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Semantic Study: An Analysis of the Meaning of Abu Nawas's Poetry within the Richness of the Global Arabic Language

Kajian semantik: Analisis Makna Puisi Abu Nawas dalam Kekayaan Bahasa Arab Global

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna pada puisi Abu Nawas melalui pendekatan semantik. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kajian pustaka (*library research)* yang bersumber pada Diwan Abu Nawas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa puisi Abu Nawas memiliki bermacam-macam gaya atau karakter pada setiap puisinya dan dalam puisi ini tidak hanya berisi perjalanan spritual melainkan juga memuat perasaan pribadi, nilai-nilai sosial, dan budaya.

Keyword: poetry, Abu Nawas, semantics

مستخلص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل المعاني قصائد أبو نواس من خلال منهج دلالي. وقد استخدم الباحث في هذه الدراسة منهج البحث المكتبي، مع اعتماد ديوان أبي نواس كمصدر أساسي. تشير نتائج البحث إلى أن قصائد أبي نواس تتميز بأنماط وأساليب متنوعة، ولا تقتصر على التجارب الروحية فحسب، بل تتضمن أيضًا مشاعر شخصية وقيمًا اجتماعية وعناصر ثقافية

كلمات أساسية: الشعر، أبو نواس، المعني الدلالي

Language is the foundation of human life that facilitates the processes of thinking and communication. More than that, language functions as a representation of group identity and a reflection of culture that distinguishes one civilization from another (Situmorang et al., 2025). The Arabic language itself is known to possess very profound meanings; therefore, a semantic approach is needed to understand each word and expression accurately. The meanings contained within it can shift from literal meanings to figurative ones depending on how the words are used. In this case, not only context, but also changes in word forms, sentence

structures, and the close relationship between language, culture, and literature contribute to shaping the uniqueness of meaning embedded within it.

In the global and academic context, Arabic occupies a highly strategic position with various important statuses. Besides being the liturgical language of the Qur'an and Hadith for Muslims, it has also been recognized as an official international language at the United Nations. Geopolitically, Arabic serves as the national identity of more than 22 Middle Eastern countries and functions as an instrument for preserving intellectual and socio-cultural heritage (*lughat at-turats*) (Ridlo, 2015). In addition to being a global linguistic treasure, Arabic also possesses several unique characteristics.

The following are some of the special characteristics of the Arabic language that the author can present in this paper, as follows (Lasawali, 2020):

1. Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. Allah says in Surah Az-Zukhruf verse 3: *"Indeed, we have made it an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand."*
2. Arabic is the language of Prophet Muhammad and the spoken language of his companions. The hadiths of the Prophet have been transmitted to us in Arabic. Likewise, classical Islamic jurisprudence books are written in this language. Therefore, mastery of Arabic becomes the gateway to understanding them.
3. Arabic word structures are relatively concise. Most consist of only three-letter roots, making them easier to understand and pronounce.
4. The beauty of Arabic vocabulary. Those who examine Arabic expressions and sentences will feel the beauty and clarity of its expressions, arranged in concise and eloquent wording.

After Allah SWT designated Arabic as the language of the Qur'an, this language experienced extraordinary development, giving rise to various important roles in human interaction, especially in Islamic education. These roles can be classified as follows (Lasawali, 2020):

First, Arabic functions as the language of revelation, making it a privileged language. This is indicated by Allah choosing to communicate with humanity through Arabic in the Qur'an. Surah Yusuf verse 2 states: *"Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand."*

Second, Arabic serves as the language of communication between humans and Allah SWT. In Islam, certain acts of worship such as prayer, remembrance (*dhikr*), and supplication (*du'a*) are performed in Arabic. Prayer, as a medium of direct communication with Allah, contains recitations entirely in Arabic. Therefore, to comprehend their meanings, one needs to study Arabic.

Third, Arabic functions as an international language. Arabic plays an important role internationally and is used in both Islamic and non-Islamic educational institutions. It is even studied at major world universities such as Harvard University and Oxford University.

Fourth, Arabic plays a major role in Islamic studies. Arabic is used in various classical works of Tafsir, Hadith, Sufism, Fiqh, law, and others. Therefore, comprehensive mastery of Arabic is required to avoid misunderstandings.

Literature and language are entities that are dialectically interconnected. Language and literature are inseparable elements that significantly contribute to human existence. While language functions as a fundamental communication tool, literature serves as a medium for cultural articulation and reflection of human thought (Khaerul Umam et al., 2025). Literature possesses the privilege of conveying messages to broad audiences. Through this function, literature actively serves as a communication medium connecting the writer's ideas with readers. Literature is also an imaginative representation of human experiences and realities. Everyday phenomena captured by the senses are creatively transformed into various forms of writing such as poetry, short stories, and drama scripts (Rani Setiani & Priyanto, 2019).

The language used in poetry is often difficult to understand and rarely used in daily communication because poetic language contains diverse associations and varying connotations (Hadir Suteja, 2022). Therefore, analyzing poetry requires an analytical perspective and cannot rely solely on literal translation, in order to prevent misunderstandings in interpreting poetry. In this context, a more comprehensive analytical perspective is needed by viewing language as a system of signs whose meanings are shaped and agreed upon within certain cultural contexts (Sianturi et al., 2025). Thus, systematic disciplines such as semantics and semiotics are needed to study this field, and this research specifically employs semantics.

According to Elitaria et al. (2021, as cited in Hutagalung, 2022), semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning in language. The term *semantics* refers to various highly technical ideas and is commonly used in everyday language to indicate issues related to understanding word choice. Semantics is understood as the study of meaning based on the assumption that meaning is part of language or linguistics. In semantic studies, denotative meaning in poetry focuses on clear and direct expressions describing apparent realities or conditions. Meanwhile, connotative meaning explores deeper interpretations often related to emotions, cultural values, and symbolism hidden behind the poet's words.

Denotation and connotation fall within the scope of semantics. The term *semantics* derives from the Ancient Greek word *sema* (noun form), meaning "sign" or "symbol." Its verbal form, *semaino*, means "to signify" or "to symbolize." The sign or symbol referred to here corresponds to the linguistic sign (*signe linguistique*) proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure. Linguistic signs consist of the signifier (*signifie*), manifested as sound, and the signified (*signifié*), manifested as concept or meaning (Chaer & Muliastuti, 2014). Denotative meaning refers to dictionary or literal meaning, whereas connotative meaning contains feelings, values, or particular imagery (Ainin, 2014). According to (Nasution et al., 2021), denotative meaning directly conveys the poet's message, while connotative meaning involves deeper and more detailed interpretations such as symbolism, metaphor, or emotions conveyed through poetic verses.

Poetry is a literary work containing implicit meanings and is written using beautiful language according to the creativity and imagination of the poet. Poetry contains beautiful expressions, and its language functions as a medium for conveying information, thoughts, ideas, feelings, messages, or anything the writer wishes to communicate to readers (Rerin, 2018). Poetry has its own writing conventions, whether examined from language, diction, or readership aspects (Tri Andari et al., 2023). Poets possess freedom in creating poetry, allowing them to express their imagination and broad insights through any linguistic style they desire. These imaginative ideas are then processed through thought and emotion before being expressed in literary works.

Poetry in the Arab world holds a highly important position, and Arabs are renowned for their skill in composing poetry. Arabs appreciate poetry because it is considered one of the most monumental and historical literary forms (Indri Cahyani & Akmaliyah, 2025). One of the specialties of Arab civilization lies in the richness of its language, which has played a major role in the development and spread of Islam (Yunus, 2015). The development of Islam is closely related to Arab culture, especially literature. Arabic literature experienced significant growth during the Abbasid Dynasty, as evidenced by the emergence of brilliant poets such as Abu Nawas and Al-Mutanabbi, both of whom played important roles in the tradition of Arabic poetry through their meaningful and beautiful works (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Abu Nawas composed numerous poems that significantly influenced Arabic literature. His poetry covered various themes such as criticism, advice, feelings of exile, divinity, and others. The themes in *Diwan Abu Nawas* consist of eight categories: *al-khamriyat*, *al-ghazal*, *al-madhu*, *al-hija'*, *ar-ratsa'*, *al-'itab*, *al-zuhd*, and *at-thardu* (Makrufah & Kholisin, 2021).

Abu Nawas was a unique and eccentric figure known for his unusual sense of humor. On one hand, he was often summoned to the royal palace to provide advice to the king, yet on the other hand, he was also known for his bad habit of consuming intoxicating drinks (Maisyaroh, 2024). Abu Nawas is famous for his distinctive poems, one of the most renowned being *Al-I'tiraf*. However, this study discusses another poem by Abu Nawas through a semantic approach by analyzing denotative and connotative meanings. Denotative meaning refers to literal dictionary meaning, whereas connotative meaning refers to emotional associations or symbolic relations connected to words, which readers may interpret emotionally (Rahmelia & Asih, 2023).

There have been previous studies focusing on semantic analyses of denotative and connotative meanings. (Hidayatullah, 2023) analyzed denotative and connotative meanings in the poetry of Nizar Qabbani and found that connotative meanings appeared more frequently than denotative ones. (Henilia and Hum, 2022) identified several stylistic devices in poetry, including simile, repetition, litotes, rhetorical questions, and personification, particularly in poems with egoic themes and psychological conflict.

Furthermore, (Azizah and Hidayatullah, 2022) found four denotative and four connotative meanings in each stanza of the poem *al-Quds* by Nizar Qabbani. Although many expressions in the poem could already be understood denotatively, connotative interpretations remained significant.

Research by (Hadir Suteja, 2022), entitled *Analysis of the Meaning of Poetry by Mustofa Bisri*, concluded that the poems "Maju Tak Gentar" and "Berita Politik" reflected social inequality, including injustice committed by political elites and conflicts among parties during the New Order era.

Research by (Indri Cahyani and Akmaliyah, 2025) demonstrated that poetry contains complex layers of meaning that can be interpreted through both denotative and connotative dimensions. Lastly, Dewi and Dwi (2024) analyzed Sapardi Djoko Damono's poem *Aku Ingin* using Abrams' pragmatic approach and found that each stanza contained elements of *decore* conveying moral teachings and *movere* stimulating emotional responses from readers.

The objectives of this study are: 1) To identify differences in meaning within Abu Nawas's poetry. 2) To identify denotative meanings in Abu Nawas's poetry. 3) To identify connotative meanings in Abu Nawas's poetry. In relation to previous studies, this research also aims to expand existing knowledge and enrich scholarly understanding regarding meaning analysis in poetry through the study of denotative and connotative meanings.

Methods (منهج البحث)

This study employs a library research method. Library research is an activity of reviewing and examining various existing literatures with the aim of obtaining scientific data and information in the form of theories, methods, and findings from previous studies that have been documented in books, journals, articles, and other scientific manuscripts (Aprilyada et al., 2023).

The approach used in this study is a semantic approach focusing on the analysis of denotative and connotative meanings in the poetry of Abu Nawas. This research is descriptive qualitative in nature because the analyzed data consist of words, phrases, and poetic verses rather than statistical or numerical data.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. The primary data are the poems of Abu Nawas contained in *Diwan Abu Nuwas* written by Ahmad Abdul Majid Al-Ghazali. This e-book was published by Darul Kitab Al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, and accessed through the internet (Makrufah & Kholisin, 2021). Meanwhile, the secondary data were obtained from semantic books, journal articles, and previous studies relevant to denotative and connotative meaning analysis (Azizah & Huda, 2021).

The object of this study is the denotative and connotative meanings contained in Abu Nawas's poems. The research samples were selected purposively, namely poetic verses containing literal and figurative meanings relevant to semantic studies.

The data collection technique was conducted through literature study by reading, understanding, and taking notes on the poetic verses of Abu Nawas that contain denotative and connotative meanings. Furthermore, the data were classified according to the categories of meaning analyzed (Winda, 2023).

The data analysis technique in this study was carried out through several stages: (1) identifying poetic verses containing denotative and connotative meanings; (2) classifying the

data based on the types of meaning; (3) describing the meanings contained in each verse; and (4) drawing conclusions based on the results of the semantic analysis of Abu Nawas's poetry.

Results (نتائج البحث)

1. **The Difference Between Denotative and Connotative Meanings in Abu Nawas's Poetry**

Meaning is something related to words, phrases, and sentences. Meaning is influenced by the speaker, the place and time an expression is uttered, as well as the situation and conditions in which the utterance is expressed (Ngatourrahman, 2023). The difference between denotative and connotative meanings refers to the existence of emotional and contextual nuances in every word through in-depth analysis. More specifically, denotative meaning is the literal meaning or the meaning found in the dictionary, whereas connotative meaning is the meaning based on the values and emotions contained within it by relating it to the social and cultural aspects underlying the creation of the literary work.

2. **Denotative and Connotative Meanings in Abu Nawas's Poetry**

Poetry 1

يا رَبِّ إنَّ القَومَ قَد ظَلَموني # وَبِلا اِقتِرافِ مُعَطِّلٍ حَبَسوني

وَإلى الجُحودِ بِما عَلَيهِ طَوِيَّتي # رَبّي إلَيكَ بِكِذبِهِم نَسَبوني

ما كانَ إلّا الجَريُ في مَيدانِهِم # في كُلِّ خِزيٍ وَالمَجانَةُ ديني

لا العُذرُ يُقبَلُ لي وَيَفرَقُ شاهِدي # مِنهُم وَلا يَرضَونَ حَلفَ يَميني

ما كانَ لَو يَدرونَ أَوَّلَ مَخبَإٍ # في دارِ مَنقَصَةٍ وَمَنزِلِ هونِ

أَمّا الأَمينُ فَلَستُ أَرجو دَفعَهُ # عَنّي فَمَن لي اليَومَ بِالمَأمونِ

Poetry 2

يا رَبِّ إن عَظُمَت ذُنوبي كَثرَةً # فَلَقَد عَلِمتُ بِأَنَّ عَفوَكَ أَعظَمُ

إن كانَ لا يَرجوكَ إلّا مُحسِنٌ # فَبِمَن يَلوذُ وَيَستَجيرُ المُجرِمُ

أَدعوكَ رَبِّ كَما أَمَرتَ تَضَرُّعاً # فَإِذا رَدَدتَ يَدي فَمَن ذا يَرحَمُ

ما لي إِلَيكَ وَسيلَةٌ إِلا الرَجا # وَجَميلُ عَفوِكَ ثُمَّ أَنّي مُسلِمُ

Poetry ke 1

Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Poem Verse

O Lord, truly people have wronged me # And without my having committed any offense, they have imprisoned me.	Abu Nawas felt troubled and distressed because he was about to be punished by the king for his offense, even though it was not a serious offense and did not harm anyone else. This verse depicts the situation at that time, in which Abu Nawas received neither justice nor peace of mind from the king's decision.	يا رَبِّ إنَّ القَومَ قَد ظَلَموني وَبِلا اِقتِرافِ مُعَطِّلٍ حَبَسوني
And to those who deny what is written in my heart # O my Lord, to You I entrust the matter of those who have falsely accused me.	Those around Abu Nawas denied his intentions or inner thoughts, even though they knew the truth about him. In this verse, Abu Nawas entrusts their affairs to God—an act of surrender on his part, since these people had brought shame upon his name.	وَإلى الجُحودِ بِما عَلَيهِ طَوِيَّتي رَبِّي إلَيكَ بِكِذبِهِم نَسَبوني
All I did was run among them (following their ways). In all my humiliation and the madness of my faith.	This verse contains Abu Nawas's self-criticism for having strayed into their ways—ways marked by sin and futility—which constitute the very essence of disgrace in religion.	ما كانَ إلّا الجَريُ في مَيدانِهِم في كُلِّ خِزيٍ وَالمَجانَةُ ديني
They accepted no explanation from me, and they rejected my testimony. Nor would they believe the oath I swore with my right hand.	People at that time did not believe Abu Nawas's words, even though he provided proof by raising his right hand—a gesture signifying his unwillingness to be hostile toward others—and swore by the name of Allah.	لا العُذرُ يُقبَلُ لي وَيَفرَقُ شاهِدي منهُم وَلا يَرضَونَ حَلفَ يَميني

	However, they remained indifferent and unconvinced.	
If only they knew where I once took refuge—in a home of poverty and a humble dwelling.	This verse describes the feelings of the poet (Abu Nawas), whose life was once filled with simplicity, struggle, deprivation, and humiliation—things they knew nothing about.	**ما كانَ لَو يَدرونَ أَوَّلَ مَخبَإٍ** **في دارِ مَنقَصَةٍ وَمَنزِلِ هونِ**
As for the "amin" (the ruler), I don't expect him to stand up for me. So who can I trust now to be my savior?	This stanza depicts the poet's feelings of having lost all hope of help from anyone, including those in power; the phrase "al-amin" refers to government officials. Here, the poet continues to wonder, filled with disappointment, because there is no one left to trust as a helper or savior—only himself can resolve his own problems.	**أَمّا الأَمينُ فَلَستُ أَرجو دَفعَهُ** **عنّي فَمَن لي اليَومَ بِالمَأمونِ**

Poetry 2

Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Poem Verse
O Lord, no matter how great my sins may be, I know that Your forgiveness is far greater.	In this stanza, the poet places great hope in God's forgiveness, knowing that God's mercy is far greater than anything else; even grave sins can be forgiven because of God's forgiving nature.	**يا رَبِّ إِن عَظُمَت ذُنوبي كَثرَةً** **فَلَقَد عَلِمتُ بِأَنَّ عَفوَكَ أَعظَمُ**
If only those who do good were to pray to You, then to whom would the sinner turn for refuge and ask for help?	This stanza depicts an emotional aspect: the fear of losing God's mercy. It also conveys a belief that the mercy and compassion of Allah SWT are boundless, extending even to servants who frequently commit sins.	**ان كان لا يَرجوكَ إِلّا مُحسِنٌ** **فَبِمَن يَلوذُ وَيَستَجيرُ المُجرِمُ**

	Those who have sinned are encouraged to seek help and protection so that spiritual values may still remain within them.	
I plead with You, O Lord, as You have commanded, with all humility. So if You reject my plea, who else will have mercy?	This verse illustrates the value of total surrender accompanied by humility. For, fundamentally, a servant must pray, strive, and surrender or submit to Allah in accordance with His commands. The supplications and requests offered to Allah will not be rejected—not even those of sinners.	أدعوكَ رَبِّ كَما أَمَرتَ تَضَرُّعاً فَإِذا رَدَدتَ يَدي فَمَن ذا يَرحَمُ
There is no way for me to draw near to You except through hope and Your beautiful generosity, and I am a Muslim.	This verse is more or less the same as the one above, namely total surrender to God accompanied by hope, for that is what a Muslim must do. Meanwhile, the phrase "the beauty of Your forgiveness" implies that Allah's forgiveness is so vast, gentle, and soothing to the hearts of sinners.	ما لي إِلَيكَ وَسيلَةٌ إِلا الرَجا وَجَميلُ عَفوِكَ ثُمَّ أَنّي مُسلِمُ

Discussions (المناقشة)

1. The Difference Between Denotative and Connotative Meanings in Abu Nawas's Poetry

Denotative meaning refers to the literal meaning of a word as found in the dictionary. Meanwhile, connotative meaning is a meaning that contains certain feelings, values, or imagery (Ainin, 2014, p. 40). Words that do not carry emotional effects or particular associations are considered to have neutral connotations. For example, the words *thin*, *slim*, and *skinny* have the same denotative meaning, namely a body size below average. However, their emotional effects differ: *thin* is neutral, *slim* carries a positive meaning, and *skinny* carries a negative or offensive meaning (Chaer & Muliastuti, 2014).

Research conducted by Khairunisa (2026) analyzing the lyrics of the song *Amin Paling Serius* consistently found lexical elements containing both denotative and connotative meanings. Literally (denotatively), the lyrics describe natural realities and concrete experiences that clearly establish the setting and situation. However, connotatively, the metaphors used reflect inner struggles, past trauma, and hopes for a mutually respectful relationship. Thus, the distinction between denotative and connotative meanings can be identified by analyzing the meanings of words, starting from the simplest to the most significant elements within the text. Based on the findings above, most verses tend to convey certain values or emotions; therefore, each stanza in this poem contains connotative meaning.

2. Denotative and Connotative Meanings in Abu Nawas's Poetry

Poem 1

In the first stanza, the denotative meaning is: *"O God, indeed people have oppressed me # And without any clear reason, they imprisoned me."* Meanwhile, the connotative meaning of the first stanza, in substance, is that Abu Nawas feels anxious and oppressed because of policies that have burdened him; in short, Abu Nawas is being persecuted or treated unjustly. In the phrase قَد ظَلَموني, the particle *qad* means "indeed" or "truly," emphasizing that the act was genuinely committed. In fact, Abu Nawas's actions could be considered neutral or permissible (*mubah*) in Islamic law. This is evident in the phrase وَبِلا اِقتِرافِ مُعَطِّل, which means "without any clear reason." The imbalance of justice in this policy is driven by personal issues rather than by norms of goodness and justice.

Research by Zulva Vauziah et al. (2023) explains that during his youth, Abu Nawas often engaged in immoral behavior, lived lavishly, became intoxicated, and frequently criticized the government of his time. The stanza in this poem is influenced by such events. However, Abu Nawas's poetry also contains criticism toward the authorities, and when connected to his background, there is a correlation between these two aspects. Compared to Abu Nawas's poem *Al-I'tiraf*, this poem is somewhat different because *Al-I'tiraf* contains expressions of regret for his own mistakes and supplications for repentance to God for his sins (Indri Cahyani & Akmaliyah, 2025). The meaning in this stanza also reflects social injustice toward human beings because the principle of social justice includes respect for the dignity of every individual who possesses equal rights, as well as the fulfillment of conditions necessary for achieving social justice, such as the obligation of all citizens to act fairly and the right of every person to live according to humanitarian values (Pasaribu, 2024).

In the second stanza, the meaning is: *"And to those who deny what is written within my heart # O my Lord, to You I entrust the affairs of those who have attached falsehood to my name."* In this stanza, "they" refers to the people around Abu Nawas who denied his intentions and inner sincerity even though they knew the truth within him. In this stanza, Abu Nawas surrenders the matters of those who spread lies or evil about him to God, which reflects his resignation because these people had dragged his name into false accusations. This is evident in the phrase رَبّي إِلَيكَ بِكِذبِهِم نَسَبوني, which illustrates Abu Nawas's surrender and his entrusting of all matters, including the lies fabricated against him, to God. They acted in such a way because they denied Abu Nawas's intentions and thoughts, even though he was on the right path.

Research by Indri Cahyani and Akmaliyah (2025) also explains that Abu Nawas's poem *I'tiraf* contains connotative meanings reflecting emotional feelings, social and cultural values, as well as regret and anxiety. The difference in this poem is that the regret arises from the sins that had been committed. Research by Siti (2023) also aligns with this opinion, stating that Abu Nawas was a humble poet, self-aware, sincere, and constantly repentant for his sins.

Furthermore, the third stanza means: *"All I did was run within their circles (following them), in all humiliation and the futility of my religion."* Thus, this stanza contains Abu Nawas's self-criticism for having followed their environment of immorality and futility, which represents disgrace within religion. This demonstrates Abu Nawas's awareness of his shortcomings in the past, which he considered a humiliation in religion. However, he realizes his mistakes and strives to improve himself, because a person who considers themselves religious should possess humility, as humility is a noble moral quality and prevents someone from looking down on others (Jessica, 2022).

In the fourth stanza, the denotative and connotative meanings are: *"No excuse from me was accepted, and my witnesses were rejected. They also refused to believe in the oath I swore with my right hand."* Meanwhile, the connotative meaning of this stanza, in substance, is that people at that time did not believe Abu Nawas's words even when he presented evidence or witnesses; they still ignored and distrusted him. This is evident in the phrase وَلا يَرضَونَ حَلفَ يَميني, which illustrates the rejection of the oath sworn by his right hand. The term *al-hilf* carries the meaning of a refusal to be hostile toward others in the name of Allah (Siregar, 2015). This stanza represents the inner experience of someone who becomes the victim of slander or is trapped in an unfavorable situation. Even though inwardly he feels truthful and innocent, others refuse to trust him or give him the opportunity to explain the truth. Thus, Abu Nawas appears as a poet who frequently engaged with social and cultural values. Adonis, a renowned poet, admired Abu Nawas because he was considered courageous in introducing innovations into literature. He viewed Abu Nawas as the first poet to bring everyday language and urban life into poetry. For Adonis, Abu Nawas serves as an example for contemporary poets not to fear addressing complicated or even taboo issues in their literary works.

The fifth stanza describes the feelings of Abu Nawas regarding his past, which was filled with ease as well as humiliation. This stanza reflects Abu Nawas's humility, as his home and life were full of deficiencies. If people at that time had understood the beginning of his life, they would have felt ashamed for having judged him wrongly. Although Abu Nawas is often regarded as humorous, his stories actually contain significant da'wah messages for life. These include strengthening the foundations of faith, implementing Islamic law, and perfecting moral conduct (*akhlaq*) (Rosalina, 2020). The value reflected in this stanza is weakness accompanied by surrender toward an immoral and underdeveloped society as well as a corrupt ruling system. Abu Nawas himself was born in 140 H (757 CE) in the village of Suuq al-Ahwaz in the Kurdistan region, northwest of Baghdad. His father was Arab, while his mother was Persian. When Abu Nawas was six years old, his mother took him to Basra and entrusted him to his uncle, who worked as a perfume maker. After reaching adulthood, Abu Nawas worked helping his uncle (Dea Ananda, 2023).

In the sixth stanza, the verse presents two significant layers of meaning. The literal meaning is: the *amin* (leader or ruler) from whom he once expected protection could no longer defend him.

Therefore, he wonders who else remains that he can trust as his savior. On the other hand, the connotative meaning reflects Abu Nawas's psychological condition, which is filled with deep disappointment and a loss of trust in others. In this stanza, the word أمين refers to a trustworthy, honest, and loyal guardian or ruler who nevertheless could not help him. This illustrates how isolated and lonely Abu Nawas felt because the very people who should have protected him had instead disappointed him. According to (Fatimatuz Zahro et al., 2025), through *Al-I'tiraf*, Abu Nawas demonstrated that poetry can function as a medium of prayer and inner contemplation equal to remembrance (*dhikr*) and other forms of worship. The strength of this poem lies in its simple yet profound diction and in its metaphors, which bridge the poet's personal struggles with the universal principles of Islam. The humility shown in acknowledging personal limitations, along with optimism in God's mercy, reflects the spiritual dynamics of every human being who hopes for divine forgiveness. Meanwhile, Akastangga et al. (2020) explained that in the poem *al-I'tirof*, the lyrical "I" demonstrates perseverance through his continual acknowledgment of sins and his constant pleas for forgiveness from God every day. The poet continuously confesses his mistakes and fully surrenders himself to God's will. If he is forgiven, he realizes that Allah possesses boundless mercy. However, if his repentance is rejected, he becomes anxious and wonders to whom else he can seek forgiveness other than Allah alone.

Poem 2

In the first stanza of this poem, the literal meaning is: *"O Lord, no matter how great my sins are, I know that Your forgiveness is far greater."* This illustrates that Abu Nawas is a person of noble character, as evidenced by his sincere plea for forgiveness for the sins he has committed. Repentance is not a sign of weakness; rather, it is a manifestation of honesty of conscience and genuine humility. It is a form of courage shown by a servant in acknowledging his limitations before the Creator. By repenting, a person is not degrading his dignity; instead, he is seeking honor and purifying his dignity once again before God (Butsainah et al., 2025).

On the other hand, Abu Nawas firmly believes that his supplication will be accepted because he knows that God possesses immense forgiveness. The phrase *"ما لي إليك وسيلة إلا الرجا"* emphasizes that Abu Nawas has abandoned dependence on deeds or social status; he relies entirely on hope in divine mercy. This is strengthened by the phrase *"وجميل عفوك"*, which illustrates the vastness and beauty of Allah's forgiveness, making it the only refuge for a servant full of mistakes. Allah's mercy encompasses all things, even for those who repeatedly commit sins, as long as they are accompanied by sincere repentance. This confirms that the key to attaining divine forgiveness lies in a servant's persistence in seeking forgiveness (*istighfar*) and in the firm belief that Allah's mercy is always greater than the sins committed (Butsainah et al., 2025).

In the second stanza, the literal meaning is: *"If only righteous people may ask of You, then to whom do sinners turn for refuge and help?"* From the literal perspective, this stanza contains the premise that God's help is not exclusive. The rhetorical question regarding the fate of sinners represents the human condition, which is full of mistakes, and becomes a manifestation of surrender and deep hope in God's compassion. However, it should be understood that Allah's mercy and compassion are intended for everyone, even for servants who frequently commit sins.

Indirectly, this stanza portrays the attribute of Allah's *rahmah* (mercy). The meaning of *rahmah* in the sense of "compassion" is much deeper than mere sympathy. The root of the word implies responsibility to protect, nurture, and ensure the survival of the weak. This demonstrates that *rahmah* is active compassion; it does not remain merely as empathy within the heart but transforms into concrete care and concern (Ningsih & Pallawagau, 2025). In this stanza, the phrase فَبِمَن يَلوذُ وَيَستَجيرُ المُجرِمُ indicates that the poet earnestly hopes for God's forgiveness and assistance even though he is burdened with sins.

In the third stanza, the literal meaning is: *"I ask of You, O Lord, as You have commanded, with full humility. Then if You reject my plea, who else will show me mercy?"* The implied meaning in this stanza reflects humility and submission to Allah's commands. The phrase فَبِمَن يَلوذُ وَيَستَجيرُ المجرم signifies that even a *mujrim* (a violator of religious law) is obligated to seek help and forgiveness from Allah because no one besides Allah can grant forgiveness and assistance. One supporting proof can be found in a *hadith qudsi*:

"Indeed, a servant committed a sin and said: 'O my Lord, I have sinned, so forgive me.' Then his Lord said: 'Does My servant know that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them? I have forgiven My servant.' Then he refrained from sinning for as long as Allah willed. Then he sinned again and said: 'O my Lord, I have sinned again, so forgive me.' His Lord said: 'Does My servant know that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them? I have forgiven My servant.' Then he refrained again for as long as Allah willed. Then he sinned once more and said: 'O my Lord, I have sinned again, so forgive me.' His Lord said: 'Does My servant know that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them? I have forgiven My servant three times, so let him do as he wishes.'" (Butsainah et al., 2025).

In the fourth stanza, the literal meaning is: *"I have no means of approaching You except through hope and the beauty of Your generosity, and I am a Muslim."* This stanza illustrates that a Muslim should always place hope in Allah because a believer must know and be convinced that Allah grants generosity, guidance, and mercy to His servants. The phrase:

ما\ لي\ إِلَيكَ\ وَسيلَةٌ\ إِلا\ الرَجا

indicates that without hope, one's dependence upon Allah may be severed. Indeed, a Muslim should always hope for Allah's mercy. Muslim personality (*asy-syakhshiyyah*) views the soul (*ruh*) as the essential foundation of human existence. This concept emphasizes the integration of intellectual aspects (*aqliyah*) and emotional-psychological aspects (*nafsiyah*) rooted in the values of *tauhid*. Therefore, the poet's behavior reflects the depth of faith that integrates both mind and soul (Indriana et al., 2023).

Conclusions (الإستنتاج)

This study found that Abu Nawas's poetry is rich in meaning, containing not only literal meanings but also deeper and more philosophical interpretations. The poems contain both denotative and connotative meanings, each possessing its own uniqueness and characteristics. Through these poems, Abu Nawas expresses his feelings in accordance with the conditions of

his era, which were closely related to social life and circumstances. He also criticizes the conditions occurring at that time and, to some extent, portrays his life journey filled with struggle and patience.

The connotative or deeper meanings in these poems depict feelings of anxiety, heartbreak, disappointment, and sadness, which enrich the aesthetic and philosophical values of the poetry. Understanding the meanings within these poems provides new insights and knowledge related to Arabic literature, offering a new perspective in interpreting poetic meanings.

The findings of this study confirm that understanding poetry comprehensively is not limited to knowing the literal meanings of words alone. Rather, it is also necessary to consider the background and context of the poem as well as how the poem emotionally affects its readers. This research contributes additional insight into classical Arabic literary works and provides broader understanding regarding religious texts and Sufi literary works.

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