil, "A Review Study: Critique and Review of Izutsu's Qur'anic Semantic Methodology," *Manar Elsharq Journal for Literature and Language Studies* 3, no. 1 (2025): 36–42, <https://doi.org/10.56961/mejlls.v3i1.871>; Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (McGill-Queen's Press - MQUP, 2002).

⁶ Muzaqqi Muzaqqi, "Semantic Approaches in Islamic Studies; The Review of Toshihiko Izutsu's Thought," *PEDAGOGIK: Jurnal Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (n.d.), accessed December 25, 2025, <https://ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/pedagogik/article/view/118>.

⁷ Şalāḥ Al-Dīn Al-Zarāl, "Applied Semantics and the Qur'an: Izutsu's Methodology as a Case Study," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): 200–173, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2012.0047>.

normative, but can be proven through the semantic relationship between the core concepts of the Qur'an.⁸

These values can be instilled in multicultural education through Arabic language learning. Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an, is not only a means of communication, but also a vehicle for internalizing values.⁹ Learning Arabic can be an effective medium for shaping students' multicultural awareness through a semantic approach to Qur'anic vocabulary that embodies the values of diversity, justice, and dialogue. For example, when students learn the words *ummatun*, *syu'ūb*, *qabā'il*, *ta'āruf*, *ikhtilāf*, *ḥaqq*, or *'adl* in the context of the verse, they not only learn the structure of the language but also grasp the social relations and ethical messages it contains. Arabic language education has the potential to build semantic awareness, which is the ability to understand the meaning of words contextually and the values they represent, as exemplified by Izutsu.¹⁰

Multicultural values-based Arabic language learning allows teachers to integrate Qur'anic discourse into teaching materials without getting caught up in a dogmatic approach.¹¹ Teachers can develop learning activities in the form of semantic analysis of Qur'anic verses relevant to issues of diversity, intercultural dialogue, and social justice. Students can be invited to compare the meanings of multicultural words in various Qur'anic contexts.¹²

Multicultural education through Arabic language learning also supports the development of students' socio-cultural competencies. Arabic is positioned not only as a linguistic subject but also as a means of building awareness of human diversity.¹³ Students can be introduced to the diversity of Muslim cultures, Islamic intellectual traditions, and the diversity of approaches and thoughts that have developed in the Arabic-speaking world. This enrichment helps them see language as a cultural product as well as a gateway to understanding the plurality of Islam

⁸ Abdul Kabir Hussain Solihu, "Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung: A Critical Analysis of Toshihiko Izutsu's Works," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 26, no. 4 (2009): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v26i4.387>.

⁹ Ahmad Abdel Tawwab Sharaf Eldin, "Teaching Culture in the Classroom to Arabic Language Students," *International Education Studies* 8, no. 2 (2015): p113, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v8n2p113>.

¹⁰ Fatih Yılmaz, "Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education: A Case Study of Teacher Candidates' Perceptions," *Cogent Education* 3, no. 1 (2016): 1172394, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1172394>.

¹¹ Orhan Agirdag et al., "Teachers' Understanding of Multicultural Education and the Correlates of Multicultural Content Integration in Flanders," *Education and Urban Society* 48, no. 6 (2016): 556–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124514536610>.

¹² Nuruddin Nuruddin et al., "The Need for Arabic Language Teaching Materials Based on Multicultural Education for Indonesian Diaspora Students," *ALSINATUNA* 7, no. 1 (2021): 45–63, <https://doi.org/10.28918/alsinatuna.v7i1.4768>.

¹³ Shyla Gonzalez-Dogan, "Linguistic Othering and 'Knowledge Deserts': Perspectives on Arabic Use in Linguistically Diverse Islamic Institutions," *Linguistics and Education* 71 (October 2022): 101076, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101076>.

across sectors.¹⁴ This is in line with Qur'anic values that emphasize justice, brotherhood, and recognition of other communities.

The integration of Izutsu's semantic approach in Arabic language learning provides an epistemological foundation and pedagogy for the development of Qur'anic multicultural education.¹⁵ Through meaning-oriented language reading and conceptual relations, students not only master linguistic skills, but also internalize Qur'anic values of diversity, justice, dialogue, and humanity. Thus, Arabic language education can be a strategic instrument for shaping a generation that is knowledgeable, has good character, and can live side by side peacefully in a multicultural society.¹⁶

Integrating multicultural values into Arabic language education through semantic analysis allows Qur'anic discourse to be incorporated pedagogically without reducing it to dogmatic instruction. Teachers may design learning activities that focus on comparing Qur'anic concepts across contexts, examining relational meanings, and reflecting on the ethical implications embedded in linguistic structures. In this way, Arabic language instruction can function as a medium for developing socio-cultural competence, enabling learners to appreciate human diversity, intercultural dialogue, and the plurality of Islamic intellectual traditions across historical and cultural settings.

The study aims to conceptually analyze Qur'anic verses related to multicultural values using Izutsu's semantic approach, and to provide pedagogical illustrations informed by student reflections that demonstrate the emergence of semantic awareness in Arabic language learning contexts. Through this focus, the article seeks to contribute to the theoretical and pedagogical discourse on Arabic language education by repositioning Qur'anic semantics as a meaningful resource for multicultural education.

Method

This study adopted a conceptual–qualitative research design aimed at developing a theoretically grounded pedagogical understanding of how Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic framework can be meaningfully integrated into Arabic language education to support the internalization of Qur'anic multicultural values. Rather than testing hypotheses or measuring instructional effectiveness, this design

¹⁴ Shahzaman Haque, "Language Use and Islamic Practices in Multilingual Europe," *Signs and Society* 8, no. 3 (2020): 401–25, <https://doi.org/10.1086/710157>.

¹⁵ Ikrom Nurdin Jamil and Ainur Rhain, "Semantic Analysis of the Meaning of Al-'Ilmu in the Qur'an from Toshihiko Izutsu's Perspective," *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2025), https://al-afkar.com/index.php/Afkar_Journal/article/view/2163; Eisa Al-Akoub, "Izutsu's Study of the Qur'an from an Arab Perspective," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): 107–30, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2012.0039>.

¹⁶ Sulistyaningsih and Dailatus Syamsiyah, "Arabic Language Learning Through Multicultural Approach in Indonesia and Malaysia: (A Comparative Descriptive Analysis)," *An Naba* 8, no. 1 (2025): 91–105, <https://doi.org/10.51614/3a2dzd64>.

emphasizes interpretive inquiry, conceptual analysis, and pedagogical reflection grounded in textual interpretation and educational theory.

Conceptual–qualitative research is appropriate for inquiries that seek to bridge theory and pedagogy through critical engagement with texts, concepts, and meaning structures, rather than through statistically generalizable findings.¹⁷ Accordingly, this study positioned Qur'anic semantic analysis as the core analytical component, while a small corpus of student reflections is incorporated only as illustrative data. These illustrations are not intended to function as empirical evidence for causal or evaluative claims, but to provide reflective insight into the educational relevance of Izutsu's semantic framework within Arabic language learning contexts.

The participants in this study were fifth-semester undergraduate students from the Arabic Language Education program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram. They were selected purposively due to their prior exposure to Arabic semantics and tafsīr tarbawī, particularly in studying Qur'anic verses related to multicultural values. Their reflections were used solely to exemplify how semantic-oriented instruction may shape learning experiences, rather than to generate findings about a broader population. The primary analytical procedure is conceptual semantic analysis based on Toshihiko Izutsu's framework. Selected Qur'anic verses related to multicultural values, such as diversity, justice, dialogue, religious autonomy, and social solidarity, are examined through four interrelated semantic layers: basic meaning, relational meaning, historical meaning, and worldview (*weltanschauung*).¹⁸

The analysis begins with the identification of key Qur'anic concepts (e.g., ta'āraf, 'adl, qist, raḥmah, ukhuwwah), followed by an examination of their relational networks within the Qur'anic text. Particular attention is given to how meaning is constructed through lexical choices, syntactic relations, and rhetorical patterns, and how these linguistic elements collectively articulate an ethical worldview that supports multicultural values. This conceptual analysis provides the theoretical basis upon which the study's pedagogical reflections are formed.

To complement the conceptual analysis, the study incorporates limited qualitative pedagogical illustrations in the form of reflective student accounts. These reflections were drawn from Arabic language learning contexts in which semantic discussion of Qur'anic vocabulary and structures formed part of instructional engagement. Students were selected purposively based on their involvement in Arabic language learning and Qur'anic studies, as well as their willingness to articulate reflective responses to the learning experience.

¹⁷ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (SAGE, 2014).

¹⁸ Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*; Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung* (Islamic Book Trust, 2002).

These reflections are not treated as empirical data for generalization. They are presented selectively to illustrate how learners may respond to semantic-oriented instruction and how conceptual engagement with Qur'anic meanings can shape linguistic and ethical awareness. As such, they function as contextual pedagogical narratives rather than a comprehensive qualitative dataset.

Student reflections were analyzed interpretively using a theory-informed approach. The analysis focuses on recurring patterns related to semantic awareness, ethical reflection, and perceptions of multicultural values in Arabic language learning. No formal coding procedures typically associated with empirical qualitative research were applied. Instead, student statements were read dialogically alongside Izutsu's semantic framework and the pedagogical aims of the study, while maintaining a clear analytical boundary between participants' lived experiences and the author's conceptual interpretation.¹⁹

Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring informed consent and anonymization of all student reflections. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed that their reflections would be used solely for academic purposes as illustrative material within a conceptual study. No sensitive personal data was collected, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process.

Given its conceptual-qualitative orientation, this study does not claim empirical generalizability or instructional effectiveness. Its contribution lies in offering theoretical insight and pedagogical reflection, rather than producing evaluative or outcome-based conclusions about the learning outcomes. The limited use of student reflections should therefore be understood as an illustrative complement to the conceptual analysis, providing contextual grounding for pedagogical discussion and highlighting opportunities for future investigation.

Result and Discussion

Qur'anic Multicultural Values through Izutsu's Semantic Framework

The results of the conceptual analysis demonstrate that Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic framework provides a systematic and coherent methodological tool for uncovering multicultural values embedded in the Qur'anic worldview (Weltanschauung). Rather than treating diversity, justice, dialogue, and social cooperation as isolated moral exhortations, Izutsu's approach reveals how these values are linguistically constructed and semantically systematized through interconnected semantic relations within the Qur'anic text.

The analysis begins with verses addressing ethnic and linguistic diversity, particularly Qur'an al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13 and Qur'an al-Rūm [30]:22. Lexically, the terms *syu'ūb* and *qabā'il* refer to social groupings based on lineage, a common

¹⁹ Solihu, "Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung."

organizing principle in pre-Islamic Arabia.²⁰ However, their relational meaning shifts profoundly within the Qur'anic syntagmatic structure. In Qur'an 49:13, diversity is explicitly linked to the command *li-ta'ārafū* (so that you may know one another), transforming difference from a static social condition into ethical mandate for interaction, dialogue, and mutual recognition.²¹ Paradigmatically, this structure places *taqwā* in direct opposition to *'aṣabiyyah* (tribalism), replacing ethnic hierarchy with moral responsibility as the sole criterion of human worth.

Similarly, Qur'an 30:22 frames linguistic and physical diversity (*alsinatikum* and *alwānukum*) as *min āyātihi* (among His signs). The relational meaning here is theological-cosmic: diversity is elevated from a sociological fact to a sign of divine creativity that invites reflection (*tafakkur*). Historically, this semantic configuration rejects pre-Qur'anic notions of racial or tribal superiority. The worldview produced by these verses positions diversity as a deliberate and functional element of divine design, forming a foundational principle for multicultural education that seeks semantic awareness and ethical understanding rather than mere passive tolerance. Izutsu's semantic analysis also clarifies Qur'anic positions on religious difference, particularly through Qur'an al-Baqarah [2]:256 and Qur'an al-Kahf [18]:29. The key concepts *ikrāh* (coercion) and *dīn* (religion) in Qur'an 2:256 establish a paradigmatic opposition between coercion and authentic faith. While *ikrāh* denotes external compulsion, *dīn* represents an internal system of belief and moral commitment. Their syntagmatic relation in *lā ikrāha fī al-dīn* produces a relational meaning that affirms absolute freedom of belief.²²

This principle is reinforced by Qur'an 18:29, where the balanced rhetorical structure *falyu'min wa man shā'a falyakfur* emphasizes autonomy of choice. Semantically, *al-ḥaqq* (truth) is presented as objective reality, while acceptance or rejection is left entirely to human volition. The worldview emerging from these verses is one of recognized theological plurality, in which religious difference is acknowledged as a legitimate social and existential reality rather than an aberration. From a multicultural educational perspective, this semantic structure supports respect for belief autonomy and peaceful coexistence without coercive intervention.

Justice (*'adl* and *qisṭ*) emerges in the analysis as a central multicultural value with universal scope. In Qur'an al-Nisā' [4]:135, *qisṭ* is linked syntagmatically to

²⁰ Yoav Alon, "Tribalism in the Middle East: A Useful Prism for Understanding the Region," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 53, no. 3 (2021): 477–81, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743821000787>.

²¹ Dalilul Falihin et al., "Multiculturalism Insight Based on Qur'an and Its Relevance to Plurality in Indonesia," *Jurnal Adabiyah* 24, no. 1 (2024): 90–118, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jad.v24i1a5>.

²² Umi Fadhillah and Kharis Nugroho, "Semantic Analysis of Toshihiko Izutsu in the Phrase 'Al-'Urwatul Wutsqo,'" *Proceeding ISETH (International Summit on Science, Technology, and Humanity)*, January 30, 2024, 1510–16, <https://doi.org/10.23917/iseth.4333>.

bearing witness for God (shuhadā'a lillāh), producing a relational meaning that frames justice as an absolute moral obligation independent of personal interest or communal affiliation. Justice here transcends social boundaries and becomes a divine ethical command.²³

This principle reaches its highest semantic articulation in Qur'an al-Mā'idah [5]:8, where 'adl is explicitly connected to taqwā. The syntactic precedence (taqdīm) of i'dilū emphasizes justice as an ethical priority, while the phrase huwa aqrabu li al-taqwā establishes justice as inseparable from piety. Paradigmatically, 'adl is positioned in opposition to shanā'ān qawm (hatred toward a group), rejecting selective or tribal justice. The worldview constructed by these verses affirms universal human equality before moral law, providing a strong semantic foundation for anti-discrimination, impartial treatment, and social inclusion within multicultural education.

Dialogue and tolerance are articulated in the Qur'an not merely as social practices but as ethically governed forms of interaction. In Qur'an al-Nahl [16]:125, the command al-mujādalah bi al-latī hiya aḥsan introduces a moral constraint on debate. While mujādalah lexically denotes argumentation, its relational meaning is shaped by the modifier aḥsan, establishing the ethics of optimal, dignified communication. This structure rejects confrontational or humiliating discourse and positions wisdom (ḥikmah) as a cognitive prerequisite for dialogue.²⁴

Qur'an al-'Ankabūt [29]:46 complements this principle by emphasizing a shared theological foundation through the phrase ilāhunā wa ilāhukum wāḥid. The relational meaning here is recognition of a common core of divinity, which serves as the semantic basis for respectful interfaith dialogue. Together, these verses construct a dialogical-inclusive worldview in which differences do not obstruct ethical engagement or the pursuit of truth.

The analysis of Qur'an al-Mā'idah [5]:2 and Qur'an al-Ḥashr [59]:9 highlights the Qur'anic emphasis on active social cooperation. The term ta'āwanū (mutual assistance) in Qur'an 5:2 is relationally restricted to al-birr wa al-taqwā, establishing cooperation as morally goal-oriented rather than identity-based. This semantic structure legitimizes collaboration across communal or ideological boundaries so long as it serves ethically constructive purposes.

Qur'an 59:9 further elevates solidarity through the concept of īthār (self-sacrifice), which represents the highest expression of social empathy. Paradigmatically opposed to greed (shuḥḥ), īthār situates social responsibility within the semantic field of ethics. The worldview produced is that of a collectively

²³ Laily Liddini et al., "The Concept of Justice in The Qur'an and Hadith (Study of Quraish Shihab's Interpretation QS. An-Nisa: 135 on Youtube)," *AQWAL Journal of Qur'an and Hadis Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022): 91–108, <https://doi.org/10.28918/aqwal.v3i2.6145>.

²⁴ Mahmoud Raheem Allawi and Mohammed Sa'eed Abd., "The Importance of Dialogue in the Qur'an - Surah (Al-Nahl) as a Model," *KnE Social Sciences*, ahead of print, March 13, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i6.13137>.

responsible community, reinforcing the Qur'anic demand for active participation in social justice and welfare.

Qur'an al-Baqarah [2]:62 and Qur'an al-Ḥajj [22]:17 articulate recognition of multiple religious communities within a shared eschatological horizon. While these verses name specific religious groups, their most significant relational meaning lies in the conditional emphasis on faith in God, the Last Day, and righteous deeds. Spiritual merit is thus decoupled from exclusive communal identity.²⁵

The semantic worldview emerging from these verses is axiological pluralism combined with eschatological deferentialism, in which ultimate judgment delegated to divine authority rather than human institutions. For multicultural education, this structure supports respect for religious diversity while emphasizing ethical conduct as a universal criterion.

Pedagogical Implications for Arabic Language Education

Within a conceptual–qualitative framework, the semantic findings indicate that Arabic language education can function as a transformative medium for developing semantic awareness. Rather than being confined to lexical memorization or grammatical accuracy, Arabic learning may be positioned as an entry point into relational meaning—ethical, theological, and social values embedded within Qur'anic linguistic structures.

Morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical structures in Arabic play a significant role in this process of meaning construction. The morphological pattern tafā'ala in the verb li-ta'ārafū emphasizes reciprocity and participation in social interaction, framing diversity not as a passive condition but as an ethical command for active mutual recognition. Similarly, syntactic constructions such as i'dilū huwa aqrabu li al-taqwā convey a hierarchy of moral values through sentence structure, placing justice as a prerequisite for closeness to God.

Rhetorical features also participate in meaning-making. The parallel structure of Qur'an al-Kahf [18]:29 reinforces the message of autonomy of will and the recognition of theological plurality. These linguistic features demonstrate that Arabic grammar and rhetoric are not merely technical devices, but also carriers of ethical meanings that are highly relevant to multicultural education.

Through a semantic-oriented approach, Arabic language instruction enables learners to understand language as an integrated system of meaning in which vocabulary, grammatical structure, and discourse context interact to shape conceptual understanding. This approach encourages learners to connect linguistic competence with ethical reflection, allowing Arabic language education to contribute to the development of multicultural awareness in a reflective and non-dogmatic manner.

²⁵ Muhammad Kudhori et al., "Reinterpreting Religious Pluralism in QS. al-Baqarah: 62 (A Method of al-Qaradāwī's Interpretation)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 29, no. 2 (2021), <https://ejournal.uin-suska.ac.id/index.php/ushuludin/article/view/10662>.

This study contributes to existing scholarship by repositioning Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic framework within the field of Arabic language pedagogy, rather than limiting it to Qur'anic interpretation or theological inquiry. While previous studies have predominantly emphasized the philosophical and ethical dimensions of Izutsu's semantics in Qur'anic studies, this conceptual–qualitative inquiry highlights its relevance as an epistemological foundation for Arabic language education oriented toward multicultural values.

By integrating Qur'anic semantic analysis into Arabic language learning, this approach offers a text-based, reflective, and non-dogmatic pathway for multicultural education. Arabic is positioned not merely as a linguistic tool for understanding sacred texts, but as a medium for cultivating ethical awareness, intercultural understanding, and respect for diversity through direct engagement with Qur'anic meaning structures.

The inclusion of limited student reflections in this study serves solely as illustrative pedagogical narratives, not as empirical data for determining instructional effectiveness. Accordingly, the discussion does not aim to evaluate learning outcomes, but to articulate conceptual principles that may inform the development of Arabic language pedagogy in multicultural educational contexts.

In this sense, the article extends the application of Izutsu's semantic framework from the domain of textual interpretation to the domain of language education, while maintaining clear analytical boundaries between conceptual analysis and illustrative pedagogical reflection. The findings presented here offer a foundation for future empirical research to examine instructional design, classroom implementation, and learning outcomes of semantic-based Arabic language education in diverse educational settings.

Students' Perceptions of Multicultural Value Internalization through Izutsu's Semantic Framework in Arabic Language Learning

This section presents an expanded, integrated analysis of students' perceptions regarding the use of Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic framework in Arabic language learning for the internalization of Qur'anic multicultural values. In accordance with the conceptual–qualitative design with pedagogical illustration, students' perceptions are treated as contextual qualitative evidence that illuminates learning experiences rather than as data intended for statistical generalization or causal inference. Each perceptual pattern is immediately discussed in dialogue with relevant theoretical and empirical literature, thereby maintaining analytical coherence and methodological transparency.

From Lexical Translation to Relational Meaning-Making

Students consistently reported a perceptual shift from understanding Arabic texts through isolated lexical translation toward interpreting meaning relationally and contextually. Engagement with Qur'anic vocabulary such as *syu'ūb* and *qabā'il* in relation to *li-ta'ārafū* (Qur'an 49:13) was perceived as revealing meaningful

connections between linguistic form, textual context, and ethical orientation. Several students contrasted this experience with previous Arabic learning, which they associated primarily with vocabulary memorization and grammatical drills.

This perceptual shift is consistent with meaning-oriented approaches in language education, which conceptualize language as a semiotic resource for constructing meaning within discourse rather than as a collection of discrete forms.²⁶ In second language acquisition research, sustained attention to form–meaning relationships has been shown to promote deeper cognitive processing and conceptual understanding.²⁷

Within Izutsu's semantic theory, Qur'anic meaning emerges not from isolated lexical units but from networks of relational concepts that collectively construct a worldview (*weltanschauung*).²⁸ When learners are guided to examine how Qur'anic terms function relationally rather than merely lexically, the learning experience naturally aligns with Izutsu's epistemological orientation. Students' perceptions of "seeing connections" therefore reflect a pedagogical resonance with relational semantics, even though the systematic articulation of such semantic networks remains the researcher's analytical work rather than the learners' explicit meta-theorization.

Grammar as a Value-Bearing Structure: Ethical Salience through Syntax

Students frequently reported that Arabic grammar, particularly syntax, became meaningful when presented as a carrier of ethical value. Analysis of Qur'an al-Mā'idah [5]:8 (i'dilū huwa aqrabu li al-taqwā) was perceived as transforming justice from a grammatical imperative into a core moral principle embedded in sentence structure. Students contrasted this experience with earlier grammar instruction that emphasized correctness without contextual meaning.

These perceptions correspond closely with Systemic Functional Linguistics, which views grammatical structures as a resource for enacting meaning and

²⁶ Fh Christie, "Systemic Functional Linguistics and a Theory of Language in Education," *Itha Do Desterro* Jan/June 2004, no. 46 (2004), <https://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/scholarlywork/267647-systemic-functional-linguistics-and-a-theory-of-language-in-education>; Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (Hodder Arnold, 1994); Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective* (Deakin University, 1985).

²⁷ Stéphanie Roussel, "'Attention' in Second Language Learning: Implications for Teaching Practice," *Journal of the European Second Language Association* 9, no. 1 (2025): 200–215, <https://doi.org/10.22599/jesla.146>; Rod Ellis, "Current Issues in the Teaching of Grammar: An SLA Perspective," *TESOL Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (2006): 83, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40264512>; Diane Larsen-Freeman, "Saying What We Mean: Making a Case for 'Language Acquisition' to Become 'Language Development,'" *Language Teaching* 48, no. 4 (2015): 491–505, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444814000019>.

²⁸ Muhammad Badrun et al., "The Significance of the Quranic Language as a Fundamental Concept of Semantics: An Analysis of Toshihiko Izutsu's Thought," *QURANICA - International Journal of Quranic Research* 15, no. 1 (2023), <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/quranica/article/view/44859>.

interpersonal relations rather than as neutral formal devices.²⁹ From this perspective, syntactic ordering, emphasis, and clause relations encode value hierarchies and social orientation.

Contemporary grammar pedagogy similarly supports approaches that link grammatical form to communicative and ethical function, arguing that such integration promotes deeper learning than rule-based instruction alone.³⁰ Izutsu's framework complements this view by demonstrating how syntagmatic relations in Qur'anic discourse position ethical concepts hierarchically: justice ('adl) is not merely commanded, but explicitly aligned with piety (taqwā), thereby shaping moral orientation at the level of meaning structure. Students' perceptions thus illustrate how semantic-oriented grammar instruction can foster ethical sensitivity without overburdening learners with abstract theory.

Dialogical Ethics and Communicative Awareness

Engagement with dialogical verses such as Qur'an al-Naḥl [16]:125 and Qur'an al-'Ankabūt [29]:46 led students to report increased awareness of ethical communication. The phrase al-mujādalah bi al-latī hiya aḥsan was frequently interpreted as emphasizing respectful argumentation, restraint, and the pursuit of mutual understanding rather than rhetorical dominance. Students described this realization as reshaping their view of communication from a transactional exchange of ideas to a morally accountable practice.

This perception resonates with frameworks of intercultural communicative competence, which emphasize ethical discourse, respect, and relational awareness as integral to language learning.³¹ Language education research increasingly recognizes that communicative competence entails not only linguistic accuracy but also ethical and pragmatic sensitivity.

²⁹ David Rose, "A Systemic Functional Approach to Language Evolution," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 16, no. 1 (2006): 73–96, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774306000059>.

³⁰ Zanyar Nathir Ghafar and Murad Hassan Mohammed Sawalmeh, "Exploring the Pedagogical Significance of Grammar: A Comprehensive Review of Its Role in Language Learning and Teaching," *British Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4, no. 1 (2024): 13–16, <https://doi.org/10.32996/bjal.2024.4.1.2>; Abdul Hussein Ahmed Al-Khafaji and Zafar Adel Al-saedi, "Employing Educational Poetic Songs as Grammatical Rules in the Achievement of Fifth Grade Students in Arabic Grammar and Measuring Their Concentration Intensity," *Journal of Ecohumanism* 4, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v4i1.6018>; Ibrahim H. Alzahrani, "Exploring Learners' Beliefs on Grammar Learning: Importance and Preferred Methods," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 14, no. 5 (2024): 1475–85, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1405.20>.

³¹ Li-Jung Daphne Huang, "Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Classrooms – A Study of EFL Learners in Taiwan," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 83 (July 2021): 55–66, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.04.015>; Michael Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence: Revisited* (Multilingual Matters, 2021); Suad Abdal Kareem Alwaely and Maitha Fahd Al-Jasari, "Students' Involvement Level in Arabic Language Textbook Communication for Cycle One in the United Arab Emirates," *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, August 30, 2022, 33–40, <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v22i2.50>.

From a multiliteracies perspective, critical engagement with discourse norms fosters reflective and responsible language use.³² Izutsu's semantic analysis situates dialogical ethics as relational meaning embedded within Qur'anic rhetoric, thereby providing a conceptual bridge between linguistic analysis and ethical communication. Students' perceptions suggest that such an approach can meaningfully inform communicative attitudes without relying on prescriptive moral instruction.

Religious Difference and the Autonomy of Belief

Students perceived semantic discussions of Qur'an al-Baqarah [2]:256 and Qur'an al-Kahf [18]:29 as clarifying the Qur'anic rejection of coercion in matters of faith. Many reported that this understanding fostered greater comfort with religious difference and reduced the perceived need to impose one's beliefs on others. Rather than viewing difference as a threat, several students described experiencing religious plurality as a divinely acknowledged reality.

Izutsu's analysis frames these verses as constructing a worldview that recognizes theological plurality through relational meaning rather than doctrinal assertion. The semantic opposition between coercion (ikrāh) and authentic faith underscores autonomy of belief as a foundational ethical principle.

In multicultural education, research indicates that text-based, non-dogmatic engagement with religious diversity supports respectful attitudes more effectively than normative moralization.³³ In applied linguistics, scholars such as Kramsch emphasize that language learning is inherently linked to identity and worldview negotiation.³⁴ Students' perceptions thus illustrate how semantic analysis can mediate discussions of belief diversity in ways that are both intellectually grounded and pedagogically sensitive.

Morphological Awareness and the Perception of Permanence

Students noted that attention to morphological forms such as mukhtalifin in Qur'an Hūd [11]:118–119 suggested the enduring nature of difference rather than its temporality. This led to the perception that diversity is not a contingent social condition but an inherent and ongoing feature of human existence.

This perception aligns with research on form–meaning mapping in applied linguistics, which identifies morphology as a critical site for conceptual meaning-making. When morphological patterns are taught as meaningful rather than mechanical, learners are more likely to engage in abstract and ontological reflection.

³² Chantelle Warner and Beatrice Dupuy, "Moving toward Multiliteracies in Foreign Language Teaching: Past and Present Perspectives ... and Beyond," *Foreign Language Annals* 51, no. 1 (2018): 116–28, <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12316>.

³³ James A. Banks, *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (Allyn and Bacon, 1994).

³⁴ Claire Kramsch, "The Multilingual Subject," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 16, no. 1 (2006): 97–110, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2006.00109.x>.

Within Izutsu's framework, historical and relational semantics frame diversity as a recognized and enduring element of the Qur'anic worldview. Students' reflections demonstrate how morphology, when integrated into semantic analysis, can support ontological reflection within language learning, reinforcing the idea that grammatical forms participate in worldview construction.

Variability of Experience and the Need for Instructional Scaffolding

Students' experiences of semantic-oriented Arabic learning were not uniform. Some reported difficulty transitioning from rule-based grammar instruction to semantic-oriented analysis and required additional instructional support. Such variability is consistent with qualitative educational research, which emphasizes the heterogeneity of learner experience and the contextual nature of meaning-making.³⁵ Pedagogical research underscores the importance of scaffolding when introducing meaning-centered approaches, particularly for learners accustomed to form-focused instruction. Acknowledging these tensions enhances analytical credibility and avoids confirmation bias. It also underscores that semantic-based pedagogy requires careful sequencing, explicit guidance, and sensitivity to learners' prior educational experiences.

Integration of Language, Ethics, and Culture in Learner Perception

Across reflections, students increasingly perceived Arabic not merely as a linguistic system but as a medium for engaging with ethical and cultural meaning embedded in Qur'anic discourse. This perception supports the language-culture nexus articulated in applied linguistics, where language learning is understood as engagement with cultural, ethical, and ideological meaning.³⁶ In Arabic language pedagogy, meaning-oriented instruction has been shown to enhance sociocultural competence and learner engagement.³⁷

Izutsu's semantic framework provides epistemological grounding for this integration by linking linguistic form to worldview construction. Students' perceptions thus reflect the pedagogical potential of treating Arabic as a system of meaning that mediates ethical and cultural understanding.

Operational Pedagogical Insights Emerging from Student Perceptions

Students expressed appreciation for activities involving semantic mapping, guided textual discussion, and reflective analysis, indicating that such practices supported deeper engagement with Arabic texts. Such preferences align with task-

³⁵ Sarah J. Tracy, "Qualitative Quality: Eight 'Big-Tent' Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 10 (2010): 837–51, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>.

³⁶ Alastair Pennycook, *Language as a Local Practice* (Routledge, 2010).

³⁷ Christiane Lütge and Michelle Stannard, "Multiliteracies," in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Computer-Assisted Language Learning*, ed. Lee McCallum and Dara Tafazoli (Springer Nature Switzerland, 2025), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-51447-0_242-1.

based and reflective learning models that emphasize meaning construction, learner agency, and contextualized assessment.³⁸

Pedagogically, they suggest the value of integrating semantic networks, discourse analysis, and reflective assessment into Arabic language curricula. Such practices are consistent with multiliteracies pedagogy, which advocates for learning designs that connect linguistic form, meaning, and social practice while encouraging learners to articulate how language mediates ethical and cultural understanding.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic framework offers a coherent and theoretically grounded approach for conceptually analyzing Qur'anic verses related to multicultural values. The semantic analysis demonstrates that values such as diversity, justice, dialogue, social cooperation, and recognition of religious plurality are not articulated in the Qur'an as isolated moral prescriptions, but are constructed through relational networks of meaning that connect key concepts, syntactic structures, and discursive patterns within the Qur'anic worldview. This finding confirms the relevance of Izutsu's semantics for uncovering the ethical architecture of the Qur'an in a systematic and meaning-oriented manner.

Pedagogical illustrations informed by student reflections additionally provide meaningful insight into how semantic awareness may emerge within Arabic language learning contexts. The reflective accounts suggest that when Arabic learning engages Qur'anic texts through semantic analysis rather than through lexical translation or formal grammar alone students begin to attend more closely to relational meaning, contextual nuance, and ethical implications embedded in linguistic structures. This shift indicates the development of semantic awareness, understood as the ability to interpret language beyond surface meanings and to relate linguistic form to broader conceptual and value-based frameworks.

These pedagogical illustrations are not presented as empirical evidence of instructional effectiveness, but as contextual narratives that illuminate learning experiences within specific educational settings. They demonstrate how semantic-oriented engagement with Qur'anic vocabulary, syntax, and discourse can support reflective understanding and ethical sensitivity in Arabic language learning, without positioning students as expert interpreters or making generalized claims.

Overall, this study contributes to Arabic language education by linking Qur'anic semantic theory with pedagogical reflection. By showing how Izutsu's semantic approach can inform meaning-oriented Arabic language learning and foster the emergence of semantic awareness, the study provides a conceptual

³⁸ Kwanghyun Park, "Learner–Corpus Interaction: A Locus of Microgenesis in Corpus-Assisted L2 Writing," *Applied Linguistics* 33, no. 4 (2012): 361–85, <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/ams012>.

foundation for integrating multicultural values into Arabic language education through reflective and text-based engagement with the Qur'an.

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Author Contribution Statement

N, ASHM, IK, and SR contributed to the formulation of the research idea, literature review, and data analysis. N led the conceptual framework design and the main manuscript writing. APPS and N made significant contributions to the theoretical framework and methodology development. JS supported the analysis of findings and the preparation of the discussion. All authors actively participated in reviewing, refining, and approving the final manuscript prior to publication.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors state that there are no financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research and findings presented in this study.

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