

# **The Collocability of the Names of Allah in Qur'anic Expressions: Aspects of Habitual Syntagmatic Dependency**

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## **Abstract:**

A great of our communication behavior takes place between the explicitly expressed words which happens implicitly. In other words, what we mean is hardly exhausted by what we explicitly say. To quote P. Grice ( 1975) we group the intended implicit meaning by assuming corporation of certain conversational maxims on the part of the speaker/and hearer. Inference of meaning is made when a person goes beyond available evidence to achieve communication. To attend this end, Eysench (1990) assumes three phases: understanding the premises or facts stated, initiating a link between the producer and the context, then to evaluate the validity of the output with reference to the context meaning intended with all sheds.

A syntagmatic dependency that holds between two Qur'anic terms is usually bilateral so that the occurrence of either of the two items in an expression presupposes with a probability greater than chance that the other item will also co-occur in contiguity with it. The meaning of the first term of Qur'anic collocation might be generalized, confirmed or even restated by the second term. The Qur'an collocational scatter is not limited to certain lay out of semantic relations. It outlines some isomorphic features. Terms tend to collocate with each other are repeated so often that they become clichés and iconic, stronger in effect than their constituents. To infer the intended implicit meaning one is opt for the general rather than the specific along with the analysis of the context and the co-text preceding and following the targeted text.

## 1. Introduction:

This paper is steeped within Qur'an exegesis in studying the collocability of certain Qur'anic terms, the names of Allah used in the Holy Qur'an, each other from the angle of the habitual syntagmatic dependency, technically known as collocations. They are abstract lexical associations relating to the content of identical lexical names.

In addition, this paper, to echo some classical and modern Arab linguists, claims that part of the meaning of the expressions is its collocability with the second term of the collocation and conversely, part of the meaning of the first term can be disambiguated, paraphrased, fixed, or even highlighted by its collocability with the second term. <sup>(1)</sup>

The main concern of this paper is the quest of comprehending the implicit meaning intended of a discourse by probing markedable collocated expression in the Holy Qur'an. Having collecting enough evidence, we assume that thematic meaning mode is highly adaptable in the style of the cited verses 'ayat' for implicating a variety of speech acts. Let alone, the role of context is highly outlined in delivering His messages.

Contextualism, the role of context in determining the implicit intended meaning, may trigger a scale of truth values to sift the ultimate meaning of the expressions.<sup>(2)</sup> The occasion, on the other hand, cannot be ignored in mapping the intended yet invisible meaning. However, cases of determinacy of meaning are limited to the point that to deviate, through managing certain collocations, is unsurprisingly high to outline the linguistic meaning through a wide spectrum of semantic components.

Of the main features of the 'ayat' already cited as a corpus for analysis is that they tend to collocations that are repeated so often that they become clichés, stronger in force than their pseudo-modifiers, e.g.

(1) الخبير الحكيم where الخبير means who knows every thing  
الحكيم means who is the wisest

The collocate means "the wisest and most knowledgeable in the universe when it is exported in all its banality.

(2) العليم القدير where العليم means who never forgets and knows about every thing and wishes. القدير means that is able to do what He likes

It is somewhat axiomatic that the context is the physical, social and psychological frame in which language is used. (Levinson, 1983:23). The basic parameters of context can be grouped into; participants; relationships between actual or intended members of the participants; subject matter (topic); temporal and special setting then; objectives (communications in our case). Thus, any language used out of context might have specific potential meaning which can have different meaning or implications in different context with different co-texts, i.e. the text preceding and following the utterance we aim to interpret. Collocation, in all its modes, performs its contextual role within the general corona of elements to convey the intended meaning with such fresco. Besides, the mosaic of language components cove their way in the transferred message by means of relevant collocates.

## 2. Collocations in English Language:

It would be desirable, since collocation purports to be stylistic and rhetoric, to begin with a general definition of collocation. Even a brief glance at the vast literature on the subject, however, reveals that forming a precise definition is difficult. Collocation is a term, which is used and understood in many different ways.

The following quotations offer a varied view on the concept of collocation, variously defining it as a lexical, grammatical or research phenomenon, but containing a focus on the co-occurrence of words:

....you shall know a word by the company it keeps. (Firth 1957:179)

...the study of lexical patterns .... (Brown 1974:1).

...a sequence of words that occurs more than once in identical form and which is grammatically well structured. (kiellmer 1987:133).

...the meaning of a word has a great deal to do with the words with which it commonly associates. (Nattinger 1988:68).

... the way individual words co-occur with each other. (Lewis 1993:93).

In general, collocation is the relationship between two words or group of words that often go together and form a common expression. If the expression is heard often, the word becomes glued together in our mind. “Crystal clear”, “Middle management”, “nuclear family” and “cosmetic surgery” are examples of collocated pairs of words. Examples of phrases: a person can be ‘locked in mortal combat’, meaning involved in a serious fight, or ‘bright eyed and bushy tailed’, meaning fresh and ready to go; ‘red in the face’, meaning ‘embarrassed’. (The terminology of literary terms). Palmer (1981:76) states that collocation is not simply a matter of association of ideas. For, although milk is white, we should not often say “white milk” though the expression “white paint” is common enough. He (ibid) adds that collocation is very largely determined by meaning; it is sometimes fairly idiosyncratic and cannot easily be predicted in terms of the meaning of the associated words. One example is Porzig’s “blond” with “hair”. We should not talk about “a blond door” or “a blond dress”, even if the colors were exactly that of blond hair.

However, the father of collocation is widely regarded to be J.R. Firth. Firth is central to the “lexical composition approach”- the first of three schools of thought on collocation discussed by Gitsaki (1996 ). The two later approaches to collocation she termed “the semantic approach” and the “structural approach”. Each approach will now be discussed briefly.

1. The lexical composition approach: Methodologically, this approach is based on the assumption that words receive their meaning from the words they co-occur with (Ibid.:10). It thus sees lexis as independent of grammar and the Neo-Firthians, as they were called also kept grammar and lexis separate.
2. The semantic approach: This is an approach where linguists attempted to investigate collocations on the basis of semantic framework, also separate from grammar (Ibid.: 13). The crux of this approach was to try and find out not that certain words collocate with each other, but why they collocate: why we can say “blonde hair” but not “blonde car”.
3. The structural approach: The third approach to collocation says that collocation is influenced by structure, and collocations occur in patterns. Therefore, the study of collocation should include grammar (Ibid.:17). Thus, in contrast to the two previous approaches, grammar is seen as a central factor that cannot be separated from lexis.

The term collocation has widely been studied by several Arab and English rhetoricians and semanticists. A working definition of

collocation for this paper would be that collocation is, linguistically, the return of speech on another speech for the purpose of clarifying, explaining or emphasizing it. From a terminological viewpoint, it is a rhetorical device or style semantically related to the preceded co-text, which is used for clarifying, explaining or emphasizing this co-text. To attend a satisfactory explanation of this highly adorable phenomenon the semantic approach to collocation will be the working approach for this term paper.

### **3.Collocations in Arabic Language:**

In Arabic, the phenomenon of collocation is defined as ‘the care in choosing the counterpart or the counterpart word. It has several names in Arabic which includes among other things *almunasaba*, *altanasub*, *ala’tilaf* and *altawfiq*.<sup>(3)</sup> In other words, and on the same line with English, collocation means that two (or sometimes more) words appear in each other’s company because the usage of a particular word (for example a noun) limits the choice of an adjective or a small number of adjectives that can combine with this particular noun. The same can count for a noun plus a noun, and for a noun plus a verb in Arabic.

One might say that there is a core word (the word that comes to the mind first) and a collocater that combines with that core-word. One has, for example, the noun ‘جريمة’ in mind and looks for the verb which combines with it, and denotes the action. This has to be either the verb ‘ارتكب’ or ‘اقترب’. While still having the same noun in mind and seeking for an adjective that expresses the bad, violent and harmful nature of the crime, one can in Arabic choose from a limited number of adjectives like *جريمة نكراء* to become *جريمة نكراء*.

### **4. Collocation of names of Allah for rhetorical purposes in Holy Qur'an:**

4.1. From what has already been presented, it seems that collocation of the names of Allah in Qur'anic expressions might outline precise semantic features and /or relations. The two terms involved may feature the following among others no doubt.

4.1.1 Meaning Compatibility-The two terms, the collocates, overlap semantically to map, or limit, the semantic reference. In certain cases

words or names collocate to each other have exclusive semantic relation; the meaning of one noun limits the choice of the counterpart noun.<sup>(4)</sup>

(3) قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

(They said:" Glory to You: of Knowledge we have none, save what You have taught us: in truth it is You who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom ." ) Baqara, 32

As indicated, the occurrence of the two terms الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ is not arbitrarily determined. There is specific semantic relation between them. Since the knowledge of something is the way to master it, so the term الْعَلِيمُ collocates with the term الْحَكِيمُ and the collocation as a whole has a semantic similarity to the co-text of the ayah that precedes this collocation.

4.1.2 Wide corona of semantic relations- collocation can generalize a variety of semantic detail. At the end of the following ayah, the collocate, العليم الحكيم rhetorically states that Allah, The Merciful, is the only one who knows every thing. He is الحكيم for He has one each one his slaves learn, know and realize according to what each slave deserves.

(4.)

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

(They said:" Glory to You: of Knowledge we have none, save what You have taught us: in truth it is You who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom ." ) Baqara, 32

4.2. The following functions and sub-functions can be foreseen in mapping the semantic relations between the collocates themselves and/or with the preceding or following contexts.

4.2.1 Clarification of Cueing- part of the meaning of the first term is disambiguated, clarified or cued in by its collocability with the second term. In the following ayah:

(5.) وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُولُوا فَجَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

(To God belongs the East and the West: withers ever you

turn, there is the Presence of God for God is all pervading, all knowledge). Baqara, 115.

Allah, Most Gracious, is limitless and has endless power. He surrounds every thing and being. He knows every tiny detail about His creatures for all are under His sight and shadow. He is *عليم*, the cue of the miscue, the Arabic *واسع* .

4.2.2 Fixation of Reference- the collocability of the two terms shows a type of overwhelming semantic relatedness. They are abducative in nature. The 66<sup>th</sup> verse of Hud sura might portrait this feature.

(6.)

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَمِن خِزْيِ يَوْمِئذٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ

(When Our Decree issued, we saved Salih and those who believed with him, by (special) grace from Ourselves and from the ignominy of that day .For thy Lord He is the Strong One, and able to enforce his will.)

Hud, 66.

In this ayah, the collocability of the two terms *الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ* shows a type of fixed semantic relatedness. Because Allah is Mighty (*قَوِيٌّ*), He is, of course, powerful (*عَزِيزٌ*) where one of the meanings of the name (*عَزِيزٌ*) is The Mighty.<sup>(5)</sup>

4.2.3. Sequencing of Conditions- A poesy feature of collocation in Arabic entails that such structures are semantically related to the preceding co-text of the ayah. The choice of certain names of Allah to collocate heavily depends on the co-text or on the meaning of the linguistic text that precedes it. The meaning or the topic of the preceded co-text of the ayah limits or entails the choice of the collocation that has similar meaning used to comment and explain the intended meaning of the co-text that precedes this collocation. Thus, one can suggest that collocation in the Holy Qur'an becomes one of the concepts used to make the text rhetorically rich.

4.2.3.1 Presupposing semantic connection- collocation in Qur'an presupposes truism or limited connection between the collocates and the preceded text. In the following ayah

(7.)

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

(No vision can grasp him, but his grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things.)

Al- Na'm,103.

the collocation ( وهو اللطيف الخبير ) indicates the connection or relationship between it and the preceded linguistic co-text. Since Allah is لطيف , all the eyes of his creatures are not able to see and recognize him and since he is خبير , he is the only one who can see his creatures. There is a semantic similarity between the first part of the collocation (... اللطيف) and the first part of the linguistic co-text that precedes it (لا تدركه) (الخبير) . Then, one can deduce that due to contextual reasons, the name (اللطيف) comes before the name (الخبير) in the collocation for, in the linguistic context, tenderness of Allah is talked about before the experience of Allah.<sup>(6)</sup>

4.2.3.2. Augmentation of Generalities- collocation used may widen the meaning intended in a preceding ayah. The following may illustrate the point. (8.)

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ  
(Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls. Despair not of the Mercy of ALLAH: for ALLAH forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.) Zumur,53.

In this ayah, the collocation (انه هو الغفور الرحيم) declares what is intended in the linguistic co-text (قل يا عبادي الذين اسرفوا على انفسهم لا تقنطوا من رحمة الله) Hence, collocation is a kind of repetition of meaning differently for rhetorical purposes throughout establishing relations of semantic similarity between the phrase of collocation and the linguistic co-text. So, the collocation (انه هو الغفور الرحيم) generalizes the intended meaning of the preceded text. This will form a semantic motive to convince the reader/hearer with the real meaning of the co-text that Allah bolts out all sins although they are much. And because of the piled sins of the man and the idea of not being forgiven by Allah, he will be moved from the stage of being hopeful to the stage of being hopeless. As such the coming of the collocation forms semantic accumulation leading/having man to dispel this idea and keep it a way from his mind. <sup>(7)</sup>

4.2.3.3. Meaning Enrichment - collocation in the following ayah

(9.)  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَنِّي حَمِيدٌ

(O ye who believe! give of the good things which ye have (honorably) earned, and of the fruits of the earth which we have produced for you, and do not even aim at getting anything which is bad, in order that out of it ye may give away something, when ye yourselves would not receive it



except with closed eyes. And know that ALLAH is free of all wants, and worthy of all praise) .  
Baqara, 267.

is rhetorically enriched and based on the connection between the collocation and the preceded co-text where Allah talks to his slaves ordering them to do alms-giving and to spend the best from what Allah gifted them. Allah chooses to describe himself as (غني) to have his slaves understand that Allah is not in need for their alms-giving to the poor because he is richer and more lavish than them. What they have is basically his own. And when they give the best as if they do so for themselves and then Allah describes himself (حميد) for God will accept their alms-giving and thank them.<sup>(8)</sup>

The linguistic co-text has a semantic relationship to names to collocate to each other functioning as enrichment for the preceded co-text of the ayah. Since the linguistic co-text of the ayah talks about alms-giving, so the collocation of the names of Allah is semantically related through containing words intensifying the intended meaning of the linguistic co-text that precedes it. In other words, the meaning of the collocation "غني حميد" fits the meaning of the co-text of the ayah that precedes it.

4.2.3.4. Multi-Gradient Meaning Defragmentation- in the collocation at the end of the ayah.

(10.)

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

And remember Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House (with this prayer): Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: For thou art the All hearing, The all knowing.

Allah doesn't say "العزیز الحکیم", but instead He says "السمیع العلیم". The name "العزیز" has nothing to do with the co-text of the ayah that precedes it. Since the preceded linguistic co-text is concerned with Ibraheem and Ishmael's praying to Allah to accept their demand to establish the rules and bases of the holiest places on the earth and since for this praying to be answered needs to be heard by Allah, so it is supposed for the collocation as a rhetorical device to contain (السمیع). It is semantically related to the meaning of the preceded co-text. So the name (السمیع) fits in meaning to the praying of Ibraheem and Ishmael and for this praying to be answered, there should be real intentions and loyalty in their work. Allah then describes himself as (العلیم) because He knows well whether these intentions are real or not. Thus, wherever the knowledge of this real

intention and loyalty in work takes place, the supplication will be answered.<sup>(9)</sup>

A prior, the semantic relatedness is indicated between the praying style as being the preceded co-text and names collocated to each other as a style or concept of collocation performing a rhetorical function. Since the hearing is a way for knowing, so it is supposed that there is to be such collocation (السميع العليم) and that (السميع) precedes (العليم) .

## 5. Conclusion:

To recapitulate, collocation is a rhetorical style semantically related to the linguistic co-text of certain Qur'anic verses. It has a wide spectrum of semantic features and functions. In essence, collocation is an additional structure which either enhances, clarifies, fixes, entails, presupposes, or even generalizes the meaning of the preceded co-text of the ayah. Still, it does not have extra meaning different from the meaning intended in the preceded co-text. It is a way of repeating the meaning to fit the semantic contents mapped in the co-text of the ayah.

Moreover, collocation is a rhetorical style used to explore the cue of certain expressions by means of the semantic relation it has with a preceded ayah. Such relation, between the collocated terms and the relevant ayah goes side by side with the linguistic co-text to embrace names of Allah semantically fitting the meaning of the linguistic co-text of the ayah. In other words, the choice of certain names of Allah to be collocated is not arbitrarily determined. It depends on the type of the semantic relation established between the collocation as a whole and the preceded linguistic co-text.

Fascinatingly, the collocability of some names of Allah, with the preceded Qur'anic expressions ensues the following functions and sub-functions:

1. Clarifying of miscueing in a Qur'anic verse.
  2. Fixing a reference.
  3. Entailing an effect.
  4. Presupposing a notion.
  5. Generalizes a concept.
  6. Enhancing an idea.
  7. Defragmenting multi-gradient conception.
- featuring throughout the following identical facets

1. Compatibility of semantic relation between the collocates
2. Broad spectrum semantic relation.

Finally, the two terms of the Qur'anic expressions are often non-reciprocal-the strength of collocation between the first and second terms is not equal on both sides. The names **العليم الحكيم** can be seen to be in different relationships. **الحكيم** only collocates with a very limited number of names of Allah like **العليم الحكيم** and **العزیز الحكيم**, but **العليم** collocates with many names, e.g., **العليم الخبير**, **العليم العزيز**, **العليم الحليم**, **الواسع العليم**, **السميع العليم**, **الفتاح العليم**, **الشاکر العليم**, **الخالق العليم**, **العزیز العليم**, etc.

## Notes

- (١) بديع القرآن: ابن معنز/١٤٥
- (٢) الفاصلة في القرآن:
- (٣) خزانة الأدب: عبدالقادر بن عمر البغدادي / ١٣١
- (٤) بديع القرآن: ابن معنز/١٤٥
- (٥) ابن كثير: ٦٦/١١
- (٦) تفسير الجلالين: ١٠٣/٦
- (٨٧) صفة التفاسير: ٥٣/٣٩
- (٨) تفسير الجلالين: ٢٦٧/٢
- (٩) القرطبي: ١٢٧/٢

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