

# A Critical Shari‘ah -Linguistic Analysis of the Term (Al-Mukhābara) Using Artificial Intelligence

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## ABSTRACT

This study critically evaluates the performance of three AI applications—ChatGPT, Gemini, and DeepSeek—in conducting a specialized academic analysis of the prohibited Islamic financial term "Al-Mukhābara," employing a descriptive, analytical, and critical methodology to assess their ability to define the term's linguistic and Shari‘ah meanings, explore the connection between them, and, most importantly, handle conflicting scholarly opinions by attempting reconciliation or preference. The findings reveal a significant disparity in the applications' capabilities, highlighting both promising aspects and considerable limitations, particularly in their effectiveness when dealing with classical texts and performing advanced juristic reasoning, thereby providing a clear perspective on the current advantages and disadvantages of using these AI tools for specialized academic research in Islamic law.

**Keywords:** Al-Mukhābara, Artificial Intelligence, Linguistic Meaning, Shari‘ah Meaning.

## INTRODUCTION

The past few years have witnessed a widespread proliferation of various Artificial Intelligence applications, with increasing public reliance on them to manage their daily tasks and work. Their use is not limited to individuals but has extended to researchers in various specializations, who have used them in preparing their theoretical and applied scientific research. Thanks to these applications, a significant amount of research has been accomplished concerning the analysis and discussion of issues, analysing questionnaires and data, and summarizing books and research, extracting important information from them. This experience is modern and requires more testing on these modern electronic applications to be able to judge them, their performance, and the quality of their reading and analysis of texts, especially Arabic texts. Semantic linguistic studies are among the most important studies in the modern era, particularly when linked to Islamic texts such as the Noble Qur'an and the Prophetic Hadith. Scholars of Islamic law still differ in determining many Shari‘ah rulings mentioned in these two primary sources, and this difference is due to their variation in determining the correct meaning of some terms and structures that may be ambiguous in meaning or differ in their connotations. This has led to multiplicity and division in jurisprudential schools, which may be a source of good for the nation of Muhammad, peace be upon him, if the difference is based on sound and correct principles and rules, whether linguistic or Shari‘ah.

## Research Objectives:

1. Clarify the linguistic meanings mentioned by the selected Artificial Intelligence applications through their analysis of the term "Al-Mukhābara".
2. Clarify the Shari‘ah meanings mentioned by the selected Artificial Intelligence applications through their analysis of the term "Al-Mukhābara".
3. Explain the aspects of reconciliation or preference performed by the Artificial Intelligence applications after their analysis and discussion.
4. Evaluate the performance of Artificial Intelligence in the analysis, and mention the positives and negatives observed in its reading and discussion of the opinions regarding the term "Al-Mukhābara".

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research relied on the descriptive, analytical, and comparative methodologies, due to their suitability for the research topic. The term "Al-Mukhābara," mentioned in the Hadiths of the Messenger of Allah - may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him - and characterized by conflicting linguistic and Shari'ah meanings, was selected. The opinions and views concerning it were gathered and presented to three famous AI applications for analysis and discussion. Subsequently, the comparative approach is used to compare the analysis of each application from several aspects and axes, showing the differences between them. Then, the analytical approach will be used to examine the applications' analysis and evaluate the quality of their extrapolation of opinions and views, their discussion of evidence and proofs, the accuracy of their reading of the opinions, and their ability to reconcile or prefer between them. Finally, their performance will be critiqued, highlighting the positives and negatives in all aspects they analyzed and discussed for the selected terms.

### Analysis of the Term (Al-Mukhābara)

This word is mentioned in a Hadith narrated from Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh: "He prohibited Al-Mukhābara, Al-Muḥāqala, Al-Muzābana, and selling fruits until their suitability (for harvest) becomes apparent, and that they should not be sold except for Dinar." (Al-Bukhari, 1311 H, Number: 2091)

After presenting the opinions and views regarding the term (Al-Mukhābara) to the selected AI applications for analysis and discussion, a number of important matters emerged, which will be clarified according to the analysis axes designated in the research.

#### First Topic: Semantic Linguistic Analysis:

The three applications provided generally good analyses of this term, tracing it back to its fundamental linguistic meaning. The (Gemini) application was good in mentioning six origins for this term, which are (Al-Farāhīdī, 4/258. Ibn Fāris, 1979 AD, 2/239, Al-Nawawī, 1392 H, 10/192-193, Al-Zamakhsharī, 1/349, and Ibn Al-‘Aṭṭār, 2006 AD, 2/1117):

Application Name	Semantic Linguistic Analysis	Preference	Critical Observations
Gemini	<p>Mentioned six origins for the term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Al-Khabr</b> - with a Fatha on the Kha and Sukun on the Ba: Meaning the crop itself. A farm is also called Khabr.</li> <li><b>Al-Khabīr</b>: Meaning the farmer, also called the tenant farmer (Akār), because he prepares the land.</li> <li><b>Al-Khubra</b> - with a Damma on the Kha: Meaning the portion, i.e., the share of each contracting party. Abu 'Ubayd interpreted it as a portion of fish or meat. The application mentioned that Al-Jawhari reported that.</li> <li><b>Al-Khibār</b> - with a Fatha on the Kha and a light Ba: Meaning soft, stony land. The three applications did not mention the reason for linking soft land to this prohibited sale; it appears that specifying it with soft land is because such land has uncertain outcomes regarding crop spoilage, hence the uncertainty</li> </ol>	<p>The only application that preferred a single opinion in the linguistic meaning, stating that Al-Mukhābara is farming for a known portion of what the land produces, which is the third of the mentioned opinions, namely Al-Khubra meaning the portion.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The (Gemini) application did not mention the sources it derived these origins from, except for the third opinion, nor did it mention page numbers for each piece of information, except at the end of the analysis.</li> <li>It excelled in comprehensively investigating all possible linguistic semantic origins for the term Al-Mukhābara.</li> <li>It did not correctly prefer between the opinions regarding the linguistic meaning except for the (Gemini) application only. Preference or reconciliation in such matters is important</li> </ol>

<p>and ambiguity arise from this aspect, and Allah knows best.</p> <p>5. <b>Al-Khibārā</b>: Meaning soft land.</p> <p>6. <b>Khaybar</b>: Because the Prophet, peace be upon him, contracted with them to cultivate the land of Khaybar on the condition that they get half of its yield, which is the opinion of Ibn Al-A'rābī and some jurists. The verbal noun is derived from the verb.</p>	<p>for determining the true meaning of the term and then linking it to the Shari'ah terminological meaning.</p>
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Application Name	Semantic Linguistic Analysis	Preference	Critical Observations
DeepSeek	Mentioned four linguistic origins from the six previous ones: Al-Khabr, Al-Khubra, Al-Khibār, and Khaybar.	When mentioning aspects of difference and preference, it presented a question from which it seemed apparent that it would state the preponderant opinion regarding the linguistic meaning of this term, but it came as: <b>Derivation</b> : [Is it from "Khaybar" or "Al-Khubra"? Then left the question open without an answer or preference for either opinion.]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentioned only four origins.</li> <li>Distinguished by mentioning sources and pages, stating that Al-Khalīl mentioned the origin Khabr (Al-Farāhīdī, 4/258), Al-Jawhari mentioned Al-Khubra (Al-Jawharī, 1987 AD, 2/641), Ibn Manzūr mentioned Al-Khubār from Ibn Al-A'rābī (Ibn Manzūr, 1993 H, 4/228), and Ibn Qutaybah mentioned Khaybar (Ibn Qutaybah, 1397 H, 1/196).</li> <li>This application showed inconsistency when attempting preference; it posed a question but left it unanswered without preferring any opinion.</li> </ol>

Application Name	Semantic Linguistic Analysis	Preference	Critical Observations
Chat GPT	<p>Mentioned the general origin of the root (Kha B R) quoting from Ibn Fāris (Ibn Fāris, 1979, 2/239), that its meanings revolve around two main principles:</p> <p>First: Knowledge of a thing, from which {And none can inform you like a Khabīr (Well-Acquainted)}.</p> <p>Second: Softness and pliability, including Al-Khibār; which is soft land.</p> <p>It also mentioned the other origins: Al-Khabīr as mentioned in Al-Ṣiḥāḥ (Al-Jawharī, 1987 AD, 2/580), and Al-Khubra which is the portion, as mentioned in Lisān al-'Arab (Ibn Manzūr, 1993, 4/228), and Khaybar as mentioned by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 1387 H, 2/320).</p>	Preferred tracing Al-Mukhābara back to two origins: Al-Khabr meaning the portion, and Al-Khabīr meaning the farmer; the reason for preference being that both connect to the nature of the agricultural transaction. It did not prefer a single opinion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentioned only four origins.</li> <li>Mentioned sources and pages.</li> <li>The (Chat GPT) application was distinguished by quoting from Ibn Fāris in stating that the root (Kha B R) revolves around two main principles, and the book Maqāyīs al-Lughah is one of the important fundamental linguistic sources concerning linguistic semantic etymology of words.</li> </ol>

### Second Topic: Shari‘ah Semantic Analysis:

The three applications do not differ regarding Shari‘ah meaning of the term Al-Mukhābara, stating that it Shar‘i signifies leasing land to a farmer skilled in agriculture to improve and cultivate it in exchange for taking a portion of its produce; half, third, or quarter, according to the agreement.

Application Name	Shari‘ah Semantic Analysis	Preference	Critical Observations
Gemini	Linguists and jurists differ regarding its similarity to Al-Muzāra'ah (sharecropping) or not, into two opinions:  First Opinion: The majority of Shafi'is view that Al-Mukhābara and Al-Muzāra'ah are close in meaning, both being transactions on land for a portion of its crop produce.	Did not prefer between the two opinions.	1-Lack of concern by the (Gemini) application in mentioning sources. 2-Lack of concern for preference.
DeepSeek	However, the difference lies in: Al-Muzāra'ah: The seed is from the landowner. Al-Mukhābara: The seed is from the worker (the farmer) (Al-Nawawī, 1392 H, 10/193).  Second Opinion: Some Shafi'is and a group of linguists held that they have the same meaning (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, 1387 H, 2/321).	Did not prefer between the two opinions.	1-(DeepSeek) is the one who mentioned the sources of the two opinions. 2-Lack of concern for preference.
Chat GPT	Al-Mukhābara and Al-Muzāra'ah are close in meaning, both being transactions on land for a portion of its crop produce. However, the difference lies in: <b>Al-Muzāra'ah</b> : The seed is from the landowner. <b>Al-Mukhābara</b> : The seed is from the worker (the farmer) (Ibn Qudāmah, 1997 AD, 5/553).	Mentioned only the first opinion.	Did not mention the difference of opinion regarding the similarity between Al-Mukhābara and Al-Muzāra'ah, contenting itself only with the opinion that differentiates between them, and did not mention the second opinion.

### Third Topic: Reconciliation or Preference, and Linking Linguistic Meaning to Shari‘ah Meaning:

The research found that only the (Chat GPT) application attempted to reconcile and link the linguistic and Shari‘ah semantic differences, although it did not prefer a single opinion. The other applications did not concern themselves with mentioning reconciliation or preference between the multiple opinions in the linguistic meaning and linking them to the Shari‘ah meaning. The (Chat GPT) application stated the following:

It is clear from tracking that the linguistic meaning establishes the Shari‘ah understanding:

- Considering Al-Mukhābara as Mu‘ākara (i.e., sharing in work and portion) corresponds with the Shari‘ah meaning which involves giving land to a worker in exchange for a known portion of the output.
- Deriving it from Al-Khabīr, meaning the farmer, indicates that the worker is the one undertaking the work, which explains why the seed is from the worker.
- Deriving it from Al-Khubra (the portion) agrees with the Shari‘ah requirement that the portion must be known and not unknown to avoid uncertainty (Gharar).

This application attempts to reconcile a set of opinions to explain the meaning of Al-Mukhābara linguistically and **Shar‘i**, linking the two meanings together. It is as if it says that this naming admits several origins, the most

important of which are two: Al-Khabīr (the farmer) and Al-Khubra (the portion), both of which suit the Shari‘ah meaning. Accordingly, it did not prefer a single opinion.

In truth, upon examining the opinions and tracking the linguistic semantic origins and linking them to the Shari‘ah meaning, we find that all the opinions are close and strong, and preferring between them is somewhat difficult. The meaning of Al-Mukhābara known to linguists and Hadith commentators is: an agreement between the landowner and the one who undertakes its cultivation and improvement that the farmer takes a part of what the land produces; half, third, or quarter, as they agree upon. In Al-‘Ayn: "Al-Mukhābara linguistically: cultivating agricultural crops for half or third" (Al-Farāhīdī, 4/258). In Maqāyīs al-Lughah: "Al-Muzāra'ah for half, third, less, or more, is called Al-Khabr, and it is said: Al-Mukhābara is derived from the name Khaybar" (Ibn Fāris, 1979 AD, 2/239). The multiple linguistic meanings all relate to this Shari‘ah meaning of Al-Mukhābara; whether its relation is to the worker farmer, or to the type of land, or to the crop itself, or to the specified portion - which is a portion with an unknown outcome - or its relation to the region of Khaybar.

However, the research sees that the closest of the linguistic semantic origins is the "portion." In the contract of Al-Mukhābara, the share of each contractor is clarified, with uncertainty about the outcome of this share in terms of safety or lack thereof in the future, because the portion pertains to both contracting parties. Al-Mukhābara comes on the pattern of "Mufā‘ala" (form III), and the principle is that preference should be given to a matter related to both parties, not to one party. If it were related to the farmer, it has no relation to the landowner, and if related to the land, it has no relation to the farmer worker, and Allah knows best.

It is noticeable that such preference and its evidence were not addressed by the three applications, showing their lack of depth in analysis, reading opinions and views, understanding them, critiquing them, and correctly preferring between them.

Among the important matters not addressed by the three applications is that the "Mufā‘ala" form in Al-Mukhābara conforms to the implication of this morphological pattern; which is the occurrence of the action from both parties. Because both contracting parties contracted for this type of prohibited contract, which involves uncertainty, ambiguity, and unclear outcomes, and they consented to it, thus the act of contracting occurred between the two parties.

## RESEARCH CONCLUSION

The research reached a number of results, which are:

1. The three applications were able to trace the selected terms back to their linguistic roots with varying degrees of accuracy and depth, but they varied in mentioning and documenting sources, which is extremely important in peer-reviewed scientific studies.
2. The ChatGPT application excelled in combining linguistic and Shari‘ah meanings, and attempting to build a semantic structure linking the linguistic origin to the jurisprudential terminological concept. The Gemini application also excelled in preferring between opinions in linguistic meanings.
3. The analyses showed aspects of deficiency in all applications in terms of lacking deep critical aspects and providing an analysis that comprehensively addresses jurisprudential and linguistic differences with an integrated vision.
4. The research revealed a weakness in some applications in the morphological interpretation of the morphological structure (namely the "Mufā‘ala" form in Al-Mukhābara) despite its significant impact on determining the Shari‘ah meaning.
5. It became clear that using Artificial Intelligence to analyze the terms of Prophetic Hadith can contribute to approximating meanings and simplifying differences, but it does not replace deep scientific scrutiny and authentic verification in authoritative sources.
6. This research indicated the importance of combining automated analysis with specialized human verification to ensure sound understanding, correct foundationalization, and deep linkage between language and Shari‘ah, especially in complex texts with sensitive jurisprudential implications.
7. It revealed the applications' shortcomings when reconciling or preferring between different opinions in

linguistic or Shari‘ah meaning, and that they still need deep training on the correct principles of reconciling or preferring between opinions in Arabic texts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preceding analysis, discussion, and comparison between the three Artificial Intelligence applications, and the evaluation of these applications' performance in analysis, presenting opinions, and reconciling or preferring between conflicting views, and after presenting the diverse results of what was tested in these applications, the research recommends the following:

1. Paying attention to developing Artificial Intelligence algorithms in the field of linguistic and Shari‘ah studies, to make them more capable of dealing with historical jurisprudential and linguistic contexts, especially by familiarizing them with the correct principles and rules for semantic and Shari‘ah analysis, and the principles and rules for reconciling and preferring linguistic and Shari‘ah semantic differences.
2. The necessity of supervision by specialized researchers over the use of Artificial Intelligence tools in analyzing Islamic texts, and avoiding complete reliance on them without accurate, critical scientific review.
3. Focusing, in the development of linguistic models, on understanding the morphological, grammatical, and semantic structures of Shari‘ah terms, and linking them to classical eloquent Arabic usage as found in dictionaries and Hadith commentaries.

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