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**ANALYSIS OF LOW AND HIGH LEXICAL MEANINGS IN A
MONOLINGUAL ARABIC DICTIONARY**

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Abstract

This study investigated the difference between low and high meanings in a monolingual Arabic dictionary, namely Al-Munjid by Ma'luf (1973). As technical terms, low and high meanings were first introduced by Sanat (1998). They represent the gap between the ordinary usage of the lexical item, the low meaning, and the implied religious meaning, which is regarded as high. The study examined seven randomly-chosen lexical entries to see whether they cover all possible low and high meanings. A descriptive analytical method was adopted and, hopefully, the outcome would help Arab lexicographers produce dictionaries accommodating low and high meanings that have already become an integral part of competent Arabic speakers' vocabulary. It would also help draw the attention of Arabic dictionary users to such indispensable high meanings. Preliminary results of the study show that Al-Munjid dictionary tends not to list the high meanings, especially those found in Islamic resources, and instead purposefully focuses only on the low meanings. Based on these results, monolingual Arabic dictionaries are recommended to provide low and high meanings of the lexical entries side by side, as using examples from religious resources can be of major significance in rendering the meanings clearer and more comprehensive. Results and implications of the findings are to be discussed further.

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1. Introduction

Al-Munjid Arabic dictionary was written by Luis Ma'luf Al-Yasu'i, a Christian priest, and was first published by the Catholic Press, Lebanon. It is a well-known monolingual Arabic dictionary that has been issued in approximately 30 editions since it was first printed in 1908.

Many were those who levelled criticism at the dictionary for the apparent Christian spirit it diffuses, and the flagrant negligence of Islam and its various manifestations, be it in the dictionary entries, explanations, illustrative examples, prominent figures, or the religious rituals and acts of worship. Foremost among those was Awad (1991), who intensively accumulated numerous examples of errors and/or evidence that the author ignored important items, such as those mentioned above. However, what this current study attempts to do, based on the concepts of low and high meanings, is to show objectively whether the dictionary provides the necessary lexical information that has become an integral part of the vocabulary needed by Arabic speakers and learners to indicate competence in Arabic.

Noteworthy, concepts of low and high meanings examined in this study have nothing to do with concepts of high-level and low-level languages discussed elsewhere; the latter are mainly concerned with programming and writing machine codes (Yu, Lu, Luo, & Wang, 2011). This present study tackles high-level and low-level meanings of human languages, namely Arabic, and attempts to examine these two types of meanings by analysing a number of randomly selected lexical entries. Precisely, this study is concerned with the definition proposed by Sanat (1998), which qualifies these two concepts as a gap between the ordinary everyday usage that is viewed as 'low', and the implied religious text feature meaning that is viewed as 'high'. According to him, for Islamic religious texts, we have sources from the Qur'an and Prophetic Hadīth. Hence, whenever the dictionary cites the meanings of these religious texts, it can be safely said that it provides the high meanings, and the opposite is also the case.

According to Sanat (1998), the 'high meaning of a word' is understood from a divine text that came down upon man through 'revelation'. Thus, revelation is regarded as the source of that type of meaning; whereas, the 'low meaning of a word' is derived from the common usage of language by its native speakers. According to him, a word such as *dead* or *slain*, in Qur'an 3:169 (Translated by Hammad (2007)) should be understood in the context of martyrdom as 'alive' in the following *ayah* (verse) that means, "And do not think those killed in the path of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord being provided for."

Sanat (1998) further suggests that providing such additional lexical information (i.e. meaning) to Malay lexical items in a dictionary will guide its user to be more aware of the culture associated with this linguistic usage of the term in the Qur'anic context. In fact, this can be said of any human language, as adding such high meanings or subtle lexical information to a dictionary entry can help its users have more knowledge about the language at hand as well as its specific uses. Definitely, Arabic is no exception.

The religious texts/terms were briefly mentioned earlier; they can be divided into *shari'ah*-based terms and Islamic terms. Islam reintroduced numerous terms that were known to the Arabs with certain lexical meanings, but it introduced many new denotations that were relevant only to Muslims. These terms can be divided, as is mentioned above, into Islamic and *shari'ah*-based terms. An Islamic term is broader than the *shari'ah*-based one. Terms related to Arabic linguistics, poetry and the human heritage that originated and developed under the Islamic civilization fall under Islamic terms. The second covers terms brought by Islam itself, i.e. the Qur'an and Prophetic Hadīth, such as *wudu'* (ablution) and *'umrah* (minor

pilgrimage). It also covers terms that were coined by scholars of *shari'ah* and *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) such as *isnad* (transmission of Hadīth), and *Al-Jarh wal Ta'dīl* (invalidation and validation of the narrators of Prophetic Hadīth).

Faris (1997) illustrates this extensively following his detailed account of the conditions of pre-Islamic Arabs and the impact Islam had on their entire lives and weltanschauung. According to him, the term *al-mu'min* was known to the early Arabs only as a derivative from *al-aman* (lit., security/safety) and *al-iman* (lit., credence). However, Islamic *shari'ah* prescribed some conditions by which this term, when pronounced, stands for 'one who believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and the Divine Decree'. The same is true of the words *al-islam* and *al-muslim*, as the Arabs knew them to only denote 'handing something over to someone'. In a similar vein, 'Atiyyah, as quoted in Al-Halawani (2004), defines a *shari'ah*-based term as, a term that is recognized by scholars of *shari'ah*, whether it kept its original lexical meaning, some new meanings were added thereto by the Divine Legislator, or the technical meaning was categorically different from the lexical one.

The discussion of religious terms, be it *shari'ah*-based or Islamic, entails shedding light on the meaning of register and its relation to low and high meanings. Register is generally understood to be the type of language one uses in a particular situation or when communicating with a given group of people. Though this concept is stressed by Biber (1995) who saw it as, "situationally defined varieties", it is different from the user-related varieties known as dialects (Hatim & Mason, 2014) and aims to "uncover the general principles which govern this variation, so that we can begin to understand what situational factors determine what linguistic features" (Halliday, 1978).

Crystal and Davy (2016) criticized the use of the term 'register' in the 1970s as it was used indiscriminately and used to be applied to every possible variety of language; they concluded, "It is inconsistent, unrealistic, and confusing to obscure these differences by grouping everything under the same heading." However, the term is still widely used today and provides a useful parameter of linguistic analysis. Later, Crystal (2011) defined register as the variation of language in accordance with its use in social situations: formal, scientific and religious English registers. Thus, he agreed with others on the importance of the situation involved in the discourse, as is illustrated above.

As such, a monolingual dictionary is, in one way or another, a representation of the language at hand. It should contain lexical entries from all registers so as to be comprehensive, neutral and reliable. This study attempted to examine the said dictionary to see whether it provides such high meanings which are abundant in the religious register. In other words, the main aim here is to obtain the specific religious register meaning which is incorporated into the common meaning of the lexical term in the dictionary. This can be viewed as a process of expanding the meaning of the lexical entry, with its basic low meaning, by adding the high meaning(s) derived from the religious register.

A plethora of research work has been conducted on bilingual and/or monolingual Arabic dictionaries, especially on their entries and the way these lexical entries should be arranged. However, examination of the different types of meanings in dictionaries among these studies has been quite few in number. To the knowledge of the author, no other study has been conducted on the difference between low and high meanings in Arabic monolingual dictionaries. As such, this study attempts to fill an existing gap in the literature. It can also be elaborated on by other researchers who wish to pursue the research of such

a topic in the future. The results as well as recommendations of this study can be of use to compilers of Arabic monolingual dictionaries and users alike as well as others who are concerned with Arabic monolingual dictionaries. It is important to mention that the results of this study cannot be generalized beyond the boundaries of the sample. Among the research works conducted by other researchers, the following can be highlighted.

Ghazali and Braham (2001) stated that traditional Arabic dictionaries are based on historical perspectives and that they tend to include old meanings that are not relative to the language user of today. They called for new dictionaries based on empirical approaches to be written, especially language corpora, which, to them and many others, have become of paramount importance to lexicographers, language teachers, machine translation and other NLP applications.

Hanks (2010) gave an account of some of the main issues confronting the writers of monolingual dictionaries in this age of the Internet. He discussed many issues such as the role of corpora, historical principles in lexicography vs. synchronic principles, the instability of word meaning, principles of definition writing, and the role of dictionaries in society, among many other topics.

Research carried out by Belkhouche, Harmain, Al Taha, and Al Najjar (2011) focused on how to encourage the young users of Arabic dictionaries to independently learn more vocabulary. They proposed a framework for building dictionaries that enable game-like interactive learning; a matter which may provide a suitable environment for young users to explore more concepts and vocabulary. They also lamented that Arabic dictionaries fall far behind dictionaries of other languages in their use of state-of-the-art techniques.

Research carried out by Halpern (2016) showed how three bilingual learners' dictionaries, namely Chinese, Japanese and Arabic bilingual dictionaries, address problems such as archaic headwords and senses, inappropriate examples, an overly prescriptive approach, learner-unfriendly sense ordering, and the omission of important multiword expressions, among others. He stated that such shortcomings were rarely seen in works of other major languages. The study specifically addressed sense ordering, the logical interrelatedness of senses, and semantic transparency, among others.

2. Problem Statement

The connection between Islam as a religion and the Arabic language goes back more than 1400 years. Arabic is the medium in which Islam's sacred book, the Qur'an, was revealed, as believed by Muslims. Besides, all the sayings of the Prophet of Islam are in Arabic. Consequently, to understand the Qur'an and the Prophet's sayings from their original sources one needs to master the Arabic language. However, mastering the Arabic language entails mastering many levels of the language; a matter which reflects its richness in terms of vocabulary and meanings. Dictionaries, especially monolingual ones, are indispensable tools for learners of language; therefore, they should be representative, credible, unbiased, and comprehensive. If a dictionary fails to provide many of the recognized and well established meanings of the language terms, it will lose credibility among its users. As technical terms, 'low' and 'high' meanings were first introduced by Sanat (1998). They represent the gap between the ordinary usage of the lexical item, the 'low' meaning, and the implied religious meaning, which is regarded as 'high'. This study examined seven randomly-chosen lexical entries from a well-known Arabic dictionary, *Al-Munjid*, to see

whether they cover all possible low and high meanings. Hopefully, the outcome will help Arab lexicographers produce dictionaries accommodating low and high meanings that have already become an integral part of the competent Arabic speaker's vocabulary.

3. Research Questions

To meet the goals of this study, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

- 3.1. Is there any difference between low and high meanings of a given lexical item?
- 3.2. What are the sources of high meanings in the Arabic language?
- 3.3. Will the lexicographer, and consequently the user, miss any subtle high meanings if Islamic religious texts are disregarded when compiling the dictionary?

4. Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at investigating the difference between low and high meanings of Arabic lexical items in a monolingual dictionary. It attempted to unfold the nature of both meanings and the significance to users of the dictionary of incorporating the high meanings of the selected Arabic lexical items into the dictionary. It endeavoured to develop some recommendations that may help lexicographers render their dictionaries more comprehensive, academic and unbiased.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Sample of the Study

Seven lexical items were randomly collected from *Al-Munjid* dictionary to represent the sample of this study. Table 1 below shows the seven lexical items with their literal English equivalents.

Table 01. The seven lexical items representing sample of the study

No.	Arabic Lexical Item	Transliteration	English Literal Equivalent
1.	المفلس	al-muflis	The bankrupt
2.	الكيس	al-kayyis	The intelligent person
3.	الجاهل	Al-jahil	The ignorant person
4.	المفلح	al-muflih	The successful person
5.	العادل	al-'adil	The just person
6.	المنافق	al-munafiq	The hypocrite
7.	الفاسق	al-fasiq	The debaucher

5.2. Sampling Procedures

The meaning of these terms/concepts was thoroughly examined and critically assessed against that of their counterparts in Manzur (1975), the most comprehensive Arabic monolingual lexicon. Moreover, the author relied partly on his linguistic competence as a native speaker of Arabic. The low as well as high

semantic meanings were determined in accordance with the following criteria: The ordinary literal meaning of the lexical item was regarded as its low meaning, whereas the extra and subtle meaning derived from the Islamic religious texts, namely the Qur'an and Prophetic Hadīth, represented its high semantic meaning. Whenever the high meaning was absent, the researcher would collate it from the said religious sources.

Originally, the selected terms are general ones upon which Islam conferred extra specific denotations that were unknown to the Arabs of the Pre-Islamic era. The Qur'an and Prophetic Hadīth are abundant in these terms, beyond counting. Notwithstanding, these seven terms are nothing but a small sample of a vast reservoir of terms/concepts with which the Qur'an and Prophetic Hadīth are replete. Principally, Lane (1865) was set as a benchmark for the rendition of these terms *as per Al-Munjid* into English. Furthermore, translations of the meaning of Qur'anic *ayahs* were taken from Pickthall (1999) unless otherwise is stated.

6. Findings

The lexical items were determined, listed and analysed as follows:

6.1. *Al-muflis* (The bankrupt)

This lexical term is derived from the root /*f-l-s*/ (Fa-Lam-Siin) which revolves around the meaning of proclaiming or pronouncing someone to be bankrupt or insolvent.

This lexical entry displays only the low meaning of the term. This low meaning concerns bankruptcy and being destitute or without any property in this present life as can be seen in *Al-Munjid*'s entry: *aflas-a, He became bankrupt or insolvent; or he had no property remaining*. On the other hand, the high meaning represents being deprived of any good and being left without any good deeds at the time of reckoning on the Day of Judgment. Though one of the derivatives of the Arabic root /*f-l-s*/ may mean one who is destitute of good, only the low meaning is stated because there is neither an explicit nor an implied reference to the Hereafter or the religious connotation of the term which is understood from the Prophetic Hadīth in which he (PBUH) asked his Companions, “*Do you know who is al-muflis (i.e. the bankrupt)? ...*” (al-Qushayrī & Al-Nawawi, 1929).

The Prophetic Hadīth added a new meaning to the Arabic term *al-muflis*; that is, the one from whom all his good deeds will be taken on the Day of Judgment due to his mischievous behaviour during his lifetime. Consequently, he will be left without any good deeds on the Day of Reckoning and will be prevented from entering Heaven. Surprisingly, Manzur (1975) does not cite this high meaning either. This high meaning derived from the Prophetic Hadīth should have been included in both dictionaries as the real objective of all human beings is to enter Heaven at the end of time. This should not have been overlooked.

6.2. *Al-kayyis* (The intelligent person)

Under the root /*k-y-s*/ (Kaf-Ya-Siin), *Al-Munjid* states that the root revolves around several meanings; the one this study is concerned with is ‘acuteness, sharpness or quickness of intellect’.

It is clear that *Al-Munjid* provides only the low meaning of this term/concept such as in: *kas-a fulan-an, He overcame so-and-so in acuteness of intellect*. The high meaning is not represented in a clear-cut way, as there is nothing but ‘*The ability to choose for one's self what is more useful and beneficial*’ under

the term *al-kayyisah*. This does not typically conform to the meaning of the Prophet's Hadīth in which he said, "A wise man [*al-kayyis*] is the one who calls himself to account and does noble deeds to benefit him after death; ..." (Al-Tirmidhi, 1998). In another Hadīth, the Prophet (PBUH) said that the most intelligent believers are those who constantly remember death and get ready for it (Al-Busairi, 1999).

These Prophetic Hadīths state that the clever man, *al-kayyis*, is the one who observes two things: he calls himself to account; and he performs good deeds that may benefit him after his demise. In short, he is a God-fearing person; a person with piety and who fears Allah, the Creator. However, none of these has been mentioned in *Al-Munjid* in any way; there is only a reference to one's acuteness and intelligence so as to be able to choose for oneself what may be beneficial and useful in this present life. There is no mention whatsoever of the hereafter or preparation for the inevitable death that is tasted by all mortals.

6.3. *Al-jahil* (The ignorant one)

Under the root /*j-h-l*/ (Jim-Ha-Lam), *Al-Munjid* mentions three meanings: to be foolish, coarse and rough; to be ignorant; and, to move or boil vehemently. According to *Al-Munjid*, *jahil-a* stands for, *He was or became ignorant; contrary to he knew or became knowledgeable*. It defines *al-jahiliyyah* as: *The state of ignorance; The time, or state, of ignorance or paganism in the lands of the Arabs before the advent of Islam*. Arabs before the advent of Islam used this root along with its derivatives to denote ignorance which is contrary to knowledge, and meanness which is contrary to magnanimity.

According to the Qur'an, *jahiliyyah* is a psychological state which rejects abiding by Allah's Guidance, and a system that refuses to judge by what Allah has revealed as can be understood from Qur'an 5:50. Whoever does not observe any of the religious obligations is characterized by the attribute of *jahiliyyah* which is evidenced in the Prophetic Hadīth in which the Prophet (PBUH) said to Abu Dharr when the latter had reproached one of the Companions because his mother was not an Arab, "... you are a person who still has (the remnants) of (the days/state of) Ignorance in him" (al-Qushayrī & Al-Nawawi, 1929). This shows that *Al-Munjid* dictionary confined itself to only the low meanings of the root /*j-h-l*/ and did not provide any aspect of its high meanings that are mentioned in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Hadīth stated above.

6.4. *Al-muflih* (The successful person)

Al-Munjid dictionary was consulted and three meanings were found under the root /*f-l-h*/ (Fa-Lam-Ha); these are:

- a) To plough the land in order to cultivate it; to till the ground,
- b) To act with artifice, fraud, or guile; to say that which is not true,
- c) To prosper; be successful; attain that which one desires; attain what is good, or felicity, or that whereby one becomes happy and in a good state.

Clearly, the third meaning is what is intended and sought here, which is to be successful or become happy and in a good state. Under this meaning, the dictionary states what follows: *aflah-a al-rajul-u, The man prospered; was successful; acquired that which he desired or sought*.

It was found out that this lexical entry does not cover the high meaning as it only denotes meanings of success, prosperity and attainment of what one desires, etc., in this present life; it does not mention anything about the hereafter or being admitted into Heaven. In short, for Muslims, entering Heaven in the hereafter is true success and prosperity which nothing else can be compared to. This high meaning can be understood from the interpretation of the following Qur'anic *ayah*, "Then those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful," Qur'an 23:102.

6.5. *Al-'adil* (The just person)

Under the root /a-d-l/ (Ain-Dal-Lam), *Al-Munjid* dictionary states that the root revolves around three main meanings; foremost among which is to act equitably towards others.

The Qur'an uses the term *al-'adl* to denote the opposite of *injustice*, *transgression* and *oppression*; it also uses it as the opposite of *lewdness* and *debauchery*. Muslim jurists use it to denote two things:

- a) Establishing justice in terms of adjudications and relationships so as to observe or establish justice among the people or among one's wives.
- b) Personal veraciousness or righteousness, as the one characterized thereof is straight and righteous; that is why jurists use this with testimonies and witnessing.

The Qur'an focuses on the meaning of achieving equilibrium between man's rights and duties. It states that Allah enjoins justice and kindness as well as giving to kinsfolk, and forbids lewdness, abomination and wickedness, Qur'an 16:90.

Al-'adl must be observed when giving one's word and offering one's testimony, even though it may be against one's kith and kin as can be understood from Qur'an 6:152. It is one of the most important principles of Islam; it is the reason the Messengers were sent and the divine books were revealed; it is the principle that witnesses no exception and which should be applied to all, be it friend or foe as can be understood from Qur'an 5:8.

Al-Kafawī (d. 1683) defines *al-'adalah* as being willingly righteous and steadfast on the right path, and so not choosing what is religiously forbidden (Al-Kafawi, 1998).

This said, it seems that *Al-Munjid* dictionary provides the low meanings of being fair toward others, deviating from the right path, and declaring witnesses as veracious. However, it does not mention anything about wilfully abiding by righteousness by following the right path while abandoning all unlawful and forbidden acts, which are regarded—according to this present study—as the high meaning of the term.

6.6. *Al-munafiq* (The hypocrite)

Under the root /n-f-q/ (Nun-Fa-Qaf), *Al-Munjid* dictionary states that it revolves around three main senses; foremost among which is to come out of a hole or a tunnel through a second outlet. It denotes someone who hides *his disbelief in his heart and pretends to be faithful with his tongue; thus, he is a munafiq* (i.e., a hypocrite).

The adjectival term *al-munafiq* and many of its derivatives are mentioned in the Qur'an and Prophetic Hadīth; there is a complete surah in the Qur'an with the title, *Al-Munafiqun*, i.e. The Hypocrites, in which the attributes of such persons are mentioned in detail. Also, the Prophet (PBUH) says in one of

his Hadiths that when the hypocrite speaks, he tells lies; when he makes a promise, he does not fulfil it; when he is entrusted with something, he betrays his trust (al-Qushayrī & Al-Nawawi, 1929).

As far as Islamic terminology is concerned, *hypocrisy* is an Islamic name which was not known to the Arabs [before Islam] with its specific meaning, namely, to hide disbelief and pretend to be a believer, though the word itself was known to them with its original lexical meaning (Manzur, 1975). Hypocrisy here, in the Islamic sense, is derived from the hole or tunnel excavated by a jerboa or mouse. It is compared to a jerboa as a jerboa enters a hole which has another hidden outlet through which it manages to escape. Similarly, a hypocrite professes belief at one time and disbelief at another; in so doing, he enters faith through one door and leaves it secretly by his own will through another.

As far as *Al-Munjid* is concerned, this lexical entry covers only the low meaning of the term *al-munafiq*, as it denotes meanings of being saleable, coming out of a hole, and being exhausted (i.e., a store), consumed, spent, etc. as well as the meaning of hypocrisy which stands for claiming to be faithful while hiding one's disbelief in one's own heart.

Remarkably, though the dictionary mentions the meaning of hypocrisy, i.e., declaring something while hiding another, it still does not cover the high meaning as is understood from the Islamic sources as hypocrisy means to declare faith in Islam while hiding and concealing one's disbelief. What *Al-Munjid* mentions is similar to what is mentioned in Rundell and Fox (2007) under the term *hypocrite*, which refers to a person who claims to have good moral principles or beliefs but his behaviour does not attest to his claims. In fact, moral principles or beliefs can denote any principle and/or belief, be it political, social, philosophical or even religious. Still, this is the low meaning of the term as faith in Islam is not mentioned or highlighted here in any way. Hence, the above meaning is general and does not cope with the very specific meaning attributed by Islamic sources to the term *hypocrite* as is understood from the above Hadith. The meaning mentioned by *Al-Munjid* shows one of the two types of hypocrisy, which is practical hypocrisy, while several *ayahs* of the Qur'an show many of the attributes of the hypocrites, be they practical or creedal. Among these is the *ayah* which shows the hypocrites' pretension to be faithful and believers in Allah and His Messenger, while they were not; they were telling lies to befool the Messenger and the believers, but Allah has exposed them to His Messenger and has shown their attributes to the believers, Qur'an 63:1.

6.7. *Al-fasiq* (The debaucher)

Under the root /*f-s-q*/ (Fa-Siin-Qaf), *Al-Munjid* states that it revolves around two distinct meanings: to commit lewdness, and become perverted.

Indeed, *al-fisq* stands for departing from the right way or the way of the truth. However, it also has other meanings in the Qur'an. Foremost among which is to neglect, forsake and relinquish the command of Allah, or to leave the faith and the religion of Allah, or to have a tendency to sin and be disobedient to Allah. Amazingly, as attested to by Ibn Al-A'rabi as quoted in Makram (1996), it [the term *fasiq*] was never heard in the pre-Islamic era, nor in the poetry of that time. He further comments by saying, "and this, indeed, is amazing".

Hence, one concludes that though this lexical root was known to the Arabs before Islam along with a number of its derivatives, they used it only to mean departing from the truth. This is the low meaning

thereof, while the high meaning encompasses relinquishing the commands of Allah and neglecting His ordinances. Hence, *Al-Munjid* mentions the low meaning of the term *fasiq*, while citing the high meaning of departing from the truth, but without mentioning anything about disobeying Allah or violating and not following His divine orders and commands. Clearly, this is the low meaning of the term, and there is no mention of the high meaning as is understood from the Islamic sources.

It has become evident that the meaning of a term is not clear unless the context in which it is said or used is cited. Thus, the meaning of a term is but the sum of its relation to its collocates in these contexts. Therefore, consideration of context and citations are crucial when compiling a dictionary (Al-Halawani, Khadawardi, & Elaskary, 2015), as they help provide both the low and high meanings of a given lexical entry/term. Surprisingly, though the sample of the study was chosen randomly, all the chosen terms proved that *Al-Munjid* overlooked all related high meanings. It confined itself only to the low meaning of the lexical entry, which is well known to many, without providing any hint or cue to the high meaning that is derived from the religious texts represented here by the Qur'an and Hadīth. This is surprising indeed as a monolingual Arabic dictionary should cover all possible meanings which have become part and parcel of the native speakers' competence. As a dictionary, it should cover such meanings in order for it to be comprehensive, unbiased and acceptable to all language users, regardless of their faith. Furthermore, it should be characterized by objectivity, and respect for historical and scientific facts as well as the main faith of the majority of its users. The researcher cannot find any justification for such omission by the writers of *Al-Munjid* save that they tried their best—and successfully—to confine themselves to the Christian way of understanding and recognizing words, overlooking the faith of Islam as if they were writing a religious dictionary for a given Christian denomination. The objective behind writing a dictionary should be to serve knowledge, and react to human and/or national impulses, not only to acquire financial gains. Among the objectives of writers of dictionaries with regards to providing citations is to incite the reader to know more about the term in its original context (Al-Qasimi, 1991). However, it seems that *Al-Munjid* writers do not want to draw the attention of the reader to such texts which are different from their own faith.

Finally, the compilation of dictionaries is a challenging industry that should be error-, negligence- and illusion-free. It demands extreme precision, not allowing any mistakes under any excuses or pretexts. This is due to the fact that these dictionaries as well as encyclopaedias are deemed as reliable references through which researchers and learners seek guidance while having complete confidence therein.

7. Conclusion

The terms/concepts denoting Islam's acts of worship (rituals), transactions, and *shari'ah*-based rulings mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadīth are beyond counting. They clearly indicate the revolution Islam staged in relation to the meaning of terms/concepts which were previously known to the Arabs only by their basic lexical meaning, and added many other meanings thereto. Through this lexical semantic revolution, Qur'anic terms prevailed, their meanings varied, and their indications diversified. It is worth noting that the contextual meaning of the term precedes the dictionary-lexical meaning, as the word is born and gains denotations and connotations from lingual and non-lingual contexts, after which the compilers of dictionaries observe the term and record it in their dictionaries.

It has become apparent that *Al-Munjid* dictionary is not interested in stating the high meanings as derived from the Islamic sources, but focuses only on the low meanings while neglecting most, if not all, high meanings that are present in other texts. This said, monolingual Arabic dictionaries should provide both low and high meanings of their lexical entries, as Qur'anic and/or Islamic denotations as well as the basic lexical denotations and connotations of these terms/concepts are in no way separable. In a similar vein, using examples from the Qur'an and Hadith in the explanation of such dictionary entries can be of major significance in rendering the meanings clearer and more comprehensible. Finally, objectivity must be observed when compiling a dictionary to render the work reliable and unbiased and, thus, academically acceptable.

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