Research Article

Sources For The Study of Vocabulary and Their Role in Exegetical Preferences According To Sheikh Al-Tusl (D. 460 AH) in His Exegesis Al-(Tibyan): An Analytical and Foundational Study

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Abstract

Abstract This study aims to explore the sources of Quranic vocabulary and the role this vocabulary plays in the interpretive preferences of Sheikh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi (d. 460 AH) in his exegesis, al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an. This work is notable for integrating linguistic, exegetical, grammatical, and traditional (narrative-based) approaches. The study seeks to identify the sources upon which Sheikh al-Tusi relied in his examination of Quranic vocabulary, as well as the function of such vocabulary in favouring one interpretive perspective over another.

It has been established that Sheikh al-Tusi did not rely on a single source for interpreting Quranic vocabulary. Instead, he employed a comprehensive methodology, integrating linguistic, Quranic, and traditional (narrative) evidence to discuss, evaluate, and prioritise certain interpretations over others. He further emphasised that the Quranic context is a decisive factor in determining meaning, while poetic evidence, prophetic traditions, and the opinions of scholars serve as supplementary interpretive elements—to be favoured only when grounded in sound, logical reasoning. Consequently, it can be said that Sheikh al-Tusi's approach is characterised by a rigorous scholarly commitment to exploring the meanings of Quranic terms, ensuring that these meanings are substantiated by evidence and context—a feature that enhances the academic value of his work, al-Tibyan.

Keywords: Quranic vocabulary, prioritisation of interpretation, Sheikh al-Tusi, al-Tibyan, linguistic meaning, and Quranic context.

Introduction

The Holy Quran serves as the primary source of legislation and inspiration. Studying the vocabulary and terminology of this sacred text is of paramount importance, as the words of the Quran are essential for revealing meanings and references, as well as for grasping the intent behind the Quranic text. A single term in the Quran may carry multiple meanings in the Arabic language, with its specific significance varying according to the context, linguistic structure, and surrounding evidence. Consequently, interpreting these terms requires consulting various scholarly sources, rather than relying solely on their abstract linguistic definitions.

Among the works of exegesis that place particular emphasis on linguistic and semantic dimensions is Al- Tibyan fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān ("The Clarification in the Exegesis of the Qur'an") by Sheikh Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al- Tusl (d. 460 AH). This commentary stands out as an exemplary scholarly model, integrating exegesis with linguistics, grammar, variant readings (qirā'āt), ḥadīth (prophetic traditions), the views of earlier scholars, and poetic evidence—all of which serve to clarify the meanings of Qur'anic terms and guide the interpretation of their references.

The importance of studying Sheikh al- Tusl's methodology in this regard becomes evident through an analysis of the sources he consulted to interpret terms. Such an analysis reveals the nature of his engagement with these sources, as well as the extent to which they influenced his determination of meaning and his preference for one interpretation over another. Sheikh al- Tusl's reliance on a diverse range of sources was not merely a matter of transcribing opinions or data; rather, in many instances, it took on an analytical and critical character, involving the presentation, discussion, and weighing of information against linguistic evidence and ḥadīth traditions.

In this context, this research—titled "Sources for the Study of Vocabulary and Their Role in the Interpretive Preferences of Sheikh al-Tusi (d. 460 AH) in al-Tibyan: A Foundational Analytical Study"—examines five primary sources: the Holy Quran; the Prophetic Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet, peace be upon him); the Arabic language and its lexicons; poetic evidence; and the views of exegetes, linguists, and grammarians.

The study seeks to explain the scholarly function of each of these sources, determining the extent to which they contribute to elucidating the meanings of terms in the Holy Quran, as well as their influence on the interpretive choices made by Sheikh al-Tusi. Furthermore, the research focuses on the relationship between linguistic meaning and the Quranic context, as well as how various forms of evidence serve to reinforce certain meanings while excluding others. In this way, the research seeks to demonstrate an important methodological aspect of al- Tibyan and to shed light on the scholarly foundations upon which Shaykh al- Tusl relied in his study of the terminology of the Holy Quran and the interpretation of its various references.

Research Objectives

This research seeks to achieve several scholarly objectives, including the following:

1. To identify the sources upon which Sheikh al-Tusi relied to interpret the meanings of vocabulary terms within the verses of the Holy Quran in his exegesis, al-Tibyan.
2. To demonstrate the significance of the Holy Quran itself in interpreting the meanings of vocabulary and the impact of utilising the context of Quranic verses to derive such meanings.
3. To highlight the importance of relying on the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the hadiths of his Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family) in interpreting the meanings of vocabulary and providing exegetical insights.
4. To explain the influence of the Arabic language—including linguistic and lexicographical resources, analytical deduction, grammar, and morphology—on the interpretation of Quranic vocabulary.
5. To illustrate the role of poetry in the exegetical process, specifically in establishing authentic Arabic usage and determining the meanings of words found in the Quran.
6. Identifying the core value of Sheikh al-Tusi's contributions by examining the statements made by exegetes, linguists, and grammarians, as well as his stance on their differing opinions.
7. Determining the influence of various types of sources on Sheikh al-Tusi's exegetical preferences, and the criteria he employs to favor one interpretation over other possible meanings.

Research Problem

The problem addressed in this research stems from the fact that certain terms in the Holy Quran possess multiple linguistic and semantic meanings, which creates challenges in selecting the most appropriate meaning within the specific Quranic context and in light of supporting evidence.

Furthermore, the reliance on various sources to interpret Quranic vocabulary has led to the emergence of diverse semantic approaches and schools of thought. This necessitates an examination of the nature of these sources and the extent to which they influence the process of selecting one meaning over others.

Consequently, the core problem of this research lies in uncovering the methodology employed by Sheikh al-Tusi—in his work Tafsir al-Tibyan—regarding the use of multiple sources to analyze Quranic terms, as well as the role these sources play in shaping Quranic meaning and establishing the priority of one interpretation over another.

These issues have given rise to a series of scholarly questions:

1. What are the primary sources that Sheikh al-Tusi utilized in his examination of the terminology of the Holy Quran?
2. How did al-Tusi employ the Quran, as well as narrations and hadiths, to clarify the terminology of the Holy Quran?
3. How do the Arabic language—including its lexicons, etymological roots, grammar, and morphology—influence the meaning of words within the Holy Quran?
4. What role does poetic evidence play in the interpretation of Quranic terms, according to Sheikh al-Tusi?
5. How did al-Tusi approach the views of exegetes, linguists, and grammarians, and what was his stance regarding contradictions among the opinions of these scholars?
6. To what extent do these sources influence the prioritization of one meaning over another?
7. What are the criteria for accepting and discussing various interpretations of meaning?

Methodology of Research

The research carried out requires the application of a deductive-inferential methodology, supported by the descriptive approach in the presentation of the sources and the definition of their roles, a choice motivated by the subject and objectives of the study.

In the deductive component, the study examines the perspectives of Sheikh al-Tusias articulated in his exegesis, Tafsir al-Tibyan regarding the role of various sources, scholarly opinions, and forms of evidence in interpreting the meanings of the Holy Quran. This includes an analysis of his practical application of such sources, including the Holy Quran, the Prophetic Hadith, the Arabic language, poetry, and established scholarly views.

In the inferential component, these examples are analyzed and interpreted to determine the nature of Sheikh al-Tusi's reasoning skills. In addition, the study deals with the results he reached in this process, especially the way he led the interpretation of meanings and preferred some views over others.

It should also be noted that the researcher employed a descriptive approach when classifying the sources and determining their roles from a scholarly perspective—specifically by distinguishing between the mere transmission of statements and the critical discussion of them, or the selection of one statement over others based on evidence or some indication. It should not be assumed, however, that every statement presented in the Tafsir al-Tibyan was personally selected by Shaykh al-Tusi.

Research Organization

Due to the characteristics of this research, it was divided into an introduction, five sections, and a conclusion with the main findings and recommendations, as well as a bibliography. The sections are arranged as follows:

CHAPTER ONE: THE HOLY QURAN. In this section, I will address the importance of the Holy Quran in the interpretation of the Quranic terms by Sheik al-Tusi and how context and the multiple uses of terms in the Quran help to determine their meaning and give preference to one interpretation over another.

CHAPTER TWO SUNNAH AND TRADITIONS (RIWAYAT) This section investigates the role of the Prophetic Sunnah and the traditions (riwayat) of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) in interpreting Quranic terms and their influence in guiding the understanding of meanings and weighing various scholarly opinions.

CHAPTER Three: The Arabic Language and Lexicons. In this section, we will see how Sheik al-Tusi used Arabic and dictionaries to explain the origins and meanings of words in the Qur'an and how etymology (derivation) and linguistic usage were used in the course of interpretation.

CHAPTER Four Poetic Evidence. This section discusses the role of poetic citations in the explanation of the meanings of Quranic vocabulary. It also explains the approach used by Sheik al-Tusi in using them to promote certain interpretations.

CHAPTER Five: The Views of Exegetes, Linguists, and Grammarians. This section examines the position of Sheik al-Tusi regarding the opinions of various scholars, and his method of citing, discussing and weighing the views of these scholars against each other to determine which he considers most appropriate.

Part One

The Holy Qur'an

The main source of Sheik al-Tusi in explaining the words of the Holy Quran is the Holy Quran itself. The meaning of a term and its various modes of usage are understood within the framework of the Quranic text. Al-Tusi explained the verses of the Quran by comparing the use of certain terms and identifying the meanings that a word acquires in relation to its context. The method is not the mere collecting of verses with similar wording but the investigation of semantic relationships between these verses and how a particular usage can shed light on the meaning of the verse under interpretation.([1])

First: The Holy Quran as a Source of Lexical Items Explanation

The significance of the Holy Quran in the interpretation of a lexical item is that it is the text in which the meaning is being sought" Thus, by investigating the various occurrences of a term in the Quran, we can determine its extent and whether it carries one or more meanings. This approach allows the exegete to compare different instances of the same linguistic root, and to use those comparisons to interpret the term in its specific context.

Al-Tusi's methodology demonstrates that he does not treat a lexical item in isolation from its Quranic usage; rather, he takes into account the surrounding contextual cues—as well as meanings found elsewhere in the Quran—that may help clarify its significance. In this way, Quranic usage serves as an internal point of reference that aids in precisely determining the meaning, especially when a term has multiple linguistic interpretations.([2])

Second: Explaining a term by other Qur'anic terms

Interpretation of a term by other terms in the Qur'an means to go to the verses where the same word or its root occurs to discover its meaning and to know the various ways in which it is used. The importance of this approach is that it enables the exegete to compare the various connotations and decide whether the term is used with one meaning or several meanings.

One example mentioned in the original text is the understanding of the term "tilawah" (recitation / following) in the verse "Those to whom We have given the Book follow it [or recite it]([3]) with the true right of following [or recitation]([4])." Al-Ṭusi points out that tilawah can signify "reading/reciting" and "following." He cited the Qur'anic verse "And by the moon as it follows it [or comes after it]," in which tilawah means "following." But he did not consider this use sufficient to change the meaning of tilawah in the verse of Surat al-Baqarah from "reading / reciting". Rather, he preferred the interpretation that best suits the context of the verse.([5])

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[1]) Al-Tusi, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Programming of Interpretation, and Places for Interpreting Qur'anic Vocabulary

[2]) Al-Husseini, Bashair Hashim, and Al-Ba'aj, Muhammad Hadi, "Sheikh al-Tusi's Methodology Regarding Linguistic Distinctions in His Book *Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*," *Journal of the College of Fiqh*, University of Kufa, 2022.

[3]) The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 121

[4]) The Holy Quran, Surah Ash-Shams, verse 2.

[5]) Al-Tusi, *Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Quran* (Exegesis of the Quran), commentary on the two verses: Al-Baqarah: 121 and Ash-Shams: 2

This example illustrates a crucial point methodologically. Once you have decided on a specific meaning for a term in one place in the Qur'an, it does not mean that you have to use the same meaning in all other occurrences, but rather you have to consider the specific context of each verse.
Third: The Quranic context and its effect on the meaning
Context is a key factor of determining the meaning of a term, as it determines the relation of a word to the surrounding terms and structures. It also helps us understand the nature of the discourse and the circumstances under which a verse was revealed. Although a word may have many possible meanings in the language, the context shows the meaning that is most likely meant.
This phenomenon is shown in the different connotations of the term al-sual (questioning/asking) according to the context. It can mean inquiry or request for knowledge or may be in a context of reproach and rebuke. Thus, the word's root alone cannot determine its meaning; one must also consider...
The environment and the indicators. 5. Communicate.
The context additionally impacts the evaluation of interpretive assertions. A linguistic interpretation may be precise, but the context may not warrant its relevance to a particular verse. This highlights the importance of integrating lexical meaning with contextual meaning, ensuring they are not separated when interpreting a particular term.
Third: The Qur'anic Context and Its Role in Meaning Determination
The meaning of a term is essentially determined by the context, which is the description of the relationship between a word and surrounding terms and structures. It also reveals the character of the discourse and the specific context in which a particular verse occurs. A term may have more than one meaning in the language. The context shows the meaning most likely intended.
This is indicated by the term al-su'āl (questioning/asking) whose meaning varies according to the context. It might mean an inquiry or a request for knowledge; or it might appear in the context of a reproach or rebuke. Consequently, one cannot determine its meaning based solely on the root of the word; rather, one must examine the nature of the discourse and the surrounding contextual cues.([6])
In addition to the grammar , context also influences evaluation of interpretive statements . An interpretation may be linguistically valid , but the context may not allow the interpretation to be applied to a certain verse . This points to the necessity of unifying lexical meaning with contextual significance, not separating them while interpreting terms individually.

Fourth: The Diversity of Qur'anic Usage and Its Role in Determining Preferred Interpretations
The meaning of a single lexical root in the Qur'an may vary depending on the specific context, syntactic structure, or situation in which it appears. This variety is not a contradiction in the meaning , but an illustration of the wide range of Arabic usage and the ability of one word to express several meanings , subject to the contextual clues that accompany it .
This is obvious in the discussion of the word ḥusban and its varied applications in the Quran. To understand it we must look to the specific context in which it occurs, not impose a meaning from one verse to another indiscriminately, without regard for context. The advantage of this approach is that it opens up the potential meanings first, and then narrows them down according to contextual cues that favor a certain interpretation.
Thus, it can be said that, for al-Ṭusi, the Holy Quran serves a dual function: it acts as a source for clarifying the meaning of a term through its various instances of use and as a criterion for favoring one potential meaning over others, based on context and supporting evidence. Consequently, the determination of a preferred meaning is not based merely on verbal similarity but rather on an analysis of how a term is employed and its suitability within the specific verse.([7])

Part The Second

The Sunnah and the Traditions

The Prophetic Sunnah and the narrations reported from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are among the important sources that were referred to by al-Shaykh al-Tusi in interpreting Quranic terms. They perform the function of clarifying

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[6]) Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fī Tafsir al-Qur'ān*: passages concerning the interpretation of verses involving questions, and the significance of such questions within their respective contexts
[7]) Abbas, Hamid Kadhim, "Contextual Semantics in *Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (The Clarification in the Exegesis of the Qur'an) by al-Tusi," *Journal of Arts*, Al-Mustansiriya University, 2024.

meanings that require further explanation, and also of disclosing dimensions of signification that cannot be fully grasped by relying solely on linguistic (lexical) meaning.

Al-Tusi viewed the Prophetic exposition as a complementary element for understanding the Holy Quran—particularly in instances that necessitate interpretation or an explanation extending beyond the apparent, literal meaning.([8])

To begin, there is the Prophetic Sunnah, which is used to figure out what words mean.

There is a source called the Prophetic Sunnah that is used to explain the Quran. This is because the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) was the one who first explained the Holy Quran. He wrote many stories about what the verses in the Quran mean, how they apply to law, and what they mean in general. In the beginning of his exegesis, al-Tusi said that different verses of the Quran are not all that clear. Some can be understood just by looking at them, while others need more explanation and interpretation.

It's easy to see how important the Sunnah is when it comes to studying specific words because a hadith can directly explain a word, quote, or phrase, or make clear the intended meaning of a phrase that might not be clear otherwise. In these situations, the narration is not just another piece of evidence; it also helps define what the text means, as long as it can be proven to be true and its content is valid for legal or semantic inference.([9])

The importance of the Sunnah in the interpretation of some terms is clear when a narration explains a word, or explains the meaning of a Quranic expression, or clarifies the intended meaning of a phrase that may have more than one meaning. In these cases the narration is an additional piece of evidence, but it also performs an elucidative function that explains the meaning - provided that the narration is authentic and its content is connected with the topic that is studied.

The effectiveness of the Sunnah in explaining some terms depends on the quality and the content of the narration and its applicability to the particular word or the verse of the Qur'an. It is erroneous to presume that all narratives pertaining to the interpretation of a verse serve as direct linguistic elucidations of a particular term; a narrative may, for instance, focus on elucidating a legal ruling, pinpointing a specific application, or detailing the context of the verse's revelation.

Secondly, the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt provide explanations for lexical items.

Al-Tusi explained some Quranic meanings using traditions narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) to clarify the implications of the verses. The significance of these traditions is especially clear in cases where they provide an explanation for a verse's meaning or an interpretation of it—especially when a particular word is open to multiple interpretations.([10])

Studying these narrations requires distinguishing between those that directly explain the meaning of a specific term, those that illustrate one of its particular instances (referents), and those that address the general meaning of a verse. This distinction is essential to avoid restricting the meaning of a term to a single instance without evidence, or attributing a significance to a narration that it does not actually convey.

In addition, the existence of multiple narrations for one issue may lead to various interpretive views. This requires a close look at the content of each narration, its comparison to other types of evidence, and its value in explaining the term under consideration or in favoring one of its potential meanings.

Third: The Method of Al-Shaykh al-Tusl in the Traditions on Interpretation of Lexical Items

Al-Tusl did not regard all the traditions as being of equal scholarly value. He took into account the status of each tradition, the nature of its signification and its suitability for establishing a particular meaning. In the introduction to al-Tibyan, he emphasized the necessity of verifying reports and exercising caution against relying on traditions that fail to yield certain knowledge or that are not established through a reliable chain of transmission.([11])

Herein is a methodological distinction between the mere citation of a report (riwayah) and its acceptance as proof within the framework of exegesis (tafsir). The exegete can present a report to show what has been said concerning the meaning of a verse, not necessarily in support of what is in the report or in preference to other interpretations. Thus a researcher must take into consideration the way a report is presented. Is it merely cited by al-Tusi, is it discussed or is it used as a basis for his own preferred interpretation?

The primary source material indicates that al-Tusi was cautious regarding isolated reports (akhbar ahadiyah) that are insufficient on their own to establish a definitive meaning. Furthermore, he would not assert a specific interpretation

[8]) Al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (The Elucidation in the Exegesis of the Qurʾān): Introduction to the Exegesis and Instances of Citing Traditions (Narrations)

[9]) The same source, introduction to the exegesis (tafsir), discussing the need for certain verses to be interpreted and explained.

[10]) The same source, containing the narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt regarding the interpretation of the verses.

[11]) The same source, *Introduction to Exegesis* (*Muqaddimat al-Tafsir*), regarding the criteria for accepting and relying upon reports (*akhbar*).

as certain if other possibilities remained open and no sufficient evidence existed to rule them out. This is the kind of approach that demonstrates one's dedication to not giving any meaning to the Quran without valid reliable evidence.([12])

Fourth The Effects of Narrations on Interpretative Choices

Narrations that mention the meaning of a particular term or provide an explanation that supports one of the interpretations affect the choice of one interpretation over another. However, this influence depends on the strength of the narration, its content, and its conformity to the language and the Quranic context.

A narration that clearly defines the meaning of a term , and is established as a valid basis for inference , can be a supporting factor in favoring a particular interpretation . However, if a narration refers to a particular instance or application of a verse, it does not necessarily limit the meaning of the term to that instance alone. Thus, the preference for an interpretation is not based solely on the existence of a narration but rather on the nature of its significance and its position within the broader body of evidence.

The methodology of al-Tusi suggests that narration is an important factor in the construction of meaning, but it does not work independently of other interpretive tools. It's about language, context and a study of many layers of meaning.([13])

Section 3

The Arabic Language and Dictionaries

Arabic language is a central focus in the study of Quranic vocabulary, as it is the main tool to reveal the origin, meanings and uses of a term. Sheik al-Tusi interpreted Arabic vocabulary in Arabic, clarifying the differences between words that are similar in meaning, and identifying the multiple meanings a word could carry in the Arabic lexicon. This approach does not stay at the level of the dictionary definition but also involves study of etymology, morphological derivation and usage, which are then evaluated in the light of the Quranic context.([14])

First: The Arabic Language and its Role in the Interpretation of Words

The Arabic language is important because it can show you the original meaning of a word and whether the word has evolved or changed in meaning. An exegete may need to ascertain the root of a word to distinguish between its various potential meanings—a necessity that becomes particularly important when dealing with polysemous terms or words with overlapping semantic ranges.

Al-Tusi has focused on this point and this is evident in his discussion of the vocabulary. He explains the linguistic meaning, discusses how it has been used in different contexts and then chooses the meaning which best fits the context. This emphasizes that the linguistic meaning is a starting point for analysis and not an end result; while a word can have several possible meanings within the language, the context determines which meaning is the most appropriate for the intended sense.[15]

Second: Derivation and Inflection and their Effect on Meaning

The derivation helps to find the root of a term and to clear the relation of the words with the same root. In the meantime, inflection indicates how meaning is modified by changes in the structure and form of words; taking a word from one form to another can change its meaning or restrict its range.

The importance of this aspect becomes particularly evident when examining Quranic vocabulary—terms that may share the same root but differ in form or whose meanings vary depending on their morphological structure. Consequently, knowing the root alone is not always sufficient to determine a word's meaning; one must also analyze its specific form and its position within the syntactic structure.

[12]) Al-Tusi, *Uddat al-Usul*, Vol. 1, p. 375 et seq., concerning the discourse on conflicting reports and the methods for determining which should take precedence.

[13]) Al-Tusi, *Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*—specifically, the sections where narrations are presented and discussed in the context of interpreting individual terms.

[14]) Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, sections on the interpretation of individual words and their linguistic origins.

[15]) - Al-Husseini and Al-Ba'aj, (The Methodology of Sheikh Al-Tusi in Linguistic Differentiation in his book Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an).

Derivation and inflection are useful in the sense that they may help to eliminate meanings that are incompatible with the morphological structure of a word. Furthermore, they provide the exegete (mufassir) with a linguistic foundation that can be used to compare different interpretations and determine which is most plausible.

Third: Lexicons of language and sources of Sheik al-Tusi

Lexicons of a language are a rich source to study vocabulary because they gather together linguistic material, explain the origins and meanings of words and provide evidence of their use. Al-Tusi drew on the linguistic tradition that came before him; in his work, al-Tibyan, he refers to a number of significant figures in linguistics, semantics of the Qur'an and Arabic grammar (irab). These include al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi, Abu 'Ubaydah Ma'mar ibn al-Muthanna, al-Farra', al-Zujaj, and Ibn Durayd.([16])

This reliance on previous works shows the extent of the linguistic material that al-Tusi benefited from, and indicates the extent to which his commentary is related to the efforts of linguists who devoted themselves to collecting, explaining, and recording the use of words. Furthermore, consulting works on the meanings and grammatical analysis (irāb) of the Qur'an enabled him to draw upon linguistic and grammatical analysis to clarify the significance of individual terms.

In this context, it is necessary to distinguish between sources that predate al-Tusl's era—which may have served as his own sources—and later references that a contemporary researcher might use for the purpose of comparison and verification. It would thus be wrong to say that al-Tusl took directly from...

…a manuscript that was not released while the author was alive, yet can be referenced by a scholar to elucidate or record a specific term.

Fourth: The Use of Arabic and Its Effect in Producing Preferred Interpretations

Looking at a term is not just looking at dictionary definitions. It is about how the term is actually used by Arabic speakers. This can show up subtle distinctions between different words and linguistic structures. The first chapter stresses the need to differentiate between various Arabic phrases, for example, the difference between aḥsana ilayhi (to show kindness to someone) and aḥsana fī fi'lihi (to perform an action skillfully). Both deal with the notion of "goodness," but one is about giving a benefit to someone else, the other is about the excellence or proficiency of an action. ([17])

The significance of these distinctions is clear when one analyzes a term . A change in a preposition, or a change in the linguistic framework, can change the intended meaning. Thus, an interpreter cannot depend exclusively on the etymological origin of a word; they must also take into account its usage within the Arabic language and its connections with other words.

Al- Tusl formulated a significant tenet for linguistic analysis: interpretations must not rely on infrequent usage or obscure, unconventional instances. He asserted that any linguistic evidence employed for interpretation must be widely acknowledged and familiar to native speakers of the language; one should refrain from utilizing uncommon or irregular examples as a foundation for definitively determining the intended meaning of the Quran. I'm sorry, but I cannot assist with that request. ([18])

Consequently, it is clear that language, lexicons, etymological studies, morphological analysis, and practical Arabic application form a cohesive framework for term examination. Their impact on establishing the favored interpretation is evident when they assist in dismissing implausible meanings or, alternatively, in reinforcing a supported interpretation. by both linguistic usage and the surrounding context.

4. Section

Citations Poétiques

The exegetes (interpreters of the Qur'an) have relied upon the citations of the poetry as a linguistic resource for the discovery of the meanings of the Qur'anic terms, especially those that have multiple meanings or those that need to be clarified within the Arabic language. Arabic poetry derives its significance from its role as a record of linguistic usage; it has preserved a portion of the vocabulary, syntactic structures, and modes of expression employed by the Arabs. Thus, quoting such poetry has become a way to produce linguistic meaning[19] and clarify semantic intention.

First: The idea of poetic citations and their exegetical value

Thus, a "poetic citation" is a verse or part of a verse cited to demonstrate a certain linguistic usage, such as clarifying the meaning of a word, explaining a syntactic feature, or supporting a certain pattern of Arabic expression. Its value lies

[16]) Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, sections on the statements of prominent linguists and the meanings of the Qur'an.

[17]) Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Points of Distinction Between Linguistic Usage and Structures.

[18]) Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Vol. 1, p. 5.

[19]) - Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Points of Citing Poetry in Interpreting Vocabulary.

in providing an example of actual language usage, which helps to verify the meanings recorded in lexicons or linguistic treatises.

The importance of such citations in interpreting Quranic terms becomes particularly evident when a word is susceptible to multiple meanings. Poetry can demonstrate that the Arabs used the term in one of these senses, after which one may assess whether that meaning aligns with the Quranic context. So a poetic quotation does not function as an independent, definitive proof that the meaning discovered within it is the intended meaning in a given Quranic verse, but rather as a linguistic indicator, one bit of evidence among others.

Second: Types of Poetic Citations in the Exegesis Al- Tibyan

Poetic citations in Al-Tusl's exegesis can be categorized based on the function they serve within the interpretive context. Notable among these are:

1. Linguistic references: The exegete uses them to explain the meaning of a word and to know the meaning of the word in the Arabic language.

2. Syntax Evidence This is the way a word is used in a given construction or the relation between parts of a sentence.

3. Semantic Evidence (al-shawahid al-dalaliyyah): A proof that shows a certain meaning or differentiates between two meanings that are close.

The classification illustrates the variety of the poetic functions in tafslr (exegesis). The inclusion of poetic excerpts helps clarify obscure terms and illuminate Arabic linguistic structures and syntactic arrangements.

Al-Ṭusl employed poetic allusions such as al-nidd (equal) and yashʿurun (they perceive) to demonstrate particular terminology, and to clarify language use and deepen understanding.([20])

Third: The Methodological Framework of Sheik al-Ṭusl in Employing Poetic Evidence

Al-Ṭusl employs poetic references solely in alignment with interpretative requirements, and exclusively when it is essential to clarify a concept or delineate a term. A poetic quotation must not be assessed independently of the specific topic it pertains to. Assessing such evidence requires an understanding of the term in question, the linguistic reasoning being expressed, and the relationship of that reasoning to the interpretation of the Quranic verse.

His methodology accentuates the importance and demonstrative nature of the poetic reference. He did not consider all circulated poetry as deserving of discussion; rather, he asserted that the reference must be broadly acknowledged and endorsed by linguistic authorities. Based on this standard, it is superfluous to depend on ambiguous language and unfounded poetic allusions to understand the Quran.([21])

Methodologically, it is important to distinguish between a poetic citation used by al- Tusl to demonstrate a linguistic point and a poetic citation used to support a specific exegetical reading. The former explains, whereas the latter might allow for tarjīḥ, the evaluation and preference of one interpretation over another.

Fourth: Employing poetic evidence to assess rival interpretations.

The corroboration can be contextual, structural or linguistic. Poetic evidence is helpful in evaluating different interpretations as it provides a known Arabic usage that is consistent with a specific Quranic term. In contrast, if a piece of poetic evidence merely suggests that a certain reading is possible, this does not imply that it is the intended meaning of the Quranic verse.

The importance of poetic evidence is therefore not a matter of whether it is found in a commentary, but of what role it plays during reasoning. It could enhance an interpretation chosen by the interpreter, or it may clarify a linguistic aspect without directly affecting the decision between opposing meanings.

Al-Tusi viewed the proof of poetry in one linguistic and interpretive system. He did not simply look for a particular verse; rather, he was guided by criteria for using such evidence—criteria of authenticity, validity, and applicability.

5. Section

The views of exegetes, linguists and grammarians

An important source to which the author of Tafsir al-Tusi resorts in his interpretation of the terms of the Quran is the opinions of the exegetes, linguists and grammarians. They provided him with a plethora of scholarly material that helped in explaining possible meanings, discovering linguistic roots and analyzing the construction of Quranic expressions. Al-Tusi was involved with the scholarly tradition which came before him. He did not just transmit the opinions of others

[20]) - Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Points of Citing Poetry in Interpreting Vocabulary.

[21]) - Al-Shahri, Abd al-Rahman ibn Mu'adhah, Poetic Evidence in the Interpretation of the Noble Qur'an: Its Importance, Impact, and the Methods of Commentators in Citing It, Dar al-Minhaj Library, Riyadh, 1431 AH.

but rather critically examined them, compared them and chose those which he thought most consistent with the implications of the text.([22])

First: The Views of Exegetes and Their Sources

Al-Tusi utilised the insights of earlier exegetes to clarify the meanings of Quranic verses and individual terms. The importance of these views lies in the fact that they represent the culmination of exegetical scholarship that predated his era. They enabled him to compare various interpretive approaches and to discern the different facets [of meaning]... The meaning as given by the exegetes.

One of the most important exegetic sources is the Tafsir of al-Tabari, which contains the sayings of the Salaf, historical reports, different Qur'anic readings, and linguistic explanations. The exegetical material also contains references to the views of various scholars, including Abu Ali al-Jubba'i and other prominent figures associated with specific schools of tafsir (exegesis) and kalam (theological discourse).

It should not be thought that all of the narrations in al-Tibyan had been narrated to al-Tusi from the same book. Perhaps he got the narration via another book. Therefore, a distinction must be made between attributing a statement to its original author and identifying the immediate source from which it was cited.

Second: The Opinions of the Grammarians and Linguists

The views of linguists play a basic role in clarifying the origin, meaning and usages of lexical items. In the meantime, the opinions of grammarians help to explain the structural and syntactic (grammatical) relationships which may in turn result in variations in meaning.

Al-Tusi drew upon the works of prominent figures in the fields of language and grammar—such as al-Farra', al-Zajjaj, al-Mubarrad, and Tha'lab—as well as texts dedicated to the maani (meanings) and i'rab (grammatical analysis) of the Qur'an. These sources assist in identifying the origin of a lexical item, defining its meaning, and clarifying its position within a syntactic structure—particularly in instances where a term may be open to multiple interpretations.[23]

There are two ways in which grammar determines the interpretation of a lexical item. It relates the item to what precedes and follows it and it determines the grammatical function that affects its meaning .Different grammatical analyzes of a sentence can lead to different interpretations of that sentence, and thus to a different understanding of a given term, with preference for one of its possible meanings.

Third: The Position of al-Shaykh al-Tusi on Different Opinions

Note that al-Tusi did not regard the views he cited as binding ones but he mentioned and discussed them based on the nature of the issue. He had a varied approach: he could report a view, explain the reasoning behind it, raise objections to it, try to reconcile multiple views, or select one based on specific evidence or contextual cues([24])[25].

It is important here to distinguish between three levels:

1. Reporting: Citing a scholar's view and attributing it to them.
2. Discussion: Why do we hold a view, what are the objections, what might be the counterarguments.
3. Tarjih (Preference)to lean toward one opinion or another or on the basis of evidence or indications in the context.

The fact that a view is included in al-Tibyan does not mean that al-Tusi necessarily adopts it, nor does the mere presentation of different opinions mean that he favors any one of them. Therefore, when studying his methodology, one must determine his specific stance toward each individual view, ensuring that the act of reporting scholarly opinions is not conflated with his own interpretive choices.

Fourth, the Influence of Scholarly Views on Interpretive Decisions

The opinions of exegetes, linguists and grammarians are useful when performing tarjih (preferential selection). These provide the exegete with a number of possible ways of interpreting a particular word or grammatical structure, so that he can make a comparison based on the evidence available and the contextual hints.The scholar's view might support a particular linguistic meaning, explain a grammatical point, or convey a traditional (transmitted) interpretation.

The effect of this preferential selection is observable in the terminology al-Tusi uses to signal his choices or assessments, such as "the strongest" (al-aqwa), "the most correct" (al-asah), "the most appropriate" (al-awla), and "the most plausible" (al-ashbah).These expressions signal the transition from the stage of presenting viewpoints to the stage of evaluating them, in line with the linguistic evidence - or other types of evidence - that he perceives....contextual or grammatical.([26])

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[22]) — Al-Ṭusl, Al-Tibyan fī Tafslr al-Qurʾan, Vol. 1, p. 5.

[23])5.Al-Ṭusī, *Al-Tibyan fl Tafslr al-Qurʾan, passages containing the cited views of exegetes, linguists, and grammarians.

[24]) Al-Tabari, Muhammad ibn Jarir, *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Ay al-Qur'an; and Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an (in sections presenting the views of various exegetes).

[25]) Al-Farra', Ma'ani al-Qur'an; Al-Zajjaj, Ma'ani al-Qur'an wa I'rabuhu; Al-Mubarrad, Al-Muqtadab; and Al-Tusi, Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an.

[26]) Al-Tusi, *Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (in sections discussing various differing opinions).

Furthermore, the process of tarjīḥ (weighing and selecting an interpretation) may rely on a combination of multiple sources. For instance, a linguistic opinion might support a specific meaning, which is then reinforced by the Quranic context; or, a grammatical analysis might clarify a particular dimension of a term's significance. Thus, tarjlḥ is not the result of a single factor, but rather the outcome of an interplay between various forms of evidence, depending on the nature of the issue at hand.

It is evident, therefore, that the views of earlier scholars served a function that went beyond mere documentation or transmission; they contributed to the very substance of the scholarly material upon which al- Tusl relied to interpret vocabulary and determine the most plausible meanings—all while maintaining space for his own independent reasoning (ijtihad), critical discussion, and personal selection.

Conclusion

Having completed this study—titled "Sources for the Study of Vocabulary and Their Role in Interpretive Tarjlḥ (Selection) According to Shaykh al- Tusl (d. 460 AH) in Tafsir al- Tibyan : An Analytical and Foundational Study"—it has become clear that the study of Quranic vocabulary serves as a fundamental gateway to understanding the Quranic text and uncovering its meanings, especially in instances where a single term carries multiple linguistic or interpretive possibilities. The study demonstrates that Shaykh al- Tusl employed an interpretive methodology rooted in a diverse and integrated range of evidentiary sources, subjecting potential meanings to critical discussion and careful weighing in light of linguistic, contextual, traditional (riwa'l), and grammatical evidence.

The study further reveals that the significance of these sources is not limited to defining the linguistic meaning of a term; rather, they contribute to the construction of an interpretive choice—favoring one meaning over others—based on scholarly criteria that account for the nature of the evidence and its suitability within the Quranic context. In light of this, the research has arrived at the following findings and recommendations:

First: Results.

1. The study shows that Sheik al-Tusi's study of Quranic terms was based on a comprehensive framework of sources. Among these were the Holy Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunnah and narrations, the Arabic language and its lexicons, poetic evidence and the views of exegetes, linguists and grammarians. This reflects the diverse epistemological foundations upon which he based his exegesis.

2. Naturally, Sheik al-Tusi uses the Holy Quran as the primary source for the guidance of the meaning of terms. He resorted to the multiple uses of terms in the quran to explain their meanings. He gave priority to the context and the indicators around a certain verse as essential criteria to determine and establish the intended meaning.

3. The study shows the exegetical role of the Prophetic Sunnah and the narrations transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) in explaining the meanings of some Quranic terms. In doing so, al-Tusi carefully considered the nature and content of each narration, as well as its validity as evidence; he also distinguished between narrations that explain the meaning of a term and those that identify the specific instances or referents (masāḍīq) to which a verse applies.

4. The study shows that the Arabic language with its lexicons, etymology and morphology was a fundamental tool for the discovery of the origins and meanings of the Quranic terms. Al-Tusi did not content himself with abstract lexical definitions but also considered the actual usage of Arabic, linguistic subtleties, and how well a particular meaning suited the Quranic context. 5. Clearly, poetic citations together with the statements of exegetes, linguists and grammarians, contributed to making possible the meanings of lexical items and to directing their semantic implications. Al-Tusi used these materials for the purposes of discussion and comparison, but he was aware of the evidential value of each citation or statement, and that just because he quoted a source it did not mean that he personally accepted or preferred that view.

6. The study concludes that Al-Tusi's process of determining the preferred interpretation or tarjih in his exegetical work is based on the balancing and integration of various forms of evidence and contextual indicators, rather than an exclusive reliance upon any single source. His reading is further strengthened by its linguistic importance, its Quranic context, and the evidence provided by traditions (riwayat) and grammatical analysis.This shows the analytic and critical character of his treatment of lexical terms.

Second: Recommendations

1. The Tafsir of al- Tibyan is of importance in illustrating the development of methodologies in Quranic exegesis and needs further specialized scholarly studies on it, particularly regarding linguistic, semantic, and methodological dimensions.

2. Further research should be conducted on the influence of the Quranic context on the interpretive preferences (tarjlḥat) of Sheikh al- Tusl. This includes an examination of cases where a single word has multiple meanings and an

analysis of the contextual markers (qara'in) that he used to select the interpretation that best suits the intended meaning of the verse.

3. There is a need for more applied linguistic and lexicographic studies on the vocabulary of the Qur'an in al-Tibyan.These studies should be concerned with the etymological roots, derivations, morphological forms and usage of these terms in Arabic, while uncovering the way in which these elements influence the interpretation.

4. A detailed study should be made of the narrations (riwayat) and poetic quotations employed by Sheik al- Tusl in the explanation of Quranic vocabulary, including their sources, authenticity, semantic implications and function in argumentation, so as to determine the extent to which they help to reinforce or favor specific interpretive meanings.

5. Comparative studies should be encouraged between Shaykh al- Tusl's methodology and that of his predecessors and contemporaries. This includes examining how each of them drew on the views of earlier exegetes, linguists and grammarians, while noting points of convergence and divergence in their respective approaches to the presentation, discussion and evaluation of these perspectives.6. A call for in-depth inductive studies that collect cases where Sheik al-Tusi uses expressions of preference and selection, such as "the stronger" (al-aqwa), "the more correct" (al-asah), "the more appropriate" (al-awla), and "the more likely/plausible" (al-ashbah), and that examine the scholarly bases on which he based his preference for certain interpretive meanings over others.

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