It is interesting to note that Abū Hilāl (d. 395 A.H.) while dealing with 1000 units of assumed synonyms, never uses the word al-tarāduf or al-mutarādīf. Probably the first book which appeared using the term al-mutarādīf in its title was: al-Alfāz al-Mutarādīfah by ‘Ali b. Ḥusayn al-Rummānī (d. 384 A.H.); and Ibn Fāris (d. 395 A.H.) was the first linguist who applied the term al-tarāduf to the sameness of meaning of two or more words.¹

According to Abū Hilāl, synonymy does not occur in the Arabic language except when two (or more) synonymous words come from different dialects.² He suggests that words which have close meanings should be investigated in the light of rules for discriminating between such meanings. Following is the list of eight rules for discriminating between meanings:

1. Two different words cannot have similar meaning if they are used in different ways, e.g. ‘ilm and ma‘rīfah. Ma‘rīfah implies particularisation of the known from the unknown, whereas ‘ilm connotes either general or detailed knowledge of a thing. Moreover, the difference between them can be understood from their usages, for example ‘alimtu Zaydan by itself contains no information. It is only when a word like qā‘īman is added that information is conveyed. ‘Arafātu Zaydan, on the other hand, conveys information by itself.

2. Two words cannot have the same meaning if they entail different qualities, e.g. hilm and inmāl. Hilm can only be good, whereas inmāl may or may not be a reprehensible quality.

3. The meanings of two words cannot be identical if they refer to different contexts, e.g. mazāh and istihzā‘. Mazāh does not imply the degradation or humiliation
of the one at whom it is directed, whereas \textit{istihz"a}'
does.

4. Two different verbs cannot have the same meaning if they take different prepositions to make them transitive, e.g. '\textit{afh}' and \textit{ghafara}. One says: '\textit{afawtu 'anhu}' meaning: "I have waived his punishment", while the expression: \textit{ghafartu lahu} implies: "I have concealed his sin and not disgraced him on account of it".

5. Two words cannot have the same meaning if their opposites are different, e.g. \textit{hifz} and \textit{ri'ayah}. The opposite of \textit{hifz} is \textit{id'ah} "to waste something", and the opposite of \textit{ri'ayah} is \textit{imh"al} "neglect".

6. If two words are different in their derivations than their meanings cannot be identical, e.g. \textit{sij"asah} and \textit{tadhib}. The same applies to \textit{til"awah} and \textit{qir"ah}; \textit{til"awah} cannot be used of one word, since \textit{tal"a}, \textit{yat"u} implies "to follow someone"; therefore, \textit{til"awah} is used about successive reading. One can say: \begin{verbatim} لَتْنَ أَنَّا إِنَّهُ \end{verbatim} but not \begin{verbatim} لَتْنَ إِنَّهُ \end{verbatim}.

7. Two words cannot have the same meaning if their forms (\textit{tashah}) are different, e.g. \textit{ist"ifham} and \textit{s"u'\={a}l}. \textit{Ist"ifham} can only be used about that of which one who seeks understanding is ignorant or doubtful. \textit{Ist"ifham} is on the measure of \textit{ist"i\={a}l}, a measure which implies demand. \textit{S"u'\={a}l} can be used about something which may or may not be already known.

8. Two words cannot have the same meaning if their origins (\textit{as\={l}}) are different, e.g. \textit{han"in} and \textit{ishtiy"aq}. The original meaning of \textit{han"in} is the sound which a camel makes when it yearns (\textit{ahtiqat}) to return to its homeland. Later, because of extensive use, \textit{han"in} came to be employed for \textit{ishtiy"aq}, because sometimes, in speech what is caused may replace the cause.\footnote{Ab\={u} Hil\={a}l holds that if no difference in the semantic implications of words is found, in the light of the above mentioned rules, then it should be assumed that they are from different dialects; for example, the word \textit{q"{i}dr} is used for "cooking pot" in the dialect of Ba\={s}rah, and \textit{burmah} in the dialect of Makkah. He further holds that a \textit{mu{a}arrab} word may be considered as synonymous with an Arabic one. In case of \textit{yasm} and \textit{khatm}. Ab\={u} Hil\={a}l's view that synonymy cannot occur in one dialect is based on the notion that two or more words cannot be divided for the same meaning in one linguistic unit/grouping, as the presence of two or more words with one meaning would cause useless proliferation in it. H\={a}kim M\={a}lik contends that Ab\={u} Hil\={a}l rejects the occurrence of synonymy (as understood by some critics).}
because he believes in tawqīf. We do not find anything in al-Fuwūq fi al-Lughah which might lead us to conclude that Abū Hilal believes in tawqīf. Ḥākim Mālik was probably led to his conclusion by a misunderstanding of Abū Hilal's statement: ṭawqīf, خصوصًا، كلام حكم لا يأتي فيها بما لا يجوز. Here ضمير اللغة may stand for either the group that uses the particular lughah or an individual who devises a word for a concept. Abū Hilal's other statements such as the following support this view:

\[...\]

Moreover his treatment of vocabulary in general, his acceptance of ṭawrāb, and his assertion that extension in meaning has taken place in numerous cases, all support our view that he does not believe in tawqīf.

It has already been said that Ibn al-Aʿrābī (d. 231 A.H.) was the first linguist to reject the occurrence of synonymy in Arabic. His pupil Thaʿlab (d. 291 A.H.) elaborated the theory propounded by his teacher. He explains that Synonyms are in fact the differentia which refer to the same thing but with different qualifications.

Ibn Fāris (d. 395 A.H.), a pupil of Thaʿlab, further elaborated the same theory, while discussing the various names of al-Sayf. He said:

\[...\]

These and other scholars denied the occurrence of synonymy in Arabic without considering the fact that Arabic was multitude of various dialects. As far as Abū Hilal is concerned, he does not deny the occurrence of synonymy in Arabic absolutely. He denies its occurrence in one dialect of the language. His predecessor, Ibn Durustawayh (d. 347 A.H.) was probably the originator of this idea. It was later very forcefully presented by al-Īsfahānī (d. 406 A.H.)

Following Ibn Durustawayh, Abū Hilal, and al-Īsfahānī's views, we may accept, for example, that sīkkān and μudyah are true synonyms. There are many examples of these. A story that is repeated in many books on linguistics is that when Abū Hurayrah was in the company of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) one day, the latter dropped a knife and said to him: sīkkān ناولون السكين. Abū Hurayrah did not understand. Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) repeated his request. At last Abū Hurayrah asked: sīkkān is Ḥijāzī dialect and μudyah Azdī. Another story that is frequently repeated is that of a man of the Banū Kīlāb or Banū ʿĀmir who visited Dhū Jadan, one of the kings of Yemen, who was sitting on a raised platform. The king said to the visitor: i.e. "sit", in the Yemenī dialect. The visitor understood it as meaning "jump", and therefore jumped from the platform and died. So sīkkān and μudyah are true synonyms, as being from different dialects.
Ibn Jinni (d. 393 A.H.) seems to have held the same views regarding synonymy. He says:

وَكَذَلِكَ كَرِهَ الْأَنْفَاظَ عَلَى الْقُسُوْمَ

He also cites, on the authority of al-Asma‘ī, an interesting controversy between two men over the word صَرْر. One of them pronounced it with غَذِ and the other with سْهِن. They decided to take a third opinion. The third man differed from both of them and pronounced it with ذَدِ. In fact, all of them were representing their different dialects.

It is surprising to find that Abū Hilāl has been severely criticised by most modern Arab linguists for absolutely denying the occurrence of synonymy in Arabic, since he does not do so. For example, ‘Umar Ahmad Mukhtār places Abū Hilāl among those linguists who deny the occurrence of synonymy in Arabic even if the synonymous words come from different dialects. Ibn Anis, Abd al-Hamīd al-Shalqānī, Ramaḍān Abd al-Tawwāb, Tawfiq Muhammad Shāhīn, Hakim Mālik Lu‘aybī, etc, do the same. In fact, we find, in al-Furqān fi al-Lughah, numerous examples of occurrence of synonymy in Arabic, provided the words come from different dialects. According to Abū Hilāl the following are synonyms since, in each case, the two words come from different dialects.

قدّر and صفة; ختم and نُصِّب; ابِسْل and ممّكَة; سَوَل and مسْمَع; كَلّ له and معْنٍ; مِّجّد and دُوَّل; مَّنْجِد and سُفْهَة; مِّلْوُل and سَفِهَة; لِدْن and صفوّ.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'Umar Ahmad Mukhtar, 'ilm al-Dalalah (Kuwait, 1982), p. 216.
   In his words: At-Futuq & Id-Lughah, (Beirut, 1973), pp. 13-19.
   At-Futuq & Id-Lughah illustrates on p. 19 as follows:

5. Al-Futuq fi al-Lughah, illustrates on p. 19 as follows:

6. Ibid, p. 64. He says:

11. Vide Al-Suyūti: Al-Muzak, (1:403), quoting Taj al-Subki's Sharḥ al-Minhaj:

12. Ibid., 1:404.
16. Al-Shahīdī, ʿAbd al-Hamīd: Rīwāyat al-Lughah, (Cairo, 1971), pp. 336-337; Ḥasan Zāzā: Kālim al-ʿArab min Qādīyā al-Lughah al-ʿArabiyah, (Beirut, 1975), p.104; Ibrahim Anis in Fī al-Lahajāt al-ʿArabiyah, (Cairo, 1965) doubts the truthfulness of this story and says that the word sikkān is used in Surat Yūsuf, and that a companion of the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) could not be ignorant of its meaning. Moreover Abū Hurayrah was of the tribe of Daws, living not far from Makkah, and this tribe was well connected with Quraysh even in pre-Islamic times (pp.176-177).
18. Ibn Jinnī: Al-Khāṣṣā'īs, ed. by Muhammad ʿAlī al-Najjar (Beirut, 1952), 1:374 (For a detailed account of Ibn Jinnī's views, see: "باب تأليف السنة على ابن المنهال المباني 2:113, and Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, (Beirut, 1996, in which he seems to suggest that every separate word should have a separate sense).

27. Ibid, pp. 64.
32. Ibid, p. 182.
33. Ibid, p. 194.
34. Ibid, p. 279.
35. Ibid, pp. 295.
37. Al-Ǧayrān wa al-Tābyīn, ed. by ‘Abd al-Salām M. Hārūn, (Cairo, 1948). 1:20 (Al-Jāḥiz says: .. وَكَمْ يَنِقَّلُ النَّاسُ أَنْفَاظَهُ وَيُسَطِّعُونَهَا وَغَيْرَهَا أَحَدَهِمَا نَفْعَانَا .. لَا يَكُونُونَ مِنَ الأَنْفَاظِ ما هُوَ أَحَدٌ بِالذِّكْرِ وَأَوْلَى بِالإِسْتِعْمَالِ ....)
38. Adab al-Kāṭib, (Leiden, 1900), pp. 21-42, ed. by Max Grünert.