

Differences in Qirā'āt as the Basis for Diversity in Qur'anic Interpretation: A Study from the Perspective of the Science of Tafsir

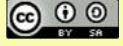
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Article	Abstract
Article History : Received : July 17, 2026 Reviewed : July 20, 2026 Accepted : August 08, 2026 Published : August 10, 2026	The diversity of <i>qirā'āt</i> has long been recognized as an integral component of the Qur'anic transmission tradition and has played a significant role in shaping the richness of Qur'anic interpretation. However, its function as an epistemological basis for interpretive diversity has not received sufficient attention in many contemporary studies, which tend to focus on the technical aspects of recitation. This study aims to examine the role of authentic <i>qirā'āt</i> in generating interpretive diversity and to explain its position within the framework of ' <i>Ulūm al-Tafsīr</i> '. This research employs a qualitative library research design using content analysis of primary sources on <i>qirā'āt</i> and Qur'anic exegesis, complemented by relevant classical and contemporary scholarly literature. The analysis demonstrates that differences among authentic <i>qirā'āt</i> extend beyond phonetic variation and significantly influence lexical meaning, grammatical construction, legal reasoning, and theological interpretation. These variations provide exegetes with multiple yet equally authoritative textual perspectives, enabling a broader understanding of Qur'anic messages without compromising the integrity of the Qur'anic text. The study further reveals that classical and contemporary mufasssirs consistently integrate authentic <i>qirā'āt</i> with linguistic analysis, contextual interpretation, and prophetic traditions to construct comprehensive interpretations of Qur'anic verses. Therefore, interpretive diversity arising from <i>qirā'āt</i> should be understood as a manifestation of the Qur'an's linguistic depth and semantic richness rather than as a source of contradiction.
Keywords : Qirā'āt, Qur'anic Exegesis, Tafsir Methodology, Variant Readings, Interpretive Diversity	
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INTRODUCTION

Ikhtilāf al-Qirā'āt (the variation of Qur'anic readings) is a phenomenon that has been closely associated with the Qur'an since the earliest stages of its revelation. In the Islamic scholarly tradition, *qirā'āt* are recognized as authentic modes of recitation transmitted from the Prophet Muhammad through reliable chains of narration and preserved by his Companions. Rather than creating contradictions within the Qur'anic text, these variations represent a legitimate dimension of revelation that enriches both its linguistic expression and semantic scope (Aasyur, 2008). As Islam spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula, the Companions taught the Qur'an according to the recitations they had learned directly from the Prophet . This process contributed to the emergence of diverse recitational traditions among the *tābi'ūn* and subsequent generations. Over time, these traditions were systematically documented and developed into the discipline of '*Ilm al-Qirā'āt*'. Recent scholarship further highlights that the study of *qirā'āt* extends beyond linguistic variation and plays an important role in understanding Qur'anic meanings as well as the formulation of legal interpretations (Febra, Admizal, & Suriyadi, 2024).

Within the field of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), *qirā'āt* occupy a significant position because variant readings often provide alternative interpretive perspectives on a given verse. Differences in recitation may influence grammatical constructions, lexical nuances, legal implications, and theological understandings. Contemporary studies indicate that these variations have contributed substantially to the richness and diversity of Qur'anic interpretation throughout Islamic intellectual history. Consequently, *qirā'āt* should be understood not merely as alternative forms of recitation, but also as an essential interpretive framework that shapes the exegetical understanding of the Qur'an (Gunarti, Ahmadi, & Ummah, 2024).

The Companions maintained the recitational traditions that they had individually received from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, even when such traditions differed from those transmitted by other Companions (Diraz, 1987). As a result, each Companion taught the Qur'an to the communities in which he resided according to the specific *qirā'ah* that he had learned from the Prophet ﷺ. According to Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib, after the Prophet's passing, many Companions during the caliphate of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رضي الله عنه traveled to regions that had come under Muslim governance in order to teach the Qur'an and Islamic teachings. In doing so, each Companion recited and taught the Qur'an according to the recitation transmitted to him by the Prophet ﷺ. Consequently, the recitational practices that developed in different regions reflected the specific *qirā'āt* taught by the Companions who settled there. This historical process contributed significantly to the preservation and transmission of the diverse Qur'anic readings that later became an integral part of the science of *qirā'āt* (Diraz, 1987).

In the historical development of Qur'anic transmission, this situation gradually gave rise to a diversity of *qirā'āt* that was continuously preserved and transmitted across generations. Following the era of the Companions, these variant readings were received by the *tābi'ūn*, who subsequently transmitted them to the *tābi' al-tābi'īn* and later generations, ensuring their widespread preservation within the Islamic scholarly tradition. This transmission process was maintained through rigorous and authoritative chains of narration, allowing each recognized *qirā'ah* to retain its authenticity within a reliable and verifiable system of *sanad*. Over time, *qirā'āt* evolved beyond a mere recitational practice and developed into a distinct scholarly discipline with its own methodological foundations. This intellectual development was marked by the emergence of specialized scholars who devoted themselves to the study, classification, and instruction of various Qur'anic readings. Their efforts in documentation and pedagogy eventually produced a substantial body of systematic literature, enabling the differences among Qur'anic readings to be examined, authenticated, and transmitted through scholarly methods within the broader framework of Islamic learning.

Within the discipline of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), one of the most authoritative approaches employed by Muslim scholars is *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*, namely the interpretation of one Qur'anic passage through another verse that shares a related semantic context. This method extends beyond a general examination of textual expressions and includes careful attention to subtle linguistic features, such as lexical variations, individual letters, and alternative modes of recitation. In this regard, *qirā'āt* occupy a crucial role as an important source for uncovering and understanding the meanings of the Qur'anic text (Al-Ismail, 1419 H). Variations in recitation often generate distinct shades of meaning that may influence exegetical conclusions in linguistic, legal, and theological dimensions. Furthermore, these differences are regarded as a means of broadening the interpretive horizons of Qur'anic verses, enabling exegetes to derive meanings and legal implications in a more comprehensive and nuanced manner (Asnawi, 2023).

Recent years have witnessed growing scholarly interest in examining the influence of *qirā'āt* variations on the interpretation of the Qur'an. One notable study is that of Ghazi Febra and colleagues (2024), entitled *The Influence of Qirā'at Variants in Interpretation Ayat-Ayat al-Qur'an* (Febra, Admizal, & Suriyadi, 2024). Employing a qualitative literature-based approach, the study demonstrates that variations in *qirā'āt* contribute significantly to differences in exegetical meaning, particularly in semantic and linguistic dimensions. Nevertheless, the research primarily provides a general overview of the phenomenon and does not thoroughly investigate the relationship between *qirā'āt* and the

methodological development of Qur'anic exegesis. Consequently, its analytical scope remains largely descriptive and limited to the discussion of meaning variations.

Another important contribution is the study conducted by Tri Tami Gunarti and colleagues (2024), entitled *The Impact of Qirā'at on Interpretation: An Analytical Study of Farsh al-Hurūf in Tafsīr Marāḥ Labīd* (Gunarti et al., 2024). Using a content-analysis approach focused on a single exegetical work, the researchers conclude that variations in *qirā'āt*, particularly those related to *farsh al-hurūf*, significantly affect the interpretive choices found in Nawawi al-Bantani's *Marāḥ Labīd*. Despite its valuable findings, the study is confined to one tafsīr text and therefore does not provide a broader understanding of how *qirā'āt* have shaped the wider tradition of Qur'anic interpretation. This limitation restricts the generalizability of its conclusions across different exegetical schools and periods.

Furthermore, Uqbah Amer and his colleagues (2022), in their article *Implications of Interpreting Qirā'āt Shādhah on Legal Verses in Sūrat al-Baqarah*, adopted a descriptive-analytical textual methodology to examine the role of non-canonical readings in legal interpretation (Amer, Qamar, & Mohamad, 2022). Their findings indicate that *qirā'āt shādhah* can offer alternative perspectives for legal reasoning and the derivation of rulings, even though such readings are generally not regarded as primary legal authorities. However, the study concentrates exclusively on a specific category of *qirā'āt* and a limited set of legal verses. As a result, it does not address the broader implications of *ikhtilāf al-qirā'āt* within the overall development of Qur'anic exegesis.

Based on the foregoing review, it is evident that previous studies have made important contributions to understanding the relationship between *qirā'āt* and Qur'anic interpretation. Nevertheless, significant gaps remain, particularly regarding a comprehensive analysis that integrates the phenomenon of *ikhtilāf al-qirā'āt* with the broader evolution of exegetical methodologies. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the implications of variant Qur'anic readings for the dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation in a more holistic and systematic manner.

This study offers a distinctive contribution by examining the relationship between *sab'ah al-aḥruf*, the categorization of *qirā'āt*, and their implications for the interpretation of Qur'anic texts within a single analytical framework. While earlier studies have generally concentrated on particular aspects of variant readings, this research seeks to provide a broader perspective by investigating how differences in recitation have shaped exegetical understanding throughout the history of Islamic scholarship. By drawing upon both classical authoritative works and contemporary academic studies, the research develops a comprehensive analysis that bridges traditional and modern approaches to the study of *qirā'āt*. In doing so, it aims to enrich current scholarly discussions and offer a more integrated perspective on the interaction between Qur'anic readings and interpretation.

Accordingly, this article addresses several interrelated themes. It begins by discussing the concept of *sab'ah al-aḥruf* as reflected in Prophetic traditions concerning the revelation of the Qur'an. The discussion then proceeds to examine the various forms of *qirā'āt* that have influenced exegetical discourse, followed by an analysis of their classification and scholarly status within the field of Qur'anic interpretation. To demonstrate the practical significance of these recitational variants, the study also presents selected cases in which differences in reading contribute to alternative interpretive understandings of Qur'anic verses.

The research adopts a qualitative library-research methodology. Relevant data are gathered from a range of primary and secondary sources, including classical treatises on *qirā'āt*, Qur'anic exegesis, and Qur'anic sciences, as well as recent scholarly publications. These materials are examined through descriptive and analytical methods to explore the extent to which variant readings influence the interpretation of the Qur'an. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the role of *ikhtilāf al-qirā'āt* in shaping the richness and diversity of the Islamic exegetical tradition.

RESEARCH METHODE

This study employs a qualitative research design based on library research, focusing on the examination and interpretation of written sources relevant to the subject under investigation. The research seeks to explore the phenomenon of *ikhtilāf al-qirā'āt* and its influence on the development of

Qur'anic interpretation within both classical and contemporary exegetical traditions. Primary data are derived from authoritative works in the fields of *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* and *tafsīr*, including the writings of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Zarkashī, and al-Suyūṭī, which provide extensive discussions on variant Qur'anic readings and their interpretive implications (Al-Suyuthi, 2011). To complement these sources, the study also utilizes contemporary scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles that address linguistic, semantic, and hermeneutical dimensions of Qur'anic studies.

Data were collected through a documentation-based technique that involved locating, reviewing, and categorizing scholarly materials relevant to *ikhtilāf al-qirā'āt* and its influence on Qur'anic interpretation. The selected sources were examined systematically to identify discussions concerning variant readings and their exegetical implications. Following the data collection process, the materials were analyzed using content analysis within a descriptive-interpretive framework. This analytical procedure focused on identifying different forms of *qirā'āt* variation and evaluating their contribution to divergent interpretations found in classical and contemporary *tafsīr* literature. In addition, a comparative examination of exegetical opinions was undertaken to reveal recurring patterns and interpretive developments associated with differences in Qur'anic readings (Krippendorff, 2018).

To enrich the analysis, the study also employs a hermeneutical approach that considers the interaction between the textual structure of the Qur'an, its historical circumstances, and the processes through which meaning is constructed and understood. This perspective enables a more comprehensive exploration of how variant readings have been interpreted within diverse intellectual and historical settings, thereby highlighting their role in shaping the interpretive tradition of Islam (Gadamer, 2004).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition and Scope of *Qirā'āt*

From a linguistic perspective, the term *qirā'āt* () is the plural form of *qirā'ah* (). The word *qirā'ah* itself is derived from the Arabic root *qara'a-yaqra'u-qirā'atan-qur'ānan* (قرأ – –), which generally denotes the act of reading or reciting. This shared etymological origin indicates a close linguistic relationship between the concepts of *qirā'āt* and the Qur'an, both of which stem from the same lexical root associated with recitation and reading (Al-Sindi, 2021). In technical usage, however, Muslim scholars have formulated a variety of definitions of *qirā'āt*, reflecting different perspectives on its nature and function within Qur'anic studies.

Among the most influential definitions is that proposed by Ibn al-Jazarī, who describes *qirā'āt* as a specialized discipline concerned with the methods of pronouncing Qur'anic expressions and the variations that occur in their recitation. This discipline examines the different reading traditions attributed to recognized reciters and transmitters, while tracing each variant reading back to its authoritative chain of transmission. Accordingly, *qirā'āt* should not be understood merely as alternative forms of pronunciation; rather, they constitute a structured system for preserving and transmitting the Qur'anic text through authenticated scholarly networks (Istiqlomah, Aqillah, & Sirojjudin, 2025).

Ibn al-Jazarī further emphasizes that the validity of any Qur'anic reading depends upon the fulfillment of three fundamental conditions. First, the reading must conform to accepted principles of the Arabic language. Second, it must be compatible with the *rasm al-Muṣḥaf al-'Uthmānī* (the consonantal script of the 'Uthmānic codex). Third, it must be supported by an authentic and reliable chain of transmission (*sanad*). These criteria establish a rigorous epistemological framework for evaluating variant readings and ensure that only those recitations meeting recognized scholarly standards are accepted as legitimate *qirā'āt* (Al-Isma'il, 1419 H). Contemporary scholarship has further highlighted the significance of *qirā'āt* by examining its contribution to linguistic, semantic, and exegetical studies. Modern researchers argue that authentic recitational variants preserve complementary meanings that broaden the interpretive horizons of the Qur'an without implying textual inconsistency (Nasser, 2020). Variations in *qirā'āt* may affect lexical meaning, syntactic structure, rhetorical expression, and legal interpretation, thereby providing exegetes with multiple yet equally authoritative perspectives for understanding Qur'anic verses (Sinai, 2023). Accordingly, *qirā'āt* should be understood as an integral component of *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* that bridges the sciences of recitation,

Arabic linguistics, and tafsīr while demonstrating the linguistic richness and semantic depth of the Qur'an.

In addition to Ibn al-Jazarī's formulation, other scholars have offered complementary definitions that further clarify the scope and nature of *qirā'āt*. According to 'Abd al-Fattāh al-Qāḍī, *qirā'āt* is a field of knowledge through which one learns the methods of articulating Qur'anic expressions, the chains of transmission through which these recitations have been conveyed, and the points of agreement and disagreement among specialists in Qur'anic readings. This discipline also seeks to attribute each recitational variant to its respective transmitter, thereby preserving the integrity of its transmission.

Similarly, al-Qaṣṭallānī defines *qirā'āt* as a science concerned with identifying both the convergences and divergences among the recognized authorities of Qur'anic recitation. These differences may relate to linguistic usage, grammatical inflection (*i'rāb*), omission (*ḥadhf*) or retention (*ithbāt*) of letters, as well as issues of separation (*faṣl*) and connection (*waṣl*) within the text. Importantly, all such variations are established through authenticated transmission rather than personal reasoning or linguistic preference.

Al-Zarqānī approaches the concept from a slightly different perspective by describing *qirā'āt* as distinct recitational traditions maintained by individual imams of Qur'anic reading. Each tradition is characterized by particular modes of pronunciation and textual realization that distinguish it from other recognized schools of recitation. These differences may involve the articulation of letters, phonetic features, or other recitational characteristics, all of which are preserved through reliable chains of transmission.

A comparative examination of these definitions reveals two major tendencies in the scholarly understanding of *qirā'āt*. The first tendency adopts a comprehensive view, defining *qirā'āt* as a discipline that encompasses both the agreements and disagreements among the leading authorities of Qur'anic recitation regarding the pronunciation of Qur'anic expressions. From this perspective, *qirā'āt* extends beyond the study of variant readings alone and includes the broader framework of transmission, documentation, and preservation through which those readings have been conveyed. This understanding is particularly evident in the formulation advanced by Ibn al-Jazarī, who emphasizes the systematic and methodological dimensions of the discipline (Fathurrozi, 2023).

The second scholarly tendency defines *qirā'āt* in a more restricted sense by limiting its scope to the differences found in the recitation of Qur'anic expressions among the recognized imams of *qirā'āt*. From this perspective, the discipline primarily concerns the study of recitational variants that distinguish one reading from another, rather than encompassing the broader framework of transmission and preservation. This understanding is reflected in the definition proposed by al-Zarqānī, who emphasizes the distinctive recitational features associated with each recognized reading tradition. The existence of these two interpretive approaches highlights the methodological diversity among scholars in defining *qirā'āt*. The first approach adopts a comprehensive framework that includes both the system of transmission and the various recitational traditions of the Qur'an, whereas the second focuses specifically on the points of variation among the accepted readings. Despite their differences in scope, both perspectives contribute to a deeper understanding of *qirā'āt* as an essential branch of Qur'anic studies and demonstrate the complexity of its theoretical and methodological foundations.

The Historical Development of the Science of *Qirā'āt*

The emergence of variant Qur'anic readings (*qirā'āt*) dates back to the earliest period of revelation. Although the phenomenon began during the Meccan phase of the Prophet's mission, the majority of the recognized recitational variants were revealed in Medina, as indicated by the Prophetic traditions concerning *al-aḥruf al-sab'ah* (the seven modes of revelation). This demonstrates that the development of *qirā'āt* was intrinsically connected to the process of Qur'anic revelation itself and formed an integral part of the divine facilitation granted to the Muslim community.

The transmission of *qirā'āt* originated during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad and continued through successive generations of Muslim scholars. After receiving the Qur'an from the Prophet, the Companions preserved and transmitted the various authorized readings to their students, who in turn conveyed them to the generation of the *tābi'ūn*. During this period, the transmission of

qirā'āt became increasingly structured and was governed by strict standards of narration. As a result, recitational variants that remained faithful to the revealed text were preserved through reliable chains of transmission and carefully passed down by specialists in Qur'anic recitation. Over time, the study of *qirā'āt* evolved from a primarily oral tradition into a distinct scholarly discipline. Muslim scholars systematically documented the accepted readings and established criteria for their authenticity and acceptance. Through this process of preservation, verification, and codification, *qirā'āt* eventually became recognized as an important branch of *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, contributing significantly to the preservation and interpretation of the Qur'anic text.

In the subsequent phase, scholars of *qirā'āt* undertook the systematic codification of the discipline by establishing criteria for the acceptance of Qur'anic readings. These criteria include conformity with the *rasm al-Muṣḥaf al-'Uthmānī*, the authenticity of the chain of transmission (*sanad*), and consistency with the rules of the Arabic language. The formulation of these standards provided a methodological framework for distinguishing accepted readings from irregular variants and ensured the preservation of authentic recitational traditions. As a result, *qirā'āt* became recognized as a distinct branch of *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* with its own scholarly authority and methodological foundations within Islamic studies (Al-Qaṭṭān, 2000). Based on its historical development, the evolution of *qirā'āt* can be divided into three major stages, as follows:

1. The First Phase: The Period of Revelation during the Prophetic Era

The earliest stage in the development of *qirā'āt* corresponds to the period in which the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. During this phase, the Prophet received the Qur'anic revelation in multiple authorized modes of recitation, a phenomenon that is closely associated with the concept of *al-aḥruf al-sab'ah* (the seven modes of revelation). Numerous Prophetic traditions indicate that the diversity of Qur'anic readings originated directly from divine revelation and was conveyed to the Prophet through the Angel Jibrīl. One of the most well-known narrations concerning this matter is reported by Ibn 'Abbās, in which the Prophet ﷺ stated:

“Jibrīl taught me the Qur'an in one mode, and I continued to ask for additional modes until he increased them for me, eventually reaching seven modes.”

Thus, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ received the Qur'anic revelation through multiple authorized modes of recitation, reflecting the diversity of *qirā'āt* and forms of expression that were divinely revealed as part of the Qur'anic transmission process (Al-Sindi, 2021).

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the Angel Jibrīl (peace be upon him) directly conveyed various authorized modes of Qur'anic recitation to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who subsequently transmitted them to his Companions through the processes of *talaqqī* (direct reception) and *ta'līm* (instruction). This transmission continued throughout the Prophetic period and led to the emergence of several Companions who became the principal preservers and transmitters of the Qur'an and its recitational traditions. Among the most prominent were Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, Abū al-Dardā', 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, and Zayd ibn Thābit (may Allah be pleased with them all). Through these distinguished Companions, the transmission networks (*asanīd*) of *qirā'āt* were established, providing the foundation upon which the traditions of the ten canonical reciters (*al-qurrā' al-'asharah*) were later transmitted. These recitational traditions continued to be preserved and conveyed across generations through uninterrupted and widely accepted chains of transmission (*mutawātir*), ensuring their authenticity and continuity within the Islamic scholarly tradition (Al-Ṣāliḥ, 2000).

2. The Second Phase: The Era of the Companions and the *Tābi'ūn*.

The second stage in the development of *qirā'āt* occurred during the periods of the Companions and the *tābi'ūn*. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ encouraged his Companions to recite and teach the Qur'an to one another, thereby facilitating the preservation and dissemination of both the Qur'anic text and its authorized modes of recitation (Al-Sindi, 2021). As a result, many Companions learned and transmitted the Qur'an, together with its various *qirā'āt*, through direct

interaction with fellow Companions. This pattern of transmission continued among the *tābi'ūn*, who acquired their knowledge of the Qur'an and its recitational traditions from the Companions and subsequently passed it on to succeeding generations.

A significant development during this period occurred under the caliphate of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān رضي الله عنه. In order to preserve the unity of the Qur'anic text, he commissioned the production and distribution of standardized copies of the Qur'an, later known as the *Muṣḥaf 'Uthmānī*. These codices were sent to major regions of the Muslim world, each accompanied by qualified reciters who instructed local communities in the proper recitation of the Qur'an according to the traditions they had received from the Prophet ﷺ through the Companions. This initiative played a crucial role in safeguarding the authenticity of Qur'anic transmission while accommodating the recognized recitational variations that conformed to the *rasm* of the 'Uthmānic codex.

The widespread teaching and transmission of *qirā'āt* during this era fostered the emergence of numerous scholars who devoted themselves to the study and preservation of Qur'anic recitation. Many of these individuals attained prominence as leading authorities in the field and became foundational figures in the development of the Qur'anic recitational tradition. Their efforts laid the groundwork for the later formation of the recognized schools of *qirā'āt* and the establishment of the canonical reciters whose traditions would be preserved in subsequent generations.

3. The Third Phase: The Codification of the Science of *Qirā'āt*

The third stage in the historical development of *qirā'āt* was marked by the emergence of systematic scholarly efforts to document and codify the discipline. This process began in the third century AH, with one of the earliest and most significant contributions attributed to Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224 AH), who compiled and recorded various Qur'anic readings in written form. Following his pioneering work, numerous scholars continued to produce works on *qirā'āt*, contributing to the preservation and transmission of the recitational tradition across successive generations. At this stage, however, scholarly compilations were not yet restricted to a specific number of canonical readings.

A major turning point occurred with the work of Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324 AH), whose renowned book *al-Sab'ah fī al-Qirā'āt* systematized and popularized the seven canonical readings (*al-qirā'āt al-sab'*). His contribution significantly influenced the subsequent development of the discipline by establishing a clearer framework for the study of recognized recitations. During this period, scholars increasingly focused on issues such as the criteria for the acceptance of authentic readings, the distinction between canonical (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and irregular (*shādh*) recitations, and the linguistic foundations used to justify and evaluate variant readings. These discussions played a crucial role in shaping the methodological and theoretical foundations of the science of *qirā'āt*. In later centuries, scholarly attention also expanded to include specialized studies devoted to individual recitational traditions and their respective transmitters (Asnawi, 2023).

Since the codification of the science of *qirā'āt* in the third century AH, the recitations of the ten canonical imams gradually spread across the Muslim world, with different regions adopting specific traditions through local scholarly transmission. From the tenth century AH onward, however, the transmission of Ḥafṣ 'an 'Āṣim became increasingly dominant, largely due to Ottoman patronage and the widespread production of Qur'anic manuscripts and printed *muṣḥafs*. In the contemporary period, its predominance has been further reinforced by mass printing, broadcast media, and digital platforms, making it the most widely recited Qur'anic reading worldwide (Al-Mutairi, 2023).

At present, the narration of Ḥafṣ 'an 'Āṣim is the predominant recitational tradition in the majority of Muslim countries. Nevertheless, several other canonical transmissions continue to be preserved and practiced in particular regions. The narration of Qālūn 'an Nāfi' remains in use in Libya and in certain areas of Tunisia and Algeria (Al-Jamal, 1420 H). Likewise, the narration of Warsh 'an Nāfi' is widely recited in western Egypt, parts of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Cameroon, Nigeria, much of West Africa, and northern and western Sudan.

Meanwhile, the narration of al-Dūrī ‘an Abī ‘Amr continues to be practiced in parts of Sudan, Somalia, and the Hadramawt region of Yemen (Asnawi, 2023). These regional distributions demonstrate the enduring diversity of the *qirā’āt* tradition and highlight the continued preservation of multiple canonical readings within the contemporary Muslim world).

The Meaning of *Sab‘ah al-Aḥruf* in the Prophetic Traditions on the Revelation of the Qur’an

The concept of *sab‘ah al-aḥruf* has been the subject of extensive scholarly discussion since the earliest period of Islamic intellectual history. In interpreting the Prophetic traditions concerning the revelation of the Qur’an in seven *aḥruf*, scholars have advanced numerous explanations regarding the precise meaning of this expression. Given the diversity of opinions on this issue, the present study highlights five of the most prominent interpretations proposed in the classical scholarly tradition. The first and most widely accepted view among Muslim scholars maintains that *sab‘ah al-aḥruf* refers to seven linguistic forms or dialectal varieties of the Arabic language that convey the same essential meaning. According to this interpretation, the Qur’an was revealed in multiple linguistic expressions to accommodate the diverse dialects spoken by different Arab tribes, thereby facilitating its recitation and comprehension among the early Muslim community. Although the wording may differ according to dialectal usage, the intended meaning remains unchanged. Scholars who support this view identify the seven dialects as those associated with the tribes of Quraysh, Thaḳīf, Hawāzin, Kinānah, Hudhayl, Tamīm, and Yemen (Wahid & Zaini, 2016). The second interpretation proposes that *sab‘ah al-aḥruf* refers to the presence within the Qur’an of linguistic features drawn from seven prominent Arab dialects. According to this view, the Qur’anic text incorporates expressions originating from the dialects of Quraysh, Thaḳīf, Hudhayl, Kinānah, Hawāzin, Tamīm, and Yemen. Unlike the first opinion, which emphasizes the permissibility of reciting the Qur’an in different dialectal forms, this interpretation focuses on the linguistic composition of the Qur’anic text itself and the diversity of Arabic speech represented therein.

A third group of scholars understands *sab‘ah al-aḥruf* not as a reference to dialectal variation but as an indication of the principal categories of teachings contained within the Qur’an. According to this interpretation, the seven *aḥruf* correspond to seven major dimensions of Qur’anic guidance, including commands and prohibitions (*al-amr wa al-nahy*), lawful and unlawful matters (*al-ḥalāl wa al-ḥarām*), clear and allegorical verses (*al-muḥkam wa al-mutashābih*), abrogating and abrogated rulings (*al-nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*), general and specific expressions (*al-‘āmm wa al-khāṣṣ*), parables (*al-amthāl*), and narratives (*al-qaṣaṣ*). Some proponents of this view further argue that *sab‘ah al-aḥruf* denotes seven different expressions that convey equivalent meanings, thereby emphasizing semantic flexibility rather than dialectal diversity (Wahid & Zaini, 2016). A fourth interpretation maintains that the number seven in the expression *sab‘ah al-aḥruf* should not be understood literally. Instead, it is regarded as a figurative expression employed to signify abundance, ease, and flexibility. According to this perspective, the term “seven” functions as a rhetorical device commonly found in Arabic usage, where certain numbers are employed to indicate multiplicity rather than a precise numerical quantity. Consequently, the purpose of the Prophetic statement is understood as highlighting the facilitative nature of Qur’anic revelation rather than specifying an exact number of recitational forms.

The wide range of scholarly interpretations regarding the concept of *sab‘ah al-aḥruf* indicates a broad consensus that the Qur’an was revealed in multiple authorized forms to facilitate its recitation among the early Muslim community. This concession acknowledged the linguistic diversity of Arabian tribes, allowing believers to recite the Qur’an according to their respective dialects as long as the recitations remained within the divinely sanctioned modes. Rather than reflecting textual inconsistency, the concept of *sab‘ah al-aḥruf* illustrates the Qur’an’s accommodation of the socio-linguistic realities of seventh-century Arabia while safeguarding the authenticity and semantic integrity of the divine revelation. Accordingly, the diversity of canonical recitations should be understood as an integral aspect of the Qur’an’s oral transmission and preservation, demonstrating both linguistic flexibility and textual stability throughout Islamic history (Ridho & Hariyanto, 2024).

A commonly cited example involves a member of the Hudhayl tribe who recited the expression ‘*attā hīn* (عتى حين) instead of *hattā hīn* (حتى حين). Upon hearing this recitation, the Prophet Muhammad SAW did not object to it, as the pronunciation corresponded to the dialectal characteristics of the Hudhayl tribe. This incident illustrates that the permission granted through *sab‘ah al-ahruf* was intended to recognize legitimate dialectal differences among Arab communities without affecting the authenticity, message, or legal authority of the Qur’anic revelation.

Types of *Qirā’āt* and Their Influence on Qur’anic Interpretation

When classified according to the quantity and strength of their chains of transmission (*sanad*), *qirā’āt* can be divided into several categories. The first is *al-qirā’āt al-mutawātirah*, namely recitations transmitted through numerous narrators in every generation, making collusion upon falsehood inconceivable. This mode of transmission has continued uninterrupted from one generation to another, and the majority of recognized *qirā’āt* belong to this category (Al-Hasani, 1423). Most scholars maintain that the *qirā’āt al-sab‘* (the seven canonical recitations) are included within the category of *mutawātir*. An example is found in Q.S. al-Fātiḥah [1]: 4, *Māliki Yawm al-Dīn* (مالك يوم الدين). In this verse, some reciters, including Imam ‘Āṣim, recited *Māliki* (), while other canonical recitations render it as *Maliki* (). Although the variation does not alter the essential meaning of the verse, it enriches its interpretation by emphasizing both Allah’s absolute ownership (*mulk*) and sovereign authority (*malik*) over the Day of Judgment (Halimah, 2019).

The second category is *al-qirā’āt al-mashhūrah*, namely recitations whose chains of transmission are authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) but do not reach the level of *mutawātir*. These recitations conform to the principles of Arabic grammar and correspond to at least one of the *Muṣḥaf ‘Uthmānī* manuscripts. They are widely recognized among specialists in *qirā’āt* and are not regarded as erroneous or *shādhah* (irregular). Consequently, such recitations are considered permissible for recitation both within and outside ritual prayer. Among the recitations classified under this category are those attributed to the three supplementary canonical imams: Abu Ja‘far al-Madanī, Ya‘qūb al-Ḥaḍramī, and Khalaf ibn Hishām al-Bazzār. An example appears in Q.S. al-Fātiḥah [1]: 7, ‘*alayhim wa lā al-ḍāllīn* (عليهم ولا الضالين). Ya‘qūb al-Ḥaḍramī recited the final *mīm* in ‘*alayhim* with a *ḍammah* before the conjunction *wāw* (‘*alayhumu wa lā al-ḍāllīn*), whereas other reciters pronounced it according to the more common reading found in the written text. Although this variation is primarily phonetic and does not significantly affect the semantic content of the verse, it reflects the richness of Qur’anic recitational traditions and provides insight into the linguistic diversity preserved within the science of *qirā’āt*.

The third category is *al-qirā’āt al-āḥād*, referring to recitations transmitted through an authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) chain of narration but which do not conform to the orthography of any of the *Muṣḥaf ‘Uthmānī* manuscripts, conflict with established principles of Arabic grammar, or lack the widespread acceptance associated with *al-qirā’āt al-mashhūrah*. For this reason, such recitations are not considered valid for liturgical recitation, whether in prayer or outside it. An example is found in Q.S. al-Tawbah [9]: 128, *laqad jā’akum rasūlun min anfusikum* (). A narration attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās reports the reading *min anfāsikum* (), with a *fatḥah* on the letter *fā’*, whereas the accepted canonical reading is *min anfusikum* () with a *ḍammah* (Halimah, 2019).

The fourth category is *al-qirā’āt al-shādhah*, namely recitations whose chains of transmission are not authentic and cannot be reliably traced back to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Because they fail to meet the requirements of accepted transmission, they are excluded from the recognized corpus of Qur’anic recitations. An example is the reading of Q.S. al-Fātiḥah [1]: 4 as *malaka yawma al-dīn* (), employing a past-tense verb (*fi’l māḍī*) and placing *yawma* (يوم) in the accusative case. This reading differs substantially from the established canonical recitations and is therefore classified as *shādhah* (Al-Hasani, 1423). The fifth category is *al-qirā’āt al-mawḍū‘ah*, which refers to fabricated recitations that lack any authentic basis and are falsely attributed to particular authorities or reciters. One well-known example is the recitation attributed to al-Khuza‘ī and falsely ascribed to Abu Ḥanīfah in Q.S. Fāṭir [35]: 28, *innamā yakhshā Allāha min ‘ibādihi al-‘ulamā’u* (إنما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء). In the accepted reading, *Allāha* () is in the accusative case and *al-‘ulamā’u* () is nominative, indicating that “the scholars are those who fear Allah.” However, the fabricated reading reverses these

grammatical markings, rendering *Allāhu* () nominative and *al-‘ulamā’a* () accusative. Such a change fundamentally alters the intended meaning of the verse and therefore cannot be accepted as a valid Qur’anic recitation (Pink, 2020).

Another category is *al-mudraj*, which consists of recitations containing explanatory additions incorporated for interpretive purposes rather than as part of the revealed text itself. An example is the recitation attributed to Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ in the verse *wa lahu akhun aw ukhtun* (وله أخ أو أخت), where the phrase *min umm* () is added to clarify that the brother or sister mentioned is related through the mother’s side. Such additions function as exegetical explanations and are not regarded as part of the Qur’anic text (Al-Hasani, 1423). From the perspective of their role in *tafsīr*, *qirā’āt* may also be classified according to whether they contribute to the interpretation of the Qur’an. Some recitational variants merely reflect differences in pronunciation, phonetics, or dialectal usage without producing any significant impact on the meaning of the verse. In such cases, the variation enriches the recitational tradition of the Qur’an while leaving the interpretive content essentially unchanged. These recitations are therefore considered variants that do not generate substantive exegetical differences. *Qirā’āt* that provide interpretive guidance and play a role in the exegesis of the Qur’an can be classified into three categories based on the extent to which they are accepted as evidence in Qur’anic interpretation, as follows:

1. *Al-Qirā’āt al-Maqbūlah* are accepted recitations that convey valid indications of the meanings and interpretation of the Qur’an. Because of their authenticity and recognized status, these recitations are regarded as part of the methodology of *tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi al-Qur’ān* (interpreting the Qur’an through the Qur’an itself), as they provide complementary explanations and enrich the understanding of Qur’anic meanings.
2. *Al-Qirā’āt al-Shādhah al-Tafsīriyyah* refer to irregular (*shādhah*) recitations that nevertheless contain interpretive indications relevant to the meaning of the Qur’an. Such recitations may be utilized in Qur’anic exegesis provided that their chains of transmission are authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*). In this case, they are treated as a form of interpretation based on the statements of the Prophet (*qawl al-Rasūl*) or the Companions (*qawl al-Ṣaḥābah*), rather than as *tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi al-Qur’ān*, since *qirā’āt shādhah* are not considered part of the Qur’anic text itself.
3. *Al-Qirā’āt al-Shādhah al-Tafsīriyyah* refer to irregular (*shādhah*) recitations that nevertheless preserve exegetical value by clarifying lexical, grammatical, or contextual meanings of Qur’anic verses. Although these recitations do not fulfill the canonical criteria required for inclusion in the Qur’anic text, they may be employed in *tafsīr* when transmitted through reliable chains (*ṣaḥīḥ*), functioning as interpretive reports attributed to the Prophet or the Companions rather than as *tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi al-Qur’ān*. Contemporary studies likewise emphasize that *qirā’āt shādhah* retain significant hermeneutical and linguistic value despite their exclusion from liturgical recitation (Al Farabi et al., 2024).
4. *Al-Qirā’āt al-Mardūdah al-Mukhtalaqah* are rejected and fabricated recitations that lack any authentic basis. Such recitations have no authority or value in the interpretation of the Qur’an, even if they appear to provide indications concerning the meaning of a verse. Because they are unsupported by reliable transmission and are regarded as invented, they are entirely excluded from the sources of Qur’anic exegesis (Bazimul, 1996).

From the classification of *qirā’āt* discussed above, it can be concluded that not all types of recitations possess interpretive authority or play a role in the exegesis of the Qur’an. Therefore, before employing a particular *qirā’ah* as an exegetical source, it is necessary to determine whether it belongs to the category of *al-qirā’āt al-maqbūlah* or, at the very least, *al-qirā’āt al-shādhah al-tafsīriyyah*. Only these categories may serve as legitimate sources for deriving interpretive insights, whereas recitations that are rejected or fabricated have no exegetical value. It is also important to note that not every variation among the recitations transmitted by the canonical reciters (*al-qurrā’*) produces an impact on Qur’anic interpretation. Exegetical implications generally arise from variations that affect the structure and meaning of words, such as differences in letters, word forms, or grammatical inflection

(i' rāb). A well-known example is the variation among the ten canonical reciters (*al-qurrā' al-'asharah*) regarding the word (أَرْجُلُكُمْ) in the verse of ablution (*wuḍū'*), where some recite it in the genitive form (أَرْجُلُكُمْ) while others recite it in the accusative form (أَرْجُلَكُمْ). Such differences have significant implications for legal and exegetical discussions concerning the method of purifying the feet during ablution. By contrast, the influence of Qur'anic recitations on *tafsīr* does not generally stem from purely phonetic or articulatory variations, such as *imālah*, *takhfīf*, *tashīl*, and similar modes of pronunciation. Although these features represent important aspects of the recitational tradition and preserve the linguistic richness of the Qur'an, they do not ordinarily alter the semantic content of the text and therefore have little direct effect on its interpretation.

Examples of the Influence of *Qirā'āt* on Qur'anic Interpretation

1. The Variant Readings of (نَسِيتُ) in Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 106. Imam *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* highlights the exegetical significance of the variant readings of the word (نَسِيتُ) in the following verse: نَسِيتُ مِمَّا نُنسَخُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِيهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا According to the recitation of *Ibn Kathīr* and *Abū 'Amr al-Baṣrī*, the word is read as (نَسَاها), which is derived from the root *al-nas'* (نَسَا), and denotes the meaning of postponement or deferment (*al-ta'khīr*). Meanwhile, the majority of the canonical reciters read it as (نَسِيَان), deriving it from *al-nisyān* (النسيان). This reading may convey either the sense of causing forgetfulness, as the opposite of remembrance (*al-dhikr*), or the sense of leaving aside or abandoning something (*al-tark*). These variations give rise to different interpretive nuances while remaining within the broader framework of the verse's meaning (Al-Rāzī, 1420).
2. Imam *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* discusses the interpretive implications arising from the variant readings of the expression (نَسِيتُ) in Allah's statement: نَسِيتُ مِمَّا نُنسَخُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِيهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا According to the recitation of *Ibn Kathīr* and *Abū 'Amr al-Baṣrī*, the word is read as (نَسَاها), derived from the root *al-nas'* (نَسَا), which denotes postponement or deferment (*al-ta'khīr*). In contrast, the majority of the canonical reciters read it as (نَسِيَان), deriving it from *al-nisyān* (النسيان). This reading may signify either causing forgetfulness, as the opposite of remembrance (*al-dhikr*), or leaving aside and abandoning something (*al-tark*). Accordingly, the verse may be understood as referring to the abrogation of a verse, its omission from revelation, or its removal from recitation. Most scholars, however, favor the interpretation of *al-nisyān* as forgetfulness in the literal sense, namely the opposite of remembrance (Al-Rāzī, 1420). Based on the reading (نَسَاها), the verse may be understood as: "Whatever verse We abrogate, or cause to be forgotten, neglected, or omitted from revelation, We bring forth one better than it or similar to it." Most scholars interpret *al-nisyān* here in the sense of forgetfulness, namely the opposite of remembrance. Accordingly, the verse signifies that Allah SWT does not abrogate a revelation or allow it to be forgotten by the Prophet Muhammad SAW except that He replaces it with one that is better or equivalent in benefit and wisdom. Within this interpretation, the Prophet's forgetfulness is understood as occurring only by the will and decree of Allah SWT and does not compromise the integrity of revelation.
3. In his work *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Al-Imām al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī explains the diverse meanings derived from the verse of Allah SWT in *Sūrat al-Isrā'* (17:16): أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا According to him, these interpretive variations are closely associated with the different *qirā'āt* transmitted for the verse. In particular, the word (أَرَدْنَا) is reported in three distinct *qirā'āt*, each of which conveys a different semantic nuance and contributes to the diversity of Qur'anic interpretation; a) The first *qirā'ah* reads the word (أَرَدْنَا) with *takhfīf al-mīm* (light pronunciation of the letter *mīm*), b) The second *qirā'ah* reads the word (أَرَدْنَا) with *tashdīd al-mīm*, resulting in the form (أَرَدْنَا), c) The third *qirā'ah* reads the word (أَرَدْنَا) with a prolonged vowel (*madd*) following the *hamzah* and *takhfīf al-mīm*, yielding the form (أَرَدْنَا) (Rafiq, 2022).

Abū Bakr al-Qāḍī further explains that the first reading represents the conventional and most widely accepted *qirā'ah*. According to this interpretation, the word (أَرَدْنَا) denotes Allah's command for the people to act justly and follow His guidance. However, they turn away from this command and engage in sinful and rebellious behavior, thereby opposing the divine decree (*qaḍā'* and *qadar*) of Allah SWT. As a result, they become deserving of destruction, as indicated by the

preceding phrase (فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ), which signifies that the divine judgment and punishment have become incumbent upon them (Rafiq, 2022).

The second *qirā'ah*, which reads the word as () with *tashdīd al-mīm*, is attributed to 'Alī, Abū al-'Āliyah, Abū 'Amr, and Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdī. According to this reading, the expression conveys the meaning of (كَثَّرْنَاهُمْ), namely, "We multiplied them" or "We increased their number." Ibn al-'Arabī explains that the notion of abundance () often implies a condition of confusion, corruption, or moral disorder (التخليط). Consequently, the increase in their number and prosperity became a factor contributing to their deviation and eventual destruction. The third *qirā'ah*, pronounced as () by lengthening the *hamzah* and applying *takhfīf* to the *mīm*, is attributed to al-Ḥasan and al-A'raj. This reading falls outside the transmission of Nāfi'. Similar to the second reading, it also conveys the sense of abundance (), since the morphological patterns () and () are generally regarded in Arabic morphology (*ṣarf*) as capable of expressing comparable meanings. Furthermore, the term () may be derived from (), implying the meaning "We appointed them as leaders." Under this interpretation, Allah SWT granted them positions of authority while simultaneously obligating them to enjoin what is right () and forbid what is wrong (النهي عن المنكر). However, they neglected these responsibilities, which ultimately led to their downfall. Ibn al-'Arabī also suggests another possible interpretation: each leader was endowed with a household, family, servants, and worldly comforts. When they attained prosperity, security, and pleasure, they became preoccupied with worldly luxuries and neglected their obligations toward the Hereafter. Their excessive attachment to material well-being consequently resulted in their destruction (Ibn al-'Arabī, 2003).

4. The impact of *qirā'āt* on Qur'anic interpretation can also be observed in al-Qurṭubī's commentary on the verse (إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ). In his exegesis, al-Qurṭubī mentions two variant readings of the phrase in question: the reading of the majority of reciters () and the reading transmitted from Nāfi' (). According to the reading of the majority (), the verse conveys the meaning: "Indeed, We have sent you, O Muhammad, with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, and you will not be questioned concerning the inhabitants of Hellfire." This interpretation emphasizes that the Prophet Muhammad SAW is not accountable for the fate of those who reject faith and ultimately become the people of al-Jahīm. In contrast, the reading () gives rise to two distinct interpretative perspectives. The first understands the phrase as a prohibition directed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW from inquiring about those who are still alive, since disbelief may be replaced by faith and sin by repentance. The second interprets it as referring to those who die in disbelief, emphasizing the severity of divine punishment and functioning as a rhetorical expression of the consequences of rejecting God's guidance (Abdel Haleem, 2021).
5. Ibn 'Ashūr discusses the semantic implications of the word (مُبَيِّنَات) in the verse (وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ آيَاتٍ (مُبَيِّنَات) (Q. al-Nūr [24]: 34). He notes that Nāfi', Ibn Kathīr, Abū 'Amr, Abū Bakr through the transmission of 'Āṣim, Abū Ja'far, and Ya'qūb recited the term with a *fathah* on the letter *yā'* accompanied by *tashdīd*, yielding the form (مُبَيِّنَات), which corresponds to the morphological pattern of *ism al-maf'ūl* (passive participle). According to this reading, the expression signifies that the verses have been clarified and explained by Allah SWT Himself. In contrast, the remaining reciters read the word as (مُبَيِّنَات), with a *kasrah* on the *yā'* and *tashdīd*, corresponding to the pattern of *ism al-fā'il* (active participle). Under this reading, the meaning shifts to the notion that the verses themselves serve as clarifying signs, elucidating the divine purposes and guidance for which they were revealed. Ibn 'Ashūr emphasizes that these two readings are not contradictory; rather, they are complementary and closely interconnected. The first reading highlights Allah SWT as the source of clarification, while the second underscores the function of the revealed verses as instruments of guidance and explanation. Together, the two *qirā'āt* provide a more comprehensive understanding of the verse by illuminating both the divine origin and the explanatory role of the Qur'anic revelation (Ibn 'Ashūr, 1984).

The findings of this study demonstrate that the science of *qirā'āt* developed progressively from the period of Qur'anic revelation until it became a systematic discipline within the broader framework of *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. The diversity of *qirā'āt* originated during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad as a form of divine facilitation and was preserved through *talaqqī* and authentic *sanad*. It was later codified by Muslim scholars based on three principal criteria: authentic transmission, conformity with the *rasm 'Uthmānī*, and consistency with Arabic linguistic principles, establishing *qirā'āt* as an authoritative branch of Qur'anic studies (Tareq Moqbel, 2023).

Furthermore, this study reveals that *qirā'āt* exert a significant influence on the dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation. Variations in recitation generate complementary layers of meaning without producing substantive contradictions within the text. This phenomenon is evident in the works of Qur'anic exegetes, who employ different *qirā'āt* to broaden interpretive possibilities across linguistic, legal, and rhetorical dimensions. Nevertheless, not all categories of *qirā'āt* are considered valid evidentiary bases for exegesis. Only *qirā'āt maqbūlah* and *qirā'āt shādhah tafsīriyyah* supported by authentic chains of transmission and meaningful interpretive relevance may be utilized as exegetical evidence. Consequently, *qirā'āt* should be understood not merely as recitational variants but also as an important instrument for enriching the methodology of *tafsīr* and deepening the understanding of Qur'anic meanings.

This study also contributes to contemporary scholarship by providing a more comprehensive examination of the relationship between the historical development of *qirā'āt* and the dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation. Unlike many previous studies that focus primarily on linguistic aspects or the analysis of *qirā'āt* within a single exegetical work, this research integrates discussions on the historical evolution of *qirā'āt*, the concept of *sab'ah al-aḥruf*, the classification of Qur'anic readings, and their implications for Qur'anic exegesis within a unified analytical framework. By drawing upon both classical sources and contemporary academic scholarship, this study moves beyond a purely descriptive approach and offers a critical analysis of the position of *qirā'āt* as an essential component in the development of Qur'anic interpretive methodology.

CONCLUSION

Ikhtilāf al-qirā'āt demonstrates that the diversity of Qur'anic readings transmitted through authentic chains of transmission constitutes an integral aspect of the authenticity of divine revelation rather than a source of semantic contradiction. These recitational variations generate a range of linguistic meanings that broaden the understanding of Qur'anic verses without altering the fundamental teachings of the Qur'an. This phenomenon reflects the richness and flexibility of Qur'anic expression, whose meanings have been preserved through a rigorous and reliable transmission system. Within the field of Qur'anic exegesis, *ikhtilāf al-qirā'āt* plays a significant role in shaping interpretive dynamics, as each variant reading may offer a distinct perspective for understanding the text. Consequently, differences among *qirā'āt* do not produce inconsistency; instead, they contribute to a complementary framework of meaning that enriches exegetical discussions from linguistic, legal, and rhetorical perspectives.

This study also makes an academic contribution by providing a more comprehensive examination of the relationship between *ikhtilāf al-qirā'āt* and the development of Qur'anic interpretive methodology. While previous studies have tended to concentrate on linguistic issues, *qirā'āt shādhah*, or analyses of individual exegetical works, the present study integrates discussions on *sab'ah al-aḥruf*, the classification of *qirā'āt*, and their broader implications for Qur'anic interpretation. By drawing upon both classical sources and contemporary academic literature, this research offers not only a descriptive account of the subject but also an analytical assessment of the role of *qirā'āt* in enriching exegetical methodology. Accordingly, the study is expected to complement existing scholarship and contribute to the ongoing development of research on *qirā'āt* and Qur'anic exegesis in contemporary academic discourse.

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