

QURAN RECITATION STYLES AS SOURCES OF ARABIC GRAMMATICAL RULES: GRAMMARIANS' PERSPECTIVES^(*)

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ABSTRACT

Quran recitation styles have always been an indispensable source for establishing Arabic grammar² rules. This paper aims to present the definition of the recitation of the Quran, its different styles and the common practice for using these styles as the standard reference to setting Arabic grammar rules. In addition, the paper explores these styles as the basis for Arabic grammatical rules, the conditions for favouring one style over another, and the position of Arabic grammarians towards accepting the different recitation styles and citing them to establish and verify grammatical rules. Also this research aims at displaying the positions of grammarians and criticizing the positions which did not give due value to the recitations. The study focuses on Quran recitation styles in general and the position of Arabic grammarians in general. Therefore, it proposes researching the position of each Arabic grammarian towards the different recitation styles separately.

Keywords: *Quran Recitation Styles, Arabic Grammar, Grammatical Rule, Grammarians, Citing.*

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² Translator note. The term grammar is used here to refer to the syntactic, morphological and phonological rules of the Arabic language.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is accepted that Arabic, as spoken by early converts to Islam, underwent a certain degree of solecism (*lahn*). This divergence from the accepted forms increased with the vast expansion of Islam and the inevitable assimilation of different peoples and cultures. In response, Arabic grammarians attempted to formalise a set of standards for the accurate use of the language especially at a time when documentation and authorship in Arabic flourished.

Throughout the process of setting homogenous grammatical rules, linguists referred to established standards and cited a wealth of available material. This paper presents the views of Arabic grammarians on the different Quran recitation styles (*qira'at*) as reliable sources for establishing these rules. This approach is of significant importance, especially when we consider the fact that far from being considered wholly infallible, some of these styles have been either disregarded or even rejected by some grammarians.

This paper employs a descriptive inductive approach citing a number of classical and modern sources on grammar, Quran studies and interpretation, recitation styles and presenting supporting evidence for setting grammatical rules. Although the topic under study here has been the focus of numerous classical and modern publications, this paper is distinctive as an attempt at presenting a precise summary of the views of grammarians regarding this issue.

2.0 EVIDENCE FROM SPOKEN DATA

Scholars of Arabic grammar use the term *source (osul)* in reference to two types of evidence cited to support a certain thesis:

- 1- That induced from speech data of native Arabic speakers (*Kalam Alarab*)
- 2- That which is based on the systemic codification of the language and the supporting comprehensive evidence on which the study of Arabic grammar was based (see *Sha'aban, 2006*)

These are classical methods that date back to the time when the systematic study of Arabic grammar was first established (see *Alkareem, 2004*). The different types of evidence that grammarians have cited include: spoken data (*alsama'a*), analogy (*alqeyas*), consensus (*alejma'a*), preferential approximation (*istihsan*) and tradition (*istis-hab*).

The grammatical rules of standard Arabic were extrapolated from the spoken forms used by the Arabs. Therefore, grammarians relied foremost on the analysis of spoken data. *Samaa'* (oral transmission), or the reliable corpus of specimens of ideal language usage, was defined by Alsoyoti (Khalil ed., 2007) as examples of the language as used in the Holy Quran and by individuals recognized for their eloquence, the Prophet (PBUH) and native speakers of the language before, during, and after the time of the Prophet and until the time Arabic was erroneously spoken and written by new users in their poetry and prose. In other words, the three main sources for *samaa'* (orally transmission) are the Holy Quran, hadith (the sayings of the Prophet), and the poetry and prose produced by eloquent Arabs (*kalām al-'arab*).

This paper focuses in this part on instances of phonological, semantic or syntactic differences between two or more recitation styles of a particular verse in the Quran (see Hassan, 2000). These verses are attributed to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) who received the Holy Quran in *sab'at ahraf*, or seven variants that ultimately render the same meaning³.

3.0 RECITATION STYLES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE (QIRA'AT)

Qira'at, or recitation styles, refer to variances in pronunciation and tone employed when reciting the Quran. Each method of recitation then employs specific phonological features such as the use of an open vowel (fat'h), approximation of the vowel 'a' to 'e' (emalat), articulation of certain sounds (eth-har), sound assimilation (edgham), extended sound duration (mad), short sound duration (qasr), sound lowering (tarqiq), sound elevation (tafkheem), and the assimilation of /o/ and /h/ sounds (see Hamud, 2003).

Although the Quran was revealed in the Quraish dialect, the Prophet permitted it to be read in the local dialects of the believers for the purpose of ease. For example, it was narrated in Sahih by Albukhari on the authority of Omar ibn Alkhatib that he happened to hear Hisham ibn Hakim reciting Alfurqan. Omar realized that Hisham was reciting this verse differently from how he himself had been taught to recite it by the Prophet. Omar almost quarrelled with him there and then. However, he waited till Hisham finished his prayers and then brought

³ The term 'sab'at ahraf' refers to variants of the same word or phrases in the Quran that are synonymous and which belong to the various dialects of Arabic common at the time of the revelation of the Quran

him to the Prophet. He informed the Prophet of what happened. In response, the Prophet asked both Hisham and Omar to recite the verse and in both cases, he gave his approval saying that 'the Quran was revealed to me in seven different variants (*sab'at ahruf*), so recite it in whichever variant that is easier for you' (Albukhari, 1987). As mentioned earlier, this hadith has been interpreted by a number of scholars to indicate that the Quran was revealed in seven different variants (see Bin-Qutaiba, 2006). Another hadith in support of this view was narrated by Ibn Abass who reported that the Prophet said, 'Gabriel taught me to recite the Quran in one specific dialect (*harf*) so I asked for confirmation. As I persisted, he ultimately recited in seven different dialects or *sab'at ahruf* (Albukhari A. M.).

Based on this evidence from hadith, Bin-Qutaiba (*ibid*) theorised that the seven *ahruf*, or dialects, are the reason why recitation styles differ in seven aspects such as variations in word declension and inflection (*ea'rab*) where the meaning and image (*sorat*)⁴ of the word remain unchanged, either word meaning or image is changed, or both are altered. Other aspects include changes in the position of the word in the sentence, or the addition or subtraction of words.

The convention in the study of Quran recitation styles is to refer to each style by the name of the most prominent Imam who employed it such as Ibn Amer Aldemashqi, Abdullah Ibn-Kathir Almakki, Asem, Abu-Ja'afar, Abu-Amer Bin-Alala'a, Hamza, Alkasa'ae, Ibn-Is-haq, Ibn Hisham Albazaz, and Nafe.

To codify recitation styles, these scholars established a special branch of study during the first hundred years of the spread of Islam: a time of some linguistic confusion (see Alrefa'e, 2001). They based their styles on those employed by the Prophet's disciples, who themselves were renowned for their recitation styles of the Quran: Othman, Ali, Abai Bin-Ka'ab, Zayed Bin-Thabet, Ibn-Masoud, Abu-Aldardaa', Abu Musa Alash'ari.

It was for ease that these recitation styles existed. However, some scholars mention other advantages such as facilitating the memorization of the Quran, its conveyance to others, and the establishment of the Prophet's teachings as the truth. A further advantage is engaging adherents of Islam in exploring the meaning of the Quran and deducing the moral messages it preaches while

⁴ The mental image a word invokes

appreciating their significant role in shaping the course of human civilization (see Mohamed, 2000; see also Mohaisen, 1998).

The differences among recitation styles also accentuate the precision of the Quran: one of its many miraculous features. In his *Burhan, or the Evidence*, Zarkashi asserts that these recitation styles are 'a noble art that highlights the splendour and eloquence of the words of the Quran hence the special care that scholars paid to it' (Alzarkashi, 1957). Alzurqani (1947) adds that 'the variations in these recitation styles is tantamount to revealing different versions of the same verses of the Quran. This in itself is a superior type of eloquence that starts with stunning succinctness and culminates into miraculous perfection.'

Another significant application of these recitation styles is as standard to accurate pronunciation of standard Arabic across the ages. 'Renowned reciters of the Quran are often referred to when linguists attempt to describe a certain sound or phonological phenomenon. Where this type of linguistic evidence is lacking, as in the case of the rest of the Arabic language corpus which is written, the language is subjected to distortion and corruption especially because of the orthographical traditions of Arabic writing' (Omar, 1998).

In addition, they include evidence of language usage that is not often included in Arabic dictionaries. For example, how the word *قَدَرُوا* *qadaru* is stressed in *حَقَّ قَدْرُهُ* 'they made not a just estimate of Allâh such as is due to Him,' {Maa qadrul laaha haqqa qadrih} (Alhajj:74 and AzZumur: 67) meaning to exalt and revere. The stress is accurately placed on this word in the various recitation styles to highlight this particular meaning of the word. This usage is not listed in Arabic dictionaries (ibid).

4.0 CONDITIONS OF USING THE QURAN RECITATION STYLES AS LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

In their initial attempts to preserve the Arabic language, grammarians established strict scientific parameters that guided the nascent field of Arabic studies. For example, only specimens of confirmed accurate usage (*fasih*) were referred to in their studies as dictated by the linguistic authority (Ihtijaaj) principle. Ihtijaaj, or linguistic authority, is defined by Afghani (1987) as 'citing received evidence based on instances of usage by a proven eloquent native Arabic speaker to verify the accuracy of certain grammatical rules or semantic and structural usage.' However, adopting Quran recitation styles as part of the same method has proven

to be problematic. Consequently, grammarians and theologians established certain parameters against which the veracity of a certain recitation is judged. Foremost, it needs to be attributed to the Prophet. Second, it should adhere to the rules of accurate usage of the Arabic language and be transcribed in the standard orthography during the days of the Caliph Othman.

If a recitation style does not meet one or more of these conditions, it is considered poor (dha'efat), deviant (shathat) or invalid (batelatun) (see Attr, 1996). However, when applying the principle of ihtijaaj to language usage, it is common practice to accept deviant readings of the Quran. This is especially the case when these recitations are attributed to trusted sources. A common justification for this is 'although a certain recitation style may have been rejected because it could not be satisfactorily attributed to the Prophet, it can still serve as an example of accurate use of the language by a native speaker' (Alafghani, *ibid*).

5.0 CITING QURAN RECITATION STYLES IN GENERAL

The different readings of the Quran are considered the main source from which grammatical rules are derived. 'Since the time of Sibawayh (died 796), grammarians have adopted this practice' (Almohaimed, 2019). This is evident in all texts on Arabic syntax. Take for example Sibawayh's view that 'different recitation styles are not to be contravened as they are part of received practices of the Prophet, or Sunna' (Haroon, 1992). In addition, it has been reported that Tha'alibi (died 904) 'would always refer to the declination and inflection, or the parsing (ea'rab), of a word as used in the Quran even when the seven recitation styles do not agree. However, if I cited common usage by native speakers, I would be inclined to use the most confirmed usage (in Abdulmawjood & Moawadhed., 1998).' His preference then was to rely on specimens of spoken language rather than recitation styles.

Several scholars stressed the need to refer to language usage in the Quran as the basis on which to construct language rules. Zajaj (died 922) asserts that 'the Quran is linguistically flawless and free of solecism (*lahn*), or pronunciation errors. It is syntactically matchless in all that the Arabs have ever produced' (Tha'alibi ed., 1994). Elsewhere, he directs that we should 'take heed of what has been reported about the Prophet, his companions and reciters of the Quran as long as it does not contradict what we know to be linguistically accurate. The priority is then to follow the received rules of recitation' (*ibid*). In support of the

same concept, Alsoyoti quotes Ibn-khaluwaih's assertion that the consensus is that the language used in the Quran is certainly more eloquent than in any other instances (see Almulah, Albajawi, & Ibrahim ed.). Ibn-Jenni (died 1002) also emphasizes that the language used in the Quran is the most eloquent (Hendawi ed., 1985). In addition, Ibn-Faris (died 1005) declares that 'we are confident that the Quran was revealed in the most expressive language' (Altha'abi ed., 1993). This is all a clear indication that the language as used in the Quran and in the different recitation styles should take precedence over all other instances when codifying language usage.

Discussing the differences between the recitation styles and preferring one over the other, Abi Ja'afar Alnahas concludes that it is a sin to contest styles that have been long-established and used by numerous scholars as they have been received from the Prophet himself (Ibrahim ed., 1971). The same sentiment is expressed by Alandalusi (died 745) who adds that each of the different recitation styles displays some wonderful aspect of the Arabic language (Abdul-mawjood, Moawadh, Alnooqi, & Aljamal ed., 2001). In the Evidence (Al-Burhan), Alzarkashi (see Ibrahim ed., 1971) supports the same idea that all recitation styles should be referred to when codifying the rules of the Arabic language without prejudice 'even when, as Kowashi puts it, there has been enough evidence to prefer one reading over the other. However, providing ample evidence in support of one reading style should not mean that the other should be rejected as both are recurrently used and authenticated.'

Furthermore, Abu-Omar Aldani (died 1052) emphasises that referring to the recitation styles is preferable to using the method of analogy (ihtijaj). He proceeds to explain that Quran and recitation scholars do not base their conclusions on common usage or analogy but rather on proven and authenticated instances from established usage and that 'recitation styles are a received tradition from the Prophet that should be referred to and followed' (see Almandoub ed., 1996). Alsoyoti (see Khalil ed., 2007) suggests that 'we should refer to any proven recitation style of the Quran may that be a recurrent (motawater), singular incident (ohadan), or outlying usage (shathan).'

He then refers to the common practice of grammarians of citing outlying usage (shath) when it does not contravene an analogy usage. However, even in such instances, the deviant usage could be cited as evidence of usage of a certain sound, though these cases cannot be invoked in support of a certain analogy usage. Commonly accepted usage that

contravenes established analogies can also be referred to as evidence of accuracy in that particular instance only and cannot be cited in support of analogy usage. For example, the use of words such as استحوذ (istah'wath) and يَأْبَى (y'aba) in Almujaadalah (verse 19) and Altawbah (verse 32) respectively. Alsoyoti confirms that 'citing this divergent usage is not controversial amongst grammarians, which is not always the case among theologians' (ibid).

6.0 REJECTING AND CHALLENGING RECITATION STYLES

Arab grammarians relied on instances of language usage in poetry more than any other corpus. In spite of the many arguments presented to the contrary (see for example Alnaylah, 1975 and Almakhzomi, 1955), many grammarians went as far as rejecting, or even challenging, some of the Quran recitation styles. Rejection usually falls into one of two categories:

1- Direct rejection (rafdh mobasher) where grammarians declare a certain recitation style to be inaccurate

Or

2- Indirect rejection (rafdh ghair mobasher) where a grammarian would present arguments against the accuracy of a certain recitation style without overtly expressing that opinion himself.

An example of direct rejection is Abu-hayan's rejection of Abi-ja'afar Alqaa's pronunciation of the word الملائكة (mala'ekatun) in وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا {wa itha qulnaa lilma laa'ikat isjudoo} 'and we ordered the angels to kneel' (Al-Israa: 61). Alqaa preferred to pronounce it as nominative (in the nominative case) noun to follow the pronunciation of اسْجُدُوا (isjudoo) in the same verse, which is a common recitation. Abu-Hayan bases his rejection on the assertion of this being inaccurate by a number of scholars such as Alzajaj, Alfarsi, Alzamakshari, Ibn- Jenni (Ibn- Jenni, 1998) and Alakbari (Alakbari, 1967).

However, some scholars upheld more extreme views. For example, Almubarrad, as reported by Alqortobi, concluded that it was unacceptable to be led in prayers by an Imam who pronounces the word الأرحام 'alarham' as a genitive case noun (Alnisa'a: 1) even though it is accepted as an authenticated

recitation of the verse. He also rejected the pronunciation of the 'b' in **بِمُصْرِحِيٍّ** 'bemasrakhi' in Ibrahim: 22 as followed by a short 'e'.

Alqortobi presents a detailed review of the opinions of different scholars of that particular pronunciation of the word **الأرحام** 'alarham'. He reports that Ibrahim Alnakha'e, Qtada, Alamash and Hamza read it as a genitive noun. However, many scholars objected to this pronunciation. For example, Albasri's school labelled this as 'lahn,' while Kufis deemed it repugnant. Sibawayh explains that the conjunction in the verse does not link **الأرحام** 'alarham' and the *assumed* genitive noun that would have to be pronounced with nunation. Jama'a asserts that the noun is conjunct with the metonym as the phrase is analogy to a common expression of exclamation. This explanation is also adopted by Alhasan, Alnakha'e and Mojahed. Other scholars, including Alzajaj, challenge the accuracy of this reading. In their view the conjunction of a genitive noun and an assumed noun lacks elegance unless the preposition is articulated. For example, **فَحَسَفْنَا**

بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ {Fakhasafnaa bihee wa bidaarihil arda} 'so we caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place' (Alqasas: 81). Almazni, as reported by Alzajaj, explains that both objects of a conjunction are exchangeable and so it is ineloquent to have the two nouns in different cases and with different inflections.

Sibawayh can be viewed as a scholar who indirectly rejected certain recitation styles or readings of certain parts of the Quran. For, although he would not expressly reject the reading, he would challenge the grammatical reasoning behind this particular reading, provide evidence from the writings of other scholars, or present a grammatical rule that such a reading contravenes. For example, the phrases **(وَالزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي) (وَالسَّارِقَ وَالسَّارِقَةَ)**, or *the male and female thief (alsariq walsariqah), and the adulteress and the adulterer (walzanyah walzani)*. Sibawayh claims that it is more syntactically accurate to pronounce the nouns in these phrases as accusative nouns rather than nominatives as is the common practice. The common reading, he explains, contravenes the rule that in imperative sentences, nouns are regarded as accusatives especially when the verb is expected to precede the noun (see Alobaidi, 1989). In this case, Sibawayh challenges a common reading of the verse because it contravenes a grammatical

rule he adopts. That is while he espouses the few recitation styles that apply that rule (Alobaidi, *ibid*).

Ibn-Hazm fiercely criticises Sibawayh's reasoning and his reliance on single instances of language usage in a piece of poetry or prose to support his arguments. He even chides Sibawayh for 'not paying heed to the words of Allah, the creator of all peoples and their different tongues, and not basing his linguistic arguments on them. He would ignore, distort or misinterpret to suit his own needs rather than abide by how Allah revealed the words of the book' (Ibn-Hazm, 1982).

I am convinced that such grammarians as Sibawayh should have reviewed and amended the grammatical rules that contradicted the accepted recitation styles. Essentially, these are the sources of these rules and so it is illogical to modify them to adhere to these rules (see Alafghani, 1994).

7.0 CLAIMS OF IGNORANCE, INACCURACY AND INARTICULACY

The extent to which some grammarians upheld their views on what constitutes accurate usage of the Arabic language was so extreme that they went as far as labelling some reciters as ignorant (*qalil aldhabt*), mistaken (*wahem*) or plainly inarticulate (*ajami*). Grammarians who belong to this group include such figures as Abu-Amr Ibn-Al-Alaa', Sibawayh, Alkasa'e, Alfara'a, Abu-Hassan Alakhfash, Almazni, Almubarred, Alzajaj, Alnahas, Abu-Ali Alfarsi, Ibn- Jenni, Alzamkhshri, Ibn-Attia, Abu-Barakat Alanbari, and Alakbari. In his *The Message of the Angels*, Altanokhi (2003) explains how some of these grammarians suspected the knowledge and eloquence of some of the early readers. However, Alsoyoti (2007) challenges these views pointing out that many have 'accused Asem, Hamzah and Ibn-Amer of *lahn*, while their readings are verified and attributed to the Prophet which in itself confirms their linguistic accuracy.'

Examples of the criticisms levelled by these grammarians at some of the reciters are numerous. For instance, in *Al-Bahr Al-Mheet*, Abu-Amr Ibn-Ala'a Alandalusi (2001) criticises the reading of the verse '*come not near this tree*' {*laa taqrabaa haazihish shajarata*} (Al-Baqarah: 35) where the /sh/ sound in شجرة (*shajarata*) is pronounced with a *kasra*⁵ as related by Harron Ala'war. Alandalusi traces this reading to the African Muslims in Mecca and therefore claims that it

⁵ A Kasra indicates that a sound is pronounced followed by an /e/ vowel

is corrupted by mother tongue interference. However, Abu-Hayan responded to this view by stressing that the reading is accurate and has been received from eloquent native speakers of Arabic.

Sibaway (1988) also criticises the reading of the words nabee' and bareea' (نبيء وبريئة) as confirmed by some Hijazis, even though that was how Nafe pronounced these words. Alkasa'e also challenges the accuracy of the reading of حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ {hattaa yalijal jamalu fee sammil khiyaat} 'until the camel goes through the eye of the needle' (Al-Araf: 40) where the /j/ is marked by *dham*⁶ and the /m/ sound is geminated in الْجَمَلُ (al jamal), pointing out that this is an instance of non-native pronunciation. However, this is how Ibn-Abass pronounced the word and the reading had been confirmed by many (see Alandalusi, *ibid*).

Alfara'a accuses some reciters of ignorance of the Arabic language when they pronounce the /h/ sound as neutral in naslah and nolah (نوله) و(نصله) as in مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ {nuwallihee ma tawallaa wa nuslihee Jahannama} 'We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell' (An-Nisa: 115). However, this is a confirmed reading as evidenced by Abu-Amr, Hamza, Abu-Jaafar and Shu'ba. He proposes that these reciters may have erroneously used neutral /h/ sound as the word is in a jussive case even though it is the final sound of a subjunctive verb and should be pronounced thus (see Alfaraa', 1983). He also challenges the pronunciation of الشياطين 'ashayatoon' in وَمَا تَنْزَلَتْ بِهِ السَّيِّطِينَ {Wa maa tanazzalat bihish Shayaateen} 'and it is not the Shayâtin (devils) who have brought it (this Qur'ân) down' (Ash-Shu'ara: 210) which is attributed to Alhassan and Mohamed Bin-Alsmuaiqa'a (*ibid*). Abu-Alhassan Alakhfash also criticises the same reading as something that he has never heard 'Arabs or grammarians' say (Alandalusi, 2001).

In addition, Abu-Othman Almazni opposes the Medina reading of وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعِيشَ {wa ja'alnaa lakum feehaa ma'aayish} 'appointed for you

⁶ Dham is where a sound is pronounced followed by an /o/ vowel

therein provisions (for your life). Little thanks do you give' (Al A'raf: 10) where some would add a glottal stop to *مُعِيشٌ* (ma'eesh) thus pronouncing it as *معائش* (ma'aa'esh). In his view, this reading was received from Naf'e Ibn-Abi-Na'eem who 'was ignorant of the Arabic language. *Lahn* was evident in his pronunciation of some sounds, and this is one of them' (see Almowsali, 1954). The same sentiment is expressed by Al-mubarrad (2008). However, Ibn-Abi-Na'eem is one of the ten main reciters and was the Imam of the reciters in Medina. Al-mubarrad also rejects the use of the accusative case of *أَطْهَرَ* (at-har) in *يَوْمَ هُوَلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرَ لَكُمْ* {yaa qawmi haaa'ulaaa'i banaatee hunna atharu lakum} 'O my people! Here are my daughters (i.e. the daughters of my nation), they are purer for you if you marry them lawfully (Hud: 78). He concludes that this was a flagrant instance of *lahn* attributed to 'Ibn-Marwan, who had no knowledge of the Arabic language' (ibid).

Alqortobi also mentions how Al-nahas criticises Ibn-Amer for reciting *وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَاءُؤُهُمْ* {Wa kazaalika zaiyana likaseerim minal mushrikeena qatla awlaadihim shurakaaa'uhum} 'and so to many of the *Mushrikun* (polytheists - see V.2:105) their (Allâh's so-called) "partners" have made fair-seeming the killing of their children' (Al-An'aam: 137) with a nominative *قَتَلَ* (qatla), an accusative *أَوْلَادِهِمْ* (awlaadihim), and a jussive *شُرَكَاءُؤُهُمْ* (shurakaaa'uhum). Al-nahas argues that this reading was based on an erroneous understanding of the grammatical rules. The same view is supported by Meki and Abu-Ghanim Ahmed Bin-Hamdan Al-nahwi, who label this reading a scholar's blunder that should not be followed (see Alqortobi, 2009). Al-zamakhshri (1998) adds that this reading would have sounded disagreeable in both poetry and prose and, therefore, not possible in the Quran that is optimum of linguistic accuracy and elegance. In response, Alandalusi (ibid) points out Al-zamakhshri's persistent tendency to accuse reciters of ignorance and fallibility. Furthermore, Kamalul-din Alanbari (Alansari & Alanbari, 2003) points out that the consensus is that the Basris' claim that this reading is flawed and that the reciter was ignorant of the rules of the Arabic language cannot be supported by concrete evidence. He goes on to explain that Ibn-Amer supported this reading

merely because he saw that the word *شُرَكَاءُهُمْ* (shurakaaa'uhum), or their partners, spelled with a *ى* /e/ in the Levant while it was spelled with a *و* /o/ in Hijaz and Iraq.

In another case, Abu-Ali Alfarsi rejects Ibn-Kathir's reading of *فَأَجْمِعُوا* *كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ أَنتُوا صَفًا* {Fa ajmi'oo kaidakum summma'too saffaa} 'and then assemble in line. And whoever overcomes this day will be indeed successful' (Taha: 64) where he pronounced the /m/ in *ثُمَّ* (thoma) with a kasra and replaced the glottal stop in *أَنْتُوا* (anto) with a /y/ sound (see Alandalusi, 2015). However, many scholars justify the use of kasra in *ثُمَّ* (thoma) by the fact that the /th/ follows another neutral sound.

In his *Al-Khasaa'is*, Ibn-Jenni (1955) claims that Asem's reading of *وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ* {wa qil man raq} 'And it will be said: 'Who can cure him and save him from death?'' (Alqiyamah: 27) was not only grammatically incorrect but also cacophonous. His justification is that the neutral /n/ sound in *من* (men) should not be followed by a pause as it is assimilated into the following /r/ sound.

Abulbaqa'a Alakbari (1967) accuses reciters of oversight when reading *إِنَّكُمْ لَذَاتُ قُلُوبٍ آَلِيمِينَ* {Innakum lazaaa'iqul 'azaabil aleem} 'Verily, you (pagans of Makkah) are going to taste the painful torment' (As-Saffat: 38) as did Ibn-Taghlab, following Asem and Ibn-Alsammak, where the /n/ is omitted and *الْعَذَابِ* (al 'azaab) pronounced as an accusative noun. However, he sees that the noun *al 'azaab* الْعَذَابِ, or torment, is a genitive construct and that the /n/ is omitted from an active participle and pronounced as an accusative noun if it starts with the definite article (al) 'ال.'

Adherents of the Basra school also criticised the confirmed reading of Naf'e Almadani and Ibn-Amer Aldemashqi, both renowned reciters, of the word *مَعَائِشَ* (ma'aesh) with a glottal stop in *وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعِيشَةً* {wa ja'alnaa lakum feehaa ma'aayish} 'and appointed for you therein provisions' (Al-Araf: 10).

However, numerous grammarians defended and justified these supposed errors such as Ibn-Ya'eesh, Abu-Hayan, Alsamin Alhalabi, Almuradi, Ibn-Hesham Alansari, Ibn-Oqail, Khaled Alazhari, Alsoyoti, Abu-Hassan Alashmoni, Ahmed Alshuja'e, and Mohamed Alkhadhari (see Mustafa, 2010). For example, Ibn-Malik (1990) justifies the conjunction of a genitive pronoun in the absence of a repeated preposition as Hmaza did when reading *تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ* {tasaaa 'aloon bihee wal arhaam} *'Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs -kinship* (An-Nisâ': 1). He also approves the separation of first and second particles of a genitive construction with the passive participle as how Ibn-Amer read *وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ أَوْلَادَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُهُمْ* {Wa kazaalika zaiyana likaseerim minal mushrikeena qatla awlaadhim shurakaaa'uhum} *'and so to many of the Mushrikûn (polytheists - see V.2:105) their (Allâh's so-called) "partners" have made fair-seeming the killing of their children'* (Al-Anam: 137). Saeed Alafghani (1987) also vindicates Ibn-Amer's recitation of the same verse stressing that Ibn-Amer was one of the seven renowned reciters, the Imam of the reciters in the levant, a respected native speaker of Arabic and someone who had received the recitation of the Quran from Othman Ibn-Affan and many others. He expounds that grammatical rules should be deduced from these recitations and that grammarians, such as the Basra school, should not depreciate a recitation style, even though it is a confirmed reading that is attributed to the Prophet, because it is in variance with the grammatical rules they support.

The Quran is the most graceful, vivid and articulate prose ever produced in the Arabic language. Therefore, criticising reciters who were either confirmed native speakers of the language, such as Ibn-Amer, or those who were raised in a purely Arabic environment as Naf'e Bin-Abi-Na'eem, Ibn-Kathir, Asem and Hamza is a glaring flaw in the study of Arabic syntax (Alobaidi, 1989). That is because all recitation styles, whether received, singular or deviant, present accurate usage of the Arabic language, a fact that should have compelled all grammarians to accept them all. Yet, the main issue that triggered the move to establishing the veracity of the different recitation styles was the fear that Arabic was being corrupted. In response, early grammarians sought to verify usage by establishing strict standards based on the language of the most eloquent of native speakers and of those Bedouin tribes that had almost no contact with non-

natives. In doing so, they initiated the scientific study of Arabic grammar and linguistics.

However, the efforts of so many grammarians who celebrated the Quran and the different recitation styles as inexhaustible sources for linguistic evidence cannot be ignored. The discrepancies between the recitation styles have had a significant impact on Arabic linguistics which underpins their importance as evidence for accurate usage of the language.

As mentioned earlier, all this did not deter other grammarians from criticising, or in some cases wholly rejecting, some recitation styles even when they were attributed to eloquent reciters. In this they often held divergent views, although they still agreed that the Quran was flawless.

This reminds me of the wise words of Ibn-Aljazri (1992) when he reminds scholars that the discrepancies among the different recitation styles are to be accepted as long as they are commonly used and have been confirmed by the early scholars. He then presents the reader with numerous examples of words or phrases that caused disagreement amongst grammarians, in spite of the confirmation of their accuracy by early scholars, such as the neutral vowel in (bare'akom) *بَارِكُمْ* (ya'amorakom) *يَا بُنَيَّ*, *سَبَأُ*, *يَا بُنَيَّ* (ya bani saba'), *وَمَكَرَ* (wa makro alsaye'), *نُنَجِّي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ* (nonji almo'menin) (Al-Anbiya'), the conjunction of two neutral initial /t/ in consecutive vowels, the stressed assimilation of two sounds as in *وَاسْتَطَاعُوا* (wa-asta'o), the lack of a vowel sound in *نِعْمًا وَيَهْدِي* (ne'oman wayahdi), the use of a long /i:/ in (wayataqi wayasbor) *نَرْتَعِي*, *وَيَنْقِي وَيَصْبِرُ* (narta'e) and *أَفِيْدَةٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ* (afe'daton men annas), the pronunciation of *الْمَلَائِكَةُ اسْجُدُوا* (almalaa'keto isjodoo) as nominatives and of *كُنْ فَيَكُونُ* (kon fayakoon) as an accusative.

8.0 THE QURAN, RECITATION STYLES AND POETRY AS EVIDENCE OF ACCURATE GRAMMATICAL USAGE

Although the Quran and its different recitation styles ought to be the primary reference for accurate usage of the language, grammarians tend to rely more heavily on poetry for this purpose. For example, Sibawayh cites poetry as evidence

for more than 1,500 times compared to approximately 400 cases from the Quran (see Sibawayh, 1988 and Sha'aban, 2006).

This is also evident in the preference of some grammarians to cite the proverbs, poetry or examples of common speech of assumed native speakers even when these were not properly documented and of debatable authenticity. Furthermore, they challenged accurately authenticated readings of the Quran that contravened grammatical rules they deduced from their corpus rather than the reverse.

Alrazi (604 H.) responds to this perverse attitude succinctly when he says, 'I feel highly amused by their attitude. Why is it that they confidently cite an unauthenticated verse as evidence to the validity of a grammatical rule when it would have been more fitting to do so based on usage in the Quran?'

While we would concede that poetry is central to Arabic culture and a significant resource for examples of accurate and eloquent use of the language; however, it has not undergone the same degree of scrutiny by the companions of the Prophet, theologians and scholars as the Quran. The Holy Quran, as we have received it, and the different recitation styles are based on firmly authenticated transmissions from the Prophet that leave us in no doubt of their accuracy. Furthermore, unlike poetry, often verses that are hard to attribute to a certain author, the Quran is not subject to stylistic or artistic necessity (see Mekram, 1965).

The fields of Arabic syntax and Quran recitation studies are devoted to the study of the Holy Quran and the Arabic language. This is evident in the works of numerous linguists. However, referring to the different recitation styles for verification of the accurate usage of the language and for deducing its grammatical rules has not always been the preferred method of a certain group of grammarians. However, as shown above, this attitude has been refuted by several linguists.

9.0 CONCLUSION

This paper reaches that the scientific study of Arabic syntax originated in response to the need to better study and protect the language of the Quran. This explains the inextricable relationship between the Quran and its recitation styles and the study of Arabic syntax. A phenomenon that resulted from the strong veneration of the Quran and the authenticated recitation styles by every Muslim. The Basing

grammatical rules on spoken corpus is a basic tenet of Arabic syntax. This corpus includes the different recitation styles which have had a significant influence on the study of Arabic syntax. There are a number of established and authenticated guidelines that inform the different Quran recitation styles.

Grammarians held different views on the need to cite instances of language usage from the Quran recitation styles to codify Arabic grammar. This is evident in their disproportionate reliance on poetry to verify grammatical rules compared to the Quran, and their rejection and challenge of certain recitation styles. A number of grammarians were too intransigent in their defence of certain grammatical rules they established that they accused a number of renowned reciters of the Quran of ignorance, inaccuracy or inarticulacy when they breached these rules. These extreme stances were countered by many scholars who stressed the need to refer to the Quran and the different recitation styles for evidence of accurate use of the language. The Quran is the most expressive and accurate text ever produced in the Arabic language and that by virtue applies to the different recitation styles. It is, therefore, unjustified to challenge reciters who are either native Arabic speakers or experienced users of the language.

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