



A Historical, Descriptive and Cognitive Semantic Evaluation of the Phrase ‘Mīthāqā Ghālīzā’ in the Holy Qur’ān

Mahbobe Sqab Gandomabadi¹, Elham Yazdanmehr^{2*} 

1. Department of Theology, Mashhad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran

2. Attar Institute of Higher Education, Mashhad, Iran

* Corresponding author: yazdanmehr@attar.ac.ir

 <https://doi.org/10.22081/ttais.2025.70394.1045>

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 25 November 2023

Revised: 21 December 2023

Accepted: 4 February 2024

Keywords:

Authenticity Principle,
Cognitive Semantics,
Descriptive Semantics,
Historical Semantics,
Mīthāqā Ghālīzā,
Qur’ānic Expression.

ABSTRACT

The semantic analysis of Qur’ānic vocabulary has emerged as a significant area of study in recent years. In the Holy Qur’ān, God specifically uses the phrase *mīthāqā ghālīzā* (a firm covenant) to describe the marriage agreement, warranting a semantic investigation to understand the reasoning behind this choice. This study adopts a qualitative approach to explore why this phrase was selected for the marriage covenant. It employs historical, descriptive, and cognitive analyses of the phrase. The term *mīthāqā ghālīzā* appears three times in the Qur’ān: first, in reference to God’s covenant with the prophets (Al-Ahzab: 7); second, regarding God’s covenant with the people of Israel (An-Nisaa’: 154); and third, in the context of marriage (An-Nisaa’: 21). Through historical semantics, the study traces the semantic evolution of *mīthāq*. Using descriptive semantics, it analyzes the phrase contextually and examines its paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions to uncover its semantic features and components. Furthermore, by applying the principle of authenticity of Qur’ānic terms within cognitive semantics, the study concludes that no synonym or alternative phrase adequately conveys the profound semantic depth and layers of *mīthāqā* in the given contexts.

How to cite this article: Gandomabadi, M. S. and Yazdanmehr, E. (2024). A Historical, Descriptive and Cognitive Semantic Evaluation of the Phrase ‘Mīthāqā Ghālīzā’ in the Holy Qur’ān. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies*, 2(2), 119-137. doi: 10.22081/ttais.2025.70394.1045

© 2024 The Authors. Published by Ākhünd-e Khorāsāni Center for Graduate Studies affiliated with Baqir al-Olum University of Qom.

This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



1. Introduction

At its core, semantics is the scientific study of meaning (Safavi, 2008) and is categorized into philosophical, logical, and linguistic branches (Qaemini, 2010). The cognitive semantics of the Qur'ān seeks to construct a cognitive map of the Holy Book (Qaemini, 2011). This map helps interpreters understand how the Qur'ān conceptualizes and describes various situations and concepts, as well as whether underlying principles govern these conceptualizations. If such principles exist, how should they be applied to the interpretation of its verses? Developing this cognitive map is crucial for advancing beyond conventional interpretations of the Qur'ān, as it engages with a specialized knowledge system not accessible from external sources. A thorough and careful examination of the Qur'ān's interpretations and concepts is essential to unlocking the profound insights it offers to humanity. Moreover, employing modern methodologies and sources of knowledge not only facilitates a systematic reflection on Qur'ānic verses but also serves as a valuable example of scholarly inquiry. This approach enables interpreters to uncover the deeper meanings of Qur'ānic conceptualizations and analyze them in their original form, free from reductionism. Since the Qur'ān is regarded as a divine miracle, its interpretations also derive from divine wisdom and serve a distinct purpose. Therefore, Qur'ānic interpretations should be examined as they are, respecting their intrinsic depth and significance (Qaemini, 2011).

Beyond cognitive semantic analysis, historical semantics not only enhances our awareness of the alterity of past documents but also fosters a humbler approach to interpreting historical evidence in the Holy Qur'ān. This alternative method of engagement becomes especially crucial when studying religious texts and contexts that serve as moral and spiritual guides for human life (Geelhar et al., 2023). Similarly, descriptive semantics aids in examining the distribution of synonyms for specific words or phrases in religious texts, including the Holy Qur'ān, particularly in their concentrated presence within certain spheres of thought. Such patterns reflect the significance attributed to these spheres by God (Ullmann, 1953).

A comprehensive examination of the meanings of Qur'ānic verses is essential for Qur'ānic research. This goal can only be achieved if the precise meanings of Qur'ānic words are understood and the choice of specific words over others is justified. Religious scholars emphasize that recognizing the correct and exact meanings of Qur'ānic terms is key to grasping God's intended message. Given the originality of the Holy Qur'ān's verses, this issue manifests in various forms, including interpretation and translation. The infallible Shiite Imams, regarded as the true interpreters of the Holy Qur'ān, have highlighted this challenge. In their absence, it becomes the responsibility of their devoted followers to scrutinize the sacred text to uncover the significance of its words and phrases. One method that has been employed for nearly a century is semantic analysis, which studies meaning to deepen textual understanding (Izutsu, 2003). Semantics explores the relationships between words and meanings, demonstrating how key terms in the Holy Qur'ān illuminate particular semantic layers of other words. While researchers have increasingly focused on the semantic analysis of Qur'ānic content in recent years, many words and phrases remain unexplored. One such phrase is *mīthāqā ghalīzā*, which literally means 'a firm covenant'. However, its deeper connotative meanings have yet to be fully examined. To bridge this gap in the literature, the present study focuses on the semantic analysis of this phrase.

The significance of this study lies, first and foremost, in its semantic analysis. Semantics serves as a bridge for exploring meaning and understanding texts; in the case of the Holy

Qur'ān, it helps unravel the intentions and implications of divine revelations. This approach examines the relationships between words and meanings, demonstrating how the selection of specific words or phrases in the Holy Qur'ān reveals deeper semantic layers of content words. Secondly, in light of growing skepticism regarding women's rights in Islam—particularly in the context of marriage—spread through the Internet and mass media, numerous electronic and printed sources have raised doubts about this issue. This study addresses such concerns by analyzing the roots of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā*, illustrating its connection to the Islamic marriage agreement and the profound value that God has bestowed upon women within this sacred covenant.

This paper aims to examine the semantic evolution of the word *mīthāq* (i.e., covenant) through the lens of historical semantics. It then employs descriptive semantics, contextual analysis, and the extraction of paradigmatic and syntagmatic concepts to analyze its semantic features along both axes. Additionally, it explores the meaning and components of *mīthāq* in the Holy Qur'ān. Following the semantic principle of the originality of Qur'ānic expressions, this study investigates the various layers of the phrase *mīthāqan ghalīzan* (i.e., firm covenant). An initial review reveals that this phrase appears three times in the Holy Qur'ān, with one instance referring to the marriage covenant—an aspect that has received comparatively less attention. To gain a precise understanding of the significance of *mīthāqan ghalīzan* in the Holy Qur'ān, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

- Why did God describe the act of marriage in the Holy Qur'ān with the particular phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā*?
- What are the historical, descriptive and cognitive semantic features of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* in the Holy Qur'ān?

2. Review of the literature

2.1. Semantic analysis of Qur'ānic phrases

Among contemporary linguists, Toshihiko Izutsu (2002), a Japanese scholar, has employed semantic analysis in two of his works: *God and Man in the Qur'ān* and *Ethical-Religious Concepts in the Holy Qur'ān*. In Iran, a few books have been published on the semantics of religious texts, particularly the Holy Qur'ān, including *Semantic Changes in the Qur'ān* by Seyed Hossein Seyedi (2015), *An Introduction to Semantics* by Kourosh Safavi (2004), and *An Introduction to Semantics* by Balqis Roshan (2009). Regarding the phrase *mīthāqan ghalīzan* in the context of marriage, one notable study is Ismail Malakootikhah's (2011) paper on its semantics and the fundamental components of loyalty. Another relevant work is Abolfazl Khoshmanesh's (2013) paper, *Marriage as a Great Covenant: A Comparative Semantics of the Firm Covenant in the Holy Qur'ān*. Despite the profound significance of the Holy Qur'ān and the necessity of in-depth lexical and semantic studies, there remains a limited number of relevant semantic analyses. In particular, historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic analyses of the principle of originality in Qur'ānic expressions are lacking, further highlighting the need for this study. As mentioned earlier, only one paper has been published specifically on the analysis of *mīthāqan ghalīzan* in Qur'ānic verses. However, this phrase can be examined more comprehensively through historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic lenses to develop a deeper understanding of its underlying meaning and interpretation. Semantic analysis can effectively clarify different interpretations of a given phrase, uncover linguistic nuances in Qur'ānic discourse, and expand the scope of interpretation (Izutsu, 2002, 2003). Given the scarcity of semantic

studies on *mīthāqān ghalīẓan* in the Holy Qur'ān—and considering its potential implications for reinforcing family bonds and elevating the value of women's roles in marriage from an Islamic perspective—this study seeks to conduct a semantic analysis of this phrase in the sacred text.

2.2. Authenticity of Qur'ānic interpretations

Discussions of the authenticity of Qur'ān have prevailed ever since the Holy Book was revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam. Internal and external sources of evidence have been found to prove the originality of the content of the Holy Qur'ān (Waqdan, 2014). The underlying assumption of the present research or any similar study that semantically analyzes words and expressions in the Holy Book is the acceptance of the authenticity of Qur'ān, which contends its teachings are genuinely original and have not been adopted or plagiarized. The relevance of the alleged authenticity of the Holy Qur'ān to semantic analysis is the non-synonymy issue, the belief that the words, phrases and expressions in the Holy Book have been each selected by God for a good reason and are not replaceable (Yousof, 2006, Al-Askari, 1974, Hafani, 1970). Thus, the meticulous choice of every word or word combination in the Holy Book can be analyzed semantically to unravel the specific historical, descriptive and cognitive features which make it unique to be used in the particular context.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing a descriptive-analytic design to explore the foundations of semantic knowledge. Its primary aim was to extract the lexical meaning and semantic scope of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīẓā* as it appears in the Holy Qur'ān. The data collection and analysis drew exclusively from all relevant Qur'ānic verses. The research process, which involved simultaneous data collection and analysis, followed five key steps:

1. To unravel the semantic components and layers of *mīthāqā ghalīẓā*, the first step involved examining the lexical meaning of *mīthāq* through historical semantics.
2. The second step focused on identifying the frequency of *mīthāq* in the Qur'ān and counting the occurrences of verses containing *mīthāqā ghalīẓā* within their verbal contexts.
3. The third step involved identifying alternative words that could be used in place of *mīthāq*.
4. The fourth step examined the co-occurrences of *mīthāq* within the text.
5. The final step applied descriptive semantics to uncover the features and semantic components of *mīthāqā ghalīẓā*, while utilizing the semantic principle of the “authenticity of Qur'ānic expressions” to reveal the multiple semantic layers of the phrase.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is rooted in lexical semantics, which focuses on the meaning of words and word combinations. Lexical semantics examines both the internal semantic structure of words and the semantic relationships within a given vocabulary (Cooper & Retoré, 2017).

4. Results

The results of the semantic analysis of *mīthāqā ghalīzā* are presented here in several sections as elaborated below.

4.1. Historical semantic analysis of *mīthāq*

The word *mīthāq* held a basic and central meaning prior to the revelation of the Qur'ān. After the emergence of the Holy Book, its semantic field expanded, and it began to be used alongside other terms, which partially altered its original meaning. Nevertheless, by reflecting on the various uses of this word, its fundamental and central meaning can still be discerned.

The word *mīthāq* was used by pre-Islamic Arabs to refer to a rope in general, or specifically to a rope used to tightly bind prisoners of war and animals (Zubaydi, 1993). Thus, the concept of tightening a rope is integral to the original meaning of *mīthāq*. In fact, considering its root *wathāqa*¹, it can be argued that the act of binding with a rope represented the most tangible, earthly concept associated with this word during the pre-Islamic era. In the non-divine worldview of the *Jāhiliyyah* (Age of Ignorance)—a worldview driven by lust, anger, and an obsession with women, horses, and swords—this was the primary understanding of the term. When *tawāṭhaq*², derived from the same root, was used to describe the strengthening of treaties, it reflected the nature of agreements among pre-Islamic Arabs, which were largely rooted in blood kinship. The practice of this virtue was typically confined to the boundaries of the tribe or clan. Within this limited context, such loyalty held significant importance, manifesting as selfless sacrifice and devotion to relatives, unwavering sincerity toward friends, and absolute trustworthiness and commitment to covenants and pacts (Izutsu, 2002). In *Asās al-Balāghah* (Zamakhshari, 1986), Ka'b ibn Zuhair states: “They will follow what they were opposed to, and they will be more secure than me, and Allah is all-seeing and all-hearing³”.

However, when this concept and its associated meanings were incorporated into a divine worldview—one in which the purpose of words and phrases was to guide humanity toward spiritual perfection—the semantic scope of the word expanded. It evolved to encompass higher levels of transcendence and began to represent more elevated, spiritual examples.

The word *mīthāq* (i.e., covenant) appears 23 times in the Holy Qur'ān. Of these, 20 instances refer to covenants between God and the prophets, between God and the general public, or between people—such as agreements made between governments and nations. Three of these covenants are accompanied by detailed descriptions: two refer to God's covenant with the prophets and the sons of Israel, while one pertains to a marriage contract. With the revelation of the Qur'ān, words took on new life. The most significant reason for this linguistic transformation was the divine and monotheistic worldview presented in the Holy Book. This perspective elevated the meanings of words, allowing them to transcend their original connotations as the Qur'ān's understanding of the world and humanity unfolded. In this new context, words found new associations and relationships. Synonyms,

¹ وَثَقَ

² تَوَاتَقُوا

³ ليوفوا بما كانوا عليه تواتقوا بخيف مَنِي واللَّه راء و سامع

parallels, and contrasts used throughout the Qur'ān introduced fresh layers of meaning, offering new insights to its audience.

According to Izutsu (2002), vocabulary, as the summative addition of all semantic fields, appears as a complex and vast network of multifaceted links among words, corresponding to an organized whole made up of concepts that are interrelated and dependent on each other in a multiple way. The word *mīthāq* is derived from the stem *wathāqa* meaning a rope in general or a rope used to tie animals. This term has a basic meaning as well as a relative meaning. The basic meaning is the primary concept that is within and in its essence, and wherever this word is transmitted, that meaning is also transmitted along with it. However, the relative meaning of the word *mīthāq* is the one that has arisen through its placement in sentences and among other words and its various relationships with other words. An examination of this word in the Holy Qur'ān shows that the words related positively or negatively to this word are Allah, *ākḥadḥa*⁴, *nabīyn*⁵, *mīthāqā*, *ghalyz*⁶, Holy Prophet, arch prophets, prophets, children of Israel, *lata'adw*⁷, *ākḥadḥna*⁸, *rijālu*⁹, *nisā'u*¹⁰ and so on. For example, we can say that the use of the word *mīthāq* next to the word Allah in many cases shows that this word refers to a kind of covenant with God. Before the revelation of Qur'ān, the words derived from *wathāqa* with the aforementioned meaning had no association with the covenant with God. Therefore, the first extension of the meaning considered for the root of this word is that there is a kind of covenant with God concerning the meaning of this word.

The denotative meaning of the word *mīthāqā* is a covenant or agreement that is accompanied by an oath (Raghib Isfahani, 1995). This word, whose original form is *mwthaq*¹¹, is derived from the root *ywthaq*¹². Lexicographers have mentioned two related meanings for this, one trust and confidence and the other firmness and stability which lie at the core of *Wathāqa* (Ibn Manzoor, 1983). It seems there is a compatibility between the two concepts because what is strong and stable is also expected to be trustworthy and reliable, and it is used for contracts and agreements that are confirmed and strengthened by certain things such as oaths and covenants (Raghib Isfahani, 1995). Its general meaning, taking into account both literal meanings of *Wathāqa* mentioned above, is any matter that brings about confidence and peace along with certainty and stability (Mostafavi, 1981).

The word *ghalīz* is a similar adjective meaning intense, and its root *ghilzat*¹³ means intensity. It is used in cases such as harshness in speech and behavior, cruelty and stone-heartedness, hardness of the earth, strength of plants and trees, and emphasis of an oath and covenant (Farahidi, 1989; Ibn Manzoor, 1993). In all these cases, there is a kind of density and intensity involved; therefore, the word *ghilzat*, which is a similar adjective and its form indicates stability and permanence, is used to describe the concept of intensity and lasting hardness of the covenant.

⁴ اخذ

⁵ نبیین

⁶ غلیظ

⁷ لاتعدوا

⁸ أخذن

⁹ رجال

¹⁰ نساء

¹¹ موثق

¹² يوثق

¹³ غلظت

The Holy Qur'ān, which was revealed to the Holy Prophet in clear Arabic language, created transcendent moral thoughts from some of the common and customary moral words of the Arab population that were not incompatible with divine revelation (Izutsu, 2002). Therefore, some Arabic words have found a new meaning in the Qur'ān, different from their conventional meaning at the time of revelation, and have ever lived on. In this regard, the word *mīthāq* which is an Arabic word, developed and extended its meaning during the time of revelation of Qur'ān, and the Holy Book became a collection of covenants and agreements that God made with Adam, the sons of Adam, the prophets, and the nations. It can be concluded that after the revelation of Qur'ān, all moral values deal with the idea of a covenant between man and God.

4.2. Descriptive semantic analysis of *mīthāqā*

As for the frequency of occurrence of *mīthāq* and *mīthāqā ghalīzā*, the analysis showed that the former is used 23 times in 21 verses in the Holy Qur'ān (Al-Baqarah:27, Al-Baqarah:63, Al-Baqarah:83, Al-Baqarah:84, Al-Baqarah:93, Al-Imran:81, Al-Imran:187, Al-Ma'idah:7, Al-Ma'idah:12, Al-Ma'idah:13, Al-Ma'idah:14, Al-Ma'idah:70, Al-Nisaa':21, Al-Nisaa':90, Al-Nisaa':92, Al-Nisaa':154, Al-Nisaa':155, Al-A'raf:169, Al-Anfal:72, Al-Ahzab:7, Al-Hadid:8). Three of these are accompanied by a detailed description. One case is concerned about God's covenant with arch prophets. Another one is about God's covenant with the sons of Israel. And the third one is used to refer to a marriage contract in which women take a covenant from their husbands. These verses are, respectively:

1. "And [remember] when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary, that was a firm covenant."¹⁴ (Al-Ahzab: 7)

2. "And We raised the Mount above them as a covenant, and We told them to enter the gate prostrating, and not to transgress on the Sabbath. They made a solemn covenant." (An-Nisaa': 154)

3. "And how can you pledge it when some of you have already pledged it from one another and they have pledged from you a firm covenant?" (An-Nisaa': 21)

To further examine the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* and its semantic analysis in the Qur'ān and discover its semantic features and components, we should examine the keywords that have a semantic relationship with this phrase in terms of paradigmatic and syntagmatic features.

4.2.1. Paradigmatic concepts of *mīthāqā ghalīzā*

Here, we deal with the words that have a paradigmatic relationship with the word *mīthāq*. The first one is the word *Ahd* meaning to maintain and observe something continuously, to preserve, and to make a covenant (Amid, 2010). According to the Qur'ānic Dictionary, it seems that the meaning of "covenant of Allah" is the natural guidance deposited in the existence of every individual, and the meaning of the covenant is its consolidation by the prophets and guardians. That is, the transgressors are those who break their natural guidance and innate understanding after it has been consolidated by the prophets. Therefore,

¹⁴ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا¹⁴

*yaqṭa' ūna wa yufsidūna*¹⁵ points to the breach of the covenant. According to the verse “The nature of Allah which He has created mankind upon¹⁶” (Ar-Rum: 30), all people enjoy divine guidance, and the prophets came to establish and strengthen that nature (Qurashi, 1992), but some violate it.

In the Holy Qur'ān, the word *Ahd* is used 46 times in 17 chapters and 36 verses, meaning to preserve and protect something and to observe what needs to be observed, such as “Fulfill the covenant, for the covenant is a matter of obligation¹⁷” (Isra': 34), meaning to be faithful in keeping your oath, or “My covenant will not be fulfilled by the wrongdoers¹⁸” (Al-Baqarah: 124). God's covenant¹⁹ can have three meanings:

1- It is the awareness of something that God has settled in our minds in a constructive way.

2- It is the awareness of something that He has commanded us to do in the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah of His Prophet.

3- Sometimes, it refers to what we are committed to, but in the principles of Sharia, it is not obligatory, such as making a vow and anything that is considered a vow, such as “And of them are those who have made a covenant with Allah, if He gives us of His bounty, we will be truthful and we will be among the righteous.²⁰” (At-Tawbah: 75).

An examination of the term *mīthāq* reveals that it is distinct from *Ahd*, which means “covenant”. While *Ahd* refers to a covenant in general, *mīthāq* specifically denotes the reinforcement of a covenant or agreement, often accompanied by an oath (Raghib Isfahani, 1995). This distinction highlights that, despite their similarities, treating these two terms as semantically identical leads to a misrepresentation of their meanings. Another concept associated with *mīthāq* is loyalty. Among Arabs, loyalty has long been regarded as a noble virtue, reflected in acts of sacrifice and selflessness toward family and kin in the fulfillment of promises or covenants. This value is echoed in verse 43 of *Mu'allaqa* by Zuhair ibn Abi Salmi: “He who fulfills his promise will not be blamed, and he whose heart guides him to the purity of truth and trustworthiness will not be divided” (Izutsu, 2002).

During the pre-Islamic era, known as the Age of Ignorance (Jāhiliyyah), the Arabs valued loyalty above all else. When a promise was made, both the individual and their tribe were bound to uphold it, regardless of circumstances—even in times of war. Oaths, once taken, were considered inviolable. In stark contrast, betrayal and treachery were deeply despised and carried severe social consequences. While loyalty was revered and respected, any act of deceit or dishonor was met with public condemnation. For instance, if someone broke a promise, a banner or flag would be raised in the market of 'Ukāz to publicly shame the individual, ensuring that everyone was aware of their dishonor. Covenants, pacts, and oaths held significant importance during this period, serving as essential mechanisms to protect both public and private interests. These agreements were often established for military alliances, economic cooperation, the creation of laws, the protection of public rights, the

¹⁵ يَفْطَرُونَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ

¹⁶ فَطَرْتُ اللَّهَ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا

¹⁷ أَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا

¹⁸ لَا يَتَأَلَّ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

¹⁹ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ

²⁰ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ عَاثَدَ اللَّهَ لَئِنْ آتَانَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُونُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

repelling of oppression, and the defense of the oppressed. Many of the treaties and oaths made by the Quraysh tribe with other tribes were rooted in such purposes. The process of making agreements in the Jāhiliyyah era often involved symbolic rituals. Agreements were sealed using elements like blood, fire, ashes, salt, or water, or in the presence of idols. Participants might dip their hands in substances such as blood or ash, circumambulate idols, or invoke these elements as witnesses to the covenant. Breaking such covenants was believed to bring misfortune, such as being deprived of the benefits symbolized by these elements—for instance, fire symbolizing warmth and protection. In some cases, people swore by bread and salt, and sharing these with someone created an unbreakable bond of loyalty. Anyone who had partaken in another's bread and salt was obligated to defend them and uphold their rights, never to harm them or their tribe. To formalize and reinforce these agreements, they were often documented in writing. The leaders of both parties would serve as witnesses, and to further solidify the pact, the written agreement was sometimes hung inside the Kaaba. Such documents were regarded with the utmost reverence, and their contents were considered binding. To enhance the sanctity of the covenant, the names of idols and statements with religious or sacred significance were frequently invoked (Kahala, 2014).

Loyalty is defined as fulfilling a promise or commitment without any shortcomings (Qurashi, 1992). In contrast, treachery, cunning, and deceit represent the breaking of promises and agreements (Raghib Isfahani, 1995). Thus, a loyal person is someone who remains steadfast and does not betray the trust of friendship.

A reflection on Qur'ānic verses reveals that the conceptual relationship between loyalty and *mīthāq* is neither one of equivalence nor of absolute generality and particularity. Loyalty refers to the act of fulfilling a promise or obligation with complete faithfulness, while *mīthāq* denotes a covenant or agreement that is formalized with an oath. In terms of logical sequence, the *mīthāq*—the covenant—is established first, and loyalty is demonstrated through the faithful fulfillment of that covenant. Therefore, while there is a degree of semantic overlap between these two terms, and they may occasionally appear interchangeable, they retain distinct meanings and functions.

The third term related to *mīthāq* is *'aqada*, which, as described by Raghib Isfahani (1995), literally means “to tie” or “to bind,” typically referring to hard or rigid objects, such as tying a rope or securing the elements of a structure. Metaphorically, it extends to signify various forms of covenants and agreements, including sales contracts and other binding commitments (Raghib Isfahani, 1995; Qurashi, 1992). A Qur'ānic example illustrates this usage: “*And do not intend to conclude a marriage contract until the prescribed period has passed*” (Al-Baqarah: 235). The term *'alāqahu* (referring to the binding nature of marriage) is used because marriage involves the formation of a bond, a symbolic “tying” between husband and wife. Lexicographers define *'alāqahu* as a noun denoting the establishment of a marital bond, contract, or similar agreement (Qurashi, 1992).

A reflection on Qur'ānic verses shows that *'aqada* generally refers to contracts related to transactions, such as purchase, sale, and other forms of property exchange. In contrast, *mīthāq* denotes a covenant or agreement that carries a deeper, more profound function, often associated with life's fundamental relationships and spiritual connections with God. For instance, in the context of marriage, *mīthāq* represents not just a legal contract but a sacred bond, a connection of soul to soul between a man and a woman. Thus, while there is a degree of semantic overlap between *'aqada* and *mīthāq*, they possess distinct inherent differences—

'*aqada* emphasizing legal and transactional aspects, and *mīthāq* highlighting spiritual and moral dimensions.

4.2.2. Irreplaceability of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* in the Holy Qur'ān

A number of scholars reflecting on the Qur'ānic language argue that the choice of words and expressions in the Holy Book is meticulously deliberate, with each word and phrase being unique and irreplaceable. While it may seem conceivable to find words that appear semantically similar, a deeper exploration of their meanings and implications reveals that these words have no true synonyms. They are distinct in their ability to convey the subtle and precise intentions of the Qur'ān. In contemporary linguistics, semanticists reject the notion of absolute synonymy among words (Safavi, 2000), asserting that every word and phrase carries its own unique nuance. Any minor alteration in a word's placement or structure—even if the words seem synonymous—can lead to significant changes in meaning. To address this, semanticists have introduced the concept of a “radial network of meaning”, which helps explain how the Qur'anic language functions in a remarkable way. According to this approach, words that seem synonymous are actually part of a network stemming from a central meaning, with each word contributing a different layer or facet to the overall interpretation.

Considering the points discussed above and analyzing words semantically related to *mīthāq* or closely associated with it, we conclude that, although these words may seem to carry the same meaning as *mīthāq*, none of them encompass the same depth, layers, and semantic weight. Furthermore, in the Qur'ānic verses where the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* (a firm covenant) appears, the term *mīthāq* is paired with the adjective *ghalīzā*, which intensifies and reinforces the strength and solemnity of the covenant.

4.2.3. Syntagmatic analysis of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* in the Holy Qur'ān

From a general perspective, the occurrences of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* in the three verses containing it can be categorized into three types: first, verses that refer to the covenant-maker; second, verses that refer to the second party involved in the covenant; and third, verses that address the subject matter of the covenant, as discussed here. In the first two verses, the covenant-maker is God, while in the third verse, the covenant-maker is the women.

1- “And We took from the prophets their covenants, and from you, and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary, and we took from them all a firm covenant”.²¹ (Ahzab:7)

2- “And We raised above them the status of their covenant, and We told them to enter the door, prostrating, and We said to them not to fight on the Sabbath. We took a firm covenant from them”.²² (Al-Nisaa':154)

3- “And how do you take it, and I have given it to each of you, and I have taken from you a firm covenant”.²³ (Al-Nisaa': 21)

²¹ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَنُوحَ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

²² وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْلُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

²³ وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنِ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

The second party (addressee) of the covenant party in verses containing the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīẓā*, in two verses, is the arch prophets and the sons to Israel. In one verse left, the second party is the men taking a covenant from their wives while marrying:

1- “And when We took a covenant from the prophets and from you and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, the son of Mary, and We took from them a solemn covenant”²⁴. (Al-Ahzab:7)

2- “And We raised above them a mountain with their covenant and told them to enter the gate bowing down. And We said to them not to transgress on the Sabbath. And We took from them a solemn covenant”²⁵ (An-Nisaa’:154)

3- “And how can you take it while you have gone to one another and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?”²⁶ (An-Nisaa’: 21)

4.3. Interpretation of *mīthāqā* in verses containing the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīẓā*

In the verse “And when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary, and We took from them a solemn covenant” (Ahzab:7), God addresses the Holy Prophet, reminding him of the covenant He took from all the prophets, including the Prophet Muhammad. God emphasizes that He took a firm covenant from them all to ensure they would fulfill their responsibility of preaching and carrying out their mission. The verse first mentions all the prophets in the context of the covenant, followed by the five major prophets, starting with the Prophet Muhammad due to his honor and stature. This solemn covenant represents the responsibility of preaching, guiding, and leading people in all aspects of life. Furthermore, all the prophets were expected to support and confirm one another. The earlier prophets prepared their nations to accept the later prophets, just as the later prophets were expected to uphold and affirm the messages of those who came before them.

In the verse “And We raised above them a mountain with their covenant and told them to enter the gate bowing down. And We said to them not to transgress on the Sabbath. And We took from them a solemn covenant” (An-Nisaa’:154), God recounts when the sons of Israel failed to awaken from their heedlessness and discard their arrogance. As a result, He raised the mountain above them and simultaneously took a firm covenant from them. He instructed them to enter the gate of the Holy House in a humble manner, as a form of repentance for their sins. God also emphasized that they must refrain from working and engaging in business on the Sabbath and avoid any acts of transgression or aggression. In return for all of this, God took a solemn covenant from them. However, they failed to fulfill any of these commitments.

The focus of this verse is the covenant that God made with the sons of Israel, yet they chose the path of disbelief, denial, and disobedience, ultimately going astray. As God said: “So because of their breaking of their covenant, disbelief in the signs of God, and their killing of the prophets in cold blood while saying, ‘Our hearts are veiled,’ God sealed their hearts with disbelief, so they will not believe except for a few” (An-Nisaa’: 155). Their hearts were entirely sealed, leaving no way for truth to penetrate. The root cause of their

²⁴ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَنُوحٌ وَإِبْرَاهِيمُ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

²⁵ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

²⁶ وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنِ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

disbelief lay within themselves, and as a result, only a few who distanced themselves from such arrogance would believe.

In the verse “And how can you take it while you have gone to one another and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?” (An-Nisaa’: 21), God appeals to human emotions, asking how men could fight with their wives and deprive them of their rights, such as their dowry, when they had once shared intimate moments together, as if they were one soul in two bodies. He then reminds them, “Besides, your wives took a firm covenant from you at the time of marriage. How can you disregard this sacred and binding covenant and commit such a blatant breach of it?”

4.4. Semantic features of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā*

Having explored the paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects of the word *mīthāq* and the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā*, we can now elaborate on the basic semantic features and components of this term. First, in the Holy Qur'an, *mīthāqā ghalīzā* is generally used to describe a firm covenant or agreement in three instances: with the arch prophets, with the sons of Israel, and with men at the time of marriage. The pronouns referring to God, either directly or indirectly, in the verses containing this phrase indicate that all covenants ultimately come from God. Second, the combination of the adjective *ghalīzā* with the word *mīthāq* emphasizes the strength and firmness of the covenant in these three cases. One such case refers to the covenant made with the arch prophets, who are the leaders of humanity. This covenant, both externally and internally, is tied to the very origin of creation. Another case involves the sons of Israel, who are described as stubborn and rebellious, yet this deeper message applies to all humanity, emphasizing the need to follow the commands of the prophets, which are, in essence, the commands of God, leading to happiness and perfection in both this world and the Hereafter. Among these instances, there is one unique case in a single verse, where this firm and lasting covenant pertains to the marriage contract, made between men and women as commanded by God. The marriage contract differs significantly from other covenants, as it involves an exchange of souls rather than property, holding a sanctity that is absent in other contracts that involve material exchange (Javadi Amoli, 2018).

The word *mīthāqā* is used to refer to the marriage contract, and since this term implies stability and reliability, it denotes a covenant that is confirmed and reinforced by a pledge or oath. The adjective *ghalīzā* conveys intensity, solidity, and lasting stability, further emphasizing the strength of the covenant. Therefore, the combination of these two words in the context of a marriage bond signifies that, from a Qur'ānic perspective, the marriage covenant is one of the strongest and most valuable human agreements, underscoring the necessity of a deep commitment. For this reason, in the marriage contract, God assigns a role and duty to women based on His divine nature, pledging a firm covenant. In fact, this covenant benefits not only women but also men, fostering their spiritual growth and development. This firm covenant is foundational to the continuity of human communities, starting from the small community of a couple and the family unit, and extending to larger communities and civilizations. It plays a critical role in strengthening the foundation of the family, which, in turn, supports the stability of cities, nations, and civilizations. If the foundation of the family is weakened, the stability of society and civilization is also at risk.

Mystically speaking, women, as the source of creation who carry life within themselves, are inherently closer to the Creator. They find life in the knowledge of their own existence and, as a result, seek to guide the souls of their husbands, children, and society toward the origin of creation. This role aligns with the divine purpose served by God through the

sending of messengers and establishing covenants with the arch prophets. Consequently, such a covenant requires a firm and enduring commitment from the man to ensure a peaceful environment for the wife, allowing her to fulfill her divine role. From a Qur'ānic perspective, while marriage addresses the fulfillment of sexual desires, its divine purpose is to protect humans from sin. The Holy Qur'ān is a source of human creation, and women, too, play a central role in the creation and nurturing of humanity. The purpose of marriage is not just companionship, but to move together toward God. In this journey, God has entrusted women with the responsibility of tending to the soul's needs, while men are tasked with addressing physical needs. Thus, the concept of a firm covenant in the Qur'ānic context is ultimately tied to the spiritual growth and development of humankind. It reflects both the divine covenant made with the prophets and the covenant women make with men as the center of family life. Marriage, in this sense, follows the tradition of the prophets and plays a vital role in maintaining the consistency and durability of religion, nature, and the foundation of civilization. In this light, a woman holds an essential and tangible role in both the physical birth and the spiritual growth and development of humanity.

All of this leads us to conclude that the semantic components of the phrase *mīthāqā ḡhalīzā* in its revelatory usage are rooted in the coexistence of several concepts: Allah, the sons of Israel, disobedience, transgression, aggression, the arch prophets, obedience, infallibility, men, and women. This phrase is anchored in the paradigmatic concepts of covenant, loyalty, and the binding bond, which all belong to the same semantic field.

4.5. Cognitive semantic analysis of the phrase *mīthāqā ḡhalīzā*

In cognitive semantics, following the principle of the originality of Qur'anic interpretations, each Qur'anic word is linked to a specific concept and conveys knowledge in a unique way. No two words express the same meaning in exactly the same manner. Therefore, each Qur'anic word has its own distinct function that no other word can fulfill. This applies to the various uses of the word *mīthāq* in different contexts, as the word offers a particular aspect of the speaker's knowledge in one context, while in another context, it provides a different aspect of that knowledge. In terms of linguistic synonymy, the meaning of one word transforms into another, meaning the expression containing the first word becomes equivalent to the expression containing the second word (Qaeminia, 2011). Taking this cognitive principle into account and considering the Qur'anic language used to express God's firm covenants and *mīthāqā ḡhalīzā*, we can conclude that the language of the Holy Qur'ān is unified and harmonious. It operates in a consistent and interconnected manner, both in the selection of words and in addressing the audience, as well as in the underlying ideas shaping the language. Thus, the different levels of Qur'anic language should not be considered in isolation but rather as part of an integrated whole.

If commentators have used words with similar meanings to interpret *mīthāq*, none of these convey the full essence of the term. The fundamental and core meaning of *mīthāq* is a covenant and agreement accompanied by an oath. Therefore, based on the principle of originality in Qur'anic interpretations, it is evident that only the word *mīthāq* carries the meaning that can fully reflect the depth and significance that God intended for *mīthāqā ḡhalīzā*, thereby excluding other meanings. None of the synonymous words can carry such profound implications, as demonstrated in the interpretations used in the first two verses:

1- “And when We took a covenant from the prophets and from you and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, the son of Mary, and We took from them a solemn covenant”²⁷. (Al-Ahzab:7)

2- “And We raised above them a mountain with their covenant and told them to enter the gate bowing down. And We said to them not to transgress on the Sabbath. And We took from them a solemn covenant”²⁸. (An-Nisaa’:154)

These two verses highlight God's direct interaction with the prophets and the sons of Israel. Since the word *mīthāq* is described as *ghalīzā*, it conveys concepts such as “firm”, “impenetrable”, and “unbreakable”, meaning that neither party to the covenant can break their word. Both are expected to be fully obedient and loyal to the covenant. This understanding is further emphasized in the twenty-first verse of Surah An-Nisaa’, where God states:

“And how will you take it, when some of you have already taken it from one another, and they have taken from you a firm covenant?” (An-Nisaa’: 21)

And the verses before that, which are about the rulings issued by God, are as follows:

“O you the believers, you are not allowed to take away women’s legacy against their will, and take away by force part of what you already gave them unless they do something wrong. Even if you do not like them, probably God knows better there is a benefit in what you seemingly dislike”²⁹ (An-Nisaa’: 19)

“And if you wish to marry again, and one wife has already a great wealth, do not try to take that back from her. Do you intend to take that wealth back from her by committing an evident sin?” (An-Nisaa’:20)

The verse following the seventh verse of Surah Al-Ahzab, which addresses the distinction between true believers and disbelievers, warrants reflection: “He will ask the true believers about their truthfulness and has prepared for the disbelievers a painful punishment”³⁰ (Al-Ahzab: 8). From this, we can draw an important conclusion: the covenant between the two parties involves the implementation of laws by one party and the granting of reward and punishment by the other party. Therefore, when discussing the firm covenant between God, the prophets, and the sons of Israel, both parties of the covenant—those to be rewarded or punished—are clearly defined. Now, a question arises: why is the term *mīthāq* specifically used in the case of marriage, out of all human contracts and covenants? In response, we can say that God, with the sanctity He has granted to the marriage contract, has distinguished it from other contracts. The marriage covenant is seen as closer to acts of worship than any other contract. The Prophet of Islam said, “I marry to preserve half of the religion” (Kulaini, 1986). This hadith views marriage as a divine act and regards it as an act of worship, emphasizing its sacred and spiritual significance (Javadi Amoli, 2018).

The analysis of the overall context of the Qur’ān, as a single interconnected volume, leads us to the conclusion that the word *mīthāq* appears three times in the Holy Qur’ān—twice in

²⁷ وَأَذْأَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

²⁸ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

²⁹ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرْثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَفْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْنَهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ وَعَايِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

³⁰ لَنَسْأَلَنَّ الصَّادِقِينَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

Surah An-Nisaa' and once in Surah Al-Ahzab. The relationship between these two Surahs is noteworthy and warrants examination, as both Surahs are Medinan. In both, civility is discussed; in both, the role of women is emphasized; in both, women's rights are addressed, and the necessity of adhering to divine piety in regard to women's affairs is highlighted. This emphasis suggests the significance of women and their vital role in the construction of civilization. When a woman, by God's command, takes a covenant from a man, the result is the reward or punishment of the man in relation to his closeness to or distance from God. It is in such a secure environment that a woman is meant to unite herself and her family. Therefore, analyzing the Qur'ānic language in expressing the concepts related to *mīthāqā ghalīzā* leads us to the conclusion that the Qur'ān's depiction of God's firm covenants manifests in three areas: cognitive, ethical, and practical. This reflects the Qur'ān as an interconnected system with a unique lexical structure, where multiple connections exist, including linguistic, literary, intratextual, contextual, and intertextual connections.

A semantic analysis of the Qur'ān can reveal the relationship between the different intellectual layers of its language, as the Qur'ānic world operates within a "God-centered" system of global ontology. God is placed at the top of the hierarchy of existence and is the focal point of the Qur'ānic language. All instructions and semantic fields in this system ultimately lead back to God. In contrast, in the worldview of pre-Islamic ignorance (Jahiliyyah), man was at the center of the world, and this perspective was reflected in the linguistic structures of that time. However, in the Qur'ānic worldview, God occupies the center of the world, a concept that significantly shapes the language of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ānic language is unified and harmonious, with its instructions unfolding across three levels: cognitive, ethical, and practical. The verses of the Qur'ān are interconnected in numerous ways, and a comprehensive understanding of its linguistic aspects requires attention to these semantic connections. Therefore, a review of the communicative aspects of the verses in the Qur'ānic language, particularly the cognitive and attitudinal layers, provides new strategies for interpretation. One of the most fundamental layers of the Qur'ānic worldview is monotheism.

The Qur'ān presents all of existence within a monotheistic framework, with every element and teaching fitting into this "God-centered" system. Considering the coherence of the semantic and textual relationships in the Qur'ānic worldview, when the Qur'ān instructs a woman to enter into a firm covenant with a man in the context of marriage, and applies the same principle to the guidance provided by the prophets and to the obedience expected from the sons of Israel, it is because all these covenants ultimately serve to bring individuals closer to God Almighty. In a safe and peaceful environment, a woman can flourish and draw closer to God. Additionally, the remembrance of God protects her from succumbing to fleeting pleasures or other sins. In this way, the respect for women's rights by men is not merely a matter of fairness, but a means of creating an environment conducive to spirituality. Under such conditions, a woman can more swiftly achieve monotheism, benefiting herself, her family, and society as a whole. Any form of oppression or mistreatment of a woman—whether through denying her dowry or other injustices—can harm her soul. Such actions may draw her away from unity and into the realm of multiplicity, hindering her from fulfilling her true purpose.

5. Discussion

The first research question explored the relevance of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* in relation to the marriage agreement, as summarized. The analytical findings of this study revealed that *mīthāqā ghalīzā* represents a covenant central to the continuity and stability of

human communities, extending from the small community of two individuals and the family unit to larger communities and civilizations. It serves as the foundation that strengthens both the family and, consequently, civilization itself. This is because if the foundation of the family is compromised, the stability of the city, country, and civilization will also be undermined. Upon examining the contexts in which the Holy Qur'ān references *mīthāq*, it becomes evident that this concept, in the Qur'ān and in heavenly religions, stems from the essence of divine monotheism, influencing all aspects of human life. Any defect in this system can harm both individual and collective existence. From the perspective of the Qur'ān, while marriage fulfills the natural desire for companionship, its divine purpose is to protect individuals from sin. The Qur'ān is fundamentally human-constructive, and women, in this context, also play a role in this constructive process. The purpose of marriage is to foster companionship and empathy in the shared journey towards God. In this regard, God has endowed women with the responsibility to fulfill the spiritual needs, while men are entrusted with providing for the physical needs.

Among the three instances of the word *mīthāq* in the Holy Qur'ān, two are found in Surah An-Nisaa' and one in Surah Al-Ahzab. The connection between these two surahs is significant and warrants further examination, as both Surahs Al-Ahzab and An-Nisaa' are Medinan. In both, the concepts of civility and the role of women are discussed; women's rights are emphasized, and the necessity of observing divine piety in relation to women's affairs is highlighted. This repeated emphasis underscores the importance of women and their constructive role in society. The discussion of *mīthāq* and *mīthāqā ghalīzā* in these Qur'anic contexts is ultimately linked to the spiritual and moral growth of humanity. It pertains both to the divine covenant taken by the prophets and to the covenant taken by women from men in the family and marriage — both of which follow the prophetic tradition and are crucial to the stability and continuity of religion, as well as to the foundation of nature and true civilization. In this context, a woman plays a significant and tangible role in the birth and development of man, both in the physical sense and in his spiritual and moral growth.

The second research question explored the historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic features of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* in the Holy Qur'ān, with the results summarized as follows. The historical semantic analysis of the word *mīthāq*, an Arabic term, revealed that its meaning evolved during the time of the Qur'ānic revelation. The Holy Qur'ān thus became a record of covenants and agreements made by God with Adam, the descendants of Adam, the prophets, and various nations. Following the revelation of the Qur'ān, all related moral values are connected to the concept of a covenant between mankind and God. The descriptive semantic analysis showed that *mīthāq* occurs 23 times in 21 verses in the Holy Qur'ān, while *mīthāqā ghalīzā* appears three times with detailed descriptions. These references include: God's covenant with the arch prophets, God's covenant with the sons of Israel, and the covenant in the marriage contract where women take a pledge from their husbands. By analyzing words semantically related to *mīthāq* or those closely connected, we concluded that while these words may seem similar to *mīthāq*, none possess the same depth, layers, or semantic weight. Furthermore, in the verses containing *mīthāqā ghalīzā*, the word *mīthāq* is combined with the adjective *ghalīzā*, which intensifies the strength and solemnity of the covenant.

The cognitive analysis of the word *mīthāq* in the Holy Qur'ān reveals that it appears twice in Surah An-Nisaa' and once in Surah Al-Ahzab. The connection between these two Surahs is significant and warrants further examination, as both are Medinan. In both surahs, civility

is discussed, the role of women is emphasized, and women's rights are highlighted alongside the importance of observing divine piety in matters concerning women. This consistent focus suggests that the Qur'ān places great importance on women and their role in the development of civilization. When a woman, by God's command, enters into a covenant with a man, the outcome is tied to the reward or punishment of the man, determined by his closeness to or distance from God. This covenant provides a safe environment where a woman is meant to unite herself and her family, fulfilling her divine role.

6. Conclusion

In the Holy Qur'ān, the covenant between God and His servants is frequently mentioned, with an emphasis on the strictness of these covenants, often expressed as *mīthāqā ghalīzā*. This study utilized semantic analysis, a branch of linguistics, to explore how this phrase is employed in the Qur'ān. The initial investigation revealed that the strict covenant implied by this phrase appears three times: once between God and the arch prophets, once between God and the sons of Israel, and once between husband and wife. The historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic analyses of this phrase demonstrate that the Qur'ān affirms and strengthens these binding covenants in various ways, while also outlining measures to prevent their weakening or neglect.

The semantic analysis of the Qur'ān reveals the relationship between the various intellectual layers of its language, as the Qur'ānic worldview is fundamentally "God-centered" in its global ontology. In this system, God occupies the highest point of existence, forming the focal point of the Qur'ānic language. All the instructions and semantic fields in the Qur'an ultimately revolve around God. In contrast, the worldview of the Age of Ignorance placed man at the center of the world, and this perspective was reflected in its linguistic layers. However, in the Qur'anic worldview, God is at the center, and women and their roles are valued in distinct and profound ways. One example of this is how God uses language in His Holy Book to articulate women's rights, particularly in the context of marriage. Qur'anic instructions are manifested at multiple cognitive, ethical, and practical levels, with the verses of the Qur'an interrelated in various ways to underscore this truth.

One limitation of the present study is the lack of similar research on the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* in the Holy Qur'an or in religious literature, which restricted the ability to compare findings. Another limitation is that the study could have yielded more comprehensive results if it had employed a natural language processing approach, utilizing computerized and digital tools to search for and analyze the occurrences and co-occurrences of the phrase in the Holy Qur'ān. As this study demonstrated, semantic analysis is an effective tool for exploring the meaning of words and word combinations, offering deeper insight into the text. The study examined the historical evolution of the phrase *mīthāqā ghalīzā* and highlighted how its meaning transformed from pre-Islamic times during the Ignorance Age to the interpretation it took on in the Holy Qur'an. By analyzing the linguistic features of the phrase, the study emphasized its unique and irreplaceable role within the Qur'anic context. Furthermore, it underscored the respect that God accords to women upon entering married life, placing the responsibility on men to treat them fairly in marriage. This finding can serve as a counterpoint to the misconceptions and negative portrayals of women's roles in Islam perpetuated by mass media, aiming to undermine the Islamic perspective on women's rights and dignity.

Given the limited research on the historical, descriptive, and cognitive semantic analyses of similar words and word combinations in the Holy Qur'ān and Islamic sources, it is highly

recommended that researchers conduct similar studies within Islamic literature to shed light on Islam's true, appreciative outlook on women and their creative and productive roles in society. Specifically, studies on the Holy Qur'an should focus on the principle of authenticity of the content, exploring why God chose certain words or phrases (over others) to convey specific ideas to the public. Researchers can investigate the reasons behind the irreplaceability of certain words or phrases that are repeatedly used in the Holy Book to refer to various social events, with marriage being just one example. Semantic analysis can guide researchers in identifying the unique qualities of these words, which make them the best fit for expressing specific concepts in the Qur'anic context. Future researchers are also encouraged to employ new computerized methods of language processing to examine occurrences and co-occurrences of relevant terms in the Holy Book, keeping pace with the latest developments in the global field of semantic analysis.

References

- Al-Askari, A. (1974). *Al-Farooq al-Laghuyeh*. Cairo: Maktabte al-Qudousi.
- Al-Saleh, S. (1962). *Studies in Fiqh Al-Gha*. Beirut: Al-Maktabeh Al-Ahliyah.
- Amid, H. (2010). *Persian literature*. Tehran: Parmis Publications.
- Cooper, R., & Retoré, C. (2017). An outline of type-theoretical approaches to lexical semantics. *Journal of Language Modelling*, 5(2), 165-178.
- Geelhaar, T., Kuchenbuch, L., Perreaux, N., Schiel, J. & Schürch I. (2023). *Historical Semantics – A Vade Mecum*. Austria: Claude Chevaleyre.
- Hafani, M. (1970). *Ijaz al-Bani between theory and application*. Cairo: Majlis al-Ali for Islamic Affairs.
- Ibn Manzoor, M. (1993). *Arab language, lexicography*. Beirut: Dar Sadir.
- Ibn-Janni, A. (1982). *Al-Khazaida*. Beirut.
- Izutsu, T. (2002). *God and man in the Qur'an*. Tehran: Soroush.
- Izutsu, T. (2003). *The God and the Human Being in the Holy Qur 'ān*. Translated to Farsi by Ahmad Aram. Tehran: Enteshar Corporation.
- Javadi Amoli, A. (2018). *Tasnim*. Qom: Isra Publishing Center.
- Kahala, O. R. (2014). *Social studies in the Islamic era*. Damascus: Al-Mutabah al-Taawunieh.
- Khoshmanesh, A. (2013). Marriage as a great covenant, comparative semantics of the firm covenant in the Holy Qur'an. *Kitab Qeym Quarterly*, 2(6), 75-105.
- Kulaini, M. (1986). *Al-Kafi*. Tehran: Dar Al-Kitab al-Islamiya Publications.
- Malakootikhah, I. (2011). The semantics of the firm covenant in the marriage contract and the study of the fundamental components of loyalty to it. *Strategic Studies of Women*, 13(52), 111-146.

- Mostafavi, H. (1981). *Al-Habiq fi Kalamat al-Qur'an al-Karim*. Tehran: Book Translation and Publishing Company.
- Qaemini, A. (2010). *Text biology, Islamic culture and thought research*. Tehran: Publishing Organization Institute.
- Qaemini, A. (2011). *Cognitive semantics*. Tehran: Publishing Organization Institute.
- Qurashi, A. (1992). *Dictionary of the Qur'ān*. Tehran: Dar Al-Kuttub.
- Raghib Isfahani, H. (1995). *The vocabulary of the Qur'an*. Tehran: Dar-al-Qalam Publications.
- Rommani, A. (1942). *Al-alfaz al-mutaradfa*. Cairo: Al-Masuaat Press.
- Roshan, B. (2019). *An introduction to semantics*. Tehran: Ilm Publications.
- Safavi, K. (2004). *An introduction to semantics*. Tehran: Sura Mehr Publications.
- Seyedi, S.H. (2015). *Semantic changes in the Qur'ān*. Tehran: Sokhan Publications.
- Ullmann, S. (1953). Descriptive semantics and linguistic typology, *WORD*, 9(3), 225-240.
- Waqdan, N.B. (2014). *The authenticity and preservation of the Holy Qur'ān*. <https://alimanlight.com/archives/3250>
- Yusuf, A. (2006). *Derasat Faniyeh in Al-Qur'an al-Karim*. Damascus: Darul Maktabi,
- Zamakhshari, M. (1986). *Al-Kashf on the facts of Ghawamaz al-Tanzir*. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi.
- Zubaydi, M. (1993). *Taj al-Arus*. Beirut: Dar al-Fakr.