

# The Transformation of the Meaning of *Qalb* from Arabic to Malay: A Semantic and Contextual Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the contextual translation of the Arabic term *qalb* (قلب) into Malay through a denotative-connotative semantic framework. Although *qalb* is commonly rendered as *hati* in Malay, such a translation may not always capture the full semantic range of the term, particularly in contexts where *qalb* is associated with physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and moral functions. The main issue addressed in this study is the semantic ambiguity that arises when *qalb* is translated through a single fixed equivalent without considering its contextual orientation. Adopting a qualitative library-based approach, this study analyses selected occurrences of *qalb* in the Qur'an, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry.

The analysis is guided by a denotative-connotative framework that distinguishes between denotative-anatomical, denotative-cognitive, connotative-emotional, connotative-spiritual, and connotative-metaphorical usages. The findings suggest that *jantung* is more suitable when *qalb* is used denotatively, either in reference to the physical organ or in contexts involving cognitive functions such as reasoning, understanding, and reflection. Meanwhile, *hati* and *kalbu* are more appropriate in connotative contexts involving emotion, spirituality, faith, morality, and metaphorical expression. The study also treats modern scientific discussions on the cognitive role of the heart as supplementary perspectives rather than definitive proof. This study contributes to Arabic-Malay translation studies by proposing a systematic framework for translating *qalb* according to its semantic function and textual context.

**Keywords:** *qalb*, Arabic-Malay translation, denotative meaning, connotative meaning

## INTRODUCTION

Translation is the process of transferring meaning from a source language into a target language by seeking the closest possible equivalent in terms of meaning, function, and style. According to Maheram (2008), translation involves transferring one language into another, while ensuring that the intended message of the source text is accurately conveyed in the target language. Similarly, Nida (1964) defines translation as the process of reproducing the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message in the receptor language, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. In this process, the translator must not translate words or sentences in isolation, but must first understand the overall textual and contextual environment in which they occur. Nida and Taber (1982), in *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, further emphasise that translators must seek the closest semantic and functional equivalence in order to preserve the original meaning across two different languages.

The translation of word meaning does not depend solely on lexical equivalence or a single fixed meaning. Rather, it requires careful attention to contextual elements that shape how a word functions in a particular discourse. Vocabulary comprehension based on linguistic context means that a word is understood through its sentential environment, grammatical structure, and relationship with other words in the text (Requejo, 2007;

Benjamin & Crow, 2009). This is particularly important in Arabic-Malay translation, where certain Arabic words carry broad semantic fields that cannot always be represented by one fixed Malay equivalent. Therefore, mastery of vocabulary alone is insufficient without contextual awareness, especially when dealing with polysemous terms.

One of the Arabic terms that presents a significant challenge in translation is *qalb* (قلب). Linguistically, *qalb* is a complex and polysemous term whose meaning varies according to context. In its primary denotative sense, *qalb* may refer to the physical heart, namely *jantung* in Malay. However, in broader religious, literary, and cultural usage, *qalb* may also refer to inner consciousness, emotion, spirituality, sincerity, faith, moral awareness, and the centre of human reflection. In Malay, *qalb* is commonly translated as *hati*, particularly in religious and literary contexts. Although this rendering is well established, it may not always capture the full semantic range of *qalb*, especially when the Arabic term appears in contexts that emphasise physical or cognitive functions.

This issue becomes more complex because the semantic fields of Arabic and Malay do not fully correspond. In Arabic, *qalb* can refer to both the physical heart and inner human faculties. In Malay, however, *jantung* refers to the physical organ that pumps blood, whereas *hati* may refer anatomically to the liver and metaphorically to emotion, feeling, and inner consciousness. The term *kalbu*, which is borrowed from Arabic, often carries a more spiritual or religious nuance. As a result, translating *qalb* into Malay requires more than automatic equivalence. It requires a careful analysis of whether the term is used denotatively or connotatively in a given context.

This study therefore proposes a denotative-connotative contextual framework for analysing the translation of *qalb* into Malay. In this framework, denotative usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* is associated with either anatomical reference or cognitive function. Anatomical usage refers to the physical heart as an organ, while cognitive usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* is connected with reasoning, understanding, reflection, or intellectual perception. In such denotative contexts, this study proposes *jantung* as the more precise Malay rendering. By contrast, connotative usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* expresses emotional, spiritual, moral, or metaphorical meanings. In these cases, *hati* or *kalbu* is considered more appropriate.

The need for such a framework can be seen in religious and literary texts. In the Qur'an, *qalb* is frequently associated with various functions, including reasoning, understanding, blindness, disease, tranquillity, faith, and moral responsiveness. Expressions such as *qulūbun ya 'qilūna bihā* indicate a cognitive function of *qalb*, while expressions such as *qalb salīm* and *qalb marīd* foreground spiritual and moral states. In Prophetic hadiths, *qalb* may refer to the physical and moral centre of the human being, as well as to spiritual fluctuation and sincerity. In classical Arabic poetry, the term is often linked to love, longing, sorrow, and emotional instability. These different usages demonstrate that *qalb* cannot be translated uniformly into Malay without considering its contextual function.

Previous studies have discussed *qalb* from various perspectives, particularly within Qur'anic semantics, Islamic psychology, and the relationship between *qalb*, *fu'ād*, and *ṣadr*. However, many of these studies focus primarily on Qur'anic interpretation or on Indonesian linguistic contexts. Less attention has been given to the specific issue of translating *qalb* into Malay across different textual genres, including the Qur'an, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry. This study seeks to address this gap by examining selected examples of *qalb* in these three domains and by proposing a systematic framework for determining whether *qalb* should be rendered as *jantung*, *hati*, or *kalbu*.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the semantic range of *qalb* in selected Arabic religious and literary texts and to analyse its possible Malay translations based on denotative and connotative usage. Specifically, the study seeks to identify contexts in which *qalb* functions denotatively, including anatomical and cognitive contexts; to examine contexts in which *qalb* functions connotatively, including emotional, spiritual, moral, and metaphorical contexts; and to propose a contextual translation framework for rendering *qalb* into Malay. The findings are expected to contribute to Arabic-Malay translation studies by offering a more systematic approach to translating polysemous terms that carry overlapping physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual meanings.

The scope of this study is limited to selected occurrences of *qalb* in the Qur'an, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry. These selected examples are not intended to represent all occurrences of *qalb* in Arabic texts. Rather, they serve as illustrative cases for demonstrating how the denotative-connotative framework may be applied in translation analysis. Thus, this study should be understood as a preliminary attempt to develop a contextual framework for translating *qalb*, rather than as an exhaustive classification of all its meanings and usages.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies on *qalb* have generally examined the term within Qur'anic semantics, Islamic psychology, and the relationship between the heart and human cognition. These studies are important because they demonstrate that *qalb* is not a simple lexical item with a single fixed meaning, but a polysemous term that carries physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and moral dimensions depending on context.

One relevant study is by Arini Suci Irwana (2024), entitled "An Analysis of the Relationship between the Heart and the Intellect in the Qur'an, Surah al-A'raf 179: An Analysis of Hamka's Interpretation in Tafsir al-Azhar". This study examines the relationship between the heart and the intellect in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah al-A'raf verse 179, where *qalb* is associated with the function of understanding. Using a qualitative library-based approach, the study refers primarily to *Tafsir al-Azhar* by Buya Hamka, supported by other exegetical and scholarly sources. Its findings indicate that *qalb* possesses a cognitive capacity in discerning good and evil, based on the semantic relationship between *qalb* and *yafqahūn* ("they understand"). This study is significant for the present research because it supports the view that *qalb* may function cognitively in Qur'anic discourse.

Another important contribution is the study by Amrina Rasyada Kamaruzaman, Nur Aina Mardhiah Che Rahim, Iskandarruzaman Mohd Zulkafli, Nur Syuhada Mohd Subri, and Siti Nuron Mohmed (2023), entitled "Qalb, Şadr, and Fu'ād: A Correlation Based on I'jāz Bayānī and Qur'anic Exegesis". This study aims to clarify the relationship and distinction between *qalb*, *şadr*, and *fu'ād* from the perspective of *i'jāz bayānī* and Qur'anic exegesis. By analysing selected verses containing these terms and referring primarily to *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, the study concludes that *qalb* is positioned within the *şadr*, which is understood as the outermost layer associated with the chest. This study is useful because it shows that the meaning of *qalb* cannot be isolated from related Qur'anic terms such as *şadr* and *fu'ād*, and that each term occupies a particular semantic and conceptual position.

Similarly, Fuad Abror (2022), in his dissertation "Synonymy in the Qur'an: A Semantic Analysis of the Words Qalb and Fu'ād", investigates the semantic relationship between *qalb* and *fu'ād*. The study concludes that *qalb*, when interpreted physically, refers to the heart as an organ, while *fu'ād* is associated with a more specific inner function related to conviction and decision-making. Although both terms are semantically related, the Qur'anic usage of *qalb* is more strongly connected with immaterial, spiritual, and non-material dimensions that enable understanding and determine the inner state of the human being. This study is relevant to the present research because it highlights the need to distinguish between closely related Arabic terms instead of treating them as complete synonyms.

In addition, Ahmad Dibul Amda and Mirzon Daheri (2020), in their study "The Semantic Meaning of Qalb in the Qur'an", examine the actual meanings of *qalb* through a thematic interpretative approach and content analysis. Their findings show that *qalb* carries both physical and psychological meanings in the Qur'an. Physically, it may refer to the heart as an organ, while psychologically it functions as an important centre influencing human behaviour and action. This dual interpretation is particularly important for the present study because it supports the classification of *qalb* into denotative and connotative dimensions.

Winda Srihandayani (2018), in the study "Qalb in the Qur'an According to Quraish Shihab in Tafsir al-Mishbah", examines Quraish Shihab's interpretation of *qalb* and its translation in the Qur'an. Using Qur'anic verses and *Tafsir al-Mishbah* as the primary sources, the study concludes that Quraish Shihab views *qalb* and *ʿaql* as having closely related functions, particularly in cognition and thinking. This reinforces the argument

that *qalb* in the Qur'an is not limited to emotion or spirituality, but may also be connected to intellectual and cognitive activity.

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that the existing literature generally recognises *qalb* as a multidimensional concept. It may refer to the physical heart, but it may also signify cognition, understanding, faith, emotion, spirituality, and moral awareness. However, most of the studies discussed above focus primarily on Qur'anic interpretation, especially within Indonesian exegetical contexts. Limited attention has been given to the specific problem of translating *qalb* into Malay, particularly through a systematic distinction between denotative and connotative meanings.

Furthermore, previous studies have not sufficiently examined *qalb* across different textual genres. Most existing discussions concentrate on Qur'anic verses, while the usage of *qalb* in Prophetic hadiths and classical Arabic poetry remains relatively underexplored in the context of Arabic-Malay translation. This is an important gap because the meaning of *qalb* may shift according to genre. In Qur'anic cognitive contexts, *qalb* may indicate reasoning, understanding, and reflection; in hadith texts, it may refer to the physical, moral, or spiritual centre of the human being; while in classical Arabic poetry, it often functions as a symbol of love, longing, sorrow, and emotional instability.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by analysing selected occurrences of *qalb* in the Qur'an, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry. Unlike previous studies that mainly discuss the meaning of *qalb* from an exegetical or conceptual perspective, this study focuses specifically on its translation into Malay. It proposes a denotative-connotative contextual framework in which *jantung* is considered suitable for denotative-anatomical and denotative-cognitive contexts, while *hati* or *kalbu* is considered more appropriate for connotative-emotional, connotative-spiritual, moral, and metaphorical contexts. Through this approach, the study aims to offer a more systematic method for translating *qalb* according to its semantic function and textual context.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employs a qualitative library-based approach for data collection and analysis. Qualitative research refers to a form of inquiry that relies primarily on data gathered through observation, document analysis, and interpretation of textual materials (Ahmad Sunwari Long, 2016). In this study, the qualitative approach is applied to the analysis of selected Arabic texts and their Malay translations, with specific focus on the translation of the Arabic term *qalb* (قلب).

The study is semantic and contextual in nature. It does not merely examine the lexical meaning of *qalb*, but also analyses how the term functions within different textual environments. The analysis focuses on whether *qalb* is used in a denotative or connotative sense and how such usage affects its possible rendering into Malay as *jantung*, *hati*, or *kalbu*.

### Data Sources

The data for this study are drawn from three main textual sources: the Qur'an, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry. The Qur'anic data are based on selected verses containing the term *qalb* or its plural form *qulūb*, with reference to *Tafsir Pimpinan ar-Rahman* translated by Abdullah Basmeih. These verses are analysed in relation to their Arabic wording, contextual indicators, and Malay translation.

For the hadith corpus, selected Prophetic hadiths containing the term *qalb* are examined in order to identify whether the term refers to physical, cognitive, spiritual, moral, or metaphorical meanings. Relevant hadith commentaries are also consulted to clarify the contextual meaning of the term.

For classical Arabic literature, selected poetic texts that contain references to *qalb* or related concepts are analysed. These poems are used to examine how *qalb* functions in literary contexts, especially in relation to emotion, love, longing, sorrow, and inner experience.

## Sampling Method

The corpus data are collected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to the selection of data based on specific characteristics that are relevant to the objectives of the study (Ahmad Sunwari Long, 2016). In this study, the selected samples are chosen because they contain the term *qalb* and represent different semantic orientations, including denotative-anatomical, denotative-cognitive, connotative-emotional, connotative-spiritual, and connotative-metaphorical usages.

The selected examples are not intended to represent all occurrences of *qalb* in Arabic texts. Rather, they serve as illustrative cases for demonstrating how the denotative-connotative framework may be applied in translation analysis. This approach allows the study to examine selected cases in depth while acknowledging the wider and more complex semantic range of *qalb* across Arabic religious and literary discourse.

## Analytical Framework

This study adopts a denotative-connotative contextual framework to analyse the translation of *qalb* into Malay. The framework begins by identifying the context in which *qalb* occurs and determining whether the term is used denotatively or connotatively. Denotative usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* carries its primary or functional meaning. This includes denotative-anatomical contexts, where *qalb* refers to the physical heart as an organ, and denotative-cognitive contexts, where *qalb* is associated with reasoning, understanding, reflection, or intellectual perception. In such contexts, this study proposes *jantung* as the more precise Malay rendering. Connotative usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* carries emotional, spiritual, moral, or metaphorical meanings. This includes contexts related to love, fear, tranquillity, sincerity, faith, hypocrisy, guidance, heedlessness, and inner moral awareness. In such contexts, *hati* or *kalbu* is considered more appropriate.

The analytical framework is carried out through the following steps:

**Step 1: Identification of the occurrence of *qalb*:** The first step is to identify the occurrence of the term *qalb* or its plural form *qulūb* in the selected text. This includes occurrences in Qur’anic verses, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry.

**Step 2: Identification of the textual genre:** The second step is to determine the genre of the text in which *qalb* appears. The text may belong to Qur’anic discourse, Prophetic hadith, or classical Arabic poetry. This step is important because the semantic function of *qalb* may differ according to genre.

**Step 3: Examination of the immediate linguistic context:** The third step is to examine the words, phrases, and expressions surrounding *qalb*. Particular attention is given to verbs, nouns, adjectives, and thematic indicators that may clarify the intended meaning of the term.

**Step 4: Classification of semantic orientation:** The fourth step is to classify the usage of *qalb* according to its dominant semantic orientation. The classification consists of five categories:

Semantic Category	Contextual Indicators	Suggested Malay Rendering
Denotative-anatomical	Physical organ, body, flesh, chest, bodily function	<i>jantung</i>
Denotative-cognitive	Reasoning, understanding, reflection, <i>ya‘qilūn</i> , <i>yafqahūn</i> , <i>yatadabbarūn</i>	<i>jantung</i>
Connotative-emotional	Love, sorrow, longing, fear, tranquillity	<i>hati</i>
Connotative-spiritual/moral	Faith, sincerity, hypocrisy, guidance, heedlessness	<i>hati / kalbu</i>
Connotative-metaphorical	Diseased heart, hardened heart, locked heart, spiritual blindness	<i>hati / kalbu</i>

**Step 5: Consultation of supporting sources:** The fifth step is to compare the preliminary classification with relevant supporting sources. These include Arabic lexical sources, Qur’anic exegesis, hadith commentaries, literary commentaries, and existing Malay translations. This step ensures that the proposed interpretation is not based solely on isolated lexical meaning, but is supported by broader textual and scholarly evidence.

**Step 6: Determination of the Malay rendering:** The sixth step is to determine the most suitable Malay rendering of *qalb* based on its dominant semantic function. If the usage is denotative-anatomical or denotative-cognitive, *jantung* is proposed. If the usage is connotative-emotional, *hati* is proposed. If the usage is connotative-spiritual, moral, or metaphorical, *hati* or *kalbu* is proposed depending on the nuance of the context.

**Step 7: Justification of the translation choice:** The final step is to justify the proposed translation by explaining how the chosen Malay term reflects the semantic function of *qalb* in the source text. This justification includes reference to contextual indicators, genre, lexical meaning, exegetical or hadith interpretation, literary usage, and Malay semantic conventions.

To provide a clearer overview of the analytical process, the stages of analysis applied in this study are illustrated in Figure 1 as below:

### Analytical Framework for Translating *Qalb* into Malay

#### Denotative-Connotative Contextual Framework

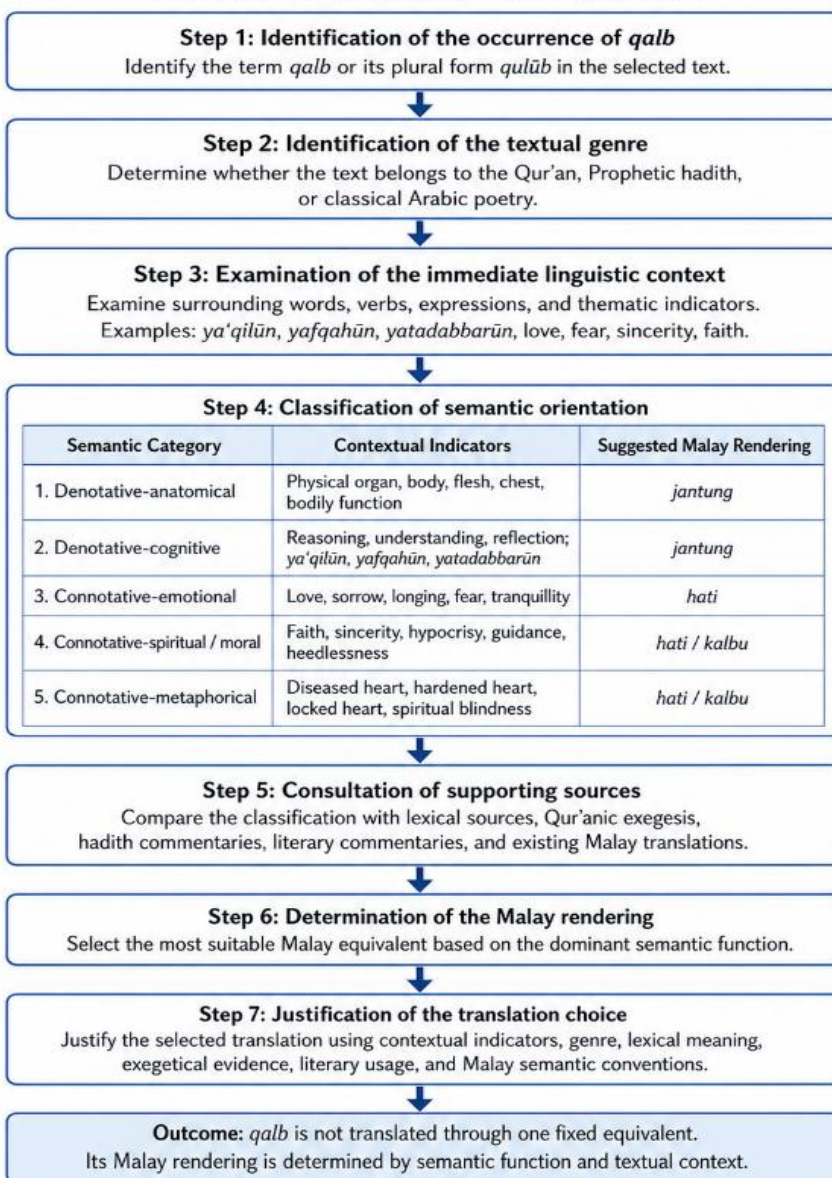


Figure 1: Analytical Framework for Translating *Qalb* into Malay

Through these steps, the framework avoids treating *qalb* as having a single fixed Malay equivalent. Instead, the translation is determined according to the semantic function and contextual orientation of the term in each selected text.

## Treatment of Scientific Claims

This study also refers to selected modern scientific discussions on the possible cognitive role of the heart. However, such discussions are treated as supplementary perspectives rather than definitive evidence for determining the meaning of *qalb*. The primary basis of analysis remains linguistic, semantic, contextual, lexical, exegetical, and translational.

Scientific findings are therefore used cautiously to enrich the discussion, particularly in cases where *qalb* is associated with cognitive functions such as reasoning, understanding, and reflection. They are not used to override classical interpretations, established exegetical traditions, or Malay translation conventions. Instead, they provide an additional perspective that may support the classification of certain usages of *qalb* as denotative-cognitive, especially when the textual context itself contains clear cognitive indicators.

## Research Findings

### Lexical and Conceptual Meaning of *Qalb*

From a linguistic perspective, the Arabic word *qalb* is derived from the trilateral root *q-l-b* (ق-ل-ب), which conveys the meaning of turning, changing, reversing, or transforming something from one state to another. According to Ibn Manẓūr (1979), *qalb* refers to that which turns or transforms something from its original form. This root meaning is significant because it reflects one of the essential characteristics associated with *qalb*, namely its tendency to fluctuate and change.

Similarly, al-Fīrūzābādī (2013), in *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, defines *qalb* as *fu'ād* and *al-'aql al-maḥḍ* or pure intellect. This definition indicates that *qalb* is not limited to an anatomical meaning, but also carries a cognitive dimension. Sheban, Filali, and Al-Wafī (2020) further explain that the term *qalb* is associated with the heart because of its constant fluctuation from one state to another, such as between happiness and sorrow, firmness and instability, or positive and negative dispositions.

From a terminological perspective, *qalb* in its physical or anatomical sense refers to the heart as a bodily organ. The *Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* in Cairo (2005), as cited in *al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ*, defines *qalb* as a hollow muscular organ that receives blood from the veins and pumps it into the arteries. This definition clearly corresponds to the physiological heart. Likewise, in English, *qalb* is commonly rendered as “heart”, which refers to the organ responsible for blood circulation.

However, the semantic situation becomes more complex when *qalb* is translated into Malay. In Malay, *jantung* refers to the physical organ that pumps blood throughout the body, while *hati* refers anatomically to the liver. At the same time, *hati* is also widely used metaphorically to denote emotion, inner feeling, intention, sincerity, moral awareness, and spiritual consciousness. As recorded in *Kamus Dewan* (3rd ed., 2002), *jantung* is defined as the muscular organ that pumps blood, whereas *hati* is defined as an internal organ located in the upper right abdomen and is also used figuratively to refer to the inner self, emotions, and understanding.

This semantic difference between Arabic and Malay creates an important translation issue. In Arabic, *qalb* may refer to the physical heart, cognition, emotion, spirituality, and moral awareness within a single semantic field. In Malay, however, these meanings are distributed across several terms, particularly *jantung*, *hati*, and *kalbu*. Therefore, translating *qalb* into Malay requires a contextual approach. The translator must determine whether *qalb* is used denotatively or connotatively in a given text.

Within the framework of this study, *qalb* is classified into two broad semantic orientations: denotative and connotative. Denotative usage includes contexts in which *qalb* refers either to the physical heart as an organ or to cognitive functions such as reasoning, understanding, and reflection. In such cases, this study proposes *jantung* as the more precise Malay rendering. Connotative usage, on the other hand, refers to contexts involving emotion, spirituality, morality, faith, sincerity, and metaphorical expressions. In these cases, *hati* or *kalbu* is considered more appropriate.

## Scientific Perspective on the Cognitive Role of the Heart

Modern scientific discussions have also raised questions about the role of the heart beyond its circulatory function. For example, Daud Lin Abdullah et al. (2014), in their study *The Importance of the Qalb in Decision-Making*, discuss findings suggesting that the heart may play a role in cognition, memory, and decision-making. Their discussion includes references to the HeartMath Institute, which argues that the heart emits electromagnetic signals that may influence the brain and the body. The study also refers to Paul Pearsall (1999), who argues that the heart possesses the capacity to feel and remember.

Similarly, Schwartz and Russek (2017), in their article “Thinking with the Heart”, suggest that the heart may have a role not only in blood circulation but also in memory and decision-making processes. These perspectives offer an additional dimension for understanding *qalb*, especially in texts where the term is associated with cognitive functions such as reasoning and understanding.

However, in this study, modern scientific discussions are treated cautiously. They are not used as definitive proof for determining the meaning of *qalb* in the Qur’an, hadith, or classical Arabic literature. Rather, they function as supplementary perspectives that may enrich the semantic discussion. The primary basis of analysis remains linguistic, lexical, contextual, exegetical, and translational. Therefore, scientific perspectives are considered only when they support, rather than replace, the textual and contextual indicators found in the source texts.

## The Use of *al-Qalb* in the Qur’an

In the Qur’an, the term *al-qalb* and its related forms appear frequently across different contexts. According to Abdul Baqiy (1988, pp. 550–551), the term appears 130 times across 45 surahs and occurs in 112 verses. These occurrences do not carry one uniform meaning. Rather, their meanings vary according to the contextual framework of each verse.

Classical Islamic scholarship has long recognised the layered nature of *qalb*. Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (1958) explains that *qalb* occupies an important position in relation to other inner faculties such as *ṣadr*, *fu’ād*, and *lubb*. He illustrates this relationship through several analogies, such as the black pupil within the eye, the city of Mecca within the sacred precinct, the wick of a lamp, the inner chamber of a house, and the kernel of an almond after its shell has been removed. These analogies portray *qalb* as an inner centre of knowledge, reflection, and spiritual perception.

Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī also likens *qalb* to a well that contains a spring of water. In this analogy, *qalb* functions as the source of knowledge, while *ṣadr* acts as the receptacle that receives and holds this knowledge before it becomes manifest in the individual. This view suggests that *qalb* is not merely an emotional faculty, but also a centre of perception, knowledge, and inner awareness.

Al-Ghazālī (1986) further describes *qalb* as a subtle entity endowed with spiritual and divine qualities, while remaining closely connected to the physical heart. This description shows that *qalb* has both physical and metaphysical dimensions. It is connected to the bodily organ, yet it also functions as a centre of spiritual perception, moral consciousness, and human understanding.

Based on these lexical, terminological, and exegetical discussions, the meaning of *qalb* in the Qur’an may be analysed according to its dominant semantic orientation. In contexts where *qalb* is associated with the physical organ or with cognitive functions such as reasoning and understanding, it may be classified as denotative, particularly denotative-anatomical or denotative-cognitive. In contexts where *qalb* is associated with faith, sincerity, heedlessness, disease, tranquillity, or spiritual blindness, it may be classified as connotative, especially connotative-spiritual, connotative-moral, or connotative-metaphorical.

Therefore, the translation of *qalb* into Malay should not rely on one fixed equivalent. Instead, its rendering should be determined by contextual indicators. The term *jantung* is proposed when the denotative-anatomical or denotative-cognitive meaning is dominant, while *hati* or *kalbu* is proposed when the connotative-emotional,

spiritual, moral, or metaphorical meaning is dominant. This distinction forms the basis for the following analysis of selected Qur'anic verses, hadith texts, and classical Arabic poetry.

## Analysis

### Analysis of Qur'anic Verses

For the analysis of Qur'anic texts, this study selects three verses from among the Qur'anic occurrences of *qalb* and *qulūb* as illustrative samples. These selected verses are not intended to represent all Qur'anic usages of *qalb*. Rather, they serve as analytical examples for demonstrating how the denotative-connotative contextual framework may be applied. The selected samples represent different semantic orientations, namely denotative-cognitive and connotative-spiritual usages. Through these examples, the study examines whether *qalb* should be rendered into Malay as *jantung*, *hati*, or *kalbu* according to its dominant semantic function.

In this analysis, the distinction between denotative and connotative usage is central. Denotative usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* is associated with either anatomical reference or cognitive function, such as reasoning, understanding, and reflection. Connotative usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* expresses emotional, spiritual, moral, or metaphorical meanings. This distinction helps clarify how *qalb* may shift in meaning according to textual context and how this shift affects its translation into Malay.

#### a) Surah al-Ḥajj: 46

﴿أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ٤٦﴾

#### Meaning:

“Have they not travelled through the land so that they might have *qulūb* with which they reason, or ears with which they hear? Indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but rather the *qulūb* within the chests that are blind.”

This verse presents *qulūb*, the plural form of *qalb*, in direct association with the cognitive act of reasoning through the expression *ya 'qilūna bihā* (“with which they reason”). The presence of the verb *ya 'qilūn* functions as a strong contextual indicator (*qarīnah*) that links *qalb* with the process of understanding, reflection, and intellectual perception. Based on the analytical framework of this study, such usage may be classified as **denotative-cognitive** because *qalb* is not merely associated with emotion or spiritual feeling, but with a functional capacity of reasoning.

According to Ibn ‘Āshūr (1903) in *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, the usage of *qalb* in this verse may be understood as *majāz mursal maḥalliyyah*. In his explanation, *qalb* is connected to the circulation of blood and the functioning of vital organs, particularly the brain, which is associated with rational thought. Although this explanation is framed within the exegetical and intellectual context of his time, it nevertheless recognises a relationship between *qalb* and intellectual capacity.

In *Tafsir Pimpinan ar-Rahman*, Abdullah Basmeih (1994) translates *qulūb* in this verse as *hati*. This rendering is understandable within Malay Islamic discourse because *hati* is conventionally used to express inward perception, spiritual awareness, and moral blindness. However, from the perspective of the present study, the association between *qulūb* and *ya 'qilūn* suggests that the term also carries a denotative-cognitive function. Therefore, the Malay rendering *jantung* may be proposed in order to preserve this cognitive and functional dimension of *qalb*.

This does not mean that the translation *hati* is entirely invalid. Rather, *hati* reflects the established connotative and spiritual reading of the verse, while *jantung* foregrounds the denotative-cognitive dimension emphasised by the phrase *ya 'qilūna bihā*. Since the purpose of this study is to examine whether *qalb* may be translated more precisely according to its semantic function, this verse is classified as a case where *jantung* is proposed as the preferred rendering.

#### Semantic Classification: Denotative-cognitive

## Suggested Malay Rendering: *jantung*

### Proposed Translation:

“Have they not travelled through the land so that they may have hearts (**jantung**) with which they reason, or ears with which they hear? Indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but rather the **jantung** within the chests that are blind.”

### b) Surah Qāf: 37

﴿إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ۝٣٧﴾

### Meaning:

“Indeed, in that there is surely a reminder for one who has *qalb*, or who listens attentively while being fully present.”

In this verse, *qalb* occurs in the context of receiving divine reminder, attentive listening, and inward presence. Unlike Surah al-Hajj: 46, the verse does not associate *qalb* directly with a cognitive verb such as *ya‘qilūn* or *yaḥqahūn*. Rather, the expression *man kāna lahu qalb* points to a person who possesses inner awareness, spiritual receptivity, and moral attentiveness.

Al-Ṭabarī (2015), in *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*, explains that the verse refers to those who possess *qalb*, meaning individuals endowed with intellect and spiritual sensitivity. Such individuals are capable of taking heed from divine reminders and avoiding the disbelief of earlier communities. Ibn ‘Āshūr (1903) similarly explains that *qalb* in this verse includes inward awareness and the ability to reflect upon Allah’s reminders. The phrase *alqā al-sam‘* indicates attentive listening, while *shahīd* refers to a state of presence and full awareness.

Al-Zamakhsharī (1998), in *al-Kashshāf*, also emphasises that benefit from divine reminder requires both an alert *qalb* and attentive listening. In this context, *qalb* does not primarily refer to the anatomical or cognitive function of the heart, but to a receptive inner faculty that responds to truth and guidance.

Abdullah Basmeih (1994) translates *qalb* in this verse as *hati*. This translation is appropriate because the dominant semantic orientation of *qalb* here is connotative-spiritual. The verse highlights inner receptivity, spiritual awareness, and moral attentiveness rather than physical or denotative-cognitive function. Therefore, within the framework of this study, *hati* or *kalbu* may be considered suitable renderings. However, since *hati* is more established in Malay Qur’anic translation and carries the meaning of inner consciousness, it remains the preferred translation in this context.

### Semantic Classification: Connotative-spiritual

### Suggested Malay Rendering: *hati / kalbu*

**Proposed Translation:** “Indeed, in that there is a reminder for whoever possesses a heart (**hati**) that is receptive, or whoever listens attentively while being fully present.”

### c) Surah al-A‘rāf: 179

﴿وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلَّ هُمْ أَصْلًا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَقُولُونَ ۝١٧٩﴾

### Meaning:

“And indeed, We have created for Hell many from among jinn and humankind: they have *qulūb* with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; rather, they are even more astray. They are the heedless.”

This verse links *qulūb* directly with the verb *yafqahūna bihā* (“with which they understand”). The verb *yafqahūn* functions as a clear contextual indicator of understanding, comprehension, and cognitive perception. The verse also places *qulūb* alongside eyes and ears, both of which are bodily faculties associated with perception. This parallel structure strengthens the reading that *qulūb* here is not merely a metaphor for emotion or spirituality, but is presented as a faculty involved in understanding and moral discernment.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (2004), in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, explains that outward actions and behaviours are guided by impulses and thoughts originating from the *qalb*. He also cites scholarly views that locate knowledge within the *qalb*, using this verse as supporting evidence. This interpretation reinforces the connection between *qalb* and cognitive activity. It also corresponds with Ibn ‘Āshūr’s broader position that *qalb* may be understood as a bodily entity endowed with cognitive capacity.

In *Tafsir Pimpinan ar-Rahman*, Abdullah Basmeih (1994) renders *qulūb* as *hati*, which reflects the conventional Malay Islamic understanding of *qalb* as the centre of inward perception and spiritual responsibility. This translation remains meaningful because the verse also condemns moral heedlessness and failure to respond to divine guidance. Nevertheless, within the denotative-connotative framework of this study, the presence of *yafqahūn* provides a strong basis for classifying this occurrence as **denotative-cognitive**.

Therefore, this study proposes *jantung* as a possible and preferred rendering in this specific context because it foregrounds the functional and cognitive dimension of *qalb*. The rendering *jantung* is not intended to negate the spiritual message of the verse, but to highlight the denotative-cognitive meaning suggested by the phrase *qulūbun lā yafqahūna bihā*.

**Semantic Classification:** Denotative-cognitive

**Suggested Malay Rendering:** *jantung*

**Proposed Translation:** “And indeed, We have created for Hell many from among jinn and humankind. They have hearts (**jantung**) with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; rather, they are even more astray. They are the heedless.”

### Summary of Qur’anic Analysis

The analysis of the selected Qur’anic verses shows that *qalb* and *qulūb* do not function uniformly across all contexts. In Surah al-Ḥajj: 46 and Surah al-A‘rāf: 179, *qalb* is associated with the verbs *ya‘qilūn* and *yafqahūn*, both of which indicate reasoning and understanding. These verses are therefore classified as denotative-cognitive usages, and *jantung* is proposed as the preferred Malay rendering.

By contrast, in Surah Qāf: 37, *qalb* is associated with receptivity to divine reminder, attentive listening, and inward awareness. The dominant meaning is therefore connotative-spiritual, making *hati* or *kalbu* more appropriate. This demonstrates that the translation of *qalb* into Malay should be determined by contextual indicators rather than by a single fixed equivalent.

Qur’anic Verse	Contextual Indicator	Semantic Classification	Suggested Malay Rendering
Surah al-Ḥajj: 46	<i>ya‘qilūna bihā</i>	Denotative-cognitive	<i>jantung</i>
Surah Qāf: 37	reminder, attentive listening, inward awareness	Connotative-spiritual	<i>hati / kalbu</i>
Surah al-A‘rāf: 179	<i>lā yafqahūna bihā</i>	Denotative-cognitive	<i>jantung</i>

Table 1: Summary of Qur’anic Analysis

### ii) Classical Arabic Poetry

For the analysis of classical Arabic poetry, this study examines selected poetic examples from three major literary periods: the Jāhiliyyah period, the Umayyad period, and the Abbasid period. These examples are not intended to represent the entire corpus of classical Arabic poetry. Rather, they function as illustrative samples

for examining how *qalb* is used in literary discourse and how its meaning differs from its usage in selected Qur'anic cognitive contexts.

The selection of poems from these periods is significant because they belong to important stages in the development of Arabic literary expression. Classical Arabic poetry provides a rich context for observing the emotional, rhetorical, and metaphorical dimensions of *qalb*. Unlike Qur'anic verses where *qalb* may sometimes be associated with cognitive functions such as reasoning and understanding, poetic usage often foregrounds love, sorrow, longing, emotional instability, and the inner struggle between feeling and reason. (al-Rāfi'ī, 1974).

Based on the selected poetic examples, the use of *qalb* in classical Arabic poetry generally reflects a connotative-emotional meaning. This is closely related to the root meaning of *qalb*, which denotes turning, changing, or fluctuation. In poetry, this semantic root is often expressed through emotional restlessness, instability, longing, and the shifting states of the lover's inner self.

This meaning can be observed in the verse attributed to 'Umar ibn Abī Rabī'ah, a prominent Umayyad poet (Fawwaz, 2022, p. 204):

وَمَا سُمِّيَ الْقَلْبُ إِلَّا مَنْ تَقَلَّبَهُ وَلَا الْفُؤَادُ فُؤَادًا غَيْرَ أَنْ عَقْلًا

### Meaning:

*The heart (qalb) is named so only because of its constant fluctuation, and the fu'ād is called so only because it possesses intellect.*

This verse explicitly links *qalb* with the idea of fluctuation. The term does not refer to the physical organ in an anatomical sense, nor does it function as a direct cognitive faculty as in the Qur'anic expressions *ya 'qilūna bihā* or *yafqahūna bihā*. Rather, it highlights the unstable and changing nature of the inner self. Therefore, within the framework of this study, *qalb* in this poetic context is classified as **connotative-emotional**. The most appropriate Malay rendering is therefore *hati*, as it preserves the emotional and affective nuance of the Arabic term.

Furthermore, the researchers observe that poets of the Jāhiliyyah period also regarded *fu'ād* and *qalb* as referring to the same concept, namely the heart (al-Durrah, 1989, p. 75). A similar connotative-emotional usage can be observed in the poetry of Imru' al-Qays:

أَعْرَكَ مِنِّي أَنْ حُبِّكَ قَاتِلِي \* \* وَأَنْتَ مَهْمَا تَأْمُرِي الْقَلْبَ يَفْعَلُ

وَأَنْتَ فَسَمَتِ الْفُؤَادَ، فَنِصْفُهُ \* \* فَنَيْلٌ، وَنِصْفٌ بِالْحَدِيدِ مُكْبَلٌ

### Meaning:

*Have you been deceived by the thought that your love is killing me, and that whatever you command the heart to do, it will obey? You have divided my heart into two halves: one half is slain, and the other is bound in chains.*

In this example, *qalb* and *fu'ād* are used within the semantic field of love, emotional submission, suffering, and inner captivity. The speaker presents the heart as something controlled by the beloved, wounded by love, and divided by emotional pain. Although *qalb* and *fu'ād* may have different semantic nuances in other contexts, this poem uses both terms to express the inner emotional condition of the lover.

Accordingly, *qalb* in this context should not be translated as *jantung*, because the poem does not refer to the physical heart or to a denotative-cognitive function. Instead, it expresses emotional vulnerability and affective surrender. The Malay term *hati* is more suitable because it captures the literary and emotional meaning of the verse. Translating *qalb* as *jantung* in this context would weaken the poetic effect and obscure the emotional symbolism intended by the poet.

The connotative-emotional meaning of *qalb* can also be found in the poetry of Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī:

مألنا كُنَّا جَرِيًّا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ \* أَنَا أَهْوَى وَقَلْبُكَ الْمَتَّبُولُ

كُلَّمَا عَادَ مَنْ بَعَثْتَ إِلَيْهَا \* غَارَ مِنِّي وَخَانَ فِيمَا يَقُولُ

أَفْسَدَتْ بَيْنَنَا الْأَمَانَاتِ عَيْنَا \* هَا وَخَانَتْ قُلُوبُهُنَّ الْعُقُولُ

**Meaning:**

*Why are we both consumed by sorrow, O messenger? I am the one who loves, yet it is your heart that is afflicted. Each time he returns from delivering my message to her, he grows jealous of me and betrays me in his words. The beauty of her eyes has destroyed the trust between us, so that reason betrays the hearts.*

In this poem, al-Mutanabbī presents *qalb* within the emotional world of love, jealousy, betrayal, and sorrow. In other words, the intellect possesses cognitive power that can influence and restrain the emotions arising from the *qalb* (al-Barqūqī, 2004). The poem also introduces a relationship between *qalb* and *‘aql* or reason. The line *khānat qulūbahunna al-‘uqūl* suggests a tension between emotion and intellect, where reason fails or betrays the hearts. This does not mean that *qalb* here should be classified as denotative-cognitive. Rather, the cognitive element appears as a contrast to the emotional force of *qalb*. The dominant semantic orientation remains emotional and literary.

Therefore, within the framework of this study, *qalb* in al-Mutanabbī’s poem is classified as **connotative-emotional**, with an additional element of emotional-intellectual tension. The suitable Malay rendering is *hati*, because it preserves the poetic contrast between emotion and reason. Rendering *qalb* as *jantung* would make the verse sound anatomically literal and would fail to convey the symbolic and affective meaning intended in the poem.

**Summary of Classical Arabic Poetry Analysis**

Overall, the analysis of selected classical Arabic poems shows that *qalb* in literary discourse tends to function connotatively rather than denotatively. It is associated with love, sorrow, longing, emotional instability, and the fluctuation of the inner self. This differs from selected Qur’anic cognitive contexts, where *qalb* may be classified as denotative-cognitive due to its association with verbs such as *ya‘qilūn* and *yafqahūn*. In poetry, however, the dominant function of *qalb* is emotional and metaphorical. Therefore, *hati* is generally more appropriate than *jantung* in translating *qalb* in classical Arabic poetry.

Poetic Example	Contextual Indicator	Semantic Classification	Suggested Malay Rendering
‘Umar ibn Abī Rabī‘ah	fluctuation, changing inner state	Connotative-emotional	<i>hati</i>
Imru’ al-Qays	love, emotional submission, suffering	Connotative-emotional	<i>hati</i>
al-Mutanabbī	love, sorrow, emotional-intellectual tension	Connotative-emotional	<i>hati</i>

Table 2: Summary of Classical Arabic Poetry Analysis

The findings from the poetry analysis support the broader argument of this study that *qalb* should not be translated through a single fixed Malay equivalent. While *jantung* may be suitable in denotative-anatomical and denotative-cognitive contexts, *hati* is more appropriate in poetic contexts where *qalb* functions as a symbol of emotion, love, longing, sorrow, and inner fluctuation.

**iii) Selected Hadith Texts**

For the analysis of hadith texts, this study examines three selected hadith excerpts containing the term *qalb*. These hadiths are selected because they represent different semantic orientations of *qalb*, namely denotative-anatomical, connotative-spiritual, and connotative-moral usages. As with the Qur’anic and poetic examples,

these hadiths are not intended to represent all occurrences of *qalb* in the hadith corpus. Rather, they function as illustrative examples for applying the denotative-connotative contextual framework to Prophetic discourse.

Hadith texts are particularly important for this study because they often combine physical, moral, and spiritual dimensions in their use of *qalb*. In some cases, *qalb* is described in bodily terms, while in others it refers to inner faith, sincerity, moral qualities, and spiritual fluctuation. Therefore, the translation of *qalb* in hadith requires careful attention to both the wording of the hadith and the explanations of classical hadith commentators.

### a) The Hadith of *Mudghah*

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ . أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

#### Meaning:

“Indeed, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Truly, it is the *qalb*.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

In this hadith, the Prophet ﷺ explicitly refers to *qalb* as a *mudghah*, namely a piece of flesh within the body. The expression *fī al-jasad* (“in the body”) and the term *mudghah* provide clear anatomical indicators. Based on the framework of this study, this occurrence of *qalb* is classified as **denotative-anatomical**, because the term is directly connected to a bodily organ.

In Malay, the anatomical organ that corresponds to *qalb* in this context is *jantung*, not *hati*. The word *hati* in Malay may refer anatomically to the liver, although it is also widely used metaphorically for inner feeling, sincerity, and spirituality. Since this hadith explicitly presents *qalb* as a physical entity within the body, *jantung* is proposed as the more precise rendering in this context.

Al-Nawawī (1996), in *Sharḥ al-Nawawī ‘alā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, cites the view of the Mālikī scholar al-Māzarī, who argued that the centre of thinking or intellect is located not in the head, but in the *mudghah* referred to by the Prophet ﷺ as *qalb*. This view was supported by reference to Qur’anic verses such as Surah al-Ḥajj: 46 and Surah Qāf: 37. Al-Nawawī also reports that this was the view held by some physicians of that period, although other scholars and philosophers located cognition in the brain. This discussion shows that classical scholars had already recognised the relationship between *qalb*, bodily function, and cognition, even if empirical knowledge at the time was limited.

The meaning of this hadith is also reinforced by an athar attributed to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib:

إن العقل في القلب والرحمة في الكبد والرافة في الطحال والنفس في الرئة

#### Meaning:

“Indeed, intellect is in the *qalb*, mercy is in the liver, compassion is in the spleen, and desire is in the lungs.” (Reported by al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*)

This athar is significant because it distinguishes *qalb* from *kabid* or liver. Such a distinction supports the argument that *qalb* should not be automatically rendered as *hati* when the context is anatomical or cognitive. In the hadith of *mudghah*, the dominant semantic orientation is anatomical, while the moral message of the hadith is built upon that physical reference. Therefore, *jantung* is proposed as the preferred Malay rendering.

**Semantic Classification:** Denotative-anatomical

**Suggested Malay Rendering:** *jantung*

**Proposed Translation:** “Behold, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the entire body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the entire body is corrupt. Truly, it is the heart (*jantung*).”

## b) The Hadith on Divine Evaluation of the *Qalb*

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ

### Meaning:

“Indeed, Allah does not look at your appearance or your wealth, but He looks at your *qalb* and your deeds.” (Narrated by Muslim)

In this hadith, *qulūb* appears in contrast with external appearance and wealth. The structure of the hadith shifts attention from outward forms to inward moral and spiritual realities. Although *qalb* may be understood anatomically in some contexts, the dominant meaning here is not physical. Rather, it refers to sincerity, intention, faith, moral quality, and the inner state of the human being.

Al-Nawawī (1996), in his commentary, briefly connects this *qalb* with the *muḍghah* mentioned in the previous hadith. However, Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (2002), in *Marqāh al-Mafātīh Sharḥ Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, explains that *qalb* in this context is more spiritual and inward in nature. It functions as the locus from which moral qualities, whether good or evil, emerge. It is also the centre of inner states such as faith, sincerity, and ostentation.

Based on the framework of this study, this hadith is classified as **connotative-spiritual/moral**. The translation *jantung* would be too anatomically restricted in this context and may fail to convey the spiritual and moral depth intended by the hadith. Meanwhile, *hati* is acceptable within Malay Islamic usage because it commonly denotes inner feeling, sincerity, and intention. However, *kalbu* may be particularly suitable here because it carries a spiritual and religious nuance while avoiding possible confusion with *hati* as the liver.

Therefore, this study proposes *kalbu* as the preferred rendering in this context, while acknowledging that *hati* remains acceptable in general Malay religious discourse.

**Semantic Classification:** Connotative-spiritual/moral

**Suggested Malay Rendering:** *kalbu / hati*

**Proposed Translation:** “Indeed, Allah does not look at your faces or your wealth, but He looks at your *kalbu* and your deeds.”

## c) The Supplication of *Yā Muqallib al-Qulūb*

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

### Meaning:

“O Turner of the hearts, keep my *qalb* firm upon Your religion.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi from Anas ibn Malik)

In this supplication, *qalb* is associated with fluctuation, change, and spiritual steadfastness. The phrase *Yā Muqallib al-qulūb* directly reflects the root meaning of *qalb*, namely turning or changing. However, the context does not refer to physical movement or anatomical function. Rather, it refers to the spiritual state of the believer, whose faith may fluctuate between firmness and weakness.

Al-Mubārakfūrī (1963), in *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī*, explains that *qalb* here refers to an inner faculty within the human being whose state may change, including the possibility of turning from faith to disbelief or from disbelief to faith. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ taught this supplication as a means of seeking steadfastness in religion.

Within the framework of this study, *qalb* in this hadith is classified as **connotative-spiritual**. The dominant meaning is not anatomical or cognitive, but spiritual and moral. Therefore, *hati* or *kalbu* is more appropriate

than *jantung*. The word *hati* is especially suitable in Malay because the phrase “membolak-balikkan hati” is already natural and widely understood in religious discourse. The term *kalbu* may also be used if the translator wishes to emphasise a more formal or spiritual tone.

**Semantic Classification:** Connotative-spiritual

**Suggested Malay Rendering:** *hati / kalbu*

**Proposed Translation:** “O Turner of the hearts, keep my heart firm upon Your religion.”

### Summary of Hadith Analysis

The analysis of the selected hadith texts shows that *qalb* does not function uniformly across all Prophetic contexts. In the hadith of *mudghah*, *qalb* is explicitly described as a bodily entity within the human body. Therefore, it is classified as denotative-anatomical, and *jantung* is proposed as the preferred Malay rendering.

By contrast, in the hadith on divine evaluation, *qalb* refers to the inner moral and spiritual state of the human being. In this context, *kalbu* or *hati* is more appropriate. Similarly, in the supplication *Yā Muqallib al-Qulūb*, *qalb* refers to spiritual fluctuation and steadfastness in faith. Therefore, *hati* or *kalbu* is preferred.

Hadith Text	Contextual Indicator	Semantic Classification	Suggested Malay Rendering
Hadith of <i>mudghah</i>	body, piece of flesh, bodily soundness/corruption	Denotative-anatomical	<i>jantung</i>
Allah looks at your <i>qulūb</i> and deeds	sincerity, inner moral state, faith, intention	Connotative-spiritual/moral	<i>kalbu / hati</i>
<i>Yā Muqallib al-Qulūb</i>	fluctuation, steadfastness, faith	Connotative-spiritual	<i>hati / kalbu</i>

Table 3: Summary of Hadith Analysis

Overall, the hadith analysis supports the central argument of this study that *qalb* should not be translated through one fixed Malay equivalent. In contexts where *qalb* is presented anatomically or functionally, *jantung* may be more precise. However, when *qalb* refers to sincerity, faith, moral quality, and spiritual fluctuation, *hati* or *kalbu* is more appropriate. This confirms the importance of applying a denotative-connotative framework in the translation of *qalb* from Arabic into Malay.

### A Contextual-Semantics Translation Model for *Qalb* into Malay

Based on the analysis of selected Qur’anic verses, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry, this study proposes a contextual-semantics translation model for rendering *qalb* into Malay. The model is developed from the denotative-connotative framework applied throughout the analysis. It aims to guide translators in determining whether *qalb* should be translated as *jantung*, *hati*, or *kalbu* according to its dominant semantic function and textual context.

The model is based on the principle that *qalb* is a polysemous Arabic term and should not be translated through a single fixed Malay equivalent. Although *hati* is the most common rendering in Malay religious and literary discourse, the analysis shows that it may not always represent the full semantic range of *qalb*, particularly in contexts where the term is associated with physical or cognitive functions. Therefore, the translation of *qalb* should be determined through contextual indicators such as genre, surrounding words, thematic function, exegetical interpretation, hadith commentary, literary usage, and Malay semantic convention.

In this model, *jantung* is proposed when *qalb* is used denotatively. This includes two main categories: denotative-anatomical and denotative-cognitive. Denotative-anatomical usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* clearly denotes the physical heart as an organ, as found in the hadith of *mudghah*. Denotative-cognitive usage refers to contexts in which *qalb* is directly associated with reasoning, understanding, reflection, or intellectual

perception, as seen in Qur’anic expressions such as *ya ‘qilūna bihā* and *lā yaḥqahūna bihā*. In these contexts, *jantung* is proposed in order to preserve the denotative and functional dimension of the Arabic term.

By contrast, *hati* and *kalbu* are proposed when *qalb* is used connotatively. Connotative-emotional usage refers to contexts involving love, longing, sorrow, fear, tranquillity, or emotional fluctuation, especially in classical Arabic poetry. In these cases, *hati* is generally more appropriate because it preserves the emotional and literary nuance of the source text. Connotative-spiritual and moral usage refers to contexts involving faith, sincerity, hypocrisy, guidance, heedlessness, and inner moral awareness. In such contexts, either *hati* or *kalbu* may be used, depending on the tone and register of the translation. *Kalbu* is particularly suitable when the translator wishes to emphasise a more spiritual, religious, or formal nuance.

The proposed model may be summarised as follows:

### A Contextual-Semantics Translation Model for *Qalb* into Malay

*Denotative-Connotative Translation Framework*

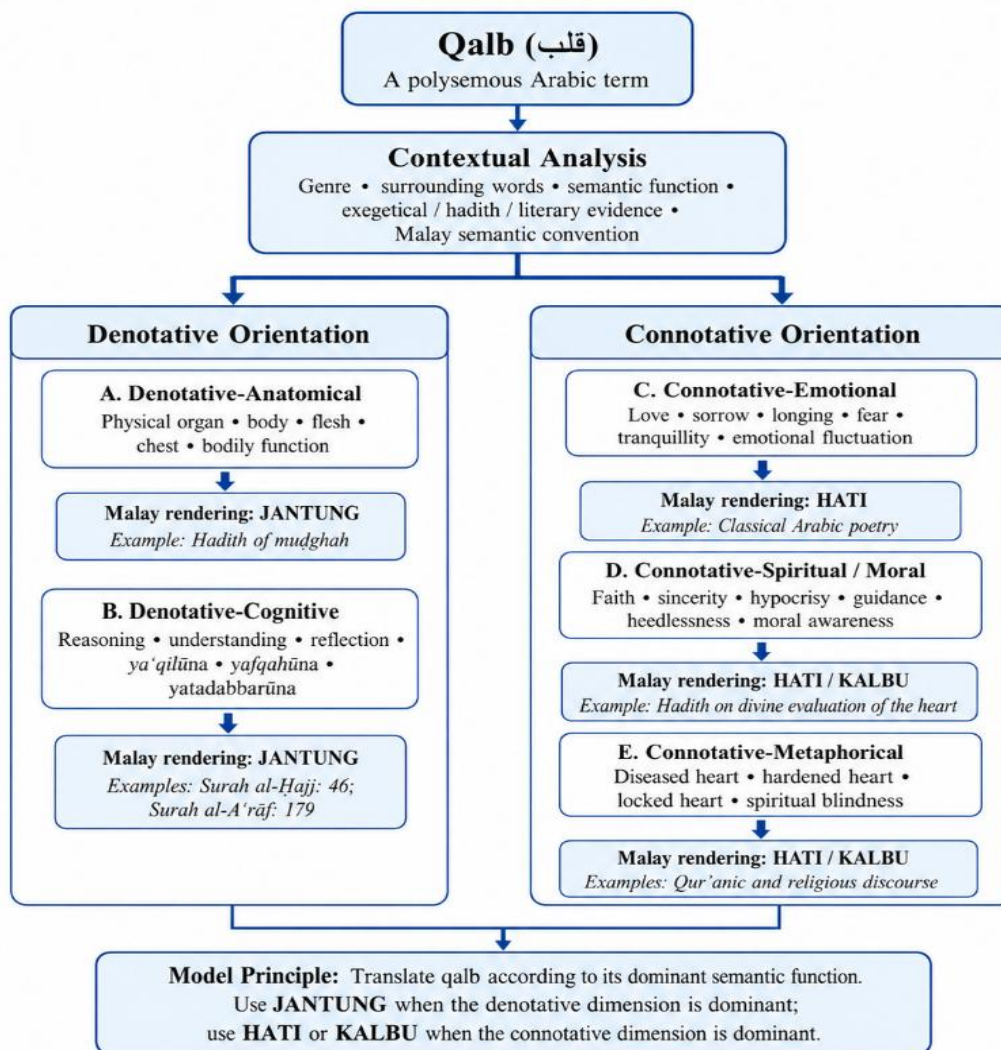


Figure 2: A Contextual-Semantics Translation Model for *qalb* into Malay

This model demonstrates that the translation of *qalb* into Malay should be based on the dominant semantic orientation of the term. When the context clearly foregrounds physical or cognitive function, *jantung* is proposed as the more accurate rendering. When the context foregrounds emotion, spirituality, morality, or metaphorical meaning, *hati* or *kalbu* is more suitable.

The model may also be expressed in the following translation decision sequence. First, the translator identifies the occurrence of *qalb* and determines the genre of the text. Second, the translator examines the immediate linguistic and thematic context. Third, the translator classifies the usage of *qalb* as denotative-anatomical,

denotative-cognitive, connotative-emotional, connotative-spiritual/moral, or connotative-metaphorical. Fourth, the translator consults relevant lexical, exegetical, hadith, literary, and Malay semantic evidence. Finally, the translator selects the most appropriate Malay rendering based on the dominant semantic function.

Through this model, the study does not suggest that all occurrences of *qalb* should be translated as *jantung*, nor does it reject the established use of *hati* in Malay religious discourse. Rather, it proposes a more systematic and context-sensitive approach. This proposal does not aim to replace established Malay Qur'anic translations, but to offer an alternative semantic rendering for contexts in which the cognitive function of *qalb* is textually foregrounded. The term *jantung* is used when the denotative dimension is dominant, especially in anatomical and cognitive contexts. The terms *hati* and *kalbu* are used when the connotative dimension is dominant, particularly in emotional, spiritual, moral, and metaphorical contexts.

Accordingly, the contextual-semantics translation model proposed in this study provides a practical framework for Arabic-Malay translators. It helps avoid automatic or uniform translation and encourages translators to consider the semantic function, textual genre, and cultural conventions of both Arabic and Malay. This model may also serve as a preliminary basis for future studies on other polysemous Arabic terms whose meanings shift across religious, literary, and cultural contexts.

## CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the translation of the Arabic term *qalb* into Malay requires a contextual and semantic approach in order to avoid reducing the term to a single fixed equivalent. Although *qalb* is commonly translated as *hati* in Malay religious and literary discourse, the analysis shows that this rendering does not always capture the full semantic range of the Arabic term. Depending on context, *qalb* may carry denotative-anatomical, denotative-cognitive, connotative-emotional, connotative-spiritual, connotative-moral, or connotative-metaphorical meanings. Therefore, the translation of *qalb* into Malay should be determined by its dominant semantic function and textual context.

Based on the analysis of selected Qur'anic verses, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry, this study proposes that *jantung* is more suitable when *qalb* is used denotatively. This includes contexts in which *qalb* refers to the physical heart as an organ, as in the hadith of *mudghah*, and contexts in which *qalb* is associated with cognitive functions such as reasoning, understanding, and reflection. In Qur'anic expressions such as *ya 'qilūna bihā* and *lā yafqahūna bihā*, *qalb* is linked directly to the function of reasoning and comprehension. Within the framework of this study, such usages are classified as denotative-cognitive, and the Malay rendering *jantung* is proposed in order to preserve the functional and denotative dimension of the Arabic term.

In contrast, *hati* and *kalbu* are more appropriate when *qalb* is used connotatively. In classical Arabic poetry, *qalb* generally functions as a symbol of love, longing, sorrow, emotional instability, and inner fluctuation. In such contexts, *hati* is more suitable because it preserves the emotional and literary nuance of the source text. Similarly, in religious contexts involving sincerity, faith, moral awareness, spiritual fluctuation, guidance, or heedlessness, *hati* and *kalbu* may be used depending on the tone and register of the translation. The term *kalbu* is especially useful in formal or spiritual contexts because it retains a religious nuance while reducing possible confusion between *hati* as the liver and *hati* as the metaphorical inner self.

The study also shows that scientific discussions on the possible cognitive role of the heart may enrich the semantic discussion of *qalb*, particularly in contexts where the term is associated with reasoning and understanding. However, such scientific perspectives should be treated cautiously. They should not be used as the sole basis for determining the meaning of *qalb*, nor should they override lexical, contextual, exegetical, hadith, literary, and translational evidence. Rather, they function as supplementary perspectives that may support the denotative-cognitive classification when the textual indicators themselves are clear.

The proposed Contextual-Semantics Translation Model for *qalb* into Malay therefore offers a systematic way of determining the most appropriate rendering. The model suggests that *jantung* should be used when the denotative-anatomical or denotative-cognitive dimension is dominant, while *hati* or *kalbu* should be used when the connotative-emotional, spiritual, moral, or metaphorical dimension is dominant. This model does not reject

the established use of *hati* in Malay Islamic discourse. Rather, it refines the translation process by showing that *hati*, *jantung*, and *kalbu* each have specific semantic functions depending on context.

The implications of this study are significant for Arabic-Malay translation, especially in the translation of religious and literary texts. Translators should avoid automatic equivalence and instead examine the semantic function, textual genre, contextual indicators, and Malay cultural conventions before selecting a translation. This is particularly important for polysemous Arabic terms such as *qalb*, whose meanings overlap across physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and moral domains.

This study is limited to selected examples from the Qur'an, Prophetic hadiths, and classical Arabic poetry. Therefore, its findings should be understood as an exploratory contribution rather than a complete classification of all occurrences of *qalb* in Arabic texts. Future research may expand this study by examining all occurrences of *qalb* in the Qur'an, comparing different Malay translations of Qur'anic verses, analysing the semantic relationship between *qalb*, *fu'ād*, *ṣadr*, and *lubb*, or investigating the translation of *qalb* in Malay literary and cultural expressions such as pantun, proverbs, and religious discourse. Further studies may also explore how AI-based translation tools distinguish between denotative and connotative meanings of *qalb* and other polysemous Arabic terms.

In conclusion, the translation of *qalb* into Malay should not be reduced to a binary choice between *hati* and *jantung*. Rather, it requires a contextual, semantic, and genre-sensitive approach. By distinguishing between denotative and connotative usages, this study provides a more precise framework for translating *qalb* as *jantung*, *hati*, or *kalbu* according to its dominant meaning in each textual context. This approach contributes to a more accurate and nuanced understanding of Arabic-Malay translation, particularly in dealing with religious and literary terms whose meanings cannot be fully captured by a single lexical equivalent.

### Statement On The Use Of Generative Artificial Intelligence

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used OpenAI's ChatGPT for the purposes of language editing and improving clarity of writing. No generative artificial intelligence tools were used to generate or interpret the scientific content. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and revised the text as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of this publication.

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