

# Chapter 4

## The Nature of the Relationship Between Sounds and Their Meanings

**Tom Adi**

*The Readware Institute, USA*

**Hala Abdelghany**

*City University of New York, USA*

**Kathy Adi**

*Readware Institute, USA*

### **ABSTRACT**

*In this chapter, the authors look at how the sounds that make up words may play a role in determining the meanings of words.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This book is about the relationship between deep semantics and the evolution of new scientific theories and discoveries. *Deep semantics is a theory about the meanings of sounds* that was first formulated in 1985. It was first published under peer review in 2007 (Adi, 2007). Many other peer-reviewed publications about deep semantics followed over the period of a decade (Adi, 2009; Adi, Ewell, Adi & Vogel, 2009; Adi, Ewell, Vogel, Payton & Hippchen, 2013 & 2014; Adi & Nevers, 2014; Adi, 2015a & 2015b; Adi, 2017).

In Section 1, we will first discuss the evolution of our view of the role of the human mind in interpreting sounds over the years. Next, we will introduce the basic concepts of the meanings of sounds. Then, we will demonstrate how sounds acquire meaning using examples with the English sounds “I”, “W”, “A”, and “H.” These four sounds represent one type of sound meaning that is called “Assignment.” Finally, we will introduce the big picture for English and Arabic sounds.

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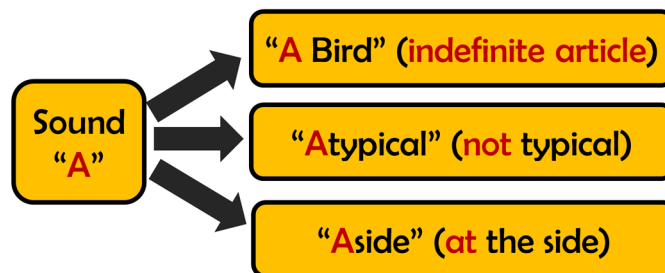
## The Nature of the Relationship Between Sounds and Their Meanings

In Section 2, we will demonstrate another type of sound meaning that is called “Manifestation.”  
In Section 3, we will demonstrate a third type of sound meaning that is called “Containment.”

### SECTION 1: THE NATURE OF THE MEANINGS OF SOUNDS

The individual sounds that make up words seem to have many conflicting meanings. In Figure 1, the sound “A” is an “indefinite article” in the phrase “A Bird.” “A” here means “any” bird, not a specific bird.

Figure 1. Sounds have conflicting meanings



However, in the word “Atypical” (which means “not typical”), sound “A” means “not.”  
And in the word “Aside” (which means “at the side”), the sound “A” means “at.”

In other languages, the sound “A” has even more conflicting meanings. Unable to reconcile these conflicting meanings, most scientists think that sounds have no meanings at all. In other words, they believe in shallow semantics: words as a whole are labels for things, and the individual sounds that make up a word are chosen arbitrarily (Saussure, 1916).

However, we use words to organize our thoughts, and words consist of sounds. Therefore, sounds must mean something.

### Evolution of Our View of the Role of the Human Mind in Interpreting Sounds

We discovered deep semantics in 1985 during work on machine translation. Deep semantics was first introduced to the scientific community at a workshop on Arabic morphology in 1987 (Adi & Ewell, 1987). Deep semantics techniques for calculating relationships of meaning between words were patented in 1989 (Adi, 1989).

Deep semantics was entirely based on the Arabic language of the Quran (*Al-Qur’an*, 1992).

Verse 1 of Chapter 2 of the Quran (*Al-Qur’an*, 1992) is “آل.م.ل.” It is a sequence of sounds that don’t form a word. The following Verse 2 says that “A.L.M.” is *the Scripture* (i.e., the Quran). What does that mean?

Most Quran commentators have said that only God knows what “A.L.M.” means. Moreover, they never connected “A.L.M.” to the nature of the Quran. Instead, they said that the first two Arabic words of Verse 2 (بَاتِكَلْا كَلْذُ) *Thaalika alKiTaaBu*, word root KTB) mean, “This is the Scripture,” without reference to A.L.M.

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