

## **The Interpretation of *Qalam* in the Quran as a Foundation of Scientific and Technological Progress**

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**Abstract:** *The word of qalam in the Quran is mentioned very limited, it is only mentioned four times. In everyday life, the word of qalam is known as a pen or a writing tools, even though if the word is analyzed even further will not have as simple meaning as that. This research tend to analyze the word of qalam in the Quran comprehensively by finding out the signs of the words in some verses of the Quran with semiotics approachment. In this case, the author will utilize the semiotic theory of Ferdinand D Saussure that is binary opposition consist of signifier–signified, langue–parole, synchronic–diachronic and syntagmatic–paradigmatic to reveal the meaning of the word of qalam in the Quran as a sign. This research is a library research with a qualitative content analysis that analyze a message of a media as an object of the research. The result of the analysis declare that the word of qalam is not only a pen or a writing tools by meaning, but also a pen use by the angels to write down the destiny, a pen of the knowledge or the tools of knowledge including the modern tools, the pen as a comparison of the ability of human beings and the mighty of God, and a pen as a media of lottery or as arrows. This kind of research must be developed recently to prove that the Quran is in line with the development of times, sciences and civilization.*

**Keywords:** *Al-Quran, Qalam, Saussure, Semiotics, Technology.*

**Abstrak:** *Kata qalam dalam Al-Quran disebutkan sangat terbatas, hanya disebutkan empat kali. Dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, kata qalam dikenal sebagai pena atau alat tulis, padahal jika kata tersebut dianalisis lebih jauh tidak akan memiliki makna sederhana itu. Penelitian ini cenderung menganalisis kata qalam dalam Al-Quran secara komprehensif dengan mengetahui tanda-tanda kata dalam beberapa ayat Al-Quran dengan pendekatan semiotika. Dalam hal ini, penulis akan menggunakan teori semiotik Ferdinand D Saussure yaitu oposisi biner yang terdiri dari signifier–signified, langue–parole, synchronic–diachronic dan syntagmatic–paradigmatic untuk mengungkapkan makna kata qalam dalam Al-Quran sebagai tanda. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan dengan analisis isi kualitatif yang menganalisis suatu pesan suatu media sebagai objek penelitian. Hasil analisis menyatakan bahwa kata qalam bukan hanya pena atau alat tulis dengan makna, tetapi juga penggunaan pena oleh para malaikat untuk menuliskan takdir, pena pengetahuan atau alat-alat pengetahuan termasuk alat-alat modern, pena sebagai perbandingan kemampuan manusia dan*

*perkasanya Tuhan, dan pena sebagai media lotere atau sebagai panah. Penelitian semacam ini harus dikembangkan baru-baru ini untuk membuktikan bahwa Al-Quran sejalan dengan perkembangan zaman, ilmu pengetahuan dan peradaban.*

**Kata kunci:** *Al-Quran, Qalam, Saussure, Semiotika, Teknologi.*

## INTRODUCTION

In the Koran, the word of *qalām* in the form of *mufrad* (singular) is mentioned only twice, namely in *QS al-Qalām* [68]:1 and *QS al-A'laq* [96]:4, while in the *jama'* form (plural) *aqlāman* is also mentioned twice in the Koran namely in *QS. Luqmān* [31]:27 and *QS. Ali Imran* [3]:44.<sup>1</sup> If we refer to the official translation of the Koran published by the Ministry of Religion of Indonesia, then the word of *qalam* literally means pen, and the word *Aqlāman* also means pen in different contexts. In everyday language, *qalam* understood by the public with a pen or a tool used to write, but this simple meaning is limited if it is applied to understand the word of *qalam* in the Koran. The lack of the word of *qalam* mentioned in the Koran results in limited objects of discussion to deepen one's understanding of the word *qalam* as a whole.

The classical islamic scholars returned all of these understandings to the explanation and interpretation of the prophet Muhammad Saw and his companions. Some people among them mentioned that the pen (*qalam*) was the first creature created by Allah Swt before the creation of everything. After creating the pen, Allah Swt ordered the pen to write the provisions of all things until the Day of Resurrection. Abdullah bin Abbas Ra mentioned that the Messenger of God Saw said: indeed the first creature created by God was the pen (*qalam*) and *Hūt* and God said to the pen to write, he replied: what I write, Allah Swt said: the provision of everything that exists until the Day of Judgment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fuād Abdul Bāqi, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufaḥras li Alfaz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Kairo, Mesir: Dar al-Kutub al-Mishriah, 1364).

<sup>2</sup> Abu Al-Fidā' Ismā'il bin Kāsir ad-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-A'zim*, Cetakan Pertama (Beirut, Libanon: Dār Ibnu Ḥazam, 2000), 1902.

The contemporary Islamic scholars begin to contextualize the interpretation of the word of *qalam* in accordance with the conditions of modern society. Hamka in his commentary explains that the mention of the word of *qalam* in the Koran has a great symbolical significance, namely the importance of knowledge transmitted from one to another through a simple tool, one of which is the tradition of writing with *qalam* (pen).<sup>3</sup> This raises scientific anxiety about the meaning of the word of *qalam*, whether *qalam* is a creature created by Allah Swt as the author of the destiny of the universe or does *qalam* have a meaning as understood by society today, namely a writing instrument. so the mention of the word of *qalam* in the Koran is to explain the great symbolical significance behind the word.

As far as the author searches, the study of the word of *qalam* in the Koran does not really attract the interest of academics, researchers, and experts in Islamic studies, the study of *qalam* is only discussed in outline in the books of classical and contemporary commentaries in brief, this is due to limitations of the object of study and no method has been found that can be used to analyze the limited data comprehensively. But nowadays, Islamic studies experts have developed various methods and approaches, which are able to open new perspectives to expand the scope of Islamic studies. So that these methods and approaches make it possible to be applied to the process of understanding the Koran or interpretation in order to produce a deep and comprehensive understanding, and in accordance with the times and modern science.

Among these methods and approaches is the semiotics approach, which is a branch of science that discusses signs, starting from the sign system, to the

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<sup>3</sup> Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah, *Tafsir al-Azhar* (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, n.d.), jilid, 10, 7565.

processes that apply to the use of signs<sup>4</sup>, semiotics comes from the word *seme* such as the word *semeiotikos* which means the interpreter of signs, some say that semiotics comes from the word of *semeion* which means sign<sup>5</sup>, based on that, semiotics is often referred to a study of signs, where social and cultural phenomena are considered as a collection of signs. In other words, semiotics is a science that examines the role of signs as part of social life.<sup>6</sup> Among the initiators of semiotics, Ferdinand De Saussure<sup>7</sup>, who is known as the father of semiotics<sup>8</sup>, who initiated the theory of signs by carrying out binary oppositions, namely *signifier* and *signified*, *langue* and *parole*, *diachronic* and *synchronic*, *syntagmatic* and *paradigmatic*. In order to answer the various scientific problems above, the author will try to interpreting the word of *qalam* from a different point of view, namely by using the semiotic approach of Ferdinand De Saussure, in order to be able to provide a new, more comprehensive understanding of Qalam with all the limitations of the discussion's object.

## METHOD

This research is a library research using qualitative content analysis method and Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic approach. Qualitative content analysis is a research that seeks to identify the message of a media as an object of research, this study analyzes in depth and comprehensively the content of written or printed information in mass media, or writes symbols or messages systematically<sup>9</sup>. Based on this, the author analyzes the word of qalam as a sign in the Qur'an by referring to the books of variations of the word or meaning of lafaz (*Mu'jam al-Mufahras li alfāz al-Qur'ān*), collects the verses containing the word of qalam in it and clarifies it with the commentary of experts in the books of interpretation of the Qur'an, both classical and contemporary as a written sources. Then analyze the

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<sup>4</sup> Ambarini AS and Nazia Maharani Umayya, *Semiotika Teori Dan Aplikasi Pada Karya Sastra* (Semarang: IKIP PGRI Semarang Press, 2012), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Dony Burhan Noor Hasan, "Kajian Semiotika Dalam Penafsiran al-Quran," *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Bahasa Arab II*, Oktober 2016, 550.

<sup>6</sup> Ferdinand De Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (London: Duckworth, 1990), 15.

<sup>7</sup> Selanjutnya disebut Saussure.

<sup>8</sup> Fajriannoor Fanani, "Semiotika Strukturalisme Saussure," *Jurnal The Messenger* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): h. 10, <https://doi.org/10.26623/themessenger.v5i1.149>.

<sup>9</sup> Nurun Nisaa Baihaqi, "Makna Salām dalam Al-Quran" 1, no. 1 (2021): 4.

meaning of the word of qalam using Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic approach which consists of signifier and signified , langue and parole, synchronic-diachronic and syntagmatic-paradigmatic.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Interpretation of the word of *Qalam* with Saussure's Semiotics Approach**

Mongin Ferdinand De Saussure was born in Geneva in 1857 AD, he was a great scholar of the 20th century, who contributed not only to linguistics but also to other disciplines, Saussure studied Sanskrit and comparative linguistics in his hometown, then continued his studies in Paris and Leipzig from 1875-1876, he mastered various languages such as Latin, Greek, German, English, and studied chemistry, physics, theology and law. At the age of 23, Saussure earned his Doctorate from the University of Leipzig Germany, teaching at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes from 1881-1891, after which he returned to Geneva to teach at his former university. At the end of the year 1906, he was asked to tutor general linguistics, history and comparative Indo-Europa languages<sup>10</sup>.

Saussure is known as the founder of the science that studies signs or semiotics, although Saussure himself called it semiology , apart from giving birth to semiotics, he is also known as the father of modern linguistics, which reorganized the study of language systematically. not only in the disciplines of language and literature but also in other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, music and film, architecture and advertising, Saussure saw the meaning of a sign as relational to other signs, one of the most important relations

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<sup>10</sup> Didi Sukyadi, "Dampak Pemikiran Saussure Bagi Perkembangan Linguistik dan Disiplin Ilmu Lainnya," *Parole* 3, no. 2 (Oktober 2013): 2.

in Saussure's view is binary opposition such as signified-signifier, synchronic-diacrmonic, langue-parole, syntagmatic-paradigmatic<sup>11</sup>.

### **Sign, Signifier, Signified**

The word *qalam* is a sign ( *sign* ), if we discuss it through the semiotic perspective of Ferdinand De Saussure, the *sign* consists of a *signifier* and a *signified*, a *sign* is a material aspect either in the form of a sign, sound, shape, image or motion<sup>12</sup>, a sign consists of a *signifier* which refers to the physical appearance of a sign which can be in the form of a drawing, line, color or sound or other signs, while the *signified* refers to the meaning Embedded in the physical appearance of a sign. According to Saussure, the sign is *arbitrary* where the combination of the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, there is no natural relationship between the two, and there is no particular reason why an object is named according to its name. Every word can replace the name of an object if it has been accepted by the consensus or agreement of a group or society, even according to Saussure, expressions that exist and develop and are understood in society are the result of collective behavior or mutual agreement<sup>13</sup>.

When we discuss the word of *qalam*, it can be understood that the word contains a *signifier* and a *signified*. When anybody heard the word of *qalam*, the sound, the voice and the letters within the words of *qa-la-ma* itself is a sign (signifier) and the sign will create a meaning or concept that is immediately present in a person's mind about an object that is used as a tool for writing or the form of a writing instrument, namely a pen, then this is what is called a *signified*. If it is returned to the word of *qalam* in the Koran, in QS. Al-Qalam [68]:1, which reads:

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

Meaning: Nun. For the sake **of pens** and what they write

<sup>11</sup> Sukyadi, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Fanani, "Semiotika Strukturalisme Saussure," 118.

<sup>13</sup> Fanani, "Semiotika Strukturalisme Saussure."

Then the word *al-Qalam* becomes a *signifier* and one's understanding of the word of *al-Qalam* with a tool used for writing is a *signified*. Likewise in QS al-A'laq [96]: 4 as follows:

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

Meaning: Who teaches (humans) with **a pen**.

In the verse above there is also a sign consisting of a *signifier* and *signified*. The sign at the end of the verse, has the same shape as the verse discussed earlier, namely *al-qalam*, the word *al-qalam* is a *signifier*, while the concept that appears in the human mind when seeing the *signifier* namely the word *al-qalam* is a *signified*. The concept behind the word, based on the consensus of a community group is a single word, which comes from Arabic and has the meaning of a pen or a tool used to write something.

In QS. Luqman [31]:27 Allah says:

وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَمٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Meaning: And if whatever trees upon the earth **were pens** and the sea [was ink], replenished thereafter by seven [more] seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

In the verse above there is also a sign that is the main discussion in this article, namely the word *aqlāmun*, the word functions as a *signifier* and the concept that arises in one's mind about the word is called a *signified*. The concept behind the word is a plural word which comes from Arabic that is interpreted by the Indonesian people with several pens or several tools used to write something. Likewise in QS. Ali Imran [3]:44 Allah Swt says:

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُنْفِقُونَ أَقْلَامَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرِيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ

Meaning: That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. And you were not with them when they cast **their pens** as to

which of them should be responsible for Mary. Nor were you with them when they disputed.

In the verse above there is also a sign of the same shape, namely *aqlāmūn*, which also has the same meaning as the previous verses, but the concept of the word *aqlāmūn* in QS. Ali ʿImrān [3]: 44 according to community agreement has a different context where the word *aqlāmūn* which means pens in the verse is not used to write, but to do a lottery, the name chosen with the pen will win the lottery.

With a method like this, it can be understood that the meaning of the word of *qalam* in the verse is a tool used to write something, and the writing utensil was sometimes used by ancient people to do a lottery, but is the writing utensil the same as the writing utensil that has been used for a long time? This is understood collectively by the community consensus, of course it cannot be equated, because between the signifier and the signified are arbitrary and do not have a natural relationship between one and another, and the understanding of the word can be replaced with other words according to community consensus, in this case the understanding of this word namely *al-qalam*, can be based on the consensus of experts in the interpretation of the Koran both classical and contemporary, and will be discussed further in this paper using the next method of Saussure's semiotics Approach.

### **Langue and Parole**

The next binary opposition expressed by Saussure is the concept of *Langue* and *Parole*. *Langue* is a systematic and abstract system of a language that without it, the utterance named *Parole* cannot be produced. *Langue* represents the result of shared thinking that can be internal to each individual or collective because it is beyond the reach of an individual's ability to change it<sup>14</sup>. *Langue* is also a system of a language in which each individual assimilates the language he hears, becomes a unit in a collectively legitimized system, and is a concept that can be accepted by the community and is ready to be used from the

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<sup>14</sup> Sukyadi, "Dampak Pemikiran Saussure Bagi Perkembangan Linguistik dan Disiplin Ilmu Lainnya," 3.



predecessors<sup>15</sup>. While *parole* is the speech of each individual who becomes a unified system that forms collective norms in the midst of society<sup>16</sup>. *Parole* is also the embodiment of actions, statements and language utterances of an individual through a combination of the concepts and sounds that represent them. The grammar contained in books or dictionaries, are *langue*, while the speech or writing that we produce when communicating verbally or non-verbally which may contain errors, repetition or simplification is *parole*. Thus, according to Saussure, linguistic studies will include *Parole* which focuses on individual utterances, and *Langue* which focuses on the linguistic system of the language itself<sup>17</sup>.

To discuss the word of *qalam* in the Koran using the *Langue* concept, the first thing that must be done is to re-understand the basic meaning of the word of *qalam* which was mutually agreed upon by the Arabs in the 7th century, while with the *Parole concept*, the author will try to collect individual utterances regarding the interpretation of the word of *qalam*, especially individual interpretations that have existed since the 7th century AD. In order to make it possible to analyze each speech which is then used as the legitimacy of the interpretation of the word *qalam* that is collectively agreed by the community and accepted as a understanding language that can be passed down from time to time until now. And also deepen the analysis with the existing utterances about the interpretation of the word of *qalam* in modern times. So, the development of the meaning of the word of *qalam* from classical to modern times can be understood.

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<sup>15</sup> M Dani Habibi, "Interpretasi Semiotika Ferdinand De Saussure dalam Hadis Liwa dan Rayah," *Mashdar: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 1, no. 2 (December 12, 2019): 122, <https://doi.org/10.15548/mashdar.v1i2.612>.

<sup>16</sup> De Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 25.

<sup>17</sup> Sukyadi, "Dampak Pemikiran Saussure Bagi Perkembangan Linguistik dan Disiplin Ilmu Lainnya," 3.

To trace the *langue* of the word of *qalam*, the author refers to one of the oldest Arabic dictionaries of *Lisān al-A'rab*, in that dictionary the word of *qalam* has four basic meanings, (1) *qalam* which means the tool used to write, in the plural form called *Aqlāmūn* and *qilāmūn* as mentioned in QS. al-Qalam [68]:1 , QS. al-A'laq [96]:4 and QS. Luqmān [31]:27, (2) *Qalam* means *az-Zulam* and *as-Sahm* which means arrow, and the plural form *Aqlāmūn*, as mentioned in QS. A'li I'mrān [3]:44, the word *Aqlāmuhum* in the verse means *Sihāmuhum*, meaning that at the time of the prophet Zakaria As, they used arrows to draw a lot about who would be given the responsibility to raise Maryam, according to az-Zajjāj the word *Aqlāmūn* here means *al-Qidāh* which means the glass used to vote who will be responsible for nurturing Mary, the arrow is called *qalam* because it is sharpened (*yuqlam*) while the pen is called *qalam*, because it is always sharpened and cut little by little, (3) *qalam* means *al-Jalam*, cutting tools or scissors, (4) *al-Qalamah* or *Muqallama*, meaning alone, single, has no partner or no one to look after and care for him, widow<sup>18</sup>.

This means that the meaning of the word of *qalam* with a pen or arrow has become a collectively agreed *langue* since ancient times, this indicates that the meaning of the word of *qalam* in QS. al-Qalam [68]:1 , QS. al-A'laq [96]:4 and QS. Luqmān [31]:27 with a pen or a tool used to write is not something wrong, as well as the meaning of the word *Aqlāmūn* with pens or arrows used to make a lottery in QS. A'li I'mran [3]:4, but interpreting something only with the basic meaning will certainly limit one's reasoning to understand these verses more deeply and comprehensively, but by seeking and analyzing *paroles* or utterances as well as the opinions and understandings of the people in classical and modern times regarding the word, one will find other data, as additional objects that will explain more deeply the meaning and intent of the word of *qalam*. So, by using that various data, a new meaning that can be agreed collectively by the community or also called by Saussure with *langue* can be comprehended comprehensively.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibnu Manzūr, *Lisān al-A'rab* (Kairo, Mesir: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), jilid. 5, 3729.

*Parole* is the speech of each individual that makes up *Langue*, among the individual speeches about the word of *qalam* comes from Abdullah bin Abbas Ra, he said, the first thing created by Allah Swt was the *qalam* (pen) and then He said: write, the *qalam* said: what I write, He said: write down all the provisions, then everything will go on from that day until the Day of Resurrection. Likewise from Abu Hurairah Ra said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: verily the beginning of anything created by God is the *qalam* (pen), then creating *Nun* and he was the ink, then he was ordered to write, the pen said: what do I write, God said: write everything in the form of charity, sustenance or death, then he wrote all those things until the Day of Judgment, then He sealed the *pen* until he will not speak again to the day of judgment<sup>19</sup>.

Imam Abu Zaid as-Ša'lābi mentions two opinions in his book of commentary, *first*, the pen was created by God to write everything but all the writing actions are done by angels, *second*, the pen means pen as it is generally known, and God Swt swears by the *pen* as a form of respect with all forms of writing activities and the collection of knowledge that includes the affairs of the world and the hereafter<sup>20</sup>. by collecting *the paroles* that exist, it can be said that the individual understanding of the community about the word of *qalam* is not the same, but this still refers to the *Langue* which has been legitimized before with the meaning of pen, writing instrument, etc., but the understanding of the word *Qalam* in QS. al-Qalam [68]:1 , QS. al-A'laq [96]:4 and QS. Luqmān [31]:27 has become clearer, with some opinions or speech or individual utterance (*Parole*) from classical exegetes as mentioned earlier.

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<sup>19</sup> ad-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-A'zim*, 1902.

<sup>20</sup> Abu Zaid Al-Tsa'laby, *Jawahir Al-Hisan Fi Tafsir al-Quran* (Beirut, Libanon: Dar Ihya al-Turast al-Araby, 1998), jilid. 5, 463.

Meanwhile, according to the perspective of modern-day, Islamic studies experts's opinions are also part of personal speech (*Parole*). Quraish Shihab said that the word of *qalam* is understood in a narrow sense, namely a certain type of pen and there is also understood in general, namely any writing utensil, even a computer or tool. other sophisticated writers, who understand the word in a narrow sense tend to say that its meaning is the pen used by the angels to write good and bad destiny, as well as all good and bad events which are all recorded in *the lauh mahfūz*, or the pen used by the angels to record the good and bad deeds of humans, or the pens of the companions of the prophet who wrote verses of the Koran, but according to him, understanding the word in general is more correct<sup>21</sup>.

### **Synchronic and Diachronic**

One of the semiotic methods described by Saussure is *Synchronic* and *diachronic*, *synchronic* is the study of language systems under certain conditions regardless of time, while *diachronic* is the study of language evolution over time<sup>22</sup>, communication system that existed in a certain period of time. While the diachronic approach seeks to investigate the history of language, the relationship between languages, and reconstruct the lost language. Historical linguistics and philology is one of the branches of linguistics with a diachronic approach. Synchronic analysis is also characterized by simultaneous, statistical, the time is instant, the study of relations in a system, the analysis is centralized, and is paradigmatic, while the diachronic analysis is consecutive, evolutionary, uses a historical point of view, conducts a study of relations over time, and focuses on The self in development, and is syntagmatic<sup>23</sup>. Synchronic can also be called an analysis of works or contemporaries, while diachronic analyzes works and signs in their historical development<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāḥ, Pesan Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Quran* (Ciputat, Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2005), vol. 14, 379.

<sup>22</sup> Fanani, "Semiotika Strukturalisme Saussure," 13.

<sup>23</sup> Sukyadi, "Dampak Pemikiran Saussure Bagi Perkembangan Linguistik dan Disiplin Ilmu Lainnya," 4.

<sup>24</sup> AS and Maharani Umay, *Semiotika Teori Dan Aplikasi Pada Karya Sastra*, 88.

The word of *qalam* in the Koran which is a sign, can be understood synchronically or diachronically, when analyzing the word of *qalam* in the Koran with synchronic analysis, the author will explain the meaning of the word which was understood by the Arab community at the time of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, or in In the early days of the revelation of the Koran, the word *qalam* in the early days of Islam was understood by the companions in three forms of understanding, (1) the word *qalam* is interpreted as a creature created by Allah SWT to write down all the provisions of creatures until the Day of Judgment, (2) the word *qalam* understood with a writing instrument used by the angels to write down all the will of God, including to record the good and bad deeds done by humans, (3) the word *qalam* is understood as a tool for writing as one of the processes that encourage the development of science to this day, then Allah swt swears by *qalam* which indicates the magnitude of the significance obtained from the writing process in the form of benefits and goodness for all creatures.

But if we look at the development of the word of *qalam* or the transformation of meaning over time diachronically, the word of *qalam* is no longer understood as a pen of destiny created by God since time immemorial, but contemporary interpretation experts focus their understanding more on the significance behind the oath of Allah Swt with that word, because Allah does not swear by something unless there is a big secret behind the oath, Muhammad Mutawalli as-Sya'rawy in his interpretation said that the religion of Islam is exalted one of them through pen, ink, writing and reading, therefore Allah Swt singled out a letter named *al-Qalam*, also called *Nun* , which means the ink or dawat used by writers to produce their works<sup>25</sup>. as well as Hamka, after quoting at length the opinions of classical commentators on the interpretation of the word of

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<sup>25</sup> Muhammad Mutawalli As-Sya'rāwy, *Tafsīr As-Sya'rāwy* (Kairo, Mesir: Dār Ikhbār al-Yaum, 1991), 16171.

*qalam*, he said that the pen, ink and work produced of the two tools is a very important item for human civilization, which supports the growth of knowledge that has no limits, Allah swt swears by the pen and swears by what is produced because the pen shows how important the pen is, how important the ink is, and how the importance of what they produce with the pen is knowledge<sup>26</sup>.

### **Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic**

A sign cannot be understood individually, but can be understood by looking at the relationship and combination of one sign with another sign, in this case Saussure puts forward syntagmatic and paradigmatic theories, *syntagmatic* relations are relations between components in the same structure<sup>27</sup>. syntagmatic is also the same thing which can be compared with something else, which can determine the value of the sign, horizontal syntagmatic relationship, the relationship between this and this and this, the syntagmatic relationship refers to the intertextual relation of what is both present in a text. While the *paradigmatic* is about the substitution, the relation which is vertical, as well as the relationship between this or this or this, the paradigmatic relationship also refers to the intertextual with other signs from outside the text<sup>28</sup>.

In understanding the word *qalam* in the Koran, when we look at the relationship between the existing phonemes of the word such as *qa-la-ma*, the relationship of the three phonemes produces a sign whose meaning can be understood by everyone who sees or listens. a sign, when one or the three phonemes are replaced with other phonemes it will produce different signs and meanings or even have no meaning at all, this is what is called a syntagmatic relationship. With the relationship between the three *qa-la-ma* phonemes, a sign is created and can be understood that the meaning of the sign is a pen commonly used to write, or writing utensils. If we connect the word *qa-la-ma* with other

<sup>26</sup> Amrullah, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, jilid. 10, 7566.

<sup>27</sup> Fadhli Lukman, "Pendekatan Semiotika Dan Penerapannya Dalam Teori Asma' Al-Quran," *Religia* 18, no. 2 (Oktober 2015): 219.

<sup>28</sup> Dian Riski Amalia et al., "Linguistik Perspektif Ferdinand De Saussure dab Ibnu Jinni," *Al-Fathin* 2, no. 1 (July 2019): 172.

words that come from outside the word, then will sharpen our understanding of a sign earlier, as in QS. Luqmān [31]:27:

ن - وَ - الْقَلَمِ - وَ - مَا - يَسْطُرُونَ

When the words of the verse, which have been arranged in such a way, are understood one by one and linked together syntagmatically, a combination of sentences will be created whose meaning can deepen our understanding of the word of *qalam* contained in the verse, the letter *al - Wāwu* in the verse in Arabic is the letter of *qasam* (oath) and the letter is accompanied by words that will deepen the meaning of the verse, this shows that Allah swears by using word of *qalam* (pen) and what is written by the pen, which showing a very important significance behind the mention of the writing instrument and the result of the writing, namely science and knowledge, Imam al-Bayḍawī in his commentary said that Allah swt swears by the pen because of many benefits that lie behind the use of the stationery, as well as what is written with the writing instrument<sup>29</sup>. Manna' al-Qaṭṭān in his book says that Allah Swt swearing by some of his creatures is a sign of the greatness and majesty of the verse or a sign, and things like this are very much in the Koran<sup>30</sup>.

In QS. Al-A'laq [96]: 4 can be comprehended syntagmatically like:

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

The sentence above consists of three sets of words that are syntagmatically connected, the word of *qalam* which is at the end of the sentence, as previously discussed has the meaning of a pen or writing instrument, but when this word is understood by paying attention to the syntagmatic connection between one word and another word, then will produce a deep understanding of

<sup>29</sup> Naṣiruddīn as-Syīrāzī al-Baiḍāwī, *Tafsīr al-Baiḍāwī, Anwār at-Tanzīl wa Asrār at-Ta'wīl*, cetakan pertama (Beirut, Libanon: Dār Ihya' at-Turāṣ al-A'rābī, 1997), 233.

<sup>30</sup> Manna' al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabahis Fi Ulum Al-Quran* (Dar al-Rasyīd, n.d.), 292.

the meaning, al-Qurṭūby said that the verse means that God teaches people to write with a pen, he expressed the opinion of a *tabi'in* named Qatādah, he said that a pen is a very great blessing from God, if not because of that, religion will not stand, and life will not be peaceful. Because Allah Swt taught his servants what they did not know so that it saved them from the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge, and he reminded them about the importance of writing that all the benefits and goodness in it will not be perfect if there is no pen, knowledge is not will be written and printed, even holy books<sup>31</sup>.

Likewise with QS. Luqmān [31]:27 if analyzed syntagmatically will clarify the meaning of the word of *qalam* in those verses, the word *aqlāmūn* in QS. Luqmān [31]:27 is the plural form of the word *qalam*, Sayyid Quthub in his interpretation says that the verse is a picture of God's wealth that will never run out and His knowledge that has no limits, God gives a very great picture in that verse, which can be imagined by human reason how great and rich God Swt is. God describes it with a pen whose ability to write is beyond the limits of human imagination, even though God uses a branch of wood as a pen, seven seas as ink, to write God's words, it will never be enough<sup>32</sup>.

The word *aqlāmūn* in QS. A'li I'mrān [3]:44 also has the same meaning synchronically, namely a pen in the singular form and several pens in the plural form, but if analyzed by looking at the connection of meaning between one word and another word, in other words syntagmatically, then will see a different concept and context, according to Imam al-Khāzin in his interpretation said that the pens they use to write are used as arrows that are thrown into the water to cast lots, who has the right to nurture Maryam bint Imran, according to him there are several reasons why they fight each other to raise Maryam, *firstly*, because Maryam is the daughter of Imran who is their leader, so they fight to raise her

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<sup>31</sup> Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurṭūbi, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām al-Qur'an* (Beirut, Libanon: Muassasah al-Risalah, 2006), jilid. 22, 377.

<sup>32</sup> Sayyid Quthub, *Fi Zhiḥāl Al-Quran* (Beirut, Libanon: Dar al-Syuruq, 2003), jilid. 5, 2795.



child, *secondly*, Maryam is a woman who is destined to worship Allah Swt and serve the mosque, because her father has died then they fight to raise him<sup>33</sup>.

Imam Abu al-Barakāt an-Nasafy in his commentary said two possible meanings, (1) the word *aqlāmun* means an arrow (*azlāmun*) which they throw into the river to determine who is Maryam's protector, (2) the word *aqlāmun* means the pens they use to When they wrote the Torah they used it as a tool for the lottery hoping that the pen could be a blessing to them, so they won the lottery to raise Maryam bint Imran<sup>34</sup>. so if one word in the Qur'an is analyzed syntagmatically by looking at the relationship of meaning between one word and another, then even though the word is similar, or gives the same sign (*signifier*), it does not necessarily provide the same meaning (*signified*) or concept.

Meanwhile, if analyzed paradigmatically by connecting one word with another word outside the text that has been discussed one by one earlier, it will produce a broad meaning. In other words, if the word *qalam* is analyzed intertextually, using the same word in the Qur'an, but from a different group of verses, it will get four true meanings of the word of *qalam*, namely:(1) destiny pen, which writes down human destiny and the universe from the beginning of creation to the end of time, (2) a pen of knowledge and sciences, which is used to write and record knowledge on paper and also tools for knowlege development, so that the results of the writing produce knowledge that is beneficial to humans both in terms of world affairs and religion. (3)the pen as an infinite picture of the breadth and infinity of Allah's words so that even though it has been written using

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<sup>33</sup> A'lauddin A'ly al-Khāzin, *Lubāb At-Ta'wīl Fī Ma'āni at-Tanzīl*, Pertama (Beirut, Libanon: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2004), jilid. 1, 245.

<sup>34</sup> Abu al-Barakāt an-Nasafī, *Madārik at-Tanzīl wa Haqā'iq at-Ta'wīl*, cetakan pertama (Beirut, Libanon: Dār al-Kalām at-Ṭayyib, 1998), jilid. 1, 255.

all the wooden branches as pens, and the seven oceans as ink will never run out.  
(4) a pen as a medium for doing a lottery, or a pen with the meaning of arrows.

## CONCLUSION

The word of *qalam* in the Qur'an is a *sign* consisting of a *signifier* and a *signified*. The sign is in the form of a letter consisting of *qa-la-ma*, the three series of letters are called *signifier*. While the concept that arises in the human mind when seeing the *signifier* is called a *signified*, and the concept is a pen or tool used to write, but when viewed in terms of *langue* as the basic meaning of the word of *qalam*, found meanings such as pens, arrows, scissors or someone who lives alone. According to the *parole* (personal speech or utterances) that is related to the word of *qalam* found that the meaning of *qalam* is various, such as the destiny pen, the pen used to write and record knowledge and when analyzed synchronically and diachronically the word of *qalam* is also transformed from the destiny pen and the knowledge pen, to a stationary writing instrument and tools used to perpetuate science and knowledge, but in different forms according to the times, can be as computers, laptops, gadgets, cellphones and other sophisticated writing instruments that can be adapted to the modern era and also the modern scientific tools.

When the word of *qalam* is analyzed syntagmatically and paradigmatically by looking at the relationship of meaning between one word to another in one verse, and paying attention to the development and expansion of meaning by looking at the same words from different groups of verses in the Qur'an, the meaning of the word is obtained. *qalam* which is quite diverse, namely as a destiny pen used by angels to write down all the provisions of the universe from the beginning of creation to the end, a knowledge pen used to perpetuate knowledge from time to time, a pen as a comparison between human abilities and the power of Allah SWT, and the pen as a medium to do the lottery by throwing it towards a certain goal, those who succeed in hitting the target will win the lottery.

This kind of research must be developed to obtain new perspective that eligible to the modern era.

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