

Symbolic Meanings of "Water" and "Path" in the Book of Proverbs

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Abstract

Symbolic meanings, which can be objects or words, can have varying meanings depending on the context. This research aims to determine the frequency of words containing the words "Water" and "Path" in the book of Proverbs and their symbolic meanings. Using qualitative methods and document analysis, the author compares the meanings of these words through context using Mishler's (1979) theory. In this research there are two problem formulations, namely 1) What is the frequency of words containing the words "Water" and "Path" in the book of Proverbs? 2) What are the symbolic meanings of the words "Water" and "Path" used in the book of Proverbs? The results show that the word "Water" appears 14 times and "Path" 13 times in the book of Proverbs, which often discusses sound guidance for individuals to make their path right and acceptable to God the Almighty. The research results can assist readers in understanding the meaning of these words when reading the book of Proverbs, a rare area of research on symbolic meanings.

Keywords: Bible, path, proverbs, symbolic meaning, water

INTRODUCTION

Language is a system that humans use to communicate with each other to convey messages and intentions so that other humans have the same experience as what the speaker is talking about. Humans engage in language as a cultural behaviour, and this conduct reflects people's perceptions of both the outside world and of themselves. That is to say because everything in existence is rational, language cannot exist independently of its cultural context (Wang & Jia, 2016). According to (Nuraini et al., 2020), the term "interact" in linguistics refers to a spoken or written exchange in which the speaker and listener provide linguistic symbols in order to convey a message. Meaningful words are used in verbal discourse so that full sentences can be formed. Language is a manifestation of the speaker's mind since, according to

(Setiawaty, 2018) language also represents the speaker's identity.

According to (Chaer, 2012), language is an arbitrary system of sound symbols that members of social groupings utilize to collaborate, communicate, and self-identify. With context in every conversation, other people who do not understand the context will be confused and unable to fully understand the message. This is found in many incidents, especially in advice texts and parables. Usually, texts of advice and parables are found in books and holy bibles. An arrangement of words or a collection of sentences which generates an understandable and practical meaning is referred to as linguistic meaning. Language is utilized frequently in human daily life in practically every area of existence, including the social, political, cultural, and even the realm of trade

(Hasan et al., 2020.). According to (Wijana, 1996), context refers to all of the prior knowledge that the speaker and the listener have in common. Locutionary speech acts (the act of speaking something), illocutionary speech acts (the act of doing something), and perlocutionary speech actions (the act of impacting someone) are the three categories into which speech acts fall. This remark says that people use language when they speak to accomplish a wide range of purposes, including expressing various emotions, beginning with opinions, or even insulting others. All of the above-explained concepts can be characterized as speech acts performed during speech (Budiasih, 2018). Speech acts can also happen when written language is used because they are a part of every discourse. Its use in books, short tales, plays, and novels is one example. These kinds allow for two different types of story submissions. Storytelling with two or more perspectives merits consideration as a useful technique for conveying meaning. The Bible contains one of them. This is supported by the Bible. Many of the accounts of the creation of heaven and earth, the fall of man into sin, and the prophets are expressed in two ways. Speech acts therefore actively participate in this situation (Tobing et al., 2023) This research is a part of a pragmatic study. Language-related pragmatic studies place a strong emphasis on the direction that these actions take in terms of achieving speech goals. The goal of speech is one of the factors that determine pragmatic meaning because verbal activities that refer to these objectives influence how well the interlocutor interprets what is spoken. Leech (2016) makes a distinction between speech meaning and speech intent as a result. The distinction between speech mean and speech purpose was underlined by Rahardi et al., (2018) because mean is present before speech is said, or put another way, mean has not yet taken the form of an action. While the

speech is being spoken, the purpose is present. Yule (1996) divides pragmatics into four categories: (1) pragmatic as the study of speakers' meanings; (2) pragmatic as a study of contextual meaning; (3) pragmatic as a study of how the spoken word becomes only one part of the communication process; and (4) pragmatic as the study of relative distance expressions. In articulating the primary points made in an utterance, the speaker performs a speech act.

Therefore, this research aims to examine the symbolic meanings in one of the holy books, namely the Bible. The Bible serves the same purpose and has the same meaning for Christians and Catholics as the Quran does for Muslims. In the Bible, there are many stories about creation and the birth of Jesus Christ. Not only that, the Bible also teaches the teachings taught by Jesus and this is a guide to life for Christians. The lesson, direction, order, prohibition, prophesy, and prayer all appear in the Holy Bible. Additionally, there are narratively told tales concerning the prophet, God's adherent, God's rebellion, and God's magnificent deeds and wonders from the beginning of the universe's creation (Resi & Adrallisman, 2021) In the Bible, there are many chapters that explain the power of God, the birth of Jesus Christ, and the good things that Christians must do. So, in this study, the researcher will only examine one chapter, namely Proverbs. The Book of Proverbs contains a lot of advice and parables related to the path of human life. So, this book is often used as a guide to the life of Christians. Using blank symbols (symbols with diction that have a generic meaning) or private symbols / special symbols (symbols with new diction from the development of the author's result). The aesthetic component—that is, the feature of beauty that is associated with a certain mode of expression—and the concept of language style are essentially equivalent. The use of language style by

poets and singers to elicit and develop meaning beyond the meaning of the written words is one of its own methods, even though in fact it is not just tied to the aspect of beauty. The manner in which language is used as a whole is determined by its style. This suggests that the linguistic style is utilized as a tactic, method, or strategy for communicating (Simanjuntak, 2021)

In this research, there are two problem formulations, namely 1) What is the frequency of words containing the words "Water" and "Path" in the book of Proverbs? 2) What are the symbolic meanings of the words "Water" and "Path" used in the book of Proverbs? These two problem formulations were determined to find out how many times the words "Water" and "Path" appear in the book of Proverbs and what are the meanings of the words "Water" and "Path" in the book of Proverbs. There is a lot of research on symbolic meanings, but researchers see a research gap in research on the Bible so researchers research symbolic meanings in the words "Water" and "Path".

METHODOLOGY

Research methodologies and techniques are crucial parts of the process. According to Sudaryanto (2015), method definitions are distinguished from technique definitions. Technique is the act of putting into practice and applying a method, whereas a method is a procedure that must be followed. Techniques and methods are two elements of study that cannot be separated. Silalahi and Gunarsa (2009) defines the research technique as a series of scientific steps used to identify a problem's solution. An in-depth understanding of the approach is provided by Basuki (2006), who claims that the research method is a process utilized to accomplish the ultimate objective. This study employs a qualitative research design that seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of a subject from the researcher's point of view. The

thoughts, perceptions, views, or understandings of the researchers are related to one another in qualitative research. In reality, qualitative research is typically planned or arranged to offer experience and meaning as the findings found in the research area, according to (Pendit, 2003).

The book of Proverbs was examined by the researcher utilizing qualitative research techniques. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the main tool, which helps to validate the study's topic (Tiva & Danu, 2018). When performing qualitative research, a researcher has the chance to watch a participant's life, including their experiences, emotions, habits, and feelings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), qualitative research is a sort of research because no statistical methods or other forms of quantification were used to generate the results. Quantitative and qualitative data can be presented together or separately, though (Patton, 2014). According to Patton (2014), three different types of data can be used to generate qualitative data. Interviews come first. Open-ended questions and people's experiences, views, perceptions, knowledge, and feelings can be used to gather the data. Next, some remarks. The fieldwork description of actions, events, or discussions might provide the researcher with the data. And last, paperwork. Texts and other documents from any field, including those from the government, program records, private diaries, and artistic creations, can be used to gather the data.

The researcher used document analysis, one of the qualitative approaches, to assess the book of Proverbs. Any document, whether it contains words (text) or images, can be studied or evaluated using the process of analysis. Document analysis is the procedure of gathering data from textual sources, such as books, magazines, and transcripts (Arikunto, 2012). For the purpose of

comprehending the book of Proverbs, the researcher used document analysis.

The researcher used the book of Proverbs as the main source of information. There are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs. The researcher read the book of Proverbs multiple times in order to locate the words "Water" and "Path" and comprehend their meanings before analyzing their frequency and meanings. The words "Water" and "Path" were examined using document analysis in this step. In this study, the researcher validated data using data triangulation. There are several steps carried out.

The Cohen et al., (2002) theory is applied by the researcher to accomplish this study. They provide the following phases in their analysis: (1) creating a natural meaning unit, (2) classifying, sorting and classifying these meaning units, (3). constructing narratives to describe the contents, (4) interpreting the data from the sources.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The frequency of words containing the word "Water" and "Path" in the book of Proverbs

Table 1. The frequency of the words "Water" and "Path"

No.	Verses containing the word "Water"	No.	Verses containing the word "Path"
1.	Drink the <u>water</u> of thy cistern, and of the rivers out of the midst of thine own well. (5:15)	1.	My son, walk not thou in the way with them: refrain thy foot from their <u>path</u> . (1:15)
2.	Let thy fountains flow forth, and the rivers of <u>waters</u> in the streets. (5:16)	2.	Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity, and every good <u>path</u> . (2:9)

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| 3. | When there were no depths, was I begotten, when there were no fountains abounding with <u>water</u> . (8:24) | 3. | Whose ways are crooked and they are lewd in their <u>paths</u> . (2:15) |
| 4. | When he gave his decree to the Sea, that the <u>waters</u> should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth, (8:29) | 4. | Surely her house tendeth to death, and her <u>paths</u> unto the dead. (2:18) |
| 5. | Stolen <u>waters</u> are sweet, and hid bread is pleasant. (9:17) | 5. | Her ways are ways of pleasure, and all her <u>paths</u> prosperity. (3:17) |
| 6. | The beginning of strife is as one that openeth the <u>waters</u> : therefore or the contention be meddled with, leave off. (17:14) | 6. | I have taught thee in ye way of wisdom, and led thee in the <u>paths</u> of righteousness. (4:11) |
| 7. | The words of a man's mouth are like deep <u>waters</u> , and the wellspring of wisdom is like a flowing river. (18:4) | 7. | Ponder the <u>path</u> of thy feet, and let all thy ways be ordered aright. (4:26) |
| 8. | The counsel in the heart of man is like deep <u>waters</u> : but a man that hath understanding, will draw it out. (20:5) | 8. | She weigheth not the way of life: her <u>paths</u> are moveable: thou canst not know them. (5:6) |

9. The King’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters: he turneth it whithersoever it pleaseth him. (21:1)
10. If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink. (25:21)
11. As are the cold waters to a weary soul, so is good news from a far country. (25:25)
12. As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. (27:19)
13. Who hath ascended up to heaven, and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fist? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the world? What is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell? (30:4)
9. For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his paths. (5:21)
10. Let not thine heart decline to her ways: wander thou not in her paths. (7:25)
11. She standeth in the top of the high places by the way in the place of the paths. (8:2)
12. I cause to walk in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment, (8:20)
13. The path of the righteous is to decline from evil, and he keepeth his soul, that keepeth his way. (16:17)
14. The grave, and the barren womb, the earth that cannot be satisfied with water, and the fire that saith not, It is enough. (30:16)

From the data above, it can be seen that the word "Water" appears 14 times in the book of Proverbs from chapters 1 to 31. The word "Path" also appears 13 times in the book of Proverbs from chapters 1 to 31.

2. The symbolic meanings of the words "Water" and "Path" used in the book of Proverbs

After the researcher observed the frequency of the words "Water" and "Path" used in the book of Proverbs. Here are the symbolic meanings of the words "Water" and "Path" used in the book of Proverbs.

a. The symbolic meaning of the word "Water"

Table 2. The symbolic meaning of the word "Water"

No.	Verse	Meaning
1.	Drink the <u>water</u> of thy cistern, and of the rivers out of the midst of thine own well. (5:15)	In this verse, "water" symbolizes something that is owned by each family or house so it is not appropriate for a family to drink water from someone else's house. However, because chapter five of the book of Proverbs talks about sexual pleasure, the "water" in this verse symbolizes

	that a person should not indulge in sexual pleasure that is not with his partner and it is good for him to carry out sexual acts with his legal partner which means it is approved by God.	he appointed the foundations of the earth, (8:29)	the order and stability.
2.	Let thy fountains flow forth, and the rivers of <u>waters</u> in the streets. (5:16)	In this verse, "water" symbolizes satisfaction. So, because this article talks about sexual activity, "water" is symbolized as satisfaction when doing this. So it is not appropriate if someone gets this satisfaction from someone who is not their legal partner.	In this verse, the word "waters" describes that all people really need water, so it is associated with "stolen waters" which are symbolized by sin. It is said to be a sin because the water was taken from someone who does not own it, so this verse concludes that stealing is a sweet thing at first, but it is a sin because it steals something from something that does not belong to it.
3.	When there were no depths, was I begotten, when there were no fountains abounding with <u>water</u> . (8:24)	In this verse, the word "water" symbolizes creation. The word "water" here symbolizes how eternal God is from before the time of creation, so this describes the eternity of God which has existed since before the time of creation.	In this verse, quarrel is symbolized by "water". Because quarrels spread very easily like water that can flow quickly. So, this verse means not to start a fight because it grows very quickly like water that quickly flows and spreads to all sides.
4.	When he gave his decree to the Sea, that the <u>waters</u> should not pass his commandment: when	The word "waters" in this verse symbolizes power, chaos and disorder, while God's boundaries symbolize	The words of a man's mouth are like deep <u>waters</u> , and the wellspring of wisdom is like a flowing river.
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| (18:4) | is the same as human words that can leave an impression on 12. someone's mind. | enthusiasm to continue living.
In this verse, the word "water" symbolizes self-reflection. Because water is able to display facial and body reflections. Water and mirrors symbolize the relationship between the heart and humans. Water reflects what is in front of it, as well as the human heart reflects what is within it. |
| 8. | The counsel in the heart of man is like deep <u>waters</u> : but a man that hath wide and how many understanding, will plans a human has for draw it out. (20:5) | In this verse, the sentence "deep waters" describes how deep and wide and how many plans a human has for their life. |
| 9. | The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of <u>waters</u> : he turneth it whithersoever it pleaseth him. (21:1) | In this verse, the word "water" symbolizes how much power the authority of the king 13. mentioned in this verse has. |
| 10. | If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him <u>water</u> to drink. (25:21) | In this verse, the word "water" symbolizes contentment. Humans need water to survive. So this verse conveys a message about giving what you have to your enemies and helping them. |
| 11. | As are the cold <u>waters</u> to a weary soul, so is good news from a far country. (25:25) | In this verse, the word 14. "water" symbolizes good news from a distant land with cool water for thirsty souls. This verse means that good news can provide relief and joy to a tired and weary soul. Good news can give hope and |
- b. The symbolic meaning of the word "Path"**

Table 3. The symbolic meaning of the word "Path"

No.	Verse	Meaning
1.	My son, walk not thou in the way with them: refrain thy foot from their <u>path</u> . (1:15)	In this verse, the word "path" symbolizes a person's way of life or behaviour. So this verse tells humans not to follow the wrong way of life or behavior so as not to be bound by sin. Apart from that, this verse tells readers not to get involved in the wrong environment.
2.	Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity, and every good path. (2:9)	In this verse, the word "path" symbolizes good deeds because this verse means wisdom and understanding. So, if someone understands good behaviour, he will gain wisdom and understanding and live righteously and morally.
3.	Whose ways are crooked and they are lewd in their paths. (2:15)	The word "path" in this verse refers to a person's way of life or behaviour. So this verse means that the way of life of people who always commit sins is tortuous, while the way of life of righteous people or
4.	Surely her house tendeth to death, and her paths unto the dead. (2:18)	In this verse, the word "path" symbolizes direction. This verse talks about the end of the life of someone who in his life always follows sin so that at the end of his life he will be led to destruction.
5.	Her ways are ways of pleasure, and all her paths are prosperity. (3:17)	In this verse, the word "path" symbolizes a person's plan or life. Because this verse describes obedience and if someone obeys God's commands then their life will be prosperous, safe and happy.
6.	I have taught thee in ye way of wisdom, and led thee in the paths of righteousness. (4:11)	In this verse, the word "path" symbolizes a person's life. "The paths of righteousness" means a good, right and moral life. So, this verse wants to convey advice about following the rules and being obedient, then you will be blessed with prosperity and wisdom.
7.	Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be ordered aright. (4:26)	In this verse, the word "path" symbolizes a person's way of life. In

	<p>this verse, Solomon advises his son to take a smooth and steady path. The flat road is the right and moral path. A fixed path is a path that is consistent and does not change.</p>	<p>woman who lives in an immoral manner, including committing adultery. This verse provides an important lesson for all of us. We must stay away from prostitutes. Harlots are a danger to us and can lead us down the wrong path.</p>
8.	<p>She weigheth not the way of life: her paths are moveable: thou canst not know them. (5:6)</p> <p>In this verse, the word "path" is a person's way of life or lifestyle.</p> <p>In this passage, 11. Proverbs speaks of "fornication" and the dangers of it. So if someone is bound by this sin, his life is not good and immoral. Because adultery is a sin that can bring destruction to our lives.</p>	<p>11. She standeth in the top of the high places by the way in the place of the paths. (8:2)</p> <p>In this verse, the word "path" symbolizes wisdom and path. Because, this verse wants to convey the message that wisdom is a figure who stands in high and busy places, such as on a hill or at a crossroads. This shows that wisdom is something that is easily accessible and can be found by anyone who seeks it.</p>
9.	<p>For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his paths. (5:21)</p> <p>In this verse, the word "path" is an action that a person does. So, this verse wants to convey the message that God is all-seeing. Every</p>	<p>12. I cause to walk in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment, (8:20)</p> <p>The word "path" in this verse symbolizes direction or destination. Thus, this verse describes wisdom as a figure who walks the path of truth and justice. This shows that wisdom is something good and true. Wisdom will</p>
10.	<p>Let not thine heart decline to her ways: wander thou not in her paths. (7:25)</p> <p>In this verse, the word "path" is a person's habit. In this verse, Solomon warns a young man not to be tempted by a prostitute. A prostitute is a</p>	

- never lead us down the wrong path.
13. The path of the righteous is to decline from evil, and he keepeth his soul, that keepeth his way. (16:17)
- The word "path" in this verse symbolizes a person's lifestyle or principles. So, this verse teaches that honest people will stay away from evil. This is because crime will bring loss and even death.

This research is in line with several previous studies such as Tobing et al., (2023) who analysed the book of Genesis and found the assertive speech acts in Genesis. Hasan et al., (2022), analysed the meaning of the song "Speechless" and found out the meaning and significance in the song lyrics. (Resi & Adrallisman, 2021), analysed the book of Psalms and found out the figurative language types in the book of Psalms. Furthermore, the information can serve as a resource for future scholars who wish to go deeper into Bible analysis and challenge readers' preconceived notions about textual criticism.

Uhunmwangho and Oghiator (2022) examine the language of religion by applying a discourse-linguistic perspective to the reading of Proverbs chapter 9. The paper critically discusses the syntactic structures of the text provided, including words; groups; clauses sentences.

Rahmadhanti et al., (2022.) examined metaphor analysis and meaning of the song "Different World". In this research, the researchers analysed sentence metaphors and know the meaning of the songs contained in the song entitled "Different World "using a qualitative description.

Tobing et al., (2023) examined the analysis of assertive speech acts in the book of

Genesis in the Indonesian Translation of the Bible using qualitative-descriptive study. This research reviewed 20 data of assertive speech acts in Genesis with details: assertive speech acts-acknowledging amounted to 2 data, assertive speech acts-demanding amounted to 5 data, assertive speech acts-declaring amounted to 6 data, assertive speech acts-giving testimony amounted to 3 data, assertive speech acts announcing amounted to 2 data, and assertive speech acts-reporting amounted to 2 data. Based on the form, assertive speech acts in the book of Genesis are detailed into 15 forms of direct speech acts and 5 forms of indirect speech acts.

Hasan et al., (2022) examined the meaning of the song "Speechless" sung in the film "Aladin". Every lyric in the Speechless song has meaning and significance in the movie "Aladdin". The method used to conduct research is a qualitative method that has a descriptive nature.

Based on this research, it was found that the word "Water" appeared 14 times and the word "Path" appeared 13 times. The meanings of these words vary, but most of them talk about the path of life and purity like water. The comparison between this research and others is the rare discussion of the book of Proverbs. Discussions regarding the words "Water" and "Path" can provide readers with an interpretation of their meaning. Seeing that the words used in the Bible are parables, this research can help readers.

CONCLUSION

The terms "Water" and "Path" from the book of Proverbs have been examined in this study. The researcher identified that the word "Water" appears 14 times and the word "Path" appears 13 times in the book of Proverbs based on the discussion and analytical data from the previous chapter. The book of Proverbs often discusses sound guidance that individuals should follow in

order to make their path right and acceptable to God. This research is able to assist readers in understanding the meaning of the terms "Water" and "Path" when reading the book of Proverbs, which is noteworthy given the relative rarity of research on symbolic meaning. The researcher expects that this study will be beneficial to anyone who is interested in the interpretation of symbolic meanings, particularly in the Bible.

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