

SEMANTIC STRUCTURE OF THE ROOT WORD M-L-K IN THE QUR'AN: A LEXICAL SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study examines the semantic structure of the Qur'anic root m-l-k (ملك) using a lexical-semantic approach. The root appears in numerous derivational forms throughout the Qur'an and is associated with concepts such as ownership, authority, kingship, sovereignty, and dominion. This study aims to identify the meanings of *m-l-k* and its derivations, analyze their contextual usage, and explain the semantic relations that construct the Qur'anic concept of authority and sovereignty. Employing a qualitative library research design, the study uses all Qur'anic occurrences of the root m-l-k as its research data, comprising 117 instances distributed across 21 derivational forms identified in *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Qur'ān*. These data were analyzed using a lexical-semantic framework informed by classical Arabic lexicons and contextual interpretation, with particular attention to polysemy, semantic field relations, and semantic hierarchy. The findings reveal a progressive semantic expansion from ordinary ownership (*mālik*) to political authority (*malik*), institutional sovereignty (*mulk*), and metaphysical dominion (*malakūt*). The analysis also demonstrates that the derivations form a hierarchical semantic system in which human ownership and political authority are portrayed as limited and temporary, whereas absolute sovereignty belongs exclusively to Allah. Furthermore, the study confirms that the meanings of the derivations are determined by the interaction of morphology, context, and discourse, producing an integrated semantic network encompassing theological, political, social, and metaphysical dimensions. This study contributes to Qur'anic lexical semantics by providing a comprehensive analysis of the semantic relationships among all derivational forms of the root *m-l-k* within a unified analytical framework.

Keywords

Lexical Semantics; Ownership; Qur'anic Semantics; Sovereignty.



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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is not only regarded as a sacred scripture containing theological doctrines and ritual guidance, but also as a linguistic text characterized by rich semantic and conceptual structures. (Mozaheb et al., 2017; Almjlad, 2025) The Qur'an employs lexical forms that often carry multiple layers of meaning extending beyond their literal definitions. (Maulani et al., 2025) One distinctive feature of the Qur'anic language is its reliance on root-word derivation, whereby a single triliteral root yields numerous lexical forms with different semantic nuances depending on morphological patterns and contextual usage. (Harianto et al., 2025; Tafiati et al., 2022) Consequently, semantic analysis has become an important approach to exploring Qur'anic vocabulary more comprehensively. (Pranata, n.d.)

From a linguistic perspective, this phenomenon reflects a fundamental characteristic of Arabic morphology and semantics: the close relationship between derivational morphology and semantic development. A single triliteral root may produce a network of lexemes whose meanings are systematically related yet contextually differentiated. Such a phenomenon is particularly significant in Qur'anic discourse because lexical derivations function not merely as grammatical variations but also as conceptual devices through which theological, ethical, and social meanings are constructed. Examining how semantic relations emerge among derivational forms is therefore essential for understanding the conceptual organization of Qur'anic vocabulary.

One of the Qur'anic roots that demonstrates broad semantic variation is the root *m-l-k* (ملك).

This root appears in several derivative forms, including *malik*, *mālik*, *mulk*, *malakūt*, and the expression *mā malakat aymānukum*. Lexically, these forms are generally associated with concepts such as ownership, authority, dominion, kingship, and control. (Syafrudin et al., 2024) However, within Qur'anic discourse, the meanings of these derivations extend beyond material possession or political rule. They also reflect theological, metaphysical, ethical, and social dimensions. (Arroisi, 2019) The semantic diversity embedded in the root *m-l-k* illustrates both the richness of Qur'anic expression and the flexibility of Arabic lexical structures.

In certain Qur'anic contexts, the term *Mālikī* refers to Allah as the absolute possessor of the Day of Judgment, as mentioned in QS. Al-Fātiḥah: 4. (Saleh, 2009; Yahya, 2018) In other verses, *al-Malik* emphasizes divine sovereignty and supreme authority, such as in QS. Ṭāhā: 114. Likewise, the terms *mulk* and *malakūt* represent broader notions of kingdom, dominion, and metaphysical power. Meanwhile, the expression *mā malakat aymānukum* reflects socio-historical relations associated with

ownership within human society. These contextual differences indicate that the semantic structure of the root *m-l-k* is polysemous and conceptually multidimensional. (Pranata, n.d.; Yusuff et al., 2025; Nusaibah & Sanuri, 2025)

This semantic diversity represents a distinctive linguistic phenomenon in Qur'anic Arabic. Rather than functioning as isolated lexical items, the derivational forms of *m-l-k* constitute an interconnected semantic system in which morphology, context, and discourse collectively determine meaning. Investigating these semantic relations is therefore important not only for explaining the lexical meanings of individual forms but also for revealing how the Qur'an conceptualizes ownership, authority, and sovereignty through a unified semantic structure.

A number of previous studies have discussed Qur'anic semantics through different lexical items and semantic developments. Khuzaimah examined the distinction between *nashr* and *'awn* in relation to assistance and support. (Khuzaimah, 2022) Baiq Raudatussolihah investigated the semantic dimensions of the word *ifk* and its derivations. (Raudatussolihah et al., 2021) Khoiriyatunnisa, Asfar, and Syahrani analyzed the semantic usage of *nashara* in Qur'anic discourse. (Khoiriyatunnisa et al., 2022) Ahmad Zaki Annafiri explored the concept of *tamkīn* and its derivational forms to reveal dimensions of empowerment and authority in the Qur'an. (Annafiri, 2022) These studies demonstrate that semantic approaches play a significant role in uncovering conceptual meanings embedded within Qur'anic vocabulary.

Collectively, previous studies confirm the value of semantic analysis for explaining the conceptual meanings of Qur'anic vocabulary. However, most of these studies examine individual lexical items and primarily focus on describing their meanings in particular Qur'anic contexts. Consequently, limited attention has been given to how derivational forms originating from the same trilateral root interact to construct a coherent semantic system. The relationship between morphological derivation, semantic hierarchy, polysemy, and conceptual organization, therefore, remains insufficiently explored.

Nevertheless, studies specifically addressing the semantic structure of the root *m-l-k* remain relatively limited. Existing discussions tend to focus primarily on theological or exegetical interpretations of the terms *malik* or *mālik* without systematically examining the semantic relations among all derivational forms of the root. (Yusuff et al., 2025; Iqbal, 2020) Furthermore, the interconnected meanings of ownership, sovereignty, authority, and metaphysical dominion within the semantic field of *m-l-k* have not yet been comprehensively analyzed through a lexical semantic

perspective. (Tafiati et al., 2022) This gap indicates the need for a systematic investigation of how the derivational forms of *m-l-k* collectively construct an integrated semantic network in the Qur'an. To address this gap, the present study adopts a lexical semantic approach. Lexical semantics provides an appropriate analytical framework because it examines relations of meaning among lexical items, including polysemy, semantic fields, semantic hierarchies, and contextual variation. Rather than interpreting each derivation independently, this approach enables analysis of the semantic relationships among the derivational forms of *m-l-k* as components of a unified conceptual system within Qur'anic discourse.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify and analyze the meanings of the root *m-l-k* and its derivations in the Qur'an based on their lexical forms, contextual usage, and semantic relations. It also seeks to explain how concepts such as ownership, authority, sovereignty, and metaphysical dominion are constructed through the semantic organization of this root. This study contributes to Qur'anic semantic scholarship by providing a comprehensive lexical semantic analysis of all derivational forms of the root *m-l-k* within a single analytical framework. Unlike previous studies that primarily examine individual lexical items or theological interpretations, this study demonstrates that the derivations of *m-l-k* constitute an integrated semantic network characterized by semantic expansion, hierarchy, polysemy, and contextual interdependence. In doing so, the study offers a more systematic understanding of how the Qur'an constructs the concepts of ownership, authority, sovereignty, and divine dominion through a single triliteral root.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design using a library research approach. A qualitative method is considered suitable because the data analyzed consist of words, phrases, and linguistic expressions that require interpretative understanding and contextual examination. (Creswell John & David, 2023); (Patty & Chan, 2024) The research specifically investigates the semantic meanings of the root word *m-l-k* (ملك) and its derivational forms in the Qur'an from a lexical semantic perspective. The primary source of data in this study is the Qur'an itself, particularly verses containing derivations of the root *m-l-k*, including *malik*, *mālik*, *mulk*, *malakūt*, and *mā malakat aymānukum*. Secondary sources were gathered from classical Arabic dictionaries, studies on Qur'anic semantics, and relevant works in linguistics. Among the principal references employed are *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān* by Al-Rāghib al-Aṣṣafhānī, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah* by Ibn Fāris, *Lisān al-'Arab*

by Ibn Manẓūr, as well as contemporary studies related to Qur'anic semantic analysis.

Data collection was carried out by identifying Qur'anic verses that contain derivational forms of the root *m-l-k*. Afterward, each derivation was classified according to its morphological pattern and contextual usage within the relevant verse. The study also examined the semantic relationship between the derivations of *m-l-k* and other interconnected Qur'anic concepts, such as *Rabb*, *Ilāh*, authority, ownership, and sovereignty. The analysis employs a lexical-semantic approach, focusing on several semantic aspects, including denotative and connotative meaning, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, and semantic field relations. In addition, contextual analysis (*siyāq al-kalām*) was employed to understand how meanings shift according to syntactic structure, thematic setting, and discourse function in the Qur'an. Through this approach, the study aims to comprehensively uncover the semantic structure and conceptual network associated with the root *m-l-k*.

The analytical process in this study was conducted through four stages. First, all derivational forms of the root *m-l-k* found in the Qur'an were identified and compiled. Second, the collected forms were classified morphologically based on their lexical and grammatical structures. Third, each derivation was analyzed contextually to identify its semantic nuances and conceptual implications. Finally, the semantic relations among the derivations were interpreted in order to construct the semantic field of the root *m-l-k* within Qur'anic discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the results of the semantic analysis of the root word *m-l-k* (ملك) in the Qur'an. The discussion is organized into two main parts. The first part outlines the research findings, including the identification of verbal and nominal derivations, their morphological classifications, and their frequency of occurrence within the Qur'anic text. The second part discusses the semantic implications of these derivations, particularly regarding semantic expansion, polysemy, the hierarchy of authority, and the Qur'anic representation of sovereignty. The findings are derived from data collected from *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Qur'ān* and analyzed using a lexical-semantic framework. The analysis shows that the derivations of the root *m-l-k* are distributed across a variety of morphological structures and semantic contexts. These patterns illustrate how the Qur'an constructs concepts such as ownership, authority, kingship, sovereignty, and dominion through the semantic network of the root *m-l-k*.

Verbal Derivations of the Root Word M-L-K

The findings reveal that the root word *m-l-k* (م-ل-ك) appears in several verbal derivations throughout the Qur'an. Based on data collected from *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Qur'ān*, the verbal forms of the root occur 44 times in different morphological patterns. (المعجم المفهرس).Pdf, n.d.) These derivations appear in past verbs (*fi'l māḍī*) and present verbs (*fi'l muḍāri'*), indicating various linguistic functions related to possession, ownership, authority, and control. The following table presents the verbal derivations of the root *m-l-k* identified in the Qur'an.

Table 1. Verbal Derivations of the Root Word M-L-K in the Qur'an

No	Derivational Form	Arabic Form	Frequency	Morphological Form	General Meaning
1	<i>Malakat</i>	ملك	15	Fi'l māḍī	Possessed
2	<i>Malaktum</i>	ملكتم	1	Fi'l māḍī	you possessed
3	<i>Amliku</i>	أملك	5	Fi'l muḍāri'	I possess/ control
4	<i>Tamliku</i>	تملك	2	Fi'l muḍāri'	you possess
5	<i>Tamlikuhum</i>	تملكهم	1	Fi'l muḍāri'	you control them
6	<i>Tamlikuna</i>	تملكون	2	Fi'l muḍāri'	you possess
7	<i>Yamliku</i>	يملك	8	Fi'l muḍāri'	he possesses
8	<i>Yamlikuna</i>	يملكون	10	Fi'l muḍāri'	they possess

The data indicate that the present verb forms (*fi'l muḍāri'*) occur more frequently than the past verb forms (*fi'l māḍī*). Among the verbal derivations, the form *malakat* appears most frequently, with 15 occurrences, followed by *yamlikuna* with 10 and *yamliku* with 8. Morphologically, the verbal derivations exhibit variations in grammatical person and number, including first-, second, and third-person forms. These variations indicate that the root *m-l-k* is used in diverse syntactic contexts throughout the Qur'an (Yusuff et al., 2025). The findings also show that the verbal forms are primarily associated with actions of possession, authority, control, and capability. These derivations appear in both divine and human contexts, reflecting the broad linguistic usage of the root word *m-l-k* within Qur'anic discourse.

Nominal Derivations of the Root Word M-L-K

The findings indicate that the root word *m-l-k* (م-ل-ك) appears predominantly in nominal derivations throughout the Qur'an. Based on the data collected from *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz*

al-Qur'ān, the nominal forms of the root occur more frequently than the verbal forms. (المعجم

المفهرس Pdf, n.d.) These nominal derivations include nouns, active participles (*ism fā'il*), plural forms,

and intensive forms associated with meanings of ownership, kingship, sovereignty, and dominion.

The following table presents the nominal derivations of the root *m-l-k* identified in the Qur'an.

Table 2. Nominal Derivations of the Root Word M-L-K in the Qur'an

No	Derivational Form	Arabic Form	Frequency	Morphological Category	General Meaning
1	<i>Mulk</i>	ملك	42	Noun / Masdar	dominion, kingdom
2	<i>Mulkan</i>	ملكا	3	Noun	sovereignty
3	<i>Mulkahu</i>	ملكه	3	Nominal phrase	His dominion
4	<i>Bimalkinā</i>	بملكنا	1	Nominal phrase	by our possession
5	<i>Malik</i>	ملك	11	Noun	king/ruler
6	<i>Malikan</i>	ملكا	2	Noun	a king
7	<i>Muluk</i>	ملوك	1	Plural noun	kings
8	<i>Mulukan</i>	ملوكا	1	Plural noun	kings
9	<i>Mālik</i>	مالك	3	Ism fā'il	owner
10	<i>Mālikūn</i>	مالكون	1	Ism fā'il plural	possessors
11	<i>Malik</i>	ملك	1	Intensive noun	supreme king
12	<i>Mamlūk</i>	مملوكا	1	Passive participle	owned/slave
13	<i>Malakūt</i>	ملكوت	4	Intensive noun	cosmic dominion

The data show that the derivation *mulk* is the most dominant nominal form, appearing 42 times throughout the Qur'an. Other frequently occurring forms include *malik* (11 occurrences) and *malakūt* (4 occurrences). Morphologically, the nominal derivations consist of various categories, including singular nouns, plural nouns, active participles (*ism fā'il*), passive participles, and intensive forms. (Ech-charfi & Ech-charfi, 2025) The findings demonstrate that the Qur'an employs the root *m-l-k* in diverse nominal structures across different linguistic contexts (Ahmad, 2016). The nominal forms generally represent concepts associated with ownership, authority, kingship, sovereignty, possession, and dominion. (Nurjannah et al., 2024) In addition, the findings indicate that several derivations of the root appear in intensified morphological patterns, such as *malik* and *malakūt*, which reflect broader semantic functions within Qur'anic discourse.

Frequency and Morphological Distribution of the Root Word *M-L-K*

The findings demonstrate that the root word *m-l-k* (م-ل-ك) appears in various morphological forms throughout the Qur'an. Based on the collected data, root derivations occur in both verbal and nominal categories, with different frequencies and grammatical structures.

Table 3. Frequency and Morphological Distribution of the Root Word *M-L-K* in the Qur'an

No	Morphological Category	Number of Forms	Frequency of Occurrences
1	Verbal derivations (<i>fi'l</i>)	8	44
2	Nominal derivations (<i>ism</i>)	13	73
3	Total	21	117

The data indicate that the nominal derivations occur more frequently than the verbal derivations. The nominal forms appear in 73 occurrences distributed across 13 derivational patterns, while the verbal forms appear in 44 occurrences distributed across 8 derivational patterns. Among the nominal derivations, the form *mulk* is the most dominant, occurring 42 times in the Qur'an. Meanwhile, among the verbal derivations, the form *malakat* appears most frequently with 15 occurrences. These findings demonstrate that the Qur'an employs the root *m-l-k* extensively in both nominal and verbal constructions. The morphological distribution also reveals that the derivations of the root appear in multiple grammatical patterns, including *fi'l māḍī*, *fi'l muḍāri'*, singular nouns, plural nouns, active participles (*ism fā'il*), passive participles, and intensive forms. This variation indicates the high morphological productivity of the root *m-l-k* within Qur'anic language. (Busari Kehinde Kamorudeen, 2024)

In addition, the findings show that the root's derivations are distributed across semantic contexts related to ownership, kingship, authority, sovereignty, dominion, and possession. The frequency and distribution of these forms demonstrate the importance of the root *m-l-k* in the conceptual structure of Qur'anic discourse.

Semantic Expansion of the Root Word *M-L-K*

The findings discussed in the previous section indicate that the root word *m-l-k* (ملك) appears in numerous verbal and nominal derivations throughout the Qur'an. These variations demonstrate that the semantic meaning of the root is not fixed or singular. Instead, it develops into broader conceptual domains through differences in morphology and contextual usage. (Iqbal, 2020) In this respect, the semantic structure of *m-l-k* reflects a gradual expansion from the notion of basic

ownership toward wider ideas of authority, sovereignty, and dominion.

At its most fundamental level, the root *m-l-k* conveys the meaning of possession or ownership. This primary meaning can be observed in derivations such as *mālik* and verbal forms like *yamliku*, both of which relate to possessing, controlling, or owning something. In several Qur'anic contexts, these forms are associated with material ownership and human capability. (Syafudin et al., 2024) Nevertheless, the Qur'an does not restrict the root to this literal sense alone, but extends its semantic scope into more comprehensive conceptual dimensions. A notable semantic development is evident in the distinction between *mālik* (owner) and *malik* (king or ruler). Although the two forms derive from the same trilateral root, each carries a distinct semantic orientation shaped by its morphological structure. (Fatima et al., 2024) The form *mālik* emphasizes possession and ownership, whereas *malik* refers more specifically to rulership, political authority, and kingship. This distinction illustrates how morphological variation contributes significantly to semantic diversification within Qur'anic language. (Pranata, n.d.)

The semantic expansion becomes even more apparent in the derivation *mulk* (مُلْك), which frequently occurs in the Qur'an. Unlike *mālik*, which focuses on the subject's possession of something, *mulk* refers to sovereignty, dominion, or authority itself. In many Qur'anic verses, the term is directly associated with Allah's control over the heavens and the earth. (Nusaibah & Sanuri, 2025) Such usage reflects a semantic movement from individual possession toward universal sovereignty and supreme authority (Mozaheb et al., 2017). Furthermore, the derivation *malakūt* (مَلَكُوت) represents a more intensive stage of semantic expansion. (Hawary & Siregar, 2025) Morphologically, *malakūt* belongs to an emphatic nominal pattern that conveys stronger semantic force. Within Qur'anic discourse, the term denotes cosmic and metaphysical dominion rather than merely worldly authority. (Journal & Language, n.d.) Consequently, the semantic value of *malakūt* transcends ordinary kingship and signifies absolute divine sovereignty encompassing all existence.

The semantic development of the root *m-l-k* can also be understood through its contextual application. In contexts related to human authority, the derivations generally indicate limited and temporary ownership. However, when the same root is associated with Allah, its meaning expands to encompass notions of eternal sovereignty, unrestricted dominion, and absolute ownership. This demonstrates that the semantic value of the root is strongly influenced by theological context and

discourse environment within the Qur'an. These developments indicate that the Qur'an employs the root *m-l-k* not simply as a lexical expression of ownership, but as a conceptual framework for representing different levels of authority and power (Al-asbahi, 2020). The diversity of its derivational forms creates an interconnected semantic network linking possession, rulership, sovereignty, and metaphysical dominion within a unified Qur'anic worldview.

Therefore, the semantic expansion of the root *m-l-k* reveals the conceptual richness of Qur'anic language. Through both morphological and contextual variation, the Qur'an constructs a multidimensional semantic structure in which the notion of ownership develops progressively into political authority, universal sovereignty, and ultimately absolute divine dominion (Ababneh & Abu-shihab, 2017).

Semantic Hierarchy of Authority and Ownership

The semantic expansion of the root *m-l-k* further demonstrates the existence of a hierarchical structure of authority and ownership within Qur'anic discourse. (Yahya, 2018) The various derivations of the root do not merely represent different lexical meanings; rather, they signify different levels of power, control, and sovereignty. Through this semantic hierarchy, the Qur'an differentiates between limited human authority and absolute divine dominion (Ababneh & Abu-shihab, 2017). At the first semantic level, the root *m-l-k* refers to ordinary human ownership and social possession, as reflected in expressions such as:

mā malakat aymānukum

In this context, the derivation denotes forms of possession within social and historical human relationships. The authority represented here is limited, temporary, and contextual because it depends upon social conditions and historical circumstances. Human ownership at this level is therefore relative rather than absolute (Mahmoud & Zrigui, 2021). The second semantic level appears in the derivation *malik* (ملك), which refers to kingship and political authority. In several Qur'anic narratives, the term describes worldly rulers who possess governmental power and territorial control. (Arroisi, 2019) Compared with ordinary ownership, the semantic scope of *malik* is broader, as it encompasses leadership, political systems, and social authority. Nevertheless, the authority of a *malik* remains finite and ultimately dependent upon divine will.

The hierarchy develops further in the derivation *mulk* (مُلْك), which represents sovereignty, dominion, or kingdom in a broader institutional sense. (Bagiono et al., 2026) Unlike *malik*, which

refers to an individual ruler, *mulk* denotes authority itself as a system of power and governance. In many Qur'anic verses, *mulk* is directly connected with Allah's sovereignty over the heavens and the earth, as illustrated in the expression:

Qulillāhumma mālika al-mulk (QS. Āli 'Imrān: 26)

This verse emphasizes that every form of authority ultimately originates from Allah. Human sovereignty is therefore portrayed as temporary and derivative, while Allah remains the ultimate possessor of dominion.

The highest semantic level appears in the derivation *malakūt* (ملكوت), which refers to metaphysical and cosmic dominion. Semantically, this form transcends worldly authority and political kingship, representing universal sovereignty over all existence. In verses such as:

Bi-yadihi malakūtu kulli shay' (QS. Yāsīn: 83)

The term *malakūt* signifies comprehensive authority encompassing both visible and invisible realities. Its intensive morphological structure reinforces the meaning of unlimited, eternal sovereignty that belongs exclusively to Allah (Tallas-mahajna et al., 2006). The semantic hierarchy of the root *m-l-k* may therefore be understood progressively as follows:

- *mā malakat*: limited human ownership
- *malik*: kingship and political authority
- *mulk*: sovereignty and institutional dominion
- *malakūt*: absolute divine sovereignty and cosmic dominion

This hierarchical structure demonstrates that the Qur'an conceptualizes authority as a graded semantic system rather than a single, uniform meaning (Pranata, n.d.); (Jamil et al., 2025). Human ownership and political power occupy lower and temporary levels, while ultimate sovereignty belongs exclusively to Allah. Through this semantic organization, the Qur'an constructs a worldview in which all forms of authority remain subordinate to divine dominion (Hawary & Siregar, 2025). Moreover, this hierarchy reflects a central theological principle within Qur'anic discourse: worldly authority is neither autonomous nor eternal (Yusuff et al., 2025). Every level of ownership and sovereignty ultimately depends on Allah, the supreme source of power. Consequently, the semantic structure of the root *m-l-k* functions not only linguistically, but also theologically in expressing the relationship between human limitation and divine absoluteness.

Polysemy and Contextual Meaning

One of the most important semantic characteristics of the root *m-l-k* in the Qur'an is its polysemous nature. Polysemy refers to a condition in which a single lexical root generates multiple interconnected meanings depending on context, morphology, and syntactic usage (Hawary & Siregar, 2025). The derivations of *m-l-k* clearly demonstrate how the Qur'an develops a broad semantic network from a single root while maintaining conceptual coherence among its meanings. At its semantic core, the root *m-l-k* relates to ownership, authority, sovereignty, and control. Nevertheless, these meanings undergo contextual modification according to the discourse environment in which each derivation appears. As a result, the same root may signify personal ownership, political kingship, institutional sovereignty, or metaphysical dominion.

A clear example of this polysemy can be observed in the distinction between *mālik* and *malik*. Although both forms derive from the same root, they convey different semantic implications because of their morphological structures and contextual functions. (Nasarudin et al., 2025) The form *mālik* generally emphasizes possession and ownership, while *malik* refers more specifically to kingship and rulership.

In the expression:

Māliki yawmi al-dīn (QS. Al-Fātiḥah: 4)

The derivation *mālik* denotes that Allah is the absolute owner of the Day of Judgment. Here, the meaning extends beyond ordinary possession and signifies complete authority over judgment, recompense, and destiny. The eschatological context reinforces the semantic nuance of ultimate ownership and unrestricted control.

By contrast, the derivation of *Malik* in verses such as:

Fa-ta'ālā Allāhu al-Maliku al-Ḥaqq (QS. Ṭāhā: 114)

Emphasizes kingship, sovereignty, and supreme authority. In this context, the semantic orientation is more closely related to governance and rulership than to possession. Thus, contextual variation produces different conceptual meanings even though both derivations originate from the same lexical root.

The polysemous character of *m-l-k* is also reflected in the derivation *mulk*. In some Qur'anic contexts, *mulk* refers to worldly kingdoms and political power, whereas in other contexts it denotes divine sovereignty over the universe. For example:

Tu'tī al-mulka man tashā' (QS. Āli 'Imrān: 26)

In this verse, *mulk* simultaneously conveys political authority and divine control over authority itself. Its semantic value, therefore, shifts according to the relationship between human power and divine will.

Similarly, the derivation *malakūt* demonstrates a contextual semantic expansion toward metaphysical dominion:

Bi-yadihi malakūtu kulli shay' (QS. Yāsīn: 83)

In this context, the root no longer refers merely to kingship or worldly sovereignty, but to comprehensive cosmic dominion over all existence. The surrounding discourse transforms the derivation's semantic value into a universal and transcendental concept (Ahmad, 2016).

The polysemous structure of the root *m-l-k* indicates that Qur'anic meaning is highly dependent upon context. Semantic interpretation cannot rely solely on lexical definitions because each derivation acquires specific conceptual nuances through morphology, syntax, and thematic discourse (Raudatussolihah et al., 2021). Consequently, the Qur'anic semantic system operates dynamically, allowing a single lexical root to generate multiple interconnected meanings while preserving semantic unity.

Furthermore, the polysemy of *m-l-k* contributes to the coherence of the Qur'anic worldview (Almjlad, 2025). The various meanings associated with ownership, kingship, sovereignty, and dominion ultimately converge upon the theological principle that all authority originates from Allah. Human ownership and political power are therefore portrayed as limited manifestations of a higher and absolute divine sovereignty. Accordingly, the analysis of polysemy and contextual meaning demonstrates that the root *m-l-k* functions as a complex semantic system rather than merely a single lexical concept. Its derivations reveal the depth and richness of Qur'anic language in constructing interconnected meanings through contextual and morphological variation.

Qur'anic Conceptualization of Sovereignty

The semantic analysis of the root *m-l-k* (ملك) ultimately reveals a broader Qur'anic framework concerning sovereignty. Through its various derivational forms, the Qur'an develops an integrated understanding of ownership, authority, dominion, and power centered upon Allah as the absolute sovereign over all existence. In this sense, the semantic field of *m-l-k* functions not only linguistically, but also theologically within Qur'anic discourse. One of the most significant conceptual aspects reflected in the derivations of *m-l-k* is the distinction between human authority and divine sovereignty (Mozaheb et al., 2017). Human ownership and political power are

consistently portrayed as temporary, limited, and dependent, whereas Allah's sovereignty is absolute, eternal, and unrestricted. This distinction is clearly expressed in the verse:

Qulillāhumma mālika al-mulk tu'tī al-mulka man tashā' wa tanzi'u al-mulka mimman tashā'

(QS. Āli 'Imrān: 26)

This verse demonstrates that sovereignty (*mulk*) is not inherently possessed by human beings. Rather, authority is granted and withdrawn by Allah according to His will. Human power is therefore represented as derivative authority rather than independent sovereignty (Mozaheb et al., 2017). Consequently, the Qur'an positions Allah as the ultimate source of all dominion and rulership.

The Qur'anic conceptualization of sovereignty becomes more comprehensive through the derivations *al-Malik* and *Mālik*. In the expression:

Fa-ta'ālā Allāhu al-Maliku al-Ḥaqq (QS. Ṭāhā: 114)

Allah is described as "The True King," emphasizing supreme and authentic sovereignty. The attribute *al-Ḥaqq* reinforces the semantic meaning of absolute authority that transcends all forms of human kingship. Unlike worldly rulers whose power is temporary and vulnerable, Allah's sovereignty is eternal and unquestionable.

Likewise, the phrase:

Māliki yawmi al-dīn (QS. Al-Fātiḥah: 4)

Extends the concept of sovereignty into the eschatological realm. In this context, Allah is portrayed not merely as ruler, but as the absolute owner of the Day of Judgment. The semantic structure of the verse combines ownership, authority, justice, and accountability within a unified theological framework. This indicates that ultimate judgment and recompense belong exclusively to Allah. (Busari Kehinde Kamorudeen, 2024)

The Qur'anic understanding of sovereignty also includes cosmic dominion through the derivation of *malakūt*. In the verse:

Bi-yadihi malakūtu kulli shay' (QS. Yāsīn: 83)

The term *malakūt* signifies comprehensive authority over all creation, encompassing both visible and invisible realities. Semantically, this derivation surpasses ordinary kingship and political dominion by representing universal and metaphysical sovereignty. Its intensive morphological structure further strengthens the meaning of limitless divine authority.

Another important aspect of Qur'anic sovereignty is the rejection of independent human power. Several verbal derivations such as:

lā yamlikūna

Are employed to deny the existence of ultimate human control apart from Allah. Through these expressions, the Qur'an emphasizes that human ownership and political authority remain entirely contingent upon divine will. Thus, the semantic structure of *m-l-k* consistently directs attention toward Allah's supreme sovereignty.

The previously discussed semantic hierarchy further supports this conceptualization. Human possession (*mā malakat*), political rulership (*malik*), worldly sovereignty (*mulk*), and cosmic dominion (*malakūt*) form a progressive semantic system culminating in Allah's absolute authority. Through this structure, the Qur'an constructs a worldview in which every form of power ultimately belongs to Allah. Accordingly, the Qur'anic conceptualization of sovereignty demonstrates that the root *m-l-k* functions as more than a lexical marker of ownership or kingship. Rather, it forms a comprehensive semantic framework through which the Qur'an articulates the relationship between human limitation and divine absoluteness. (Yahya, 2018) Authority in the Qur'anic worldview is therefore understood not as autonomous human power, but as a manifestation of Allah's ultimate sovereignty over all existence. The interconnected semantic relations among the derivations of *m-l-k* further suggest that the Qur'an constructs authority and sovereignty through a broader conceptual system. This relational semantic structure may be understood more comprehensively through Toshihiko Izutsu's perspective on the Qur'an's semantic worldview.

Semantic Worldview of *Malik* and *Mālik*

The previous discussions demonstrate that the derivations of the root *m-l-k* in the Qur'an form an interconnected semantic structure involving ownership, authority, sovereignty, and dominion. These meanings do not function independently; rather, they collectively construct a conceptual worldview concerning power and divine authority. In this regard, Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic theory provides an important framework for understanding how Qur'anic vocabulary operates within a relational system of meaning rather than as isolated lexical units. (Nasarudin et al., 2025)

According to Izutsu, the meaning of Qur'anic vocabulary emerges through its relationship with other concepts within the semantic network of the Qur'an. A lexical item therefore derives meaning not only from dictionary definitions, but also from its position within the Qur'anic

worldview.(Jamil et al., 2025) From this perspective, the derivations *malik* and *mālik* can be understood as conceptual expressions that represent different dimensions of divine sovereignty. The derivation *mālik* primarily emphasizes ownership and possession. This semantic orientation appears clearly in the expression:

Māliki yawmi al-dīn (QS. Al-Fātiḥah: 4)

In this verse, the meaning of *mālik* extends beyond ordinary ownership and refers to Allah's absolute authority over the Day of Judgment. The semantic relationship between *mālik* and *yawm al-dīn* constructs a worldview in which Allah possesses complete control over judgment, recompense, and the final destiny of creation. Consequently, the derivation *mālik* represents existential ownership and ultimate authority rather than mere material possession.

By contrast, the derivation *malik* emphasizes kingship, rulership, and sovereign authority. This meaning appears in expressions such as:

Fa-ta'ālā Allāhu al-Maliku al-Ḥaqq (QS. Ṭāhā: 114)

In this context, *al-Malik* reflects divine kingship and supreme sovereignty. The attribute *al-Ḥaqq* further strengthens the semantic meaning by emphasizing that Allah's authority is true, eternal, and absolute, unlike human authority which is temporary and limited. Within the Qur'anic semantic network, *malik* therefore functions as a representation of divine governance and cosmic order (Ahmad, 2016).

Although *malik* and *mālik* originate from the same lexical root, the Qur'an differentiates their semantic orientations through morphology and context. The form *mālik* focuses on ownership and possession, whereas *malik* emphasizes sovereignty and rulership. Nevertheless, both derivations ultimately converge on the same theological worldview, in which Allah is understood as the absolute owner and supreme sovereign over all existence. From Izutsu's semantic perspective, these derivations are also interconnected with several key Qur'anic concepts such as *Rabb*, *Ilāh*, *ḥukm*, and *mulk* (Paret & Izutsu, 1968). The concept *Rabb* emphasizes nurturing and sustaining authority, *Ilāh* represents the object of worship, while *mulk* denotes sovereignty and dominion. Within this conceptual network, *malik* and *mālik* function as semantic components reinforcing the Qur'anic understanding of divine authority and power (TOSHIKO, 2002).

Furthermore, the semantic worldview constructed through the derivations of *m-l-k* establishes a clear distinction between divine sovereignty and human authority. Human rulers may possess limited political power, yet their authority remains dependent upon Allah. By contrast,

Allah combines both absolute ownership (*mālikiyyah*) and supreme sovereignty (*mulkiyyah*), transcending all forms of worldly authority (TOSHIKO, 2002). Therefore, the semantic worldview of *malik* and *mālik* demonstrates that the Qur'an employs the root *m-l-k* as a conceptual framework for articulating divine sovereignty. Through contextual and relational meanings, the Qur'an constructs a worldview in which all ownership, authority, and dominion ultimately originate from Allah as the absolute sovereign over existence.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the semantic structure of the root word *m-l-k* (ملك) in the Qur'an using a lexical-semantic approach. The findings demonstrate that the derivations of the root appear in various morphological forms, including both verbal and nominal constructions, each carrying distinct semantic nuances depending on context and syntactic structure. The data collected from *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Qur'ān* indicate that the root is highly productive in Qur'anic discourse and spans multiple semantic domains related to ownership, authority, sovereignty, dominion, and control. Morphologically, the derivations of *m-l-k* are distributed into verbal forms such as *yamliku*, *tamliku*, and *malakat*, as well as nominal forms including *mālik*, *malik*, *mulk*, and *malakūt*. The findings reveal that nominal forms dominate the Qur'anic usage of the root, suggesting that the Qur'an places greater emphasis on concepts of sovereignty and dominion than on mere acts of possession. The semantic analysis further demonstrates that the root *m-l-k* undergoes significant semantic expansion. Its meaning develops progressively from ordinary ownership (*mālik*) to political authority (*malik*), institutional sovereignty (*mulk*), and metaphysical dominion (*malakūt*). This semantic progression reflects the conceptual richness of Qur'anic language and illustrates how a single lexical root can generate interconnected meanings across theological, political, social, and metaphysical dimensions. The study also identifies a semantic hierarchy within the derivations of *m-l-k*. Human ownership and political authority are portrayed as limited and temporary, whereas absolute sovereignty belongs exclusively to Allah. Through expressions such as *Māliki yawmi al-dīn*, *al-Malik al-Ḥaqq*, and *mālika al-mulk*, the Qur'an constructs a worldview in which all forms of authority and power ultimately derive from divine sovereignty.

Furthermore, the analysis of polysemy demonstrates that the meanings of these derivations are highly dependent upon context. The semantic distinction between *mālik* and *malik*, for instance, illustrates how morphological variation and contextual usage shape different conceptual meanings

within Qur'anic discourse. In this regard, Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic theory strengthens the understanding that Qur'anic vocabulary constitutes an interconnected conceptual network that reflects the Qur'anic worldview rather than isolated lexical definitions. Accordingly, this study concludes that the root word *m-l-k* in the Qur'an represents a complex semantic structure integrating concepts of ownership, kingship, sovereignty, and divine dominion within a unified semantic system. The diversity of its derivations demonstrates the depth of Qur'anic linguistic expression and confirms that lexical-semantic analysis is an effective approach to uncovering the conceptual and theological dimensions embedded in Qur'anic vocabulary. Finally, this study is limited to a lexical-semantic analysis of selected derivational forms of the root *m-l-k*. Future research may further explore this root through comparative semantic approaches, corpus linguistics, or thematic Qur'anic interpretation in order to enrich the study of Qur'anic semantics and Arabic linguistic scholarship.

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