Phonological Features in the Qur’anic Seven Modes of Reading (Qira’āt)

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Abstract

The paper investigates the phonological features of the seven modes of reading the Qur’an. The source of the modes of reading is attributed primarily to the Prophet Muhammad. However, the feeling of who is more accurate in his reading than the others among Muslim Qur’an reciters has led to the abrogation of all personal codices which are replaced by the official Uthmanic canonical codex. The marathon journey of the modes of reading has started during the 1st/7th century in Medina, Makkah, Kufah, Basra, and Damascus. Variant modes of reading are either phonetically-oriented, or semantically-oriented. The phonetically-oriented mode of reading involves vocalic and diacritic differences. However, the semantically-oriented mode of reading focuses on within-the-text exegetical expressions. The major differences among the Qur’an reciters can be classified into: (i) differences in consonants, and (ii) differences in vowels. Differences in consonants involve assimilation, almutamāthilain (two adjacent sounds), tashil alhamza (pronouncing the glottal stop between glottal stop and the glottal fricative), alibdal (substitution), alqalb almakāni (metathesis), alnqal (the process of pronouncing the glottal stop [ʔ] as an open vowel [a]), alta’āt (the voiceless alveolar plosive) [t], alra’āt (the voiced alveolar trill [r] and the voiced alveolar tap [ɾ]), and allāmmāt (the voiced alveolar laterals). However, differences in vowels include alimālah (the deflection of particular vowels from the fathah towards the kasrah or alif towards the yaa’ sound), al-ismām (the rounding of lips without any sound at the same time of producing the unrounded vowel), al-ikhtilās (the close vowel is reduced to mid-close vowel), alrawm (the process of lip gesture alluding to the vowel in the pause position with an extra short vowel [i], [ä], or [ü]), vowel lengthening, vowel elision, and vowel change.

Keywords: Modes of reading, Phonological features, Assimilation, Consonants, Vowels

1. Introduction

From the time of the Prophet Mohammad until midway through Caliph Uthman's rule (d. 35/656), the Qur'an continued to be read according to the seven ahruf. In the battle of Nahāvand, (currently in Iran) some confusion arose among the companions concerning which mode of reading was preferred. Some companions began to claim superiority of their reading and a rivalry began to develop. Meanwhile, some new Muslims also started to mix the different forms of reading as they thought that mixing different modes is permissible. Caliph Uthman decided to make a master codex according to the dialect of the Quraysh from the collection compiled by Zaid Bin Thabet (d. 44/665) during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr Alssiddiq (d.13/634), rescind all the personal codices, and send seven copies of the master codex to the Islamic provinces. “The Uthmanic master codex converted to be the official copy of the Muslim countries during the rule of Uthman and after his rule”. (Abdul-Raof: 2012:110). The companions and the successors carried on reading some Qur’anic verses with different modes of reading from the official canonical codex. Variant modes of reading were either phonetically-oriented which involved vocalic and diacritic differences, or semantically-oriented which involved within-the-text exegetical expressions. (Abdul-Raof: 2012:110). Below is an elucidated discussion of the compilation of modes of reading, the principles of an acceptable mode of reading, the phonetic and linguistic differences within the modes of reading, and the differences between the seven modes of reading in phonological features of consonants and vowels.

2. Literature Review

During the early seminal phase of Qur’anic recitation which arose during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, modes of reading were not available as an independent scholarship. No master codex was written since the
companions used to write scattered pieces of Qur’an on tree coats, animal skins and available papers. The companions taught the followers the Qur’an mainly as a spoken text. Among the Qurra’ from the companions were Obai Bin Ka’b, (d. 30/651) Abdullah Bin Mas’ud, (d. 32/653) Abdullah Bin Abbas (d. 68/689) and Mu’ath Bin Jabal (d.18/639). These companions among others formed the foundation of the modes of reading in Medina, Makkah, Kufah, Basra and Damascus. During the last decade of the first half of the 1st/7th century, the two major cities which witnessed the commencement of the teaching of modes of reading were Madinah and Kufah. The phase of scholarship in recording the modes of reading began during the second half of the 1st/7th century. Among the first scholars who wrote on the modes of reading were: Yahya b. Ya’mur (d. 90/708), Abān b. Taghlub (d. 141/758), Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767), Harūn b. Musa al’-war (d. around 170-180/786-796), Abu Zakariyya al-Farrā’ (d. 207/822), and Abu ‘Ubaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838) (Abdul-Raof, 2012:110).

It was during the last half of the 1st/7th century that the differences among modes of reading began to emerge. However, during the evolution of the four schools of exegesis in Makkah, Madinah, Kufah, and Basrah, two major approaches to the modes of reading developed. The seven modes of reading (al-qira’āt al-sab’) are believed to have been established by the successors who met the companions and were taught by them. Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936) was the first scholar who compiled the seven readers in one book entitled al-Sab’a fi’l-qira’at (The Seven in the Science of Reading). The seven major Qur’an reciters (al-qurra’ al-sab’a) lived in either Makkah, Madinah, Kufah, Basrah, or Sham (mainly Damascus).

Table 1 The seven readers with their ruwāt.

| No | Reader    | Death | Place  | Rāwi 1 | Death | Rāwi 2 | Death |
|----|-----------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| 1  | Ibn Kathīr | 120/738 | Makkah | Albazzi | 255/869 | Qunbul | 291/904 |
| 2  | Nafi’     | 169/785 | Madinah | Warsh  | 187/803 | Qalūn  | 205/821 |
| 3  | Hamzah   | 156/772 | Kufah  | Khalaf  | 229/844 | Khallād | 220/835 |
| 4  | ‘Asim     | 127/744 | Kufah  | Hafs   | 180/797 | Shu’bah | 194/910 |
| 5  | al-Kisā’i | 187/802 | Kufah  | Abul Hārith | 240/855 | Aldūri  | 246/861 |
| 6  | Abu ‘Amru | 154/770 | Basrah | Alṣūsī | 261/875 | Aldūrī | 246/861 |
| 7  | Ibn ’Amir | 128/745 | Damascus | Hishām | 246/961 | Ibn Thakwān | 242/856 |

“The Kitāb al-Sab’a represents a meticulously well-structured scholarship, focused primarily on the importance of the Qur’an as a liturgical text. This work is concerned with the authenticated Qur’anic readings sourced to seven eminent readers, adhering to the traditional order arrangement of chapters and verses in the Qur’an. Ibn Mujahid selected these readers whose Qur’anic readings had previously gained noticeable prominence and distinction within the reader tradition; they were celebrated luminaries from the regions of Hijaz, Iraq and Sham” (Shah, 2004:16).

There is a fairly strong tradition among twentieth-century non-Muslim scholars of identifying the Seven Readings with the seven ahruf of a famous hadith report. For example, Welch (2011) said of Ibn Mujahid in the late 1970s:

With a stroke of genius he chose seven well-known Qur’an teachers of the second/eighth century and declared that their readings all had divine authority, which the others lacked. He based this on the popular hadith in which the Prophet says the Qur’an was revealed to him in seven ahruf.

More recently, here is Gade (2006):

There are said to be seven accepted readings in the system of qira’āt. This number has been disputed at times in the past. The number seven is based on a well-known hadith transmitted in several versions. One states that Muhammad said, This Qur’an has been revealed to be recited in seven different modes (ahruf), so recite of it whichever is
The concept of the 'seven modes' has been open to a number of interpretations among scholars, including the probability that the ahruf may refer to divergent dialects among the Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Qur’an. The standard interpretation, however, is that the ahruf refer to what became known as the 'seven readings' (qira’at) of the Qur’an.

That the seven modes of reading have been transmitted from one Qur’ān reciter to another (mutawātir) in a teaching-learning chain is certain. The word mutawātir indicates that a group of learners in every generation has transmitted the linguistic and phonetic techniques (a mode of reading) to the next generation in a unanimous manner that it is customarily impossible to agree on falsehood. Thus, it is a multiple source mode of reading. These seven modes of reading are the correct or acceptable ones. For a mode of reading to be acceptable, it had to meet three major criteria:

(i) compatibility with the orthography of the Uthmanic master codex (khatt or rasm al-mushaf al-uthmāni),
(ii) compatibility with Arabic grammar, and
(iii) being authentically passed on from the Prophet. However, the third criterion is not taken into consideration by the majority of Qur’an scholars (Abdul-Raof, 2012:110).

We may, however, encounter ten, rather than seven, Qur’an reciters. The other three reciters are: Ya’qub (d. 205/820) (Basrah), Khalaaf (d. 229/843) (Baghdad), and Abu Ja’far b. al-Qa’qa’ (d. 130/747) (Madinah). Thus, one can claim that even the companions such as Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn Mas’ud, Ubai b. Ka’b, and Anas b. Malik read some Qur’ānic expressions with an irregular mode of reading. It is also important to note that:

(i) all the irregular modes of reading were abrogated by the Uthmanic master codex,
(ii) they were not allowed to be used in any prayer, and
(iii) they could not be accepted as evidence to substantiate any jurisprudential matter.

It is also necessary to mention four other readers who did not attain the same status as the Seven or the Ten just mentioned and are usually considered to represent the four Shāhdh (irregular) variants after the ten (Dutton:1999). These four are: Ibn Muhaysin (d. 123/740) in Makkah, al-A’mash (d. 148/765) in Kūfa, and al-Hasan Albasri (d. 110-728) and Yehya al-Yazidi (d. 202-817) in Basra.

Therefore, a mode of reading was classified as irregular (shadhah) if:

(i) it was adopted by one reciter only, i.e., it was not mutawātir (i.e., was not transmitted from one generation to another by a group of ruwāt),
(ii) it was not one of the seven or ten modes of reading, and most importantly
(iii) it was not compatible with Arabic grammar or Arabic language.

It is also of value to note that the two expressions (al-ahruf al-sab’ah – the seven dialects) and (al-qira’at al-sab ah – the seven modes of reading) do not overlap. In other words, they are two different notions and have different criteria. It is worthwhile to note a number of matters with regards to ‘the seven dialects’:

(i) At times, a dialect (harf) may represent a mode of reading (qirā’ah) but it is not always the case and is not vice versa.
(ii) The expression ‘seven dialects’ occurs in the prophetic tradition: (unzila al-qur’ānu ’ala sab’ati ahrufin – The Qur’an was revealed with seven dialectal forms.) “The definition of the term ahruf has been an area of much scholarly debate and is encompassed in the general works of the Qur’an. The forms corresponded to the dialects of following seven tribes: Quraysh, Yemen, Hawāzin, Kinānah, Thaqīf, Tamīm and Huthayl. The revelation of the Qur’an in seven different ahruf made its memorization and recitation much easier for the different tribes. At the same time, the Qur’an defied them to produce one surah similar to it in their own dialect so that they would not protest against the incomprehensibility” (Rippon, 1988:34). However, the expression (sab ah – seven) does not necessarily mean ‘seven’ as it was customary among the Arabs to use this expression (sab ah) for exaggeration to mean ‘many’ but not specifically ‘seven’.
Qur’anic Arabic was the dialect of the Quraish tribe as this was the dialect of the Prophet and his people, and most importantly, it was the most advanced dialect linguistically and stylistically. This view was supported by ’Uthman’s claim: (nazala al-qur’ānu bilisani quraish – The Qur’an was revealed in the dialect of Quraish.) For instance, other Arabic dialects suffered from phonetic and syntactic irregularities. The tribe of Huthayl, for example, could not pronounce the voiceless pharyngeal fricative [ʕ – h] and replaced it with the voiced pharyngeal fricative [ʕ – ʕ], as in: [ḥatta hi:n] – for a while, Q37:178) which Huthayl speakers pronounced as: [ṣatta ʕi:n]. Similarly, the tribes of Tamīm and Asad could not pronounce the initial glottal stop (al-hamzah) represented by the symbol [ʔ] and used to change it to the voiced pharyngeal fricative [ʕ – ʕ], as in: [ʔanna] – (indeed) was pronounced as: [ʕanna]. In a similar vein, the tribe of Asad used ungrammatical forms of language, as in: [təʔlamə:n] instead of the grammatical form [taʔlamu:n] - you (plural) know.

The expression (sab’ah – seven) also means: ‘seven topics or seven disciplines which the Qur’ān recurrently refers to, such as: monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, reward and punishment, the allowed and prohibited, parables and similitudes, admonition, clear and ambiguous, abrogating and abrogated, and jurisprudential matters.’

The claim that one can exchange the ayah-final set of epithets with another set of epithets since all the epithets are descriptive expressions of God and are all His names. Thus, there is no harm to replace the ayah-final set of epithets (ghafirur rahīm – forgiving and merciful) by (ṣami un basīr – hearing and seeing). This claim is linguistically and stylistically flawed. An in-depth text linguistic analysis of Qur’ānic discourse can reveal that ayah-final set of epithets are context-sensitive and do not occur haphazardly at the end of the ayah. Each epithet is semantically tied up to its context. For more details, see Abdul-Raof (2005).

3. Approaches to Modes of Reading

There were two major traditional approaches to modes of reading. The first was concerned with the manner of articulation of an expression and the rhythmical phonetic symmetry (al-tanasaq al-sawti fi al-iqa’) of words within a given surah or consecutive ayahs. The second was concerned with paraphrastic additions to a given expression to eliminate semantic ambiguity. As far as this paper is concerned, the phonologically-based modes of reading as well as the linguistic and phonological differences in modes of reading will be discussed below:

3.1 Phonetically-Based Mode of Reading

This approach was initiated and spread by the Madinah school founded by Ubai b. Ka’b (d. 20/640) and focused mainly on the articulatory phonetics of Qur’ānic recitation. The companions chose to read some Qur’ānic ayūt differently than the canonical ’Uthmanic recitandum. The phonetically-based diverse modes of reading involved vocalic or diacritic variations. Thus, this mode of reading concentrated on the variant phonological forms which a given Qur’ānic word might have. In other words, a word could be pronounced differently with or without allophonic variations which may bring about a change of meaning. “This included phonological patterns such as geminated sound (mushaddad) or a unvocalized consonant (sukūn) as well as case sounds such as the accusative (mansub), short vowel /a/ (fathah), nominative (marfu’), and the short vowel /u/ (dammah), (abdul-Raof:2005:112).

An example of an ordinary mode of reading that takes into account the criteria of articulatory phonetics is: [wa qur’ānu farraqnāhu] - It is a Qur’an which We have revealed in parts, Q17:106) which has another mode of reading in terms of phonological change in the geminated trill [r], which is: [wa qur’ānu farraqnahu] where the consonant [r] in [farraqnahu] is geminated [farraqnāhu], and [fi: ʕamadin mumaddadah] – in towering columns, Q104:9) which has a different mode of reading as: [fi: ʕumudin mumaddadah] where the fatha, i.e., the short vowel [a] in [ʕamadin] is replaced by the dammah represented by the short vowel [u] in [ʕumudin]. The phonetically-oriented mode of reading can be represented by several phonological forms of the same expression. For instance, the verb [Sabada] – to worship, Q5:60) has 16 modes of reading all of which are irregular and are nominalised nouns of the verb [Sabada], and the verb [Darasta] – to study, Q6:105) has 12 irregular modes of reading.

The phonetically-oriented mode of reading is also concerned with the phonetic symmetry (al-tanasaq al-sawti fi al-iqa’) of ayah-final sounds which can either occur in an ayah-final word or in a refrain which is a rhyme phrase at the end of the ayah that refer to God’s epithets such as [ṣaʃii:ran raʃii:maʃi: – ever forgiving and merciful], [asṣamiːs alʃaːliːm – the hearing, the knowing]. Thus, this phonetically-based mode of reading aims to achieve consonance of sounds (tanaghum al-aswat) and their rhythmical phonetic symmetry at ayah-final level. Linguist exegetes, like al-Farra’ (d. 207/822) for instance, have dealt with interesting phonetic features of Qur’ānic words with regards to the phonetically-oriented mode of reading. In his Ma an al-Qur’ān., al-Farra’ talks about phonetic ellipsis and refers
to why the final sound /i/ of the word [jasr] – to pass, Q89:4) is dropped and the word ends with an unvocalized sound /l/. Thus, stylistically, [wal-ajli ʔōda: jasr] – By the night when it passes, Q89:4 should have a different mode of reading which is adopted by other Qur’anic reciters: [wal-ajli ʔōda: jasri:] because the spelling of the word [jasri] is with a final letter /i/. However, the sound /i/ is deleted in order to achieve rhythmic phonetic symmetry and phonetic consonance in Q89 which is dominated by ayah-final words that end with the sound /l/, as in Q89:1-3 and 5 (Aldubai, 2015:61-71). We can conclude that the phonetically-based mode of reading aims to achieve melodic sounds and musical tone within consecutive ayahs through the process of phonetic ellipsis, as in [lakum di:nukum wa lija di:n] – You have your religion and I have mine, Q109:6 where the word (di:n – religion) is pronounced with a final sound /l/ in order to achieve symphonious phonetic consonance with the other ayah-final words (al-kafirun – disbelievers) and [tābēbud:n] – you worship) in Q89:1-2 respectively. The same phonetic rule applies to Q26:78 where the word [jahdin] – (to guide me) ends with the nasal sound /n/ rather than with the vowel /i:l/. The reason for this phonetically-oriented mode of reading is to achieve rhythmic phonetic symmetry with the overall phonetic environment of the surah where ayah-final words predominantly end with the sound /n/ as in Surat al-Shu’ra’.

However, we also encounter two phonetically different words in two different ayahs with different final sounds where in one case the ayah-final word occurs without undergoing phonetic ellipsis of the final sound, as in Q77:36, while in the other case, the ayah-final word undergoes phonetic ellipsis of the final sound, as in Q35:36. In [wala juʔaḥan lakum fajaʔtadīr:n] – They will be given no chance to offer any excuses, Q77:36 where the word [fajaʔtadīr:n] - to offer excuses ends with a nasal sound /n/ rather than dropping the sound /n/ to get [fajaʔtadīr]. The major reason for having [fajaʔtadīr:n] with a final sound /n/ is to achieve rhythmic phonetic symmetry through a word-final sound /n/ that phonetically matches the other ayah-final words which also end with a final sound /n/, as in Q77:34-35 and 37-50. However, in [la: juqda: ūalajhum fajama:tu:] – They will neither be finished off by death, Q35:36, the word [fajama:tu:] – to die ends with the long vowel [u:] and occurs in the middle of the ayah. Yet, this word is expected to appear with a final sound [n] [fajama:tu:n]. Instead, this word has undergone phonetic ellipsis where the sound /n/ is dropped in order to achieve rhythmic phonetic consonance with an earlier word in the same ayah [kafaru:] – they disbelieved). Thus, melodic sounds within the same ayah are achieved.

3.2 Semantically-Based Mode of Reading

This approach was initiated by the Kufah school of Qur’anic exegesis founded by Ibn Mas’ud (d. 32/653) as a new exegetical method in Qur’anic exegesis and was concerned with the eradication of semantic vagueness of verses through several linguistic techniques such as addition, deletion and synonymy that aim to free the grammatical or semantic difficulty in a certain ayah. As it is a clarifying method, it is, therefore, an exegetical mode of reading (al-qira’ah al-tafsiriyah), Abdul-Raof (2005). As far as the current paper is concerned, the emphasis is placed on the phonetically-based mode of reading rather than the semantically-based mode of reading.

4. Linguistic and Phonetic Differences in Modes of Reading

There are several major linguistic and phonetic differences in the modes of reading some Qur’anic expressions, such as:

1) The word form and its meaning remain the same although there is a change in the case marking of the two expressions, as in [ʔaʔharu] - purer which may occur in the nominative case: [hunna ʔaʔharu lakum] – They (my daughters) are purer for you, Q11:78. The phonetic change is represented by the short vowel /u/, i.e., (dammah) at the end of the word. However, according to the phonetically-based mode of reading, the expression [ʔaʔharu] can also occur in the accusative case: hunna ʔaʔharu lakum] – They (my daughters) are purer for you, i.e., the phonetic change is represented by the short vowel /u/, i.e., (fathah) at the end of the word. Similarly, the verb [jadī:q] – to be depressed) can either end with a short vowel /u/ as (jadī:qu); thus, we get: [jadī:qu sˁadr] – I shall be depressed, Q26:13, or end with a short vowel [a] as [jadī:qa]; thus, we get: [jadī:qa sˁadʁ] – I shall be depressed.

2) The word form remains the same but the meaning changes due to change in its grammatical function, as in: [rabbanā ba:ʔid baju ʔasfa:rina] – Our Lord, lengthen the distance between our journeys! Q34:19) where in this mode of reading, the verb [ba:ʔid]– (to lengthen the distance) occurs in the imperative. However, in another mode of reading, this verb form occurs as a past tense: [rabbanā ba:ʔada baju ʔasfa:rina] – (Our Lord lengthened the distance between our journeys.)

3) The word form remains the same but the meaning changes due to change in spelling, as in: [ʔunūd:ur ʔila al-ʕidā:mi kajfa nunfizuhːa], Q2:259) where the expression [nunfizuhːa:] means (to raise the bones); thus, the meaning is: (Look at the bones how We develop them). The other mode of reading, which is phonetically-based, changes the consonant letter [z] to [r]; thus, we get [nunfruhːa:], and the meaning becomes: (Look at the bones how
We re-create them). Other examples of change in spelling are: [mālīki] – master, Q1:4) and [mālīki] – (king), [annabījju – the Prophet, 3:68) and [annabī:ṣu] – (the prophet), [almunādī:] – the caller, Q50:41) and [almunādī – the caller, and [al-sīrāṭ] - path, Q1:5) and [al-sīrāṭ] - path.

(4) The doubling of consonants, as in: [jat'hrumna], Q2:222), we have the voiceless pharyngealized alveolar stop [tʰ] occurs as a single letter; thus, the meaning is: (their menstruation has finished). However, in the alternative phonetically-based mode of reading, this expression occurs with doubling the voiceless pharyngealized alveolar stop [tʰ] and the voiceless glottal fricative [h]: [jat'tahra]; thus, the meaning is: (their menstruation has finished and they have taken a complete bath). Similarly, in Q15:15, the expression [sukkarat] – to be dazzled occurs with a double consonant [kk] and the initial letter [s] is given the short vowel [u]; thus, it is a verb in the passive voice form (mabni lil-majhul). However, in another mode of reading, this verb occurs in an active voice form (mabni lil-ma'ālum) with a single [k] as [sakarat] – to neutralize something, to stop it from functioning) and the initial letter [s] is given the short vowel [a]. Similarly, in: [tusaqīt] – to drop, Q19:25), the voiceless alveolar fricative [s] occurs as a single letter meaning (the dates will drop) while in the other mode of reading: [tassaqīt] – (drop), the [s] is doubled meaning (the dates will drop in large quantities).

(5) The word form changes but the meaning remains the same, i.e., synonyms are employed, as in: [al-Sīhīn almanfu:] – fluffed up wool, Q101:5) where [al-Sīhīn] occurs but in another mode of reading, the synonymous expression [as'sūf] is used instead: [as'sūf almanfu:] – (fluffed up wool). Also, in: [fas'aw] – to proceed, Q62:9) is replaced by a synonym [famdu:] – (to go). In a similar vein, [ʔumdu:ru:na] – to wait for us, Q57:13) has three other modes of reading which employ the synonyms [ʔamhu:lia] – to grant us a respite, [ʔaxru:na] – (to delay us), and [arqibuna] – to wait for us). Also, Q19:90: [takada: slu:ssama:wa:tu jatataf'tat'arna minhu] – (The heavens almost rupture therefrom) has an irregular mode of reading due to the replacement of [tataf'tat'] – (rupture) by its synonym [jatas'adda:na] – to crack, rupture): [takada: slu:ssama:wa:tu jatasa'dda:na minhu]. Similarly, Q36:26 has two distinct modes of reading: [in ka:nu al-Sīlla s'āihatīna wa:hidat:an] - There was just one blast, Q36:29) where we have [s'āihatā] – (blast). However, in a different, i.e., irregular, mode of reading, we encounter the synonymous expression [zaqjatan] – a loud shout); thus we get: [ʔin ka:nu al-Sīlla (zaqjatan) wa:hidat:an] - There was just one loud shout). Similarly, in Q15:15 [sukkarat ḥabs'a:runa] – our eyes have been dazzled), the verb [sukkarat] – (to dazzle) is replaced by the synonym [suhhirat] – (to be coaxed, enchanted, allured). However, the alternative modes of reading are rejected for a number of reasons:

(i) it is incompatible with the Uthmanic master codex.
(ii) it is not morphologically sound since the verb of [zaqjatan] should be [zaqa, jazqu] meaning
(to shout loud), and
(iii) even if we were to accept the verb [zaqa], the word form has to change to [zaqwatan] rather than [zaqjatan].

(6) Both the word form and the meaning change, as in: [ʔal:lh mandu:d] – clustered acacia, Q56:29) where we have [ʔal:lh - acacia, bananas) but in another mode of reading this expression changes to [ʔal:ℓ] – (fruit); thus, we get: [ʔal:ℓ mandu:d] – (clustered fruit).

(7) The foregrounding and backgrounding of an expression, as in: [dā:ʔat sakratu almawti bilhaqqī] – (The intoxication of death will bring the truth, Q50:19) where [almawti] – (death) is foregrounded, i.e., occurs first, but in the alternative mode of reading, [almawti] is backgrounded, i.e., it is placed at the end of the sentence: [dā:ʔat sakratu lhaqqi bilma:wi] – (The intoxication of the truth will bring death). Also, in: [fajatqulu:na wajaqtulu:n] – They kill and are killed, Q9:111) and [fajautqulu:na wajaqutulu:n] – (They are killed and kill), and in: [ʔā:ʔa:qahaa alal:hu liba:sa:l ʔu:si wa:liw:fi] – God made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear, Q16:112) whose alternative mode of reading is: [ʔā:ʔa:qahaa alal:hu liba:sa:l ʔawfi wal ʔu:si] - God made it taste the envelopment of fear and hunger.)

(8) The addition, deletion, and substitution by synonyms, as in: [ʔu:mmma ʔala:qna nut:fata ʔalaqtan fi:qal:a:na:nl ʔala:qat mu:natran fi:qal:aqnal mu:nat:ra ʔi:q:da:man fakasawalni ʔi:q:da:ma layman] – We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump of flesh, and then We made from the lump bones, and We covered the bones with flesh, Q23:14). In another mode of reading, a number of linguistic changes have taken place:

(i) the word [ʔala:qna] - (to make, create) is replaced by the synonym [ʔa:vala],
(ii) the conjunction [fα] – (then) in [fi:qal:a:qna] is replaced by the synonymous conjunction [ʔu:mmma] – (then),
(iii) the addition of [wa:ʃa:ʃa:ban] – (and nerves),
(iv) the addition of a co-referential pronoun [ʔu:mm] – (it) referring to [ʃa:ban] – (nerves), and
(v) the deletion of [alSiːdəːmaː] – (the bones).

The new mode of reading is: [θumma dʒaːfələna nutʃata šalaqata faːdaʃələn] – We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump of flesh, and then We made from the lump bones and nerves, and We covered them with flesh.

The new mode of reading can involve the addition only of an expression, as in: [ʔɪnna haːdaʔa ʔajːiː lahːu: tisːun watisːuːna naːʃːaːtan walija naːʃːaːtan] - Indeed, my brother has ninety-nine ewes and I have one ewe, Q38:23) but in a different mode of reading, we have: [ɪnna haːdaː a:jːiː lahːu: tisːun watisːuːna naːʃːaːtan umːaː] – Indeed, my brother has ninety-nine (female) ewes and I have one ewe) where the adjective (umːaː) – (female) is added for stress. Also, in: [ʔammal səːlːaː muː fəːkuːna ʔəːbəːːhu muː minimise] - As for the boy, his parents were believers, Q18:80) but the alternative mode of reading adds the expression [kaːfran] – (he was a disbeliever) to specify the noun [əhəːluːmaː] – (the boy) and the addition of [wəːkaːnaː] – and were); thus, we get: [ʔammal səːlːaː muː fəːkuːna (kaːfran) wəːkaːnaː ʔəːbəːːhu muː minimise] - As for the boy, (he was a disbeliever) (and) his parents (were) believers. It is worthwhile to note that deletion of a letter can also take place, as in: [wəːmaː ʔəːmiləːtu ʔaːджːiːhimː] – and what their hands have made, Q36:35 whose alternative mode of reading deletes the letter [huː] of [ʔəːmiləːtu] – to make); thus, we get: [wəːmaː ʔəːmiləːt ajːiːhimː] – (and their hands have made).

(9) Masculine versus feminine word form, as in: [ləːː ʔuːqːəbːuːluː] – not to be accepted, Q2:48) which is in the masculine form, while its alternative mode of reading occurs in the feminine form: [ləːː tuːqːəbːuːluː] – not to be accepted.

(10) Change in morphological form, as in: [jaːʃːuːːnː] – (they are building, Q7:137) whose verb form is [ʃəːrʃːaː] – to build) but the other mode of reading is: [jaːʃːuːːnː – they are building) whose verb form is [ʃəːrʃːaː] – to build), and therefore the meaning is incomplete, too.

5. Phonological Changes in consonants

Phonological changes can either be in consonants or in vowels. Changes in consonants can be of general nature such as assimilation, substitution, metathesis or elision, or the changes which are specific to some consonants like changes in the glottal stop, in the voiceless alveolar plosive [t], in the voiced alveolar trill [r], in the voiced alveolar lateral [l], in the nūn sākinah (unvocalized [n]), and in the nunation (tanwīn).

5.1 Assimilation

Abu Taleb (1987: vol.1,134), Almahdawi (1995: vol.1, 74) and Ibn Abi Mariam (1993: vol.1, 193) discuss assimilation as an essential component of the Qira’āt. It is apparent in their discussion that they follow Sibawayh as they start their discussion on assimilation by discussing the places and manners of articulation as Sibawayh did in his Al-Kitāb (1982:431). However, Almahdawi gives a reason for discussing these two topics together: the reason of the assimilation is the adjacency of two sounds in their places of articulation, and the reason of dissimilation is the nonadjacency of sounds in their places of articulation. As a result of this process, discussion of the places of articulation is prior to the discussion of assimilation.

Phonologically, assimilation is observed to have its own characteristics; thus this process has its own environments and terminology in the Qur’anic settings. Assimilation in the Qur’an are of two types: (i) Alidgham alkabir and (ii) Alidgham alsaghir.

(i) alidgham alkabir

When two consonants either in the same word or across word boundaries are separated with a vowel, the vowel is dropped and the two consonants are geminated like [arrajumiː məːlik] (Q1:4-3). In this example, the vowel [i] is dropped and [m] assimilates with [m] to form a geminated [mm], [arrajumilɛ̃] in the mode of reading of Abu ’Amr Albasri. Similarly, if the two similar consonants are separated by a vowel in the same word as in [kak] in [manəːsikakum] (Q2:200), Abu ’Amr geminates them as [kk], [manəːsikakum]. Abu ’Amr also reads phrases such as [fajɛːkdu laːkaː kajdaː] (Q12:5) as geminated /kk/ [fajɛːkdu laːkajdaː]. Other readers recite them with dissimilation.

Considering the methods of the seven readers towards the assimilation, Hamza among the seven readers assimilate all types of idgham saghir without nasalization whereas the nūn sākinah and tanwīn is followed by labials, alveolars, glides or liquids. The other readers assimilate the nūn sākinah and tanwīn with nasalization if they are followed by bilabials, alveolars and glides, and without nasalization if they are followed by the liquids.

5.2 Almutamāthilain (two adjacent sounds)

Almutmāthilain are two adjacent sounds that are close in their places of articulation and share some manners of articulation. When the two sounds are adjacent, they must not be separated by vowel i.e. the first consonant must be
unvocalized (in the sukūn position [ʾ]), and the two sounds must be across word boundaries. The cases of almutmāthlain can be summarized as follows:

(i) All the Qurra’ assimilate the [t] of feminine with [d] and [t'] across word boundaries as in [ʔaʔqalat dašaway] becomes [ʔaʔqaladdašaway] (Q7:189).

(ii) All of the Qurra’ agree to assimilate [ʔa] when followed by its pharyngealized counterpart [ʔaʔ] as [ʔiʔ ʔala:] which becomes [ʔiʔ ʔalamu:] which becomes [ʔiʔ ʔalamu:].

(iii) All the Qurra’ agree to assimilate the sun [l] with the dentals, alveolars and postalveolars as in [aljams] [aldd:n] [alnafs] which become [a[ljams] [aldd:n] [alnafs] respectively.

(iv) Al-Kisāi assimilates [l] when followed by [n] as in [bal nattibīṣu] which becomes [ban nattibīṣu] (Q2:170).

(v) Ibn Amer, Hamza and Al-Kisāi assimilate [d] with [d] as in [faqad dašla] which becomes [faqad dašla] (Q2:108).

5.3 Tashīl alhamza

Tashīl alhamza (pronouncing the glottal stop between glottal stop and the glottal fricative).

Tashīl alhamza is the dialect of alhijaz, unlike the dialect of BaniTamim where the glottal stop is pronounced as a full-fledged glottal stop. The types of tashīl alhamza that occur in the Qira‘āt are:

1. When the final-glottal stop [ʔu] is followed by another glottal stop [ʔa] at the beginning of the word as in [assufahāʔu ʔa] (Q2:13), the first glottal stop is pronounced as a full-fledged glottal stop, but the second glottal stop is pronounced as a mid-point between glottal stop and glottal fricative [assufahāʔu hala].

2. When the glottal stop [ʔu] at the end of a word is followed by another word beginning with the glottal stop [ʔa] as in [wa la jaʔba a[juhadāʔu ʔiʔa mā dušu] (Q2:282), the first glottal stop is pronounced as a full-fledged glottal stop while the second glottal stop is pronounced as a palatal approximant [j], [wa la jaʔba a[juhadāʔu jiʔa mā dušu].

3. When the glottal stop [ʔa] at the end of a word is followed by another word beginning with the glottal stop [ʔi] as in [ʔam kuntum juhadāʔa ʔiʔa dašara] (Q2:133), the first glottal stop is pronounced as a full-fledged glottal stop while the second glottal stop is pronounced as a palatal approximant [j], [ʔam kuntum juhadāʔa jiʔa dašara].

4. When the glottal stop [ʔa] at the end of a word is followed by another word beginning with the glottal stop [ʔu] as in [kulla mā dʒaʔa ?ummatan rašūluḥa] (Q2:44), the first glottal stop is pronounced as a full-fledged glottal stop while the second glottal stop is pronounced as a labio-velar approximant [w], [kulla mā dʒaʔa wummata-rasūluḥa].

5.5 Alibdāl (substitution)

Alibdāl is to substitute a consonant with another consonant. It has the following types:

1) Qunbul, as transmitted from Ibn Kathir, reads [asʾirāt'] as [asʾirāt'] in [ʔiḥdina asʾirāt almustakīm] (Q1:6) where he substitutes /s/ by [s].

2) Hamza reads [alsʾirāt'] as [alzʾirāt'] in [ʔiḥdina asʾirāt almustakīm] (Q1:6) where he substitutes [s'] by [z'].

3) Abu 'Amr reads [wa ?iʔa rusulu ʔuqittat] (Q77:11) as [wa ?itda rusulu wuqittat] where he substitutes the glottal stop [ʔ] in [ʔuqittat] by [w] [wuqittat].
5.5 *Alqalb Almakāni (metathesis)*

Metathesis refers to the switching of two or more adjacent sounds within the same word such as [firsik] and [firkis] (peach), [zaŋgabi:l] and [gaŋzabi:l] (ginger). Metathesis occurs in the *qira’at* Albazzi as in [hatta ?iða staj’asa arrusulu] (Q12: 110). Albazzi lengthens the first vowel [a] and drops the glottal stop [ʔ] in the word [staj’asa] which becomes [stājasa]. Table 2 shows the possible metathesis examples in the Qur’an based on the modes of reading.

| Albazzi     | Others     | Q12, 87 |
|-------------|------------|---------|
| [tajʔasːuː] | [tājasːuː] | [tajʔasuː] |
| [stajʔasːa] | [stājasa]  | [stajʔasa] Q12, 110 |
| [stajʔasːuː] | [stājasːuː] | [stajʔasuː] Q12, 80 |
| [jajʔas]    | [jājas]    | [jajʔas] Q12, 31 |
| [dijʔaŋ]    | [dīʔaŋ]    | [dijʔaŋ] Q10, 8 |

5.6 *change in the glottal stop*

(i) *Alnaql*

*Alnaql* is the process of pronouncing the glottal stop [ʔ] as an open vowel [a] for easy reading. This phonological process occurs frequently in the reading of Warsh when the glottal stop occurs in word boundaries as in

1) [man ʔāmana] → [manāmana] (Q3:99)
   [wabilʔāxirati] → [wabilāxirati] (Q2:4)

Ibn Kathir changes the glottal stop into an open vowel when it occurs within the word boundary as

[alquʔān] → [alquʔān] (Q17:9)

Hamza drops the glottal stop when it occurs in the final position as in

[dif?] → [dif] (Q16:5)

[milʔ?] → [mil] (Q3:91)

5.7 *Alta’āt* (the voiceless alveolar plosive) [t]

Albazzi reads the voiceless alveolar plosive [t] when it occurs in the beginning of the verb on the scale of [tafāʕal] or [tafāʕal] as geminated [tt] in 31 positions in the Qur’an as in

[walā tajammamuː] → [walāttajammamuː] (Q2:267)
[ʔinna allaðiːna tawaffāhum] → [ʔinna allaðiːna ttawaffāhum] (Q4:97)
[walā tāʤassasuː] → [walā ttāʤassasuː] (49:12)

5.8 *Alra’āt* (the voiced alveolar trill [r] and the voiced alveolar tap [ɾ])

In the Qur’anic recitation, the voiced alveolar trill [r] and the voiced alveolar tap [ɾ] occur in different positions. The trill [r] is always pharyngealized when followed or preceded by an open vowel, [arrahmān], [arrahīm], [arrab], [marjam].

The voiced alveolar tap [ɾ] is always depharyngealized when followed or preceded by a close vowel, [rizq], [rijaʔ], [firʕawn]. Among the *qurra*’, Warsh tends to depharyngealize [ɾ] in the following environments:

1) When [ɾ] is preceded by the long vowel [ʕ] in all cases, it is depharyngealized [ɾ].

[bafiraŋ] → [bafiraŋ] (Q:14)
[mīrāʔ] → [mīrāʔ] (Q57:10)
The above rule will have the following form:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[+ trill [+ alveolar] \rightarrow [+ tap [+ alveolar] / [+ close - cons. \rightarrow [+ front \rightarrow [+ long] \#\]}
\end{align*}
\]

However, Warsh pharyngealizes [r] when it occurs in the following environments:

1. \[[a\text{lj}a\text{r}a\text{tu}] (Q28:68) and [a\text{jar}a\text{w}na] (Q25:22) because [r] is separated from [j] by a vowel.
2. \[[\text{f}i \text{rajb}] (Q22:4) because [r] occurs in the beginning of a word and followed by an open vowel.
3. \[[\text{ru}\text{ʔu}:\text{si}\text{him}] (Q21:65) because [r] occurs in the beginning of a word and followed by a close back vowel.

2) [r] is depharyngealized in Warsh mode of reading when it is preceded by a close vowel [i] in the same word even if it is followed by an open vowel [a] as in [\text{d}i\text{řa}\text{ʕaj}h] (Q18:18), [\text{h}a\text{s}i\text{r}a\text{t}] (Q4:90), [\text{f}a\text{k}i\text{r}a\text{n}] (Q16:121). However, [r] in the following verses is not depharyngealized because the close vowel [i] and the [r] occur across word boundaries.

[\text{S}a\text{l}a \text{a}l\text{k}u\text{f}f\text{ā}r\text{ī} \text{r}u\text{ḥ}a\text{māʔu}] (Q48:29), [\text{b}i \text{r}a\text{f}i\text{d}] (Q11:97), [\text{i}l\text{i} \text{r}u\text{q}i\text{j}i\text{k}a] (Q17:93).

3) When [rä] is preceded by a consonant in the medial position (except sˁ, tˁ and q) and the consonant is preceded by a close vowel [i], the consonant in the middle does not affect the depharyngealization of the [r].

### Table 3. Alra’āt in the seven Qira’at

| Warsh       | Others      | Surah |
|-------------|-------------|-------|
| [wizrak]    | [wizrak]    | Q94:2 |
| [almihrab]  | [almihrab]  | Q3:39 |
| [aðbikra]   | [aðbikra]   |     |
| [sihrun mubi:n] | [sihrun mubi:n] | Q6:7 |
| [misran]    | [misran]    | Q2:61 |
| [fitratelah] | [fitratelah] | Q30:30 |
| [falhamilati wiqra] | [falhamilati wiqra] | Q51:2 |

### Table 4. Allamāt (the voiced alveolar laterals)

[l] is subject to velarization and develarization. Warsh alone velarizes [l] in the following cases:

1) When [l] is preceded by one of the following pharyngealized consonants: [sˁ, δˁ or tˁ], it is velarized. However, when [l] is followed by [sˁ, δˁ or tˁ], it is develarized.

### Table 5.9 Allamāt (the voiced alveolar laterals)

| Warsh       | Others      | Surah |
|-------------|-------------|-------|
| [aʃalātā]   | [aʃalātā]   | Q29:45|
| [δalamazon] | [δalamazon] | Q16:33|
| [altalāq]   | [altalāq]   | Q2:227|
| [lasalatamaha] | [lasalatamaha] | Q4:90 |
| [fastarlaʔa] | [fastarlaʔa] | Q48:29|
| [waljalataf] | [waljalataf] | Q18:19|

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[+ lateral [+ alveolar] \rightarrow [+ lateral [+ alveolar] / [+ pharyngealized [+ alveolar \rightarrow [+ verlarized [+ dental] \#}\]}
\end{align*}
\]
However, when [l] is followed by a close back vowel [u], it is deverbalized as in [laḏallu:], (Q30:51), and [taṯluʕ] (Q18:90).

6. Changes in vowels

Arabic is typical of those languages with a minimal vowel system. It has only three vowel phonemes: one high front, one high back, and one low vowel with a length contrast.

In other words, there is a maximum dispersal of vowel quality towards the far corners of the vowel space. However, variations of mid-close, mid-open and centralized vowels also occur in some Arabic dialects, and these variations are reflected in the modes of Qur'anic readings. Some of these variations in the readings of vowels are: alimālah al-sughra, (shift from close to mid-close vowels), and alimālah alkubra (shift from close to mid-open vowels). Other variations are Al-Ishmām (deletion of a close back vowel [u] and alluding to it by lip-rounding), Al-ikhtilās (shortening the vowel to the least degree in connected reading) and Al-rwam (alluding to the vowel in the pause position).

6.1 Alimālah

Alimālah is the deflection of particular vowels from the fathah towards the kasrah or alif towards the yaa' sound. Table 5 shows the availability of these phonological changes in the modes of reading of the seven readers:
Table 6. Allamāt in the seven Qira’at

|             | Qafūn | Ibn ‘Amir | ‘Aṣim | Wars | Abu ‘Amr | Hamzā | Alkisāi | Ibn Kathīr |
|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|------|----------|-------|---------|-----------|
| alimālah    | √     | √         | √     | √    | √        | X     |         |           |
| alsgubra    |       |           |       |      |          |       |         |           |
| alimālah    |       |           |       |      |          | X     |         |           |
| alkubra     |       |           |       |      |          |       |         |           |

6.2 Al-ishmām

Al-‘ishmām is the rounding of lips without any sound at the same time of producing the unrounded vowel. Al-‘ishmām is not seen by the blind as he cannot see the rounding of lips. However, he can hear the trace of Al-Ishmām on the place of articulation. Hisham and Al-Kisāi read [qi:la] as [qūila], [xi:d] as [sūid], (Q11:44), [ḍj:iʔa] as [ḍūiʔa] (Q89:23), Ibn ‘Amir and Al-Kisāi read [si:qa] as [suiqa] , (Q39:71-73), and [hi:la] as [hūila], (Q34:54). Nafi’, Ibn ‘Amir and Al-Kisai read [si:ʔa] as [sūiʔa], (Hūd:77) and [si:ʔat] as [sūiʔat] (Almulik:27) with Ishmām as shown in the table 7.

Table 7. Al-‘ishmām in the seven Qira’at

|             | Hishām | Al-Kisāi | Ibn Thakhwān | Nafi’ | Others |
|-------------|--------|----------|---------------|-------|--------|
| [qi:la]     | [qūila]| [qūila]  | [qi:la]       | [qi:la]| [qi:la]|
| [xi:d]      | [sūid] | [sūid]   | [xi:d]        | [xi:d] | [xi:d] |
| [ḍj:iʔa]    | [ḍūiʔa]| [ḍūiʔa]  | [ḍj:iʔa]      | [ḍj:iʔa]| [ḍj:iʔa]|
| [si:qa]     | [sūiqa]| [sūiqa]  | [si:qa]       | [si:qa]| [si:qa]|
| [hi:la]     | [hūila]| [hūila]  | [hi:la]       | [hi:la]| [hi:la]|
| [si:ʔa]     | [sūiʔa]| [sūiʔa]  | [si:ʔa]       | [si:ʔa]| [si:ʔa]|
| [si:ʔat]    | [sūiʔat]| [sūiʔat]| [si:ʔat]      | [si:ʔat]| [si:ʔat]|

6.3 Al-ikhtilās

Ikhtilās alharakah (the close vowel is reduced to mid-close vowel)

Arabic language is characterized by its close and open vowels. It does not have the mid-close and mid-open positions. However, some of the readers recite some vowels in a mid-position between completely close and completely open vowels. Ibn Jinni (1982:99) indicates that alikhtilās is used by the readers to make the recitation of these vowels much easier. For instance, Abu ’Amr and Aldūri read the word [bariʔikum] in [fatubu: ʔila: bariʔikum] (Q2:54) as [barʔikum] with ikhtilās, where the vowel [i] is reduced to a centralized mid vowel. Other readers read it as a full–fledged close vowel [ri]. Thus, the process of Al-ikhtilās shortens the vowel to the least degree in connected reading. In Al-ikhtilās, the vowel is extra short [ɾ]. Al-Dūri transmitted from Abu ’Amr reads the vowel [u] with ikhtilās in [jaʔmurūkum], [jaʔmurūhum], (Q7:157), [jaʔmurūkum], (Q6:109), and [bārʔikum] (Q2:54). In all these examples, the vowel [u] that follows [r] in the last example is read as an extra short [ɾ] according to Al-Dūrī, transmitter of Abu ’Amr.

Table 8. Al-ikhtilās in the seven Qira’at

|             | Al-Duri | Others |
|-------------|---------|--------|
| [jaʔmurūkum]| [jaʔmurūkum]| [jaʔmurūkum]|
| [jaʔmurūhum]| [jaʔmurūhum]| [jaʔmurūhum]|
| [jaʔmurūkum]| [jaʔmurūkum]| [jaʔmurūkum]|
| [juʔirūkum]| [juʔirūkum]| [juʔirūkum]|
| [bārʔikum]| [bārʔikum]| [bārʔikum]|

6.4 Alrawm

Alrawm is the process of lip gesture alluding to the vowel in the pause position with an extra short vowel [i], [ā], or [ū]). For example, if the reader pauses on the word [almalʔi] (Q2:246), he must drop the last vowel and reads it as
[almalʔ]. However, some readers tend to allude to the dropped vowel with an extra short vowel [ɪ̆] as a trace of the dropped vowel in the pause position.

### Table 9. Alrawm in the seven Qira’āt

|       | Hamza | Hisham | Others |
|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| [annabaʔ] | [annabaʔ] | [annaba] | [annabaʔ] | [annabaʔ] | [annabaʔ] |
| [hamaʔ] | [hamaʔ] | [hama] | [hamaʔ] | [hama] | [hama] |

In these examples, Hamza and Hishām read either with Alrawm or with the deletion of the glottal stop [ʔ], while the others read the glottal stop [ʔ] as an unvocalized consonant in the pause position, [annabaʔ] (Q78:2) and [hamaʔ] (Q15:26).

### 6.5 Vowel Lengthening

Vowels in the Arabic language are [i], [a] and [u] and their long counterparts [iː], [aː], [uː]. In the modes of reading, these vowels can be half long, long or extra long. According to the Qurrā, vowel lengthening is divided into:

(i) **muttasil** (connected)

(ii) **munfasil** (disconnected)

The seven Qurra’ agree unanimously that the muttasil madd must be read as long [aː] or extra long [aːː]. Warsh and Hamza read the muttasil as an extra long vowel [aːː], while the rest of the Qurraa read the muttasil as a long vowel [aː]. Warsh and Hamza also lengthen the munfasil as an extra long vowel [aːː], while ’Asim, Ibn ‘Amer and Al-Kisā’i read the munfasil as a long vowel [aː]. Qalūn, Ibn Kathīr, Al-Sūsi and Al-Dūri read the munfasil as a half long vowel [aː].

### Table 10. Vowel Lengthening in the seven Qira’āt.

|        | Warsh | Hamza | ’Asim | Ibn ’Amer | Al-Kisāi | Qalūn | Ibn Kathīr | Al-Sūsi | Al-Dūri |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|----------|-------|------------|---------|---------|
| Almuttasil | vːː | vːː | vː | vː | vː | vː | vː | vː | vː |
| Almunfasil | vːː | vːː | vː | vː | vː | vː | vː | vː | vː |

(iii) **Hā al-ṣilah** (the object pronoun [hi] (it) in connected speech. Ibn Kathīr reads [fi:hi hudan] (Q2:1) as [fi:hi: hudan] by lengthening the vowel in the pronoun [hi] in connected reading. Other readers read it as a short vowel. Similar words are [rabbihi] (Q2:285) and [ʕalajhi] (Q2:158).

### 6.6 Vowel Elision

Abu ’Amr reads [rusulunā] (Q57:25) and [birusulinā] (Q57:27) as [ruslũnā] and [biruslũnā] respectively by deleting the vowel that follows [s]. He also reads [rusulukum] (Q40:50) and [rusuluhum] (Q40:83) as [ruslũkum] and [ruslũhum] respectively by deleting the vowel that follows [s]. However, if the word [rusul] is attached to the third person singular in the object case [rusulihii] or if it is not attached at all to any pronoun, the vowel that follows [s] is not dropped. Other examples where Abu ’Amr deletes the vowel are [subulana] (Q14:12) and [subulana] (Q29:69). He reads them both as [sublana] by deleting the vowel that follows [b]. Nafi’ also reads [ʔuðun] (Q9:61) and [ʔuðun bil ʔuðun] (Q5:45) and [ʔuðunaihi] (Q31:7) by deleting the vowel that follows [ʔ].
Table 11. Vowel Elision in the seven Qira’āt

|           | Abu ’Amr | Nafe’ | Others |
|-----------|----------|-------|--------|
| [rusulunā] | [ruslnā] | [rusulunā] | [rusulunā] |
| [birusulinā] | [biruslinā] | [birusulinā] | [birusulinā] |
| [rusulkum] | [rusulkum] | [rusulkum] | [rusulkum] |
| [rusuluhum] | [rusuluhum] | [rusuluhum] | [rusuluhum] |
| [rusul] | [rusul] | [rusul] | [rusul] |
| [rusulhi] | [rusulhi] | [rusulhi] | [rusulhi] |
| [subulana] | [sublana] | [subulana] | [subulana] |
| [ʔudun] | [ʔudun] | [ʔudn] | [ʔudun] |
| [ʔudun bil] | [ʔudun bil] | [ʔudn bil] | [ʔudun bil] |
| [ʔudunaihi] | [ʔudunaihi] | [ʔudnaihi] | [ʔudunaihi] |

6.7 Vowel change

Vowel change in the modes of reading is popular among the readers. These changes can be classified as follows:

(i) When the word is at the scale of [fuːuː:l], and [j] is the medial consonant, the first vowel [u] will be changed into [i] as in [bujuː:t] will be read as [bujuː:t] (Q33:53), [fijuː:n] as [fiːjuː:n] (Al-Shu’rāʾ:147), [alruːjuː:b] as [alruːjuː:b] Q5:109), [fiːjuːːχ] as [fiːjuːːχ] (Q40:67) respectively. Qalūn, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ’Amir, Shu’bah, Al-Kisāʾi, and Hamza read [bujuː:t] with vowel [i] [bujuː:t], and others with vowel [u] [bujuː:t]. Hamza and Shu’bah read [alruːjuː:b] while the others read [alruːjuː:b] Ibn Kathīr, Shu’bah, Hamza, Al-Kisāʾi and Ibn Thakwān read [fijuː:n] and [fiːjuːːχ] with the vowel [i] but the others read them with the vowel [u] [fijuː:n] and [fiːjuːːχ]. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Thakwān, Hamza and Al-Kisāʾi read [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] (Q24:31) with the vowel [i] while the others read [dʒjuːːbiḥin] with the vowel [u].

Table 12. Vowel Change in the seven Qiraʿāt

| Qalūn | Ibn Kathīr | Ibn ’Amir | Shu’bah | Al-Kisāʾi | Hamza | Ibn Thakwān | Others |
|-------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-------|-------------|--------|
| [bujuː:t] | [bujuː:t] | [bujuː:t] | [bujuː:t] | [fuːuː:l] | [fuːuː:l] | [fuːuː:l] | [fuːuː:l] |
| [alruːjuː:b] | [alruːjuː:b] | [alruːjuː:b] | [alruːjuː:b] | [alruːjuː:b] | [alruːjuː:b] | [alruːjuː:b] | [alruːjuː:b] |
| [fijuː:n] | [fijuː:n] | [fijuː:n] | [fijuː:n] | [fijuːːχ] | [fijuːːχ] | [fijuːːχ] | [fijuːːχ] |
| [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] | [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] | [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] | [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] | [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] | [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] | [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] | [dʒjuːːbiḥin na] |

(ii) Hafs, Hamza and Al-Kisāʾi read [dʒfiːjīja] (Q19:68), [ʃiːjīja] (Q19:69), and [ʃiːlijja] (Q19:70), with the vowel [i], while the others read them with the vowel [u] [dʒuːbiḥja] [ʃuːjīja] and [ʃuːlijja].

Table 13. Vowel Change in the seven Qiraʿāt

|          | Hafs, Hamza and Al-Kisāʾi | Others          |
|----------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| [dʒfiːjīja] | [dʒfiːjīja] | [dʒfiːjīja] |
| [ʃiːjīja] | [ʃiːjīja] | [ʃuːjīja] |
| [ʃiːlijja] | [ʃiːlijja] | [ʃuːlijja] |

(iii) Hamz and Al-Kisāʾi read [faliʔimmiḥi] (Q4:11) and [fi: ʔimmiḥa] (Q28:59) with the vowel [i] after the glottal stop [ʔ], while the others read them with the vowel [u] [faliʔummiḥi] and [fi: ʔummiḥa].
Table 14. Vowel Change in the seven Qira’at

| Hamza, Alkisai | Others |
|----------------|--------|
| [faliʔummihi]  | [faliʔimmihi] |
| [fi: ʔummiha]  | and [fi: ʔimmiha] |
| [faliʔummihi]  | [faliʔummihi] |

7. Conclusion

1) Quran has been read in seven modes of reading since the time of the prophet Muhammad.
2) The reason why it was read in seven modes of reading was because the phonological and semantic differences triggered by the differences in the Arabic dialects spoken at that time.
3) Phonological changes can either be in consonants or in vowels.
4) The major differences among the Qur’an reciters can be classified into: (i) differences in consonants, and (ii) differences in vowels.
5) Differences in consonants involve (i) assimilation, (ii) almutamāthilain (two adjacent sounds), (iii) tashīl alhamza (pronouncing the glottal stop between glottal stop and the glottal fricative), (iv) alibdal (substitution), (v) alqalb almakāni (metathesis), (vi) alnaql (the process of pronouncing the glottal stop [Ɂ] as an open vowel [a]), (vii) alta’āt (the voiceless alveolar plosive) [t], (viii) alra’āt (the voiced alveolar trill [r] and the voiced alveolar tap [ɾ]), and (ix) allāmāt (the voiced alveolar laterals).
6) Differences in vowels include (i) alimālah (the deflection of particular vowels from the fathah towards the kasrah or alif towards the yaa’ sound), (ii) al-ishmām (the rounding of lips without any sound at the same time of producing the unrounded vowel), (iii) al-ikhtilās (the close vowel is reduced to mid-close vowel), (iv) alrawm (the process of lip gesture alluding to the vowel in the pause position with an extra short vowel [ɪ̆], [ă], or [ŭ]), (v) vowel lengthening, (vi) vowel elision, and (vii) vowel change.

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