Mashdar in the Qur'an: A Linguistic Analysis of the Essence of Worship

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan mashdar dalam Al-Qur'an sebagai unsur kebahasaan yang merepresentasikan esensi ibadah. Fokus kajian diarahkan pada empat mashdar utama, yaitu ibadah, dhikr, du'a, dan sabr, karena keempatnya mewakili dimensi konseptual, spiritual, relasional, dan psikologis dalam ibadah. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka. Data utama berupa ayat Al-Qur'an yang memuat bentuk mashdar atau derivasi kata yang berkaitan dengan ibadah, sedangkan data pendukung berasal dari literatur morfologi Arab, semantik Al-Qur'an, dan penelitian terdahulu. Analisis dilakukan melalui identifikasi bentuk kata, klasifikasi pola wazan, penafsiran fungsi linguistik, dan pembacaan semantik berdasarkan konteks ayat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mashdar dalam ayat-ayat ibadah tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai nomina verbal, tetapi juga membentuk makna yang abstrak, universal, dan berkelanjutan. Mashdar ibadah menegaskan penghambaan total sebagai orientasi hidup manusia; dhikr menunjukkan kesadaran batin terhadap kehadiran Allah; du'a menggambarkan komunikasi responsif antara hamba dan Tuhan; sedangkan sabr merepresentasikan daya tahan spiritual yang menopang keberlanjutan ibadah. Temuan ini memperlihatkan bahwa analisis linguistik atas mashdar dapat memperkaya pemahaman mengenai ibadah sebagai konsep yang melampaui ritual formal dan mencakup kesadaran batin serta perilaku hidup secara menyeluruh.

Kata kunci : Analisis Linguistik; Ibadah; Mashdar; Morfologi Arab; Semantik Al-Qur'an.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of mashdar in the Qur'an as a linguistic element that represents the essence of worship. The analysis focuses on four selected mashdars, namely ibadah, dhikr, du'a, and sabr, because they represent conceptual, spiritual, relational, and psychological dimensions of worship. This research employs a qualitative library research method. The primary data consist of Qur'anic verses containing mashdar forms or word derivations related to worship, while the secondary data consist of Arabic morphology references, Qur'anic semantic studies, and previous research on worship and Qur'anic language. The analysis proceeds through word-form identification, wazan classification, linguistic-function analysis, and semantic interpretation based on verse context. The findings show that mashdar in worship-related verses does not merely function as a verbal noun but also constructs meanings that are abstract, universal, and continuous. The mashdar ibadah affirms total servitude as the orientation of human existence; dhikr indicates inner awareness of God's presence; du'a portrays responsive communication between the servant and God; and sabr represents spiritual endurance that sustains the continuity of worship. These findings indicate that linguistic analysis of mashdar can enrich the understanding of worship as a concept that goes beyond formal ritual and encompasses inner awareness as well as comprehensive life conduct.

Keywords : *Arabic Morphology; Essence Of Worship; Linguistic Analysis; Mashdar; Qur'anic Semantics*.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is not only a theological source for Muslims, but also a linguistic text whose meanings are deeply connected with the structures of Arabic. Qur'anic discourse often conveys theological ideas through selected lexical roots, morphological patterns, syntactic constructions, and semantic relations. For this reason, understanding the Qur'an requires attention to Arabic grammar, derivation, semantic context, and reliable translation. Recent studies on Qur'anic translation and morpho-semantic analysis show that Qur'anic terms should be read through textual coherence, historical development of translation, and contextual meaning networks rather than through isolated dictionary meanings (Faizin, 2021; Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019; Mubarak & Bashori, 2025; Ramadhan et al., 2026)

One of the linguistic aspects that plays an important role in Arabic meaning formation is morphology. Arabic is characterized by a root-and-pattern system in which lexical roots are realized through different forms, or awzan, that generate related but nuanced meanings. Recent studies of Arabic morphology emphasize

that derivational patterns are not only formal grammatical categories, but also mechanisms for constructing meaning, expanding vocabulary, and clarifying semantic relations in Arabic texts (Maesaroh et al., 2026; Ramadhan et al., 2026; Setiyadi, 2025). Contemporary computational work on Arabic nominal morphology also confirms the complexity of Arabic nominal forms and their relevance for systematic linguistic analysis (Khairallah et al., 2024).

Within this morphological system, mashdar occupies a central position. Mashdar is commonly described as a verbal noun that expresses the meaning of an action or event without being tied to tense, agent, or specific temporal occurrence. It therefore differs from fi'il, which generally marks action in relation to time, and from isim fa'il, which marks an agent or performer. The ability of mashdar to express action abstractly makes it highly relevant in Qur'anic discourse, especially when the Qur'an presents concepts that are not limited to a single event. Recent Qur'anic morphological studies highlight masdar as a form of conceptual abstraction and as a key indicator of semantic depth in revelation language (R. Rahmadani & Dasuki, 2026; Ramadhan et al., 2026; Suhemi, 2020).

Previous research on mashdar in the Qur'an has made important contributions, but much of it has concentrated on identifying forms and wazan patterns. (Suhemi, 2020), for example, analyzed mashdar in Surah Al-Kahfi and identified diverse patterns that reveal the richness of Qur'anic morphology. Rahmadani and (R. Rahmadani & Dasuki, 2026) further show that masdar in Qur'anic morphology functions as a tool of conceptual abstraction, while (R. Rahmadani & Dasuki, 2026) demonstrate that morpho-semantic analysis can explain how root derivations create structured networks of meaning. These studies provide a strong basis for connecting morphology and semantics more directly.

A similar direction can be seen in semantic studies of Qur'anic key terms. (Mubarak & Bashori, 2025) analyzed the semantic transformation of taubah and showed that a Qur'anic term can expand from an individual spiritual meaning into a broader social and ethical meaning. (Ramadhan et al., 2026) also show that changes in morphological patterns may produce shifts of contextual meaning in Qur'anic translation. Such research demonstrates the importance of examining Qur'anic vocabulary contextually. At the same time, studies that focus on only one root or lexeme still leave room for a broader analysis of several interrelated mashdars in the semantic field of worship.

The concept of worship itself is broad in Islamic thought. Worship is not limited to formal rituals such as prayer, fasting, zakat, and pilgrimage, but also includes obedience, humility, remembrance, supplication, ethical conduct, and patience before (Kallang, 2018) explains that worship in the Qur'an includes submission to Allah and practical obedience in human life. (Husna & Arif, 2021) emphasize that worship has ritual, social, and inner dimensions, while (Humaidi & Hasan, 2025) argue that everyday activities can also carry worship value when they are grounded in correct intention and do not violate divine prohibitions. Contemporary discussion of worship also warns that outward religious expression must remain connected with sincerity and ethical meaning (Pohan, 2024).

This article focuses on four mashdars: ibadah, dhikr, du'a, and sabr. These four are selected because each represents a different aspect of worship. Ibadah represents servitude and total devotion; dhikr represents spiritual awareness and remembrance of God; du'a represents relational communication between the servant and God; and sabr represents inner endurance that enables worship to continue through difficulty. The selection of these words is supported by recent Qur'anic morphology and corpus-oriented studies, which show that Qur'anic word forms can be examined through careful lemmatization, part-of-speech tagging, and morpho-semantic mapping (Akra et al., 2025; Khairallah et al., 2024; A. R. Rahmadani et al., 2023).

Based on this background, the research questions of this article are formulated as follows: how are the selected mashdars and their derivations used in Qur'anic verses related to worship; what linguistic functions do they perform in representing worship; and what semantic implications do they produce for understanding the essence of worship in the Qur'an? These questions are important because the study of mashdar is not limited to the identification of grammatical forms, but also concerns the way Qur'anic language constructs abstract and enduring religious meanings. By examining the selected mashdars in relation to their morphological patterns and semantic contexts, this article seeks to show how linguistic forms contribute to the broader understanding of worship in Qur'anic discourse.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the forms, functions, and meanings of selected mashdars and to demonstrate that mashdar can help explain worship as a universal, continuous, and holistic orientation of human life. More specifically, this study aims to identify the morphological characteristics of the selected mashdars, explain their linguistic roles in the verses, and interpret their semantic contribution to the concept of worship. Through this analysis, the article is expected to enrich Qur'anic linguistic studies by showing that worship is not merely a set of formal ritual practices, but also a comprehensive spiritual orientation involving servitude, remembrance, supplication, and patience.

Tabel 1. Research Position in Relation to Previous Studies

No	Previous Study	Focus	Relevance to This Study
1	Suhemi (2020)	Morphological forms of mashdar in Surah Al-Kahfi.	Provides the morphological basis for identifying mashdar patterns.
2	Rahmadani and Dasuki (2026)	Qur'anic morphology, sarf patterns, and masdar as conceptual abstraction.	Supports the claim that masdar contributes to conceptual and semantic depth.
3	Ramadhan et al. (2026)	Morpho-semantic analysis of root derivations in the Qur'an and Indonesian translation.	Demonstrates the value of linking wazan, context, and semantic networks.
4	Kallang (2018); Husna and Arif (2021); Humaidi and Hasan (2025)	The meaning and practice of worship in Qur'anic and social contexts.	Supports the conceptual discussion of worship as ritual, inner, social, and ethical devotion.
5	Akra et al. (2025); Khairallah et al. (2024)	Qur'anic and Arabic nominal morphology through corpus and computational approaches.	Supports systematic identification of Qur'anic word forms and nominal derivations.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with library research as the main method. Library research is appropriate because the object of the study is textual and linguistic: Qur'anic verses containing mashdar forms or derivations that are semantically related to worship. The study does not measure frequency statistically as its main goal, but interprets selected linguistic forms in their Qur'anic contexts. The method is therefore descriptive-analytical. It describes the forms of the selected words and analyzes their semantic contribution to the understanding of worship, following recent morpho-semantic and literature-based models in Qur'anic linguistic research (Mubarokah et al., 2024; R. Rahmadani & Dasuki, 2026; Ramadhan et al., 2026; Suhemi, 2020)

The primary data consist of Qur'anic verses that contain the selected roots and forms associated with ibadah, dhikr, du'a, and sabr. The verses are examined in Arabic, and their meanings are supported by the Indonesian Qur'an translation issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs when necessary (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Secondary data consist of references on Arabic grammar, Arabic morphology, Qur'anic semantics, and previous research on worship. The grammatical framework is based on recent studies of derivational patterns, Qur'anic masdar, and Arabic nominal morphology (Khairallah et al., 2024; Maesaroh et al., 2026; Setiyadi, 2025; Suhemi, 2020).

The sampling technique is purposive. The four mashdars were selected because they represent different dimensions of worship and appear in significant Qur'anic contexts. Ibadah is selected because it directly names worship and servitude. Dhikr is selected because remembrance is central to inner awareness of Allah. Du'a is selected because supplication reveals the dialogical relationship between servant and God. Sabr is selected because patience and endurance are repeatedly connected with religious perseverance. This purposive selection follows the logic of thematic semantic analysis, in which the sample is chosen for conceptual relevance to the research problem rather than for numerical completeness (Husna & Arif, 2021; Ihsanillah, 2024; Kallang, 2018; A. A. Malik, 2025)

Data analysis was carried out in several stages. First, the selected verses were identified and grouped according to the four mashdars. Second, each word was examined morphologically by looking at its root, form, and wazan. Third, the function of each form in the verse was analyzed, including whether it appeared as a direct mashdar, a verb referring to mashdar meaning, a phrase, or a participial form. Fourth, the semantic

meaning was interpreted by connecting the form with the broader Qur'anic context of worship. Recent corpus and computational morphology resources were used only to support morphological identification and were not treated as a substitute for contextual interpretation (Akra et al., 2025; Khairallah et al., 2024).

To maintain consistency between citations and references, only sources used in the discussion are included in the reference list. Each reference is cited in the body of the article, and each citation corresponds to a reference entry. This strategy is important because a linguistic article must avoid unsupported claims, especially when it deals with sacred text and technical grammatical categories. The analysis therefore combines primary textual evidence from the Qur'an with recent secondary scholarly literature in Arabic morphology, Qur'anic semantics, worship studies, dhikr, du'a, and sabr (Faizin, 2021; Shohib et al., 2025; Suriyati, 2023; Ulum, 2021; Zaini, 2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms and Usage of Selected Mashdars

The examination of the selected verses shows that the four mashdars do not always appear in identical grammatical forms. Sometimes the mashdar appears directly, as in dhikr or du'a. In other cases, the meaning of mashdar is represented through a verb or participle that points back to a verbal-noun concept. This variation confirms that Qur'anic meaning cannot be reduced to a simple search for identical surface forms. It must be read through derivational relations, root meanings, and the semantic function of the word in context.

In Arabic grammar, a mashdar is closely related to the verb from which it is derived, but its meaning is not limited by tense. This is significant in Qur'anic discourse because the concepts of worship, remembrance, supplication, and patience are not temporary events. They are forms of consciousness and conduct that are expected to continue across different situations. The distinction between fi'il and mashdar therefore has interpretive value. Fi'il often emphasizes occurrence, while mashdar emphasizes the abstract essence of the act (Maesaroh et al., 2026; R. Rahmadani & Dasuki, 2026; Setiyadi, 2025).

Tabel 2. Selected Mashdar Forms and Their Semantic Functions

No	Mashdar	Root and Pattern	Verse Context	Semantic Function
1	Ibadah (عبادة)	ʿ-b-d; fiʿālah	QS Adh-Dhariyat 51:56 and QS Al-An'am 6:162	Represents total servitude, obedience, and the purpose of human existence.
2	Dhikr (ذكر)	dh-k-r; fiʿl	QS Ar-Ra'd 13:28 and QS Al-Ahzab 33:41	Represents remembrance, inner awareness, and continuity of spiritual consciousness.
3	Du'a (دعاء)	d-ʿ-w; fuʿāl	QS Al-Baqarah 2:186 and QS Ghafir 40:60	Represents supplication, dependence on Allah, and responsive dialogue.
4	Sabr (صبر)	ṣ-b-r; faʿl	QS Al-Baqarah 2:153 and QS Ali Imran 3:200	Represents active endurance, self-restraint, and spiritual perseverance.

Table 2 shows that the four mashdars are connected with different grammatical patterns. The pattern of ibadah indicates an abstract and enduring state of servitude. Dhikr appears in a simple form that reflects the basic act of remembering. Du'a contains the sense of calling, requesting, and turning toward God. Sabr expresses restraint and endurance as a stable inner discipline. These morphological differences do not merely create formal variation; they shape the semantic range of each concept. Recent studies confirm that Qur'anic root-and-pattern variation can carry contextual, conceptual, and translational implications (Akra et al., 2025; Khairallah et al., 2024; A. R. Rahmadani et al., 2023)

The Qur'anic use of these forms also demonstrates that worship is multidimensional. Ibadah provides the conceptual center, because it names worship and servitude explicitly. Dhikr provides the spiritual center, because it relates worship to awareness of Allah. Du'a provides the relational center, because it shows worship as communication and dependence. Sabr provides the psychological center, because it allows worship to

continue despite difficulty. Together, these four terms form a semantic field that presents worship not merely as ritual performance, but as a way of being. This reading is consistent with recent studies that treat Qur'anic vocabulary as a contextual and relational network of meaning (Mubarak & Bashori, 2025; Ramadhan et al., 2026)

The Linguistic Function of Mashdar in Representing Worship

The first linguistic function of mashdar is abstraction. A verb normally presents an action as something that happens, has happened, or will happen. A mashdar, however, presents the action as a concept. When worship-related meanings are expressed through mashdar, the Qur'an directs the reader to understand worship not only as a performed act but also as a general orientation. This is why the mashdar is especially powerful in theological language. It allows meaning to move from a particular act to a universal principle. In the case of ibadah, the action of worship becomes the identity and purpose of human life. In the case of dhikr, remembering becomes a continuing state of consciousness. In the case of du'a, asking becomes a structure of dependence. In the case of sabr, enduring becomes a moral-spiritual discipline.

The second function is continuity. Since mashdar is not marked by tense, it is capable of representing actions that are not restricted to a single time. This matters in the Qur'anic presentation of worship. Worship is not a temporary event that ends when the physical act ends. It continues as an orientation of obedience, memory, reliance, and perseverance. This distinction explains why the Qur'an may move between verbs and nouns within the same semantic field. A verb can describe the performance of worship, while a mashdar can describe the essence that remains beyond the moment of performance. Such interaction between form and meaning is consistent with recent analyses of Arabic derivational patterns and Qur'anic morpho-semantics (Maesaroh et al., 2026; A. R. Rahmadani et al., 2023; Setiyadi, 2025).

The third function is conceptual stabilization. Mashdar stabilizes a meaning so that it can be discussed as a theological concept. Without nominalization, the meaning would remain tied to an action. Through mashdar, worship becomes a theme that can be connected with intention, belief, inner state, and ethical conduct. This is evident in the Qur'anic relation between ibadah and other terms such as salah, nusuk, du'a, dhikr, and sabr. The linguistic movement from action to concept enables the Qur'an to present worship as both practice and worldview. This is important because Qur'anic teachings are not only commands to perform rituals; they also form the consciousness through which those rituals acquire meaning.

The fourth function is semantic integration. The selected mashdars are not separate themes. They interact with one another. Ibadah needs dhikr, because worship without awareness becomes empty formalism. Ibadah needs du'a, because worship includes recognition of human dependence on Allah. Ibadah needs sabr, because obedience cannot be maintained without endurance. In this sense, mashdar forms function as semantic anchors within a broader conceptual network of worship. This supports the claim that Qur'anic semantics must account for how words contribute to larger structures of meaning (Mubarak & Bashori, 2025; Ramadhan et al., 2026)

Mashdar Ibadah: Worship as Total Servitude

The mashdar ibadah is derived from the root ʿ-b-d, which conveys meanings of servitude, obedience, humility, and submission. In the Qur'anic context, this term occupies a central position because it directly names the human relationship with Allah. QS Adh-Dhariyat 51:56 states that the creation of jinn and human beings is connected with worship. Although the verse uses the verbal form liya'budun, the underlying concept refers to ibadah as the general meaning of worship. The verb points to action, but the concept behind it is a continuous state of servitude.

Morphologically, ibadah belongs to a pattern that allows the meaning of action to become a stable concept. This means that worship is not restricted to a single ritual act. It is a comprehensive orientation of life(Kallang, 2018) explains that worship in the Qur'an includes obedience, humility, and the fulfillment of God's commands. This definition is important because it prevents a narrow understanding of worship as mere ritual performance. Recent studies further emphasize that worship includes ritual, social, ethical, and inner dimensions that shape daily conduct (Humaidi & Hasan, 2025; Husna & Arif, 2021; Pohan, 2024).

The same point is visible in QS Al-An'am 6:162, where prayer, sacrifice, life, and death are directed to Allah. This verse presents worship as a total orientation. It does not isolate religious acts from ordinary life;

rather, it places life itself within the horizon of devotion. (Husna & Arif, 2021) support this broader perspective by explaining that worship has bodily, verbal, and inner dimensions(Humaidi & Hasan, 2025) also show that acts of daily life may be understood within the horizon of worship when they are accompanied by proper intention and ethical conformity. The mashdar ibadah is therefore not a narrow grammatical form but a theological concept that gathers the different layers of worship into one orientation.

The semantic implication is clear: worship in the Qur'an is not an occasional action but a state of being. Human beings are not only commanded to perform worship; they are defined through their relation of servitude to Allah. This interpretation becomes stronger when ibadah is connected with dhikr, du'a, and sabr. Total servitude requires awareness, communication, and endurance. The mashdar ibadah provides the conceptual center of the study because it names the totality into which the other mashdars are integrated.

Mashdar Dhikr: Worship as Awareness of Divine Presence

The mashdar dhikr is derived from the root dh-k-r, which means remembering, mentioning, and bringing something to consciousness. In Qur'anic usage, dhikr is not merely a verbal act. It includes remembrance in speech, heart, and conduct. QS Ar-Ra'd 13:28 connects dhikrullah with tranquility of the heart, while QS Al-Ahzab 33:41 commands believers to remember Allah abundantly. Recent studies describe dhikr as a multidimensional spiritual practice that shapes religious consciousness, strengthens closeness to Allah, and contributes to psychological calm (I. Malik, 2024; Shohib et al., 2025; Zaini, 2025).

Morphologically, dhikr appears in a simple verbal-noun pattern that expresses the core meaning of the act without added complexity. This simplicity is meaningful. It suggests that remembrance is an essential spiritual act that penetrates other forms of worship. Formal worship requires awareness of the One being worshipped. Without dhikr, bodily ritual can become mechanical. Through dhikr, worship becomes an event of presence, because the servant does not merely perform an act but becomes conscious of Allah during the act.

The semantic role of dhikr can also be understood through the Qur'anic relationship between word, memory, and spiritual orientation. Contemporary interpretation of dhikr shows that remembrance is connected not only with recitation, but also with religious authority, spiritual education, and the formation of inward awareness (I. Malik, 2024; Shohib et al., 2025). In this field, dhikr is connected with faith, gratitude, humility, and guidance. It does not stand alone as recitation but functions as an inner mechanism that keeps the servant oriented toward Allah. This explains why the Qur'an frequently connects remembrance with peace, obedience, and warning.

From a linguistic perspective, dhikr shows how a mashdar can express an inner state. A verb such as yadhkurun may indicate that people remember, but the mashdar dhikr can indicate remembrance as an abstract spiritual reality. This is important for understanding worship. Worship is not only what the body performs but also what the heart remembers. Therefore, dhikr functions as the inner core of worship. It makes worship conscious, intentional, and spiritually alive.

Mashdar Du'a: Worship as Responsive Dialogue

The mashdar du'a derives from the root d-ʿ-w, which conveys calling, inviting, asking, and supplicating. In the Qur'an, du'a is one of the clearest forms of the servant's relationship with Allah. QS Al-Baqarah 2:186 presents Allah as near and responsive to the call of the supplicant. QS Ghafir 40:60 places supplication and worship in close relation by commanding people to call upon Allah and warning those who are arrogant toward worship. Studies on dhikr and prayer in contemporary Muslim life show that supplication is not merely a formulaic request, but a spiritual act connected with nearness, dependence, hope, and inner stability (Shohib et al., 2025; Zaini, 2025).

The pattern of du'a carries a sense of intensity and direction. It is a call that moves from the servant toward the Creator, but the Qur'anic context also emphasizes response. This makes du'a dialogical. Worship is not only a one-way act in which the servant performs duties before God. It is also a relationship in which the servant turns to Allah, confesses need, and receives divine attention. In this sense, du'a becomes a linguistic and spiritual bridge between servitude and intimacy.

The semantic significance of du'a is strengthened when it is compared with ordinary speech. Ordinary speech may involve communication between equals, but du'a involves acknowledgment of ontological dependence. The servant recognizes weakness, limitation, and need, while acknowledging Allah as the One

who hears, responds, and has power over all matters. This is why du'a is often considered an essence of worship. It reveals the heart of servitude: the servant cannot stand independently before God.

As a mashdar, du'a presents supplication as a general and enduring concept. It is not limited to one moment, place, or formula. It may be spoken verbally, held inwardly, expressed through tears, or embodied in actions that seek God's mercy. Therefore, du'a extends the meaning of worship beyond formal ritual and shows that the relationship between servant and Allah includes vulnerability, hope, and dialogue. This relational aspect complements ibadah and dhikr: ibadah establishes servitude, dhikr sustains awareness, and du'a expresses living dependence.

Mashdar Sabr: Worship as Active Inner Endurance

The mashdar sabr comes from the root ṣ-b-r, which conveys restraint, endurance, patience, and firmness. In the Qur'an, sabr is closely linked with faith and worship. QS Al-Baqarah 2:153 instructs believers to seek help through patience and prayer, while QS Ali Imran 3:200 calls believers to be patient, strengthen one another in patience, remain steadfast, and be conscious of Allah. Recent studies explain sabr as a mental-spiritual discipline related to obedience, self-restraint, resilience, and the capacity to face trials without abandoning faith (Hakim, 2022; Ihsanillah, 2024; Ulum, 2021).

The simple pattern of sabr is semantically powerful because it expresses a basic but difficult spiritual act: restraining the self. Patience involves restraining the self from despair, anger, disobedience, complaint, and impulsive action. It also involves continuing obedience when worship feels difficult. For this reason, sabr can be understood as the psychological foundation of worship. It is not one ritual among others; it is the inner capacity that allows other acts of worship to be performed consistently. This understanding is in line with studies that interpret sabr as steadfastness in obedience, restraint from disobedience, and endurance in hardship (Hakim, 2022; Suriyati, 2023; Ulum, 2021).

The Qur'anic pairing of sabr and salah is especially significant. Prayer is the central bodily ritual in Islam, but the verse connects it with patience. This indicates that worship requires inner endurance. A person needs patience to pray regularly, to maintain sincerity, to avoid prohibited acts, and to face hardship without abandoning trust in Allah. In this sense, sabr may be described as a meta-worship, not because it replaces formal worship, but because it sustains the possibility of worship. Without sabr, the servant may perform acts only when conditions are easy and abandon them when trials arise.

The semantic implication is that worship includes struggle. The Qur'an does not present worship as a purely comfortable or ceremonial experience. It requires discipline, self-restraint, and perseverance. This strengthens the multidimensional understanding of worship. Ibadah gives direction, dhikr gives awareness, du'a gives relational dependence, and sabr gives endurance. Together, they show that worship is an integrated pattern of life rather than a set of disconnected acts.

Integrated Semantic Implications

The analysis of the four mashdars shows that Qur'anic worship is constructed through a network of meanings. The mashdar ibadah functions as the core concept. It defines the servant's total orientation toward Allah. Dhikr functions as the internal consciousness that prevents worship from becoming empty form. Du'a functions as the relational act that expresses dependence, hope, and divine responsiveness. Sabr functions as the spiritual discipline that preserves worship in difficult conditions. These four elements are not interchangeable, but they are mutually reinforcing.

This networked reading is important because it avoids a reductionist understanding of worship. If worship is reduced to ritual, then inner awareness, supplication, and patience may appear secondary. If worship is reduced to inner spirituality, then obedience and ritual discipline may appear unnecessary. The Qur'anic use of mashdar prevents both reductions. Because mashdar abstracts action into concept, it allows worship to be understood as ritual, consciousness, relation, and endurance at the same time. This supports the broader Islamic understanding that worship includes both visible and invisible acts.

The findings also show that morphology contributes to theology. The patterns of Arabic words are not neutral vessels. They participate in the formation of meaning. This does not mean that grammar alone determines theology, but grammar helps reveal how theological meanings are structured in the text. The

selected mashdars show that the Qur'an repeatedly uses linguistic forms capable of expressing continuity, abstraction, and conceptual depth. Therefore, the study of mashdar is not merely a technical matter of sharaf; it is also a path to understanding how the Qur'an presents fundamental religious ideas (R. Rahmadani & Dasuki, 2026; Setiyadi, 2025; Suhemi, 2020)

From a methodological perspective, this article confirms the value of combining morphology and semantics. Morphology identifies the form, root, and pattern. Semantics explains how the form functions in context. When the two are combined, the analysis becomes more complete. This is particularly relevant for Qur'anic studies because many Qur'anic meanings depend on the interaction between lexical roots, derivational forms, and verse context. Corpus tools can assist in identifying word forms, but interpretation still requires careful reading of context, grammar, and theological meaning (Akra et al., 2025; Khairallah et al., 2024; Ramadhan et al., 2026)

The contribution of this study lies in showing that mashdar can serve as a linguistic entry point for understanding the essence of worship. Previous studies have discussed mashdar morphology, worship in the Qur'an, and semantic transformation of selected terms. This study brings these areas together by analyzing how selected mashdars shape a holistic concept of worship. The result is an understanding of worship as total servitude, conscious remembrance, responsive prayer, and enduring patience. Such an understanding is linguistically grounded and theologically meaningful.

Mashdar, Conceptual Network, and the Structure of Worship

A broader reading of the four mashdars also shows that the Qur'anic concept of worship is structured as a conceptual network. A conceptual network means that one term obtains fuller meaning when it is read in relation to other terms. Ibadah cannot be understood completely without dhikr, because the act of worship needs conscious remembrance. Dhikr cannot be separated from du'a, because remembrance naturally opens the servant to calling upon Allah. Du'a cannot be separated from sabr, because the answer to prayer may require endurance, trust, and spiritual discipline. This networked relation confirms that worship is not a loose collection of pious acts, but a coherent orientation of the self before Allah.

The network also explains why the Qur'an uses different grammatical forms in different contexts. A verbal form may call the believer to perform an act, while a mashdar form may stabilize the act into a concept. This difference is especially important when reading verses about worship. For instance, when the Qur'an uses a command to remember Allah, the command directs action; when it uses dhikr as a noun, it presents remembrance as a state that should characterize the believer. The same principle applies to du'a and sabr. The grammatical form guides the reader from the performance of action toward the formation of character.

This point is consistent with contemporary Arabic morphological studies showing that derivation is semantically meaningful. The root carries a basic field of meaning, while the pattern shapes how that field is actualized. Thus, the meaning of ibadah is not produced by the root alone, nor by the pattern alone, but by the relationship between root, pattern, verse context, and Qur'anic worldview. Recent Arabic grammar and Qur'anic morpho-semantic studies support this understanding by showing that nominalization can transform an action into an abstract concept and that concepts become meaningful through their relation with other key terms (Maesaroh et al., 2026; A. R. Rahmadani et al., 2023; Setiyadi, 2025).

In practical theological terms, the four mashdars may be arranged as an interpretive sequence. Ibadah answers the question of human purpose. Dhikr answers the question of inner consciousness. Du'a answers the question of relationship and dependence. Sabr answers the question of continuity and perseverance. This sequence does not impose an external framework on the Qur'an; rather, it arises from the semantic roles that these words perform in the verses examined. The result is a holistic model in which worship begins from servitude, becomes alive through remembrance, becomes relational through supplication, and remains stable through patience.

Such a model also helps avoid misunderstanding of worship in everyday religious life. When worship is understood only as ritual, it may become formal without transforming the heart. When worship is understood only as inner feeling, it may lose discipline and visible obedience. When worship is understood only as prayer in times of need, it may become self-centered. When worship is understood only as patience, it may become passive resignation. The Qur'anic network of mashdars corrects these partial views by placing each element

in relation to the others. Ritual needs awareness; awareness needs supplication; supplication needs trust; and trust needs disciplined endurance.

The analysis therefore has implications not only for linguistics but also for religious education. Teaching worship through these four mashdars can help learners understand that ibadah is not confined to a list of legal obligations. It is a comprehensive structure of life. Students of Arabic can also see that grammar is not detached from meaning. The study of sharaf becomes more meaningful when learners recognize how forms such as mashdar help the Qur'an express theological ideas. In this way, linguistic learning and spiritual understanding may strengthen one another, as suggested by recent studies on morphology-based Arabic learning (Maesaroh et al., 2026; Setiyadi, 2025).

Implications for Qur'anic Linguistic Studies

The findings of this article support the importance of a morphology-based semantic approach in Qur'anic studies. Many studies of the Qur'an focus primarily on translation or thematic explanation. These approaches are useful, but they may miss the contribution of word form to meaning. A mashdar-based analysis shows that grammatical form can guide interpretation. It reveals why an abstract noun may be more suitable than a verb for representing concepts that are universal, enduring, and not restricted to time. This is particularly relevant for concepts such as worship, remembrance, prayer, patience, repentance, gratitude, and guidance.

The study also shows the need to combine classical categories and contemporary tools. Arabic grammar provides categories such as fi'il, mashdar, isim fa'il, and wazan. Contemporary linguistic and corpus resources provide systematic ways to identify forms and verify morphological information. However, neither grammatical categories nor corpus annotation are sufficient by themselves. A corpus can identify that a word is a noun or verbal noun, but it cannot fully explain the theological significance of that word in a verse. Interpretation still requires semantic analysis, contextual reading, and awareness of Qur'anic conceptual relations (Akra et al., 2025; Khairallah et al., 2024; R. Rahmadani & Dasuki, 2026).

For future research, the method used here can be extended to other sets of mashdar. A study may examine tawakkul, shukr, kufr, iman, taqwa, or jihad through the same morphology-semantics framework. Such studies would help show how Qur'anic concepts are built through verbal roots and nominal patterns. They would also contribute to Arabic language education by showing learners that morphology is not merely memorization of patterns but a pathway to understanding meaning. This is especially relevant for non-Arabic-speaking students who often encounter Arabic grammar as a technical subject separated from interpretation.

Another implication concerns translation. Mashdar forms are not always easy to translate into Indonesian or English. A single mashdar may be rendered as a noun, a gerund, an abstract concept, or a phrase depending on the context. For example, ibadah may be translated as worship, devotion, or servitude; dhikr may be remembrance, mention, or awareness; du'a may be supplication, prayer, or calling; and sabr may be patience, endurance, or steadfastness. These translation choices affect interpretation. Therefore, translators and readers must be aware that the semantic range of a Qur'anic mashdar may exceed a single target-language equivalent (Faizin, 2021; Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019; Ramadhan et al., 2026).

The article also confirms the relevance of previous studies while offering a specific contribution. (Suhemi, 2020) provides morphological classification; (Kallang, 2018), (Husna & Arif, 2021), (Humaidi & Hasan, 2025), and (Pohan, 2024) provide conceptual foundations for worship; (Mubarak & Bashori, 2025) demonstrate semantic expansion in a Qur'anic term; and recent corpus-oriented studies support systematic identification of forms (Akra et al., 2025; Khairallah et al., 2024). This study brings those directions together by focusing on worship-related mashdars and showing how they create a unified semantic model.

There are, however, limitations. The study examines only four mashdars and selected verses. The Qur'an contains many other words related to worship, such as salah, nusuk, taqwa, shukr, iman, tawakkul, and khushu'. A broader corpus-based study could map all worship-related verbal nouns and compare their distribution across Meccan and Medinan surahs. Another limitation is that this study emphasizes morphology and semantics, while a fuller interpretation may also require tafsir comparison, hadith evidence, legal theory, and historical context. These limitations do not weaken the findings, but they indicate directions for further research in line with recent corpus and morpho-semantic developments (Akra et al., 2025; Ramadhan et al., 2026)

Despite these limitations, the study demonstrates that mashdar is a productive entry point for linguistic interpretation of the Qur'an. It helps reveal how sacred language presents action as concept, concept as orientation, and orientation as a way of life. In the case of worship, the selected mashdars show that the Qur'an invites human beings to live in servitude, remembrance, supplication, and patience. This confirms that linguistic analysis can deepen theological understanding when it is conducted carefully, contextually, and with respect for the structure of the Qur'anic text.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the use of mashdar in the Qur'an plays an important role in representing the essence of worship. The four mashdars analyzed in this article, namely ibadah, dhikr, du'a, and sabr, reveal different but interconnected dimensions of worship. Ibadah represents worship as total servitude and the fundamental orientation of human existence. Dhikr represents worship as awareness of Allah's presence that gives life to outward acts. Du'a represents worship as responsive dialogue between the servant and Allah. Sabr represents worship as active inner endurance that enables the servant to remain obedient despite hardship.

Morphologically, the selected mashdars demonstrate the expressive power of Arabic derivational patterns. Their forms are not merely grammatical labels; they carry semantic implications that affect how worship is understood. Because mashdar is not bound by tense, agent, or a single occurrence, it can represent worship as abstract, universal, and continuous. This explains why the Qur'an often conveys core religious concepts through nominal forms or through derivations that point back to mashdar meaning. The mashdar allows action to become concept and concept to become orientation.

The semantic implication of this analysis is that worship in the Qur'an cannot be reduced to formal ritual alone. Ritual remains essential, but its meaning is completed by inner awareness, supplication, and patience. The Qur'anic vision of worship is therefore holistic. It includes the body, the tongue, the heart, and the moral will. Linguistic analysis of mashdar contributes to this understanding by showing how grammatical forms help construct theological meanings. Future research may expand this study by examining other worship-related mashdars, comparing them across different surahs, or using corpus-based methods to map broader patterns of Qur'anic nominalization.

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