Abstract

This research work takes as its keynote what makes two QA words antonymous. The study tests a Qur'anic corpus of anonymous pairs against Jones' corpus-based model of antonymy (2002) which introduces and quantifies the key discourse functions of antonymy in text. The study has reached the following results: the role which antonymy plays in the Qur'anic text or discourse is highly predictable and statistically significant; the preponderant categories are coordinated antonymy and transitional antonymy though the latter category is a tiny fraction of the former; out of the 1,425 collected pairs, 275 pairs (taking up 19.29 %) are classification-resistant, i.e. could not be classified; the lexical-semantic analysis of antonymy has yielded a new system of internal and external categorization that argues for the claim that antonymy can operate differently depending on the nature of the database; antonymy has been found pandemic in the Qur'an that employs it in such a robust and creative way to make the theological message more compact and easier to grasp and to retrieve; antonymy has been found delicately and intricately interwoven with a variety of rhetorical devices without which theological messages would have been limp and lackadaisical; antonymy is a pragmatic mechanism of euphemization in the text, by means of which face-threatening acts are expressed in face-saving terms; autoantonymy is a concomitant phenomenon that features opposition between two senses of the same lexeme; ellipsis for economical reasons appears as a structural mechanism of slotting either of or both members of an antonymous pair; Qur'anic antonymy is drawn along a web of other lexical-semantic relations, notably synonymy, metonymy, polysemy and meronymy; antonymy is context-sensitive and any negligence of its context leads to a misinterpretation of the verse in focus; in the course of analysis, antonymy has proved to be a working tool—among others—in the way information is structured and communicated to the recipients.