



Various Meanings of Waw Letters and Their Implications in Interpretation of the Qur'an

Basri Mahmud¹ , Muhammad Imran² , Hamzah³ , Nur Afiah⁴ 

¹Institut Agama Islam DDI Polewali Mandar, Indonesia, basri141mahmud@gmail.com, ²Institut Agama Islam Negeri Manado, Indonesia, muhammadimran@iain-manado.ac.id, ³Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Indonesia, hamzah87_aziz@ymail.com, ⁴Institut Agama Islam DDI Polewali Mandar, Indonesia, nurafiah@ddipolman.ac.id.

Abstrak

This study examines the meanings of the letter waw as a connector in several Qur'anic verses. The waw serves various functions, with translations often rendered as "and" or "or," depending on the context. The research utilizes primary data from Qur'anic texts and secondary data from mufassir interpretations of verses discussing waw and its relevance. The findings reveal that the waw in Qur'anic verses has diverse meanings, including waw qasam (oath), waw isti'naf or ibtida' (beginning), waw atf (conjunction), waw hal (circumstantial), waw al-Samaniyah (numeric emphasis), waw al-Zaidah (additional), and waw indicating ikhtiyar (optional). These varied meanings enrich the interpretation and understanding of Qur'anic verses, demonstrating the depth and flexibility of the Arabic language in conveying complex ideas within the text.

Keywords: variety of meanings; The letter waw; Tafsir of the Qur'an

Introduction

The translation of the letter "و" (waw) in Arabic often depends on the context of the sentence and its relationship to the surrounding words. This letter has several functions, and translation options can often include "or" or "and" based on the context. Some considerations for choosing between "or" and "and" are: linguistic context, logical relationships, nuances and context of verse and accuracy of meaning and target language.

The translation of letters in the context of verse understanding, particularly in the Qur'an or other religious texts, can have significant implications. Letters and other linguistic characteristics have a depth of meaning and nuance that can have an effect on the interpretation and understanding of verse. It is important to understand the

context in which the letter "waw" is used in a particular sentence or word to accurately understand its meaning. The meaning and function of this letter depends largely on its role in the structure of sentences and words in the context of the language used.

Wau letters include a group of letters that can only be connected when in the back position. Meanwhile, when the letter wau is at the beginning, it can only stand alone. Therefore this letter only translates to the past. The number of letters included in the group there are about seven letters, namely the letters *alif, dal, dzal, ra, zal, wau* and *lam alif* (Anwar, n.d.).

The meaning of Arabic letters (Almannah Wassalwa et al., 2025) is needed in depth in the form of an explanation of the purpose and purpose of the use of the letters themselves because not always the letters mean in accordance with the literal, but sometimes the meaning of the origin of letters has a meaning appropriate to the meaning and purpose of points and evidence and conversations seen in the discourse. One example is the use of the letter wau in *masna* sentences, *wa sulasa' wa ruba'* in QS. al-Nisa/4:3, Where the position is as Atf, but on the other hand there is an important explanation of the meaning of the letter wau. Not even a few people make wau letters in QS. al-Nisa/4:3 as a legitimacy to add more than four wives (Agama, n.d.).

The use of wau letters in QS. al-Tawbah/9:60 regarding the group entitled to receive zakat (mustahiq), it is often understood that the letter wau means *al-Jam'u*, so it will be categorized as issuing zakat when someone gives to the eight groups referred to in the verse as the view of the Shafiyah scholars that all obligatory alms (zakat) both zakat fitrah and zakat maal must be distributed to eight groups, because they practice the surah. The verse gives alms to eight groups with the letter lam tamlik also uniting with the letter wau. Thus the verse shows that all alms belong to all of them, equally among them. (Wahbah al-Zuhaili, 2011:280).

While Hanafiyah and Malikiyyah scholars allow the distribution of zakat to one person from the eight groups listed in QS. al-Tawbah/9:60. They understand the verse by giving an understanding that it is not permissible to distribute zakat other than eight groups. The distribution among the eight groups shows that it is permissible to choose the distribution of zakat between them. (Wahbah al-Zuhaili, 2011:280).

So important is the study of the meanings of letters in Arabic, that several researchers have grounded the results of their work such as: Asdar et al with the study The Types and Functions of the Letter Waw in Surah Al-Mulk (Dan et al., 2024), Research that focuses more on the study of the position of wau letters in Arabic, there are some researchers who also ground their best work related to it, such as Asep Faturrohman with the research title Analysis of the meaning and function of wau letters

in suras Yasin and al-Rahman and their Implications in Nahwu Learning (Rubiawati, 2017). Likewise with Asriyah with the research title Wau Atf in the Qur'an; analysis of meaning and function (Asriyah, 2018).

Asep Faturrohman's research, focuses on the use of the letter wau in surah Yasin and surah al-Rahman. The study states that there are 146 wau letters with details of 64 wau plural', 32 wau atf, 28 wau isti'naf, 20 wau hal, 1 wau qasam and 1 wau maiyah. While in surah al-Rahman there are 42 letters wau with details of wau atf as many as 26, wau plural as many as 8, wau isti'naf as many as 4, wau maiyah as many as 3 and 1 wau hal.

As for the research conducted by Asriyah, her study focused on the use of the letters wau atf both as a pure sentence merger and sequential combination. The two studies above have similarities and differences, namely both discuss the letter wau, but on the other hand also have differences according to the focus of their respective studies.

During the investigation, researchers obtained several studies on the letter wau although not as focused on the two studies mentioned earlier, namely: Mausu'ah Al-Surat fi Al-Lughah Al-'Arabiyah by Emil Badi Yaqub, Bahsun Lugawi fi al-Faz al-Arabiyah by Najmuddin H. Abd Shafa, al-Qamus al-Muhit by Majdu al-Din Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Fairuz Abadi, Dictionary al-Adawat al-Nahwiyyah by Husain Sarhan.

Letter translation is an integral part of the effort to understand the meaning of text accurately and deeply. The translator must have an in-depth description of the base and target languages, and have sensitivity to the cultural and religious contexts that influence the use of letters and words. Likewise, in interpreting the Qur'an, scholars of tafsir use a variety of approaches, including historical, linguistic, and contextual contexts. The diversity of meanings of "و" becomes part of the complexity of the language of the Qur'an and demands deep interpreter skills to understand its meaning correctly.

Based on the background explanation above, it can be understood that the study of the letter wau is important to do because the letter wau can often be translated "or" or "and" based on the context, moreover the letter wau has many meanings so that when the letter wau comes out of its original meaning, it is often the cause of misinterpretation of the Qur'anic verse. So, it can be said that the "meaning of wawu" can help Arabic translators or learners to better understand the role and function of the letter "waw" in the context of the language, while the translation of the letter "waw" will be related to how the letter is interpreted or represented in the target language.

Research Method

This study seeks to reveal the various meanings of the letters wau used in several verses of the Qur'an through syntactic studies, namely a study of discourse, sentences, clauses and phrases. This research is a qualitative research that is descriptive using two types of data, namely primary data in the form of Qur'anic data while the secondary data consists of mufassir interpretations on Qur'anic verses that discuss the letters wau and other materials that have relevance to this study. Then the results of the data are processed by reducing the data as needed and then compiling it (display data) and verifying it so as to arrive at conclusions with emphasis on the meaning caused by the letter wau in the verse of the Qur'an.

Results and Discussion

The letter wau is the 27th letter in a series of hijaiyyah alphabets, according to the author of the book *mausuah al-Surat* mentions that the letter wau has several meanings (Yaqub, 1988). The same phrase was also put forward by Prof. Dr. Najmuddin H. Abd Shafa in his book, he revealed that there are 8 meanings of the letters wau (Shafa, 2015).

Wau letters are generally used to combine and combine words or word sequences with other words and sentences. This mixing is not significant if the beginning occurs/comes into being before the second, as in the word of Allah in QS. al-Furqan/25:35, The letter wau in the verse does not mean that the prophet Moses (as) was blessed with the book of God, namely the first Torah, followed by his brother, Aaron (as) was appointed a prophet to help Moses. The letters wau cannot all be interpreted with "and" because it has a variety of meanings and functions.

1.1. The Meaning and Function of Wau

1.1.1. Wau al-Qasam.

Qasam or oath is a form of confirmation used in the Qur'an (Shihab, 2015) Letters/words indicate that they are oaths i.e. letters: Wau, Ba, Ta, and the word Uqsimu. The letter wau is used as a tool for swearing which in Indonesian is interpreted "demi" as found in some suras of the Qur'an begins with the letter wau qasam, including: QS. al-Shaffat (*Wa al-Shaffat*; QS. al-Shaffat (Wa al-Shaffat; for the sake of the shaf-shaf entourage), QS. al-Najm (*Wa al-Najmi*; for the sake of the stars), QS. al-Mursalat (*Wa al-Mursalati*; for the sake of the angels who take life), QS. al-Buruj (*Wa al-Samai zatil buruj demi langit has clusters of stars*), QS. al-Thariq (*Wa al-Samai wa al-Thariq*; for the sake of the heavens that come at night), QS. al-Ashri (*wa al-Ashri*;

for the sake of Time), and so on. The author understands that the letter wau which functions as qasam (oath) is part of the letter jar so that the sentence after it must line up kasrah.

the existence of the oath is an important warning for us to think about as an example of God's oath in QS. al-Ashri, is to convince man that he is in a container of loss except to do four things namely faith in Allah, performing charity salih, advising each other in truth and patience. God chose to portray the loss with time instead of possessions or other sustenance because time is the main capital for man, he cannot return when he has passed. On the other hand, the existence of vows is also to strengthen conversations that can make the interlocutor believe him, because words that are strengthened by oaths are the same as being testified before God.

1.1.2. Wau al-Isti'naf.

Wau al-Isti'naf, is the letter wau which is at the beginning of a word or sentence so it is often also referred to as wau al-Ibtida' (beginning) because it is located at the beginning of the sentence, if the sentence after the letter does not have a direct relationship with the previous discourse either from the point of meaning or or from the aspect of i'rab/conjugation (Shafa, 2015), as in QS. al-Baqarah/2:8.

The letter wau in the phrase "waminnasi" is wau al-Isti'naf. This verse begins with a new talk by mentioning hypocrites where in the previous verse there are two groups of people namely believers and infidels, then in this verse is mentioned the third group that does not belong to the two groups mentioned earlier, so this verse has no connection with the previous verse and the wau at the beginning of the verse is wau al-Isti'naf or wau al-Ibtida'.

1.1.3. Wau al-Atf.

Waw 'atf is a letter that combines words. In the combined language method of ma'tuf (which is included) and ma'tuf 'alaihi (which is followed), both are subject to the same i'rab (Al-Gulayaini, n.d.). The merging of words between ma'tuf (who is included) and ma'tuf 'alaihi (who is followed) can be done in two ways, namely direct merging or called atfu al-Bayan, while merging with intermediaries is called atfu al-Nasaq (Al-Fauzani, n.d.). The use of the letter wau as an atf letter that combines the word in question can be observed in several verses in the Qur'an including QS. al-Furqan/25:35. The letter wau which functions to combine one word with another word is not absolute the first occurs before the second as in the verse above, the letter wau which means "and" does not mean that Moses (as) was blessed by Allah the Torah first and then followed by his brother Aaron (as). was appointed a prophet to help Moses (as).

1.1.4. Wau al-Hal

Wau hal is a letter used to describe the situation, which is present in the number of ismiyah as well as in the number of fi'liyah (Sarhan, 2007) as in the word of Allah in QS. Joseph/12:14, which informs us of his brothers' desire to take Joseph out to play in the pasture where they were shepherding and what happened to Joseph as described in QS. Joseph/12:14.

The letter wau between the words al-Dzi'bu and Nahnu is wau li al-Hal which describes the situation, while "nahnu" its position in i'rab is mutbada' while the word "usbatur" is as khabar (Al-Darwasi, n.d.). The above verse can be understood that Joseph's brothers gave confidence to his father who was worried about Joseph's safety until finally the father Ya'qub gave permission to Joseph's brothers to take him to play games in the shepherd's place in the desert.

1.1.5. Wau al-Samaniyah

Wau al-Samaniyah is the letter wau that appears after the number seven. The number seven is considered by the Arab community as the peak of the count which has a broad meaning, as in QS. al-Kahf/18:22. In the verse the number four flanks the number three, as well as the number six flanking the number five, both verses are not each inserted with the letter wau, this is different from the number eight that accompanies the number seven. It is inserted with the letters wau. This is also according to some scholars to be the reason why in QS. al-Zumar/39:71-73, when Allah describes the state of devout charcoal people who are ushered in heaven, Allah uses the letter wau but does not use it when talking about the inhabitants of hell (Shihab, 2015)

1.1.6. Wau Zaidah

Wau al-Ziyadah is one of the extra letters in the sentence for the purpose of the beauty of the language (Babti, n.d.). There are two kinds of additions, namely: (1). The additional letters come from the word itself as found in tasrif books. (2). An additional letter located between two words, whether the letter is connected to one of them or separated (Harun, 2017). The Mufassir debated the existence of the letters al-Ziyadah in the Qur'an because of the impression that the Qur'an had shortcomings so that there must be al-Ziyadah. Nevertheless, the mufassir referred to al-Ziyadah with the term Shilah as part of the custom of courtesy towards the Qur'an (M. Quraish Shihab, 2015:107). The use of the letter wau which is categorized as the letter Zaidah in the Qur'an can be observed in several verses in the Qur'an including in QS. al-Zumar/39:73.

The letter wau in the word "*wafutihat*" is a zaidah letter in the opinion of kufa scholars, the existence of this letter wau when talking about the inhabitants of heaven implies that the inhabitants of heaven are so revered that the doors of heaven have opened before they came, in contrast to the inhabitants of hell who are treated like criminals the gates of hell are opened after they arrive and then closed again after they enter (Al-Darwasi, n.d.).

1.1.7. Wau Which Means al-Ikhtiyar

There is a wau that functions to select one of the items mentioned, so it means "or" instead of "and". Indicators of the cause of the letter wau meaning Aw need more in-depth study because its meaning can have implications in understanding Qur'anic verses. The letter wau can mean aw (ikhtiyar), which means "or" (choice) if the discussion falls into the categories of things that are al-Ikhtiyar (choice), things that are al-Ibahah (something that is permissible), and things that are al-Taqsim (division) (Abadi, Majdu al-Din Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Fairuz, 2008). It will be explained in detail in the following discussion:

a. Things that are indeed optional

Combining one word / word arrangement with another word / sentence by using the letter wau in the subject matter that is a choice, then the letter wau means aw or ikhtiyar (choice), not means al-Jam'u (collection). The use of the letter wau which means aw or ikhtiyar can be observed in several verses of the Qur'an including in QS. al-Baqarah/2:98. The letter wau which is the connection between sentences (*wa malai katihu wa rusuluhi wa Jibrila wa Mikala*) in the verse means Aw (ikhtiyar) or choice not addition (Abi Muhammad al-Husain ibn Mas'ud al-Bagawi: 125). So that verse can be understood that whoever is hostile to one of His angels, or one of His apostles, or Gabriel or Michael is hostile to God and will lead him to destruction. Al-Zamakhshari gives a similar explanation, that whoever is hostile to one of them is like he is hostile to all because of the corruption of his creed (Al-Syamakhsyari, n.d.). The verse explains two generally accepted natures: (1). That God is no differentiating between His apostles and angels. Trust, love and obedience to them is a package. Those who are hostile to them, become enemies of God. (2). That the sanction that violates not only the Jew, but anyone who disbelieves and is hostile to him or hostile to one of his angels and beings who obey him.

b. Things of al-Ibahah nature

One of the factors that causes the letter wau which means *al-Jam'u* (Addition), can mean aw al-Ikhtiyar (Choice), namely if the discussion is on the concept of al-

Ibahah (something permissible), as in QS. al-Nisa/3:3. The letter wau between the words *masna'* and *sulasa'* and *ruba'* is the letter atf which means ikhtiyar (Choice), not *li al-Jam'i* (add). This opinion is corroborated by analyzing the use of the words *masna'* *sulasa'* and *ruba'*, in the verse does not use the words *isnatain*, *salasan*, *arbaan*. So it can be understood that the letter wau which connects one word with another in this verse means choice (Al-Mutawalli, 2002). This opinion is also reinforced by the case of Qais ibn al-Haris, who had eight wives and at the time of embracing Islam, the Prophet (peace be upon him), told him to choose four wives and separate others. Another opinion is put forward by al-Qurtubi in his tafsir that the letter wau in the verse means badal (substitute), with the understanding that marrying three wives is badal (substitute) rather than two wives and marrying four wives is badal (substitute) of three. Thus it can be understood that the presence of the letter wau in the verse does not mean wau *li Mutlaq al-Jam'i* (adding) but means *badal*/substitute (Al-Qurtubi, n.d.). The same opinion was also expressed by Taba'tabai in his tafsir by explaining that the sentences *masna'* *sulasa'* and *ruba'* have two opinions, namely: (1). The letter wau in the sentence means choice so that it implies the meaning between choosing two, three or four wives. (2). The letter wau contained in the sentence means number so that its meaning implies the ability of a person to marry up to Nine wives because two plus three, plus four add nine but he then refuted the second argument by saying That mindset is wrong because if we say "a people enters a country with two, two, three, four, four, then it does not mean gathering, but it is a choice and being fair is a condition of polygamy (Taba'tabai, 1991).

c. Matters that discuss Division

One of the factors causing the letter wau which is translated (and), can mean aw (choice), if the discussion is about division, so that in understanding the letter wau which functions to connect from one word to another and is translated with "or" (choice) instead of "and" which means addition. This can be observed in QS. al-Tawbah/9:60. The letter wau in the verse mentioned above means aw (or), not *wau li al-Jam'i* (Gathering) or commonly interpreted as "and", so it can be understood that zakat is only for the faqir or the poor and other groups mentioned in the verse (M. Quraish Shihab, 84). Thus we can understand that the distribution of zakat does not have to be given all to the eight groups that are just categorized as issuing zakat, but can be chosen while still referring to the priority scale, because the purpose of zakat is not to give people a few rupiah but to provide a decent level of living to them. The use of the letter jar lam in the first six groups and the letter

fi in the last two groups of zakat recipients indicates that the eight groups are zakat recipients. The use of the letter jar lam in the six groups is those who receive zakat directly and become their personal property, namely poor faqir, amil, people who bear debts, converts and travelers, while the use of the letter fi in the last two groups, namely groups that receive zakat for public interest, this group is in the form of agencies and bodies consisting of: *fi al-Riqab*, namely efforts to free slaves and *fi sabilillah*, i.e. all religious interests of a general nature (Agama, n.d.).

1.2. Implications of Wau's Translation in the Interpretation of the Qur'an.

It is undeniable that the diversity of meanings of letters, words, and their position in Arabic grammar is the cause of different interpretations of Qur'anic verses. The existence of the letter wau in several verses in the Qur'an which means aw opens up a new discourse in the understanding of Qur'anic verses as in one case in the distribution of zakat. A person can issue zakat through the institution of amil zakat but can also issue his zakat by giving directly to one of his *mustahiq* as stated in QS. al-Tawbah/9:60. When it is understood that the letter wau in the verse means aw (ikhtiyar) choice means that we can choose one of the eight groups (al-Asnaf al-Samaniyah) based on a priority scale, instead of giving all the newly mentioned groups categorized as issuing zakat. Likewise with the use of the letter wau found in QS. al-Nisa/3:3. The use of the letter wau which is between the words *masna'* and *sulasa'* and *ruba'* is a letter that in Arabic grammar is called the letter *atf li al-Nusaq* which means ikhtiyar (Choice), not *li al-Jam'i* (add). This argument is strengthened by the analysis of the use of the words *masna' sulasa'* and *ruba'*, in the verse does not use the words *isnatain*, *salasan*, *arbaan*. So it can be understood that the letter wau which is a connection between one word and another in this verse means ikhtiyar (Choice). So that its existence cannot be used as legality to add more than four wives, in contrast to the use of numbers three and seven which number ten with the use of the words *salasah* instead of *sulasa* and *sab'ah* instead of *suba'* in QS. al-Baqarah/2:196.

Furthermore, the existence of the letter wau which functions as wau qasam or oath is an important warning for us to think about as exemplified by Allah in QS. al-Ashri, this oath aims to convince the believer that he is in a container of loss except for those who do four things, namely: giving thanks to Allah, performing shaleh deeds, advising each other in truth and patience. God chose to describe the loss with time instead of possessions or other sustenance because time is man's main capital, he cannot return when he has passed. On the other hand, the existence

of vows is also to strengthen conversations that can make the interlocutor believe them, because talks that are strengthened by oaths mean that they have been witnessed before God.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the use of the letter waw in several verses of the Qur'an has a variety of meanings including: as waw qasam (oath), waw isti'naf or known as waw ibtida' (beginning), waw atf which functions to combine two words, waw hal which functions to draw circumstances, waw al-Samaniyah which is the letter wau that appears after the number seven, waw al-Zaidah which is an additional letter in the sentence with the aim of the beauty of language, and the letter waw which means Ikhtiyar (choice). The diversity of meanings of the letters wau in several verses of the Qur'an also has implications in adding new horizons and enriching the meaning of Qur'anic verses.

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