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To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i7/14319
DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i7/14319

Received: 10 May 2022, Revised: 12 June 2022, Accepted: 03 July 2022

Published Online: 15 July 2022

In-Text Citation: (Saad et al., 2022)
To Cite this Article: Saad, M. F. M., Mohamad, S., Mazlan, N. A., Zainol, N. Z. N., & Nur, A. (2022). Criticism towards Quranic Text with Mutawatir Status. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences. 12(7), 880 – 888.

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Criticism towards Quranic Text with Mutawatir Status

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Abstract
Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawatirah) is an authorized source in Islamic Studies based on its capacity as Quran revealed by Allah Almighty. A problematic issue had arisen when scholars prioritize human ideology compared to the Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawatirah). It was even worst that some scholars rejected and claimed that the Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawatirah) was inauthentic. This study focused on the rejection factors, critiques and acceptance argumentations regarding Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawatirah). This study adopted qualitative method with documents analysis. Results revealed that the acceptance argumentations were strong, and the rejection critiques were invalid as it was merely based on human ideology. The findings helped to enlighten the confusing among Muslims and to protect the holy of Quran.

Keywords: Qira’at Mutawatirah, Qira’at Mushkilah, Rejection Factor, Quran, Qira’at Critique

Introduction
Qira’at is a knowledge about Quranic recitation, different modes to engage the recitation either through ittifaq (similarity) or khilaf (differences) and reflected to the narrators (naqil) (al-Qadi, 2004). The narration of qira’at that fulfilled the scholar’s authorized three pillars is considered as the Quran (al-Jazari, 1980). It is either the Seven Qira’at or Ten Qira’at. The Ten Qira’at also known as Qira’at ‘Asharah and had been narrated by the companions. The tabi’in narrated it from the companions, the process continued by the atba’ al- tabi’in until the new generations. Many narrators (naqil) after their era had been narrated the qira’at in every subsequent centuries and generations. The number of the qurra’ (Quranic readers) who narrated and transmitted the qira’at until now is still increasing (Ismail, 1999). Therefore, the Ten Qira’at was the Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawatirah) in every aspect of the details as it was being practiced by the qira’at, fiqh and usul scholars (Al-Jazari, 1980; Al-Nuwayri, 1986).

There were assertions that the Three Qirāʾāt was not mutawatir (in the chain of narration), however the assertions were rejected. The three Qira’at was also thabit as
mutawatir (in the chain of narration) same with the Seven Qira’at and to complement the total of the Ten Qira’at. Al-Subki (771) stated: The point of views about the Three Qira’at was not mutawatir (in the chain of narration) were rejected by the experts and invalid to use in Islamic religion (Al-Jazari, 1980). Al-Jazari (1980) had listed the name of qira’at scholars who had been using the Three Qira’at from his era until the era of the scholars. The number in every tabaqat (layers/generation) not less than the highest number that had been mentioned by the scholars to be accepted as mutawatir (in the chain of narration). Therefore, it was confirmed through his studies that the Three Qira’at is mutawatirah. The qurra’ (Quranic readers) of this qira’at are same with the qurra’ (Quranic readers) of the Seven Qira’at. It was revealed that Abu Ja’far was one of them from the lineage of Nafi’, and Ya’qub was taken the recitation from Salam al-Tawil, meanwhile Salam learnt it from Abu ‘Amru and ‘Asim. The recitation of Khalaf was from the imam (leader) of Kufah (Shukri et al., 2001).

The narrations of the qira’at cannot be rejected because the status is mutawatirah. However, the scholars had imposed to those who rejected the Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawatirah) were called as kafir (infidel) when they implied to the following matters (Qabh, 1999; Mohamad et al., 2010):

1. The rejected qira’at had confirmed the validity and the status was as “الضرورة بالضرورة من الدين”.
2. The rejection happened not due to lack of knowledge.
3. The disbelievers knowing the validity of the narrations, yet they still choose to do the rejection.

However, the rejection towards Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawatirah) is still happening in these days and included with improper critiques. Therefore, the qira’at scholars had put the qira’at that received the critiques in a section called, al-Mushkil. Al-Mushkil is defined as a thing that cannot be understood without further research and requirements (Al-Muhaymid, 2001). It can be defined as a verbal language in which the sighah (offer and acceptance) cannot describing the definition of the verbal language itself and it needs external factors to elaborate the definition. Al-Mushkil can also happened in a verbal language with two or more definitions and divergent among the Qur’anic verses (al-Jurjani, 1988; al-Muhaymid, 2001).

The method used in this study was qualitative research methodology by analyzing documents. The data were collected from exegesis books and research findings by the Muslim and orientalist scholars. The data were analyzed in descriptive way to describe the critiques and rejections toward the Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawatirah). Based on the rejection cases that happened, the rejection factors and critiques were analyzed and explained in further sections. In comparison, the acceptance arguments were also included by the Muslim scholars as supporting evidence.

Results and Discussions
Analysis on the criticisms of Qira’at Mushkilah were found out that the confusing polemic was coming from the confused Muslim scholars. Besides that, the rejection factors were existed from the scholars who seek for the mistakes in the Quran and studied about the criticisms of the Quran.
Rejection Factors of Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawātirah) in Qira’at Mushkilah

The rejection factors of Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawātirah) were resulted from the assertions that claimed the qira’at were invalid and violating or neglecting the authentic Arabic language methodology, have the influence of Quranic rasm (Quranic orthography), have the influence of Quranic dabt (Quranic diacritical marks or symbols) and involved in the fabrication of qira’at narration chain. The rejection factors of Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawātirah) were the following:

1. The Judgment of Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawātirah) as Da’if (weak) and Violating Linguistic Method

Allah Almighty says in Chapter al-Nisa’, verse 1:

اللهِ يَا نَاسِ أَنْتُمُ الْخَلْقُ الْأَوَّلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنۡهَا زَوۡجَتِهَا وَبَثَّ مِنۡهُمَا رَجَالًا كَثِيراً وَنِسَآءٗۚ وَاتَّقُواْ ٱللَََّّ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفۡسٖ وََٰٓحِدَةٖ وَخَلَقَ مِنۡهَا زَوۡجَتِهَا وَبَثَّ مِنۡهُمَا رَجَالًا كَثِيراً وَنِسَآءٗۚ وَاتَّقُواْ ٱللَََّّ

The perplexing problem arise when some scholars stated that Qira’at Imam Hamzah was adding the diacritical kasra (single line symbol below a letter) at the letter “m” in the word “الْأَرَاحَم” (Chapter al-Nisa’:1) in the above verse which cannot be recite and was a da’if (weak) qira’at. This perspective was practiced by some of the nahw (Arabic grammar) scholars from Basrah sect (Al-Mubarrad, 1997), Ibn ‘Atiyah and others (Al-Muhaymid, 2001). They mentioned that the word cannot be ‘ataf (conjunction) with damir (Arabic pronouns). Al-Zamakhshyari (n.d.) also agreed with the same statement that it was incorrect to ‘ataf (conjunction) the word with damir zahir (Arabic direct pronouns). Meanwhile, Al-Zajjaj (1988) stated that the recitation with huruf zarr (prepositions) in the word “الْأَرَاحَم” was incorrect in Arabic language, unless it is use in poetry. If there is a situation when they are performing prayer with the imam (leader) who recites the word “الْأَرَاحَم” by adding the diacritical kasra (single line symbol below a letter) at the letter “m”, they will leave the prayer immediately (Al-Mubarrad, 1997).

The arguments presented to reject the Quranic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawātirah) were weak and violating linguistic method. The reality of Qur’anic text with Mutawatir status (Qira’at Mutawātirah) was accordingly with the authentic Arabic language, either it was clear or very clear. This term was an obligatory term to accept the qira’at (Shamah, 1975). Muslim scholars had conducted research towards all the rejection qira’at and had explained the arguments in linguistic methodology to the Linguistic scholars. The differences between a qira’at and linguistic will not defined that all qira’at were invalid with all other linguistic method. The knowledge of linguistic was wide and those scholars who rejecting parts of qira’at should reevaluate their research by making the Qur’anic text with Mutawātir status (Qira’at Mutawātirah) as a nahw (Arabic grammar) base method. For example, there were few linguistic scholars; Ibn Malik, Abu Hayyan and Ibn Hisham who were accepting qira’at as the nahw (Arabic grammar) base method (Shukri et al., 2001).

Ibn Jinni was one of the scholars who defend the recitation of Imam Hamzah in the above verse (Jinni, n.d) and rejecting the perspective of al-Mubarrad. He stated that the recitation was valid based on the perspective of Abu al-Abbas, Imam Hamzah said to him: “I never stand that “الْأَرَاحَم” was the ‘ataf (conjunction) with damir majrurr (Arabic pronouns with the huruf jarr [prepositions]; diacritical kasra [single line symbol below a letter]), but I confirmed that there was second letter of ba’ “والْأَرَاحَم”， then the ba’ was removed in the early recitation.” Ibn Ya’ish (1928) also gave two evidences to defend that the recitation of
the word was not ‘aṭaf (conjunction) with damīr majrurr (Arabic pronouns with the ġurūf jarr [prepositions]; diacritical kasra [single line symbol below a letter]), as followed:

1. Waw “و” in the word “والۡرحام” was a waw “و” qasam (oath), they made an oath with "الأرحام" which were the families and honoring them.
2. They believed that before the word “الأرحام” there was the second letter of ba’ as mentioned previously.

Al-Nahwi (1987) was an Arabic language expert who firmly critiques those who reject the Qirāʾāt Imam Hamzah. He critiqued the Basrah scholars who were followed by al-Zamakhshyari and Ibn ‘Atiyyah by saying: “The point of views to prohibit the ‘aṭaf (conjunction) with damīr majrurr (Arabic pronouns with the ġurūf jarr [prepositions]; diacritical kasra [single line symbol below a letter]) except with the repetition of the particles of jarr and the other reasons were invalid. However, the valid perspective was from the Kufah scholars which allowing the ‘aṭaf (conjunction) with damīr majrurr (Arabic pronouns with the ġurūf jarr [prepositions]; diacritical kasra [single line symbol below a letter]). The arguments were made from Allah’s saying in Chapter Al-Baqarah, verse 217: "وكفر به والمسجد الحرام". Abu Hanyyan also critiqued Ibn ‘Atiyyah by saying: It was a bad attitude to critique the Qurʾānic text with Mutawātir status (Qirāʾāt Mutawātirah) because it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Peace Be Upon Him), recite by the previous Muslims, transmitted through the qurrāʾ (Qurʾānic readers) among the companions, the companions who took the qirāʾāt directly from the prophet for example, Uthman RA, ‘Ali RA, Ibn Mas’ud RA, Zayd ibn Thabit RA, and the companions who recite it to Ubay ibn Ka’ab. He (Ibn ‘Atiyyah) rejected something in wrong interpretation. The assertions should be going to the Muktazilah like al-Zamakhshari because he made many assertions towards the works from the qurrāʾ (Qurʾānic readers) and their qirāʾāt. Meanwhile, Imam Hamzah took the recitation from Sulayman ibn Mahran al-A’mash, Hamran ibn A’yan, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Abu Layla and Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq. He never recites a single letter of the Qurʾān except with āthar (according to the companions’ recitation), he was also a pious and thiqah (trustworth) in knowledge of Ḥadīth.

Imam al-Fakhr al-Razi (n.d) had discussed in detail on his exegesis book about the perspectives of nahw (Arabic grammar) scholars and rejected their assertions by saying: “The asserters were not the persons to preserve the narration chain in Arabic linguistic, it was because Imam Hamzah was a qurrāʾ (Qurʾānic readers) of the Seven Qurrāʾ. He was not creating his own recitation but transmitted it from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Therefore, he gave two arguments for the recitation of Imam Hamzah:

1. It was based on the repetition of the ġurūf jarr (prepositions), for example: "تساءلون به وبالۡرحام”.
2. The method was used in poetry and the scholars (al-Zamakhshari and others) were accepting to set Arabic language with two unknown verses. However, the same method was not accepted to be used with the Qirāʾāt Imam Hamzah and Mujahid eventhough both of them were the Salaf scholars in the Qurʾānic knowledge.

In the Qurʾān, there were shawāhid (valid supporting narration chain of recitation) which shown the ‘aṭaf (conjunction) with no repetition of the al-khaftit (the recitation with diacritical kasra [single line symbol below a letter] at the ġurūf jarr [prepositions]). Abu Hayyan (1987) had brought four other examples from the Qurʾān to highlight the matter.
Then, he mentioned that for those who asserting any mistakes to the qirāʾāt or Imam Hamzah, the person was a liar.

**Qur’anic rasm (Qur’anic orthography) and Lack of Arabic Language Proficiency**

Allah Almighty says in Chapter al-An’ám, verse 137:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ رَزَّنَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُشۡرِكِينَ فَتَنُوا أَئِنَّمَا شَرَّكُوا مَنْ يُؤۡنِعُهُ وَلَبِيَّشُوا عَلَيۡهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوۡ شَآءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوا فَذۡرُهُمْ وَمَا يُفَتَّرُونَ

The perplexing in this verse was at the Qirāʾāt Imam Ibn ‘Amir, which was at the recitation with diacritical kasra [single line symbol below a letter] in the word, “شركائهم”. According to al-Zamakhshari (n.d), rasm (orthography) with the shape of ya’ at the word was the reason for Ibn ‘Amir to recite the word with majrur (diacritical kasra [single line symbol below a letter]) recitation differ to those who recite it with dammah (waw symbol above a letter: شکاوههم” (و)). Furthermore, the rasm (orthography) of the word was in the same form in his mushaf (Qur’anic manuscript).

Ibn ‘Atiyah (1993) rejected the Qirāʾāt Imam Ibn ‘Amir because the qirāʾāt was poor in Arabic proficiency. Meanwhile, Al-Tabari (1987) rejected the qirāʾāt based on the nahw (Arabic grammar) in which separation cannot be happened between muḍāf and muḍāf iʾlaih (possessive phrase). Al-Zamakhshari (n.d) in the book of al-Kāshaf also used the same argument, and the separation can only occur in the poetry.

Based on the above arguments, factor for Ibn ‘Amir recited ya’ at the word “شركائهم” was because he followed rasm (orthography) in his own mushaf (Qur’anic manuscript), and there was also separation that can be happened between muḍāf and muḍāf iʾlaih (possessive phrase) for the qirāʾāt. Nevertheless, the assertions on this matter had caught the attention of Muslim scholars and they confirmed that the qirāʾāt was valid and correct in Arabic linguistic. The scholars were as followed; Ibn Malik, Abu Hayyan, Ibn Jazari, al-Ashmuni, al-Siban, al-Suyuti, al-Alusi and others (Al-Muhaymid, 2001). Al-Nahwi (1987) explained about the validity of Ibn ‘Amir recitation and rejecting the views of al-Zamakhshari by giving a valid statement: al-Zamakhshari was an ’ajam (non-Arab) and lack in nahw (Arabic grammar) proficiency yet rejecting the qirāʾāt from a genuine Arab in the Qur’anic text with Mutawātir status (Qirāʾāt Mutawātirah). It was questioned that a man could had prejudice towards the Seven Qirāʾāt which had been acknowledge in the Qur’ān. Their writing, memorization, understanding and religion were affirmed by the Muslims. The separation between muḍāf and muḍāf iʾlaih (possessive phrase) can be happened in a verse, for example, in some Arab conversation: “هو غلام – إن شاء الله - أخيك” therefore it was easy when the separation occurred in mufrad (singular) form.

Imam al-Muhaqqiq Ibn al-Jazari (n.d) was also discussed about the issues. He stated that the Basrah nahw (Arabic grammar) scholars gave a perspective that it was not allowed for the separation occurred between muḍāf and muḍāf iʾlaih (possessive phrase), except for the poetry. Meanwhile al-Zamakhshari argued: “The way of his recitation was referred from few maṣāḥif that wrote with rasm (orthography) ya’ at the word “شركائهم”. Imam Ibn al-Jazari (n.d) replied to the assertions: The valid recitation was opposed to the perspective of al-Zamakhshari. Muslims must seek refuge with Allah Almighty from Qur’anic recitation that merely based on human knowledge. A separation occurred between masdar (infinitive- third in conjugation) and the fāʾil (the doer) at muḍāf iʾlaih (possessive phrase) with mof’wul (object) based on the authorized and selected linguistic terms. It was not only used for the poetry but was also for the evidence of the qirāʾāt’s status; valid, prominent and mutawātir...
(in the chain of narration). Besides that, Ibn ‘Amir was a genuine Arab and one of the kibār al-tābi‘īn (main successor) who narrated the qirāʿāt from the companions, Uthman RA and Abi Darda’ RA.

Al-Muhaymid (2001) concluded the arguments from the scholars who preserved the Qirāʾāt Ibn ‘Amir in two questions; Why does the qirāʿāt was rejected when it was narrated from Prophet Muhammad PBUH? Does the glorified of the qirāʿāt was at the mutawātirah or the nahw (Arabic grammar) method?

**Quranic dabt (Quranic diacritical marks or symbols)**

ʿUthmani mushaf (ʿUthmani manuscript) was critiqued in the early era of Islam because it does not contain diacritical marks or symbols and some rasm (orthography) in the manuscript were removed and added. The perplexed issue brought disagreements in the Quranic recitation (Shukri et al., 2001). The accuracy dependence of rasm (orthography) caused some qurrāʾ (Quranic readers) recite with “سأوريكم” instead of “سأوريكم” (Chapter al-A‘raf, verse 145) (Al-Hamd, 1986).

Sha’ban (1999) stated that Goldziher asserted the disagreements in qirāʿāt related to the Arabic khat (calligraphy) that was used in the ʿUthmānī mushaf (ʿUthmānī manuscript). There were no Qurʾānic diacritical marks or symbols which shown the ʿirāb (grammatical status; the correct diacritical marks to determine the meaning of words). According to the orientalists, the disagreements happened because there were no proper diacritical marks or symbols. The qirāʿāt was developed since the era of Sayyidina ʿUthmān RA.

The perspective was wrong and the false statement was created by the orientalist to deceive the Muslim’s faith towards the Qurʾān. The argument about the disagreement that happened because of the earliest mushaf were not having diacritical marks or symbols was opposed to the reality. The qiraʿat disagreement was the talaqqi from Prophet Muhammad PBUH and not because of the diacritical marks or symbols in the mushaf. In the earlier phase, the companions were not depending on the mushaf orthography. However, when Sayyidina ʿUthman RA started the production of mushaf and sent to the other Muslim countries, he directed a qari’ with every delivered mushaf to teach the correct qiraʿat (Al-Qadi, 1999).

The qiraʿat disagreement was based on the narration and not from the diacritical marks or symbols, because if many type of qiraʿat can be created from the rasm (orthography), there will be no used the teaching of the qāriy’ with every delivered mushaf (Shukri et al., 2001). The clear rejection towards this critique was the existence of many verbal languages in the mushaf. The orthography can be read with many recitation, however the qurra’ (Quranic readers) disagreement was only in the certain part of the recitations. For example, “ملك” was narrated in few part in the Quran. The first part in the Chapter al-Fatihah, the qurrāʾ (Quranic readers) recited it with two different recitations, with ۱ and without ۱. Meanwhile, there were no disagreement in other part of the Quran, and the word “ملك” can be recited with many type of recitation based on the orthography or Arabic linguistic (Shukri et al., 2001). Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi al-Nahwi (n.d) listed eight types of recitation for the word “ملك”, but only two types were used for recitation. Therefore, it showed that the qiraʿat narrated by al-mushafahah and al-samaʿ (talaqqi method) and not based on the orthography or calligraphy of the mushaf (al-Qadi, n.d).

**Fabrication of Qiraʿat Narration Chain**

Goldziher had brought confusion by claiming that the qiraʿat was created by human and not from Allah Almighty. The assertion based on the perspective of the exegete, Qatadah al-Basri
(117) in the verse 54, Chapter al-Baqarah. They claimed the command to “execute yourselves” in the verse was too harsh. Therefore, the fourth letter was changed in the arrangement (Qadi, n.d) and caused the changes in letter ta’ to ya’ in “فاقتلو أنفسكم” and became “فأقتلوا أنفسكم”, and the meaning changed to: Turn in (repentance) as it is what you did and regret the mistake. Based on the changes, Goldziher stated that the meaning of Qur’anic verses were also highlighted in various qira’at and it can be selected by human thought.

The assertion was extreme and unacceptable with the real knowledge. As mentioned in the earlier points that the source of qirā’āt were based on the narration (nāqal and riwayah), talaqqi and al-mushafahah. There were no involvement of human thought or selection. Besides that, the development of qirā’āt happened earlier than the compilation of the Quran. The qira’at disagreement existed also not because of the negligent in placing the diacritical marks or symbols in the muṣḥaf (manuscript).

The recitation of Qatadah for the word “فأقيلوا أنفسكم”, never been narrated by the authorized qurraʾ (Qur’anic readers). Therefore, the qira’at was not in the narration chain and genuine. Besides that, Qatadah al-Basri was not among the qurrāʾ (Quranic readers) and there were no other references about his qira’at except for this matter (Qadi, n.d).

A statement by Qatadah stated that the interpretation was made differently with the narrated qira’at. Al-Tabari (2000) stated to Qatadah by saying: “فاقتلو أنفسكم”-they were standing in the line and killed themselves until they were told that it was enough for them. Qatadah added: It was a witness to the killed and a repentance for the living. Kathir (1999) also stated to Qatadah by saying: The people were commanded with difficult situation, they killed each other with sword until Allah Almighty gave them the punishment. The livings were given forgiveness and the killed were given shuhadaʾ (martyr).

This matter was clear to show that Qatadah admitted that the killing was real as stated by the exegetes. Therefore, the interpretation by Qatadah was opposed from his qira’at. Based on the given evidences, the qira’at by Qatadah was a forgery or fraud. If the qira’at was valid, his interpretation would be same as Goldziher but he interpreted the killing was real as mentioned by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir. Therefore, it was proven that his qira’at was incorrect and fraud (Qadi, n.d).

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Acknowledgement
This study using fund under research grant GGP-2020-042 (Geran Galakan Penyelidikan) from UKM, Malaysia.

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