Toward an Integrated Methodological Framework for Classifying Variations in Qur'anic Readings: Applications to Qirāʾāt Education

Amir Adel Mabrouk Eldeib[1*], Hossameldin Abdalla Ahmed Mahmoud[2], Ashraf Hassan Mohamed Hassan[3], Abdulwahab Abdulaziz Al-Haddad[4], Khalilullah Amin Ahmad[5*], Ali Abdul Jalil[6*], Mohamad Hafiz Darpen[7*], Wafa Abdul Jabbar Shohibuddin[8*]

[1]Faculty of Al-Quran and Sunnah, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: dramir@kuips.edu.my
[2]Faculty of Al-Quran and Sunnah, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: dr.hossameldin@kuips.edu.my
[3]Faculty of Al-Quran and Sunnah, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: drashraf@kuips.edu.my
[4]Faculty of Al-Quran and Sunnah, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: drabdulwahab@kuips.edu.my
[5]Section of Islamic Studies, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. Email: amin@usm.my
[6]Faculty of Al-Quran and Sunnah, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: alijalil@kuips.edu.my
[7]Faculty of Al-Quran and Sunnah, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: hafizdarpen@kuips.edu.my
[8]Faculty of Al-Quran and Sunnah, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: wafa@unisiraj.edu.my
***Corresponding Author:**
dramir@kuips.edu.my, amin@usm.my , alijalil@kuips.edu.my , hafizdarpen@kuips.edu.my , wafa@unisiraj.edu.my

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ABSTRACT:
The diversity of Qur'anic readings (Qirāʾāt) represents a fundamental feature of Qur'anic studies, reflecting authenticated variations in recitational performance, linguistic structure, and semantic expression preserved through reliable transmission. Although classical and contemporary scholarship has extensively examined these variations, existing approaches to their classification remain largely fragmented, often addressing individual aspects such as transmission, linguistic analysis, interpretation, or Uthmānic orthography without providing an integrated methodological framework. This study aims to develop a comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework for classifying variations in Qur'anic readings and to explore its implications for Qirāʾāt education. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytical methodology, the study examines classical and contemporary contributions to Qirāʾāt scholarship, critically analyzes existing approaches to classification, and reorganizes their analytical principles within a unified conceptual model. The findings reveal that Qur'anic reading variations constitute a multidimensional phenomenon structured through five interconnected dimensions: transmission, performance and

phonetics, linguistic structure, semantic and interpretive analysis, and Uthmānic orthography. Accordingly, the study proposes an integrated classification model that provides systematic criteria for analyzing reading variants and clarifies the relationships among their different levels. The framework further offers educational implications by supporting curriculum design, structured instruction, and advanced methodological training in Qirāʾāt studies.

This study contributes to contemporary Qur'anic scholarship by introducing an integrated analytical model that bridges classical Qirāʾāt methodologies with interdisciplinary approaches and provides a theoretical foundation for future research on the classification, teaching, and analysis of Qur'anic readings.

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1. Introduction

Qur'anic readings (Qirāʾāt) constitute one of the foundational disciplines of Qur'anic studies, preserving the authenticated modes through which the Qur'anic text has been transmitted, recited, and taught across successive generations. Emerging from an oral tradition based on direct transmission (al-talaqqī wa al-mushāfahah), the discipline gradually developed into an independent field governed by established principles regulating the authenticity of transmission, recitational performance, linguistic variation, and textual interpretation. Classical works by Ibn Mujāhid, al-Dānī, and Ibn al-Jazarī established the scholarly foundations for identifying accepted readings and regulating their transmission according to rigorous criteria of authenticity and performance (Ibn al-Jazarī, 1994).

Rather than representing textual inconsistency, the diversity of Qur'anic readings reflects a controlled and authenticated form of variation that enriches the expressive, linguistic, and semantic dimensions of the Qur'anic text. Classical Muslim scholars consistently regarded these variations as complementary manifestations of revelation, emphasizing that multiple authentic readings preserve textual unity while expanding interpretive and linguistic possibilities (Al-Zarkashī, 1957; Al-Suyūṭī, 1974).

Recent scholarship has expanded the study of Qirāʾāt beyond traditional descriptive approaches by examining the historical formation of the reading tradition, mechanisms of oral transmission, the interaction between recitation and written codices, and the role of the Uthmānic consonantal text in preserving multiple authentic readings (Melchert, 2008; Nasser, 2013). These studies demonstrate that Qur'anic readings represent a complex knowledge system shaped through the interaction of oral transmission, linguistic convention, textual preservation, and educational practice.

Contemporary Qur'anic scholarship increasingly recognizes that variations among Qur'anic readings should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than as isolated linguistic or phonetic differences. Research on the history of the Qur'anic text, manuscript traditions, and linguistic analysis indicates that transmission, pronunciation, grammatical structure, semantic interpretation, and Uthmānic orthography function as interconnected components of a single recitational system (Déroche, 2013; Sinai, 2017). Consequently, analyzing individual reading variants requires methodological frameworks capable of integrating these dimensions rather than examining each independently.

Despite the richness of classical and contemporary scholarship, existing approaches to classifying Qur'anic reading variations remain largely fragmented (Ahmad, et al., 2026). Traditional classifications generally emphasize individual dimensions, such as chains of transmission, linguistic explanation, semantic interpretation, or orthographic correspondence, while modern studies frequently concentrate on historical or philological perspectives. Although these contributions have significantly advanced the field, they do not provide a unified methodological framework capable of explaining how these dimensions interact within a comprehensive classification model.

This gap has become increasingly significant as interdisciplinary Qur'anic studies continue to expand through linguistics, textual studies, manuscript research, digital humanities, and educational approaches (Ahmad et al., 2025). The absence of an integrated classification framework limits systematic scholarly analysis and restricts the development of structured approaches to teaching Qirāʾāt. A coherent methodological model would facilitate comparative analysis of reading variations and provide conceptual guidance for curriculum design, learner progression, and advanced Qirāʾāt instruction.

Accordingly, this study argues that variations in Qur'anic readings constitute a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be adequately explained through a single classificatory criterion. Instead, they emerge through the interaction of five complementary dimensions: authenticated transmission, recitational performance and phonetics, linguistic structure, semantic interpretation, and Uthmānic orthography. Building upon this premise, the study develops an integrated methodological framework that reorganizes these dimensions into a unified analytical model. Beyond its theoretical contribution, the proposed framework offers practical applications for Qirāʾāt education by supporting systematic curriculum development, structured classification of reading variants, and more coherent pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning Qur'anic readings (Ahmad, et al., 2026).

Research Problem

Despite the extensive development of Qur'anic readings studies and the diversity of approaches addressing transmission, performance, language, interpretation, and meaning, the classification of variations among readings still lacks a comprehensive theoretical framework that defines the concept of variation, identifies its dimensions, and establishes methodological criteria for systematic classification (Ahmad, et al., 2026).

The absence of such a framework has resulted in multiple partial approaches. Some studies have emphasized transmission as the primary criterion, whereas others have focused on linguistic, phonetic, or semantic aspects. Consequently, existing classifications often reflect specific perspectives rather than the complete structure of the Qur'anic reading phenomenon.

The fundamental challenge lies in the complex structure of reading variations, which involve interconnected dimensions: transmission and narration, phonetic performance, linguistic structure, semantic interpretation, and their relationship with the Uthmānic script. Treating these dimensions separately may fragment the phenomenon and obscure the structural relationships among them.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this problem by examining the theoretical and methodological foundations required for classifying variations in Qur'anic readings and proposing a multidimensional analytical model that integrates these aspects within a unified framework.

Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

To conceptualize the notion of variation (wajh al-ikhtilāf) within the framework of Qur'anic readings studies.

To examine classical and contemporary approaches to classifying variations among Qur'anic readings.

To identify the methodological limitations of existing classification systems and explain their inability to represent the multidimensional nature of Qirāʾāt variations.

To establish methodological criteria for distinguishing between transmission-based, phonetic, linguistic, semantic, and orthographic dimensions.

To develop an integrated theoretical framework that explains the relationships among different dimensions of Qur'anic reading variations.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following main question:

What theoretical and methodological foundations are required for constructing an integrated classification model of variations in Qur'anic readings?

The study further examines the following questions:

What are the conceptual boundaries of the term wajh al-ikhtilāf (aspect of variation) in Qirāʾāt studies?

What are the main classical and modern approaches to classifying Qur'anic reading variations?

What are the limitations of existing classifications in explaining the different levels and dimensions of variation?

What methodological criteria can establish a multidimensional classification system for Qur'anic readings?

How can transmission, performance, linguistic, semantic, and orthographic dimensions be integrated into a unified analytical model?

2. Literature Review and Research Gap

2.1. Classical Studies on the Classification of Variations in Qur'anic Readings

Classical scholarship on Qur'anic readings primarily developed around the objectives of preserving transmission, authenticating recitational modes, distinguishing accepted readings from rejected ones, and explaining their relationship with Arabic linguistic structures. Therefore, classification of reading variations was not initially established as an independent theoretical discipline; rather, it was embedded within broader efforts related to collection, verification, explanation, and preservation of Qur'anic readings.

Ibn Mujāhid's (d. 324 AH) Kitāb al-Sabʿah fī al-Qirāʾāt represents one of the earliest foundational works in the history of Qirāʾāt studies. His contribution was significant in consolidating the concept of canonical readings and organizing them around the seven well-known reciters. However, his primary objective was the selection and authentication of widely transmitted readings rather than the development of a comprehensive theoretical classification of variation types (Ibn Mujāhid, 1400 AH).

Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī (d. 444 AH) further developed the methodological foundations of Qirāʾāt scholarship through al-Taysīr fī al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ. His work focused on verifying chains of transmission, establishing reading principles, and documenting specific word-level variations. Nevertheless, the work remained primarily concerned with preservation and documentation rather than constructing an analytical framework that explains the different dimensions underlying these variations (al-Dānī, 1984).

Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 437 AH) introduced a more analytical approach in al-Kashf ʿan Wujūh al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ wa ʿIlalihā wa Ḥujajihā, where he examined the linguistic and semantic justifications behind different readings. His contribution expanded Qirāʾāt studies beyond transmission toward explanation and interpretation. However, his analysis focused mainly on the causes and arguments supporting particular readings rather than establishing an integrated classification model for their various dimensions (Makkī, 1984).

Abū Shāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 665 AH) discussed the principles and status of Qur'anic readings in

al-Murshid al-Wajīz ilā ʿUlūm Tataʿallaq bi al-Kitāb al-ʿAzīz. His work contributed to the critical understanding of Qirāʾāt within the wider framework of Qur'anic sciences. However, it did not aim to formulate an independent theoretical classification system explaining the structural levels of variation (Abū Shāmah, 1975).

Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833 AH) represents the most advanced stage of methodological development in classical Qirāʾāt scholarship through his monumental work al-Nashr fī al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr. He systematically collected transmission routes, authenticated readings, and analyzed their principles and detailed differences. Despite its comprehensive nature, the primary objective of the work remained the preservation, authentication, and documentation of readings rather than developing an abstract theoretical framework explaining the relationships among different forms of variation (Ibn al-Jazarī, 1994).

A review of these classical contributions demonstrates that early Qirāʾāt scholarship contains extensive analytical materials related to different dimensions of variation, including transmission, linguistic explanation, performance, and orthography. However, these dimensions remained distributed across separate areas of study and were not synthesized into a unified theoretical classification framework.

2.2. Modern Studies on Qur'anic Reading Variations

Modern scholarship has expanded the study of Qur'anic readings beyond traditional approaches of collection and authentication toward historical, linguistic, textual, and interdisciplinary perspectives. Contemporary studies have examined the formation of the Qirāʾāt tradition, mechanisms of transmission, relationships between oral recitation and written documentation, and the role of the Uthmānic script in preserving multiple authentic readings.

Some modern studies have focused on the linguistic dimensions of Qur'anic readings, examining phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic aspects of variation (Ahmad et al., 2025). These studies have demonstrated that reading differences are not isolated linguistic phenomena but are connected to broader structures of Arabic language and Qur'anic interpretation.

Christopher Melchert examined the historical development of the canonical readings, arguing that the Qirāʾāt system underwent processes of scholarly selection, organization, and standardization. His work highlighted the importance of understanding readings within their historical and intellectual contexts rather than treating them as a static system detached from scholarly development (Melchert, 2008).

Similarly, Shady H. Nasser investigated the transmission of Qur'anic readings, the concept of tawātur, and the relationship between canonical and non-canonical readings. His research demonstrated that the history of Qirāʾāt reflects a complex interaction between oral transmission, written records, scholarly criteria, and processes of classification and authentication (Nasser, 2013).

François Déroche emphasized the importance of examining Qur'anic manuscripts and readings through an integrated perspective that combines textual, material, and historical analysis. His studies highlighted the relationship between manuscript traditions, Uthmānic orthography, and recitation practices, demonstrating the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches in Qur'anic textual studies (Déroche, 2013).

Although these modern contributions have significantly enriched Qirāʾāt studies, they have generally focused on specific aspects of the phenomenon. Historical studies have concentrated on the development of the reading tradition, linguistic studies have emphasized structural analysis, and manuscript studies have examined textual and material dimensions. A comprehensive theoretical framework integrating these dimensions remains insufficiently developed (Faisal Husen Ismail et al., 2026).

2.3. Research Gap

The review of classical and modern literature indicates that the central challenge in studying

Qur'anic reading variations is not the absence of scholarly contributions, but rather the lack of an integrated theoretical framework capable of organizing these accumulated insights within a unified methodological model.

Classical scholarship developed important approaches related to transmission, linguistic explanation, performance, and orthographic analysis. However, these approaches were largely developed according to specific scholarly objectives and were not formulated as a comprehensive classification system explaining the interaction among different dimensions of variation.

Similarly, modern studies have introduced valuable historical, linguistic, and textual perspectives, but they have generally examined individual aspects of Qirāʾāt without proposing a multidimensional model that integrates the various levels of variation into a coherent analytical structure.

Therefore, this study addresses this theoretical and methodological gap by developing an integrated framework that clarifies:

the conceptual boundaries of the term wajh al-ikhtilāf (aspect of variation) within Qur'anic readings;

the methodological criteria required for classifying reading variations;

the distinction between transmission-based, phonetic, linguistic, semantic, and orthographic dimensions;

and the structural relationships among these dimensions within a unified analytical model.

Accordingly, this research does not seek merely to introduce another classification of reading variations; rather, it aims to reconstruct the conceptual and methodological foundations of Qirāʾāt studies through a multidimensional framework capable of explaining the internal relationships among different forms of variation and providing a foundation for future theoretical, educational, and interdisciplinary research.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative theoretical research design based on conceptual analysis, critical examination of classical and contemporary literature, and methodological framework construction. Unlike empirical studies that rely on participants, measurements, or statistical analysis, this research investigates the theoretical foundations of classifying variations in Qur'anic readings through an analytical approach that integrates insights from Qur'anic sciences, Qirāʾāt studies, Arabic linguistics, and Qur'anic textual studies.

The qualitative design is appropriate for this study because the primary objective is not to measure a specific phenomenon empirically, but rather to analyze existing scholarly approaches, identify their methodological characteristics and limitations, and develop an integrated conceptual model capable of explaining the multidimensional nature of Qur'anic reading variations.

2.2 Data Sources and Materials

The study relies on two main categories of sources:

First: Classical Sources of Qirāʾāt Studies

The research examines foundational works that represent the methodological development of Qur'anic readings, including works related to:

Authentication and transmission of readings.

Explanation and justification of reading variations.

Principles governing accepted readings.

Relationship between readings and Uthmānic orthography.

These sources include major contributions by scholars such as Ibn Mujāhid, al-Dānī, Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Abū Shāmah al-Maqdisī, Ibn al-Jazarī, and other authorities in Qur'anic readings.

Second: Modern Scholarly Studies

The study also analyzes contemporary research addressing:

The historical development of the Qirāʾāt tradition.

Oral transmission and textual preservation.

Qur'anic manuscripts and Uthmānic script.

Linguistic and textual approaches to Qur'anic readings.

These studies provide interdisciplinary perspectives that contribute to understanding Qur'anic readings as a complex knowledge system involving oral, linguistic, textual, and interpretive dimensions.

2.3 Data Collection and Source Selection Criteria

Since this research is theoretical and analytical, the term "data" refers to scholarly texts, conceptual discussions, and analytical observations extracted from relevant sources rather than numerical datasets or human participants.

The selection of sources was based on the following criteria:

Scholarly authority: Priority was given to works recognized within classical and contemporary Qirāʾāt scholarship.

Methodological relevance: Sources were selected according to their contribution to understanding transmission, linguistic variation, performance, interpretation, or orthography.

Representativeness: The selected materials reflect different historical stages and methodological approaches in the development of Qirāʾāt studies.

Analytical value: Preference was given to works that provide explicit discussions of variation, classification, authentication, or explanation of readings.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis was conducted through several interconnected stages:

First: Conceptual Analysis

The study examined the central concepts underlying the classification of Qur'anic reading variations, including:

Variation (ikhtilāf).

Aspect of variation (wajh al-ikhtilāf).

Qur'anic reading (qirāʾah).

Classification and methodological modeling.

This stage aimed to establish precise conceptual boundaries necessary for constructing a theoretical framework.

Second: Critical Review of Existing Approaches

The research analyzed classical and modern approaches to Qur'anic reading variations in order to identify:

Their methodological foundations.

Their classification criteria.

Their contributions.

Their limitations in representing the complete structure of variation.

Third: Comparative and Integrative Analysis

The study compared different scholarly perspectives and examined the relationships among various dimensions of variation, including transmission, performance, linguistic structure, semantic interpretation, and orthography.

This comparative analysis provided the basis for reorganizing existing insights within a unified methodological framework.

2.5 Framework Development Process

The proposed classification model was developed through a systematic process consisting of four steps:

Identification of the major analytical dimensions found across classical and contemporary Qirāʾāt scholarship.

Examination of the relationships among these dimensions rather than treating them as isolated categories.

Reorganization of previous classifications into an integrated structure capable of explaining the complexity of Qur'anic reading variations.

Formulation of a multidimensional methodological model in which each reading variation is analyzed as an interconnected unit involving transmission, performance, linguistic structure, meaning, and orthographic representation.

Accordingly, the methodology of this study provides the foundation for presenting the proposed integrated classification framework in the following section.

3. Findings and Proposed Theoretical Framework

3.1 Conceptual Foundations of the Integrated Classification Model

The analysis of classical and contemporary approaches to Qur'anic readings demonstrates that variations among readings cannot be adequately understood through a single analytical perspective. The phenomenon of Qirāʾāt variation developed within a complex knowledge system that integrates transmission, oral performance, Arabic linguistic structures, semantic interpretation, and the Uthmānic script.

Accordingly, the first finding of this study is that constructing an effective classification model requires establishing precise conceptual foundations that define the nature of variation and determine the analytical units through which it can be studied.

3.1.1 Concept of Variation in Qur'anic Readings

Variation represents a central concept in Qirāʾāt studies because the discipline itself is based on the existence of multiple transmitted forms of Qur'anic recitation. However, this variation does not indicate contradiction or inconsistency within the Qur'anic text; rather, it represents authenticated diversity preserved through established mechanisms of transmission.

Classical scholars distinguished between acceptable variation that reflects diversity in pronunciation, linguistic structure, and meaning, and forms of difference that contradict the principles of accepted readings. Scholars such as al-Zarkashī and al-Suyūṭī discussed reading variations within broader linguistic, semantic, and interpretive frameworks (al-Zarkashī, 1957; al-Suyūṭī, 1974).

Based on the analysis of Qirāʾāt literature, this study defines Qur'anic reading variation as:

The existence of multiple authenticated forms of Qur'anic expression transmitted through recognized reading traditions, where variation appears at phonetic, performance, linguistic, semantic, or orthographic levels while maintaining the unity of the Qur'anic origin.

This definition highlights that variation is not merely a collection of isolated differences but a multidimensional phenomenon requiring an integrated analytical approach.

3.1.2 Concept of Wajh al-Ikhtilāf

The concept of wajh represents a fundamental analytical unit in Qirāʾāt studies. Classical scholars employed this term to refer to specific manifestations through which variation appears among readings, whether related to pronunciation, linguistic explanation, transmission, or interpretation.

Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib examined different aspects of readings through their linguistic causes and arguments, while Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī analyzed them through Arabic linguistic structures and grammatical possibilities (Makkī, 1984; al-Fārisī, 1987).

Based on this scholarly usage, this study defines wajh al-ikhtilāf as:

A specific manifestation of variation among Qur'anic readings that appears in performance, linguistic structure, transmission, meaning, or orthographic representation within the framework of authenticated transmission.

This conceptualization allows reading variations to be analyzed according to their internal characteristics rather than merely listed as separate examples.

3.1.3 Concept of Qur'anic Reading

The concept of Qur'anic reading provides the foundation upon which all levels of variation are organized. Classical scholarship established criteria for distinguishing accepted readings, particularly the principle formulated by Ibn al-Jazarī, which requires:

Compatibility with Arabic language.

Agreement with one of the Uthmānic codices.

Authentic transmission through a sound chain.

(Ibn al-Jazarī, 1994)

Accordingly, this study defines Qur'anic reading as:

A transmitted form of Qur'anic recitation attributed to a recognized imam or narrator, preserved through established principles of transmission and belonging to the scholarly system of Qirāʾāt.

This definition limits the framework to recognized and authenticated readings rather than all possible forms of recitational diversity.

3.1.4 Concept of Classification and Methodological Modeling

Classification is not merely the arrangement of similar elements into categories; rather, it is an analytical process aimed at revealing the internal structure of a phenomenon and the relationships among its components.

Within Qirāʾāt studies, an effective classification requires criteria capable of explaining:

The source of variation.

The manner of its performance.

Its linguistic structure.

Its semantic implications.

Its relationship with the written form of the Qur'anic text.

Therefore, this study defines classification as:

A systematic process of organizing variations among Qur'anic readings into interconnected analytical categories based on specific criteria that reveal their nature, levels, and relationships.

A methodological model refers to:

An integrated analytical framework consisting of interconnected dimensions designed to explain the structure of reading variations and the relationships among their components.

3.2 The Five-Dimensional Integrated Classification Model

The analysis conducted in this study reveals that Qur'anic reading variations operate through five interconnected dimensions. These dimensions do not represent isolated categories; rather, they constitute analytical levels through which a single variation can be examined from different perspectives.

The proposed model consists of:

Transmission Dimension.

Performance and Phonetic Dimension.

Linguistic-Structural Dimension.

Semantic and Interpretive Dimension.

Orthographic Dimension.

The central contribution of this model is the shift from viewing reading variations as separate lists of differences toward understanding them as interconnected structures within a unified knowledge system.

The following table summarizes the analytical structure of the proposed model before examining each dimension in detail.

Table 1. The Five Dimensions of the Proposed Classification Model

Dimension	Analytical Focus	Main Elements
Transmission Dimension	Source and authentication of variation	Reciters, narrators, transmission routes
Performance and Phonetic Dimension	Oral realization of variation	Pronunciation, phonetic features, performance modes

Dimension	Analytical Focus	Main Elements
Linguistic-Structural Dimension	Arabic structure underlying variation	Morphology, syntax, lexical forms
Semantic and Interpretive Dimension	Meaning and interpretive implications	Meaning expansion, explanation, exegetical impact
Orthographic Dimension	Relationship with Uthmānic script	Script accommodation and textual representation

3.2.1 Transmission Dimension

The transmission dimension represents the foundational level of Qur'anic reading variation because Qirāʾāt are transmitted forms of recitation rather than individual linguistic choices.

This dimension addresses the question:

How was this variation transmitted?

It examines the source, chain, and position of a reading within the Qirāʾāt system.

The transmission dimension includes three analytical levels:

1. Variations among Reciters

These refer to differences among recognized Qur'anic reciters in specific readings while remaining within the accepted transmission framework.

2. Variations among Narrators

These concern differences transmitted by narrators from the same reciter.

3. Variations among Transmission Routes

These relate to differences arising from multiple chains of transmission connecting reciters and narrators.

The importance of this dimension appears clearly in the works of Ibn Mujāhid, al-Dānī, and Ibn al-Jazarī, where authentication and transmission constituted the foundation of accepted readings.

However, transmission alone does not fully explain the characteristics of variation, as the same transmitted reading may involve phonetic, linguistic, or semantic differences. Therefore, it must be examined together with the remaining dimensions.

3.2.2 Performance and Phonetic Dimension

The performance and phonetic dimension concerns the way in which Qur'anic readings are realized through vocal articulation, pronunciation patterns, and recitational features. While transmission establishes the authenticity of a reading, this dimension explains how the transmitted form is performed in actual recitation.

This dimension addresses the question:

How is the variation articulated and performed?

It includes variations related to:

Phonetic realization and articulation points.

Vowel patterns and vocal characteristics.

Lengthening, assimilation, and other recitational features.

The importance of this dimension appears in classical works dealing with the principles of readings (uṣūl al-qirāʾāt), where scholars analyzed systematic performance differences among reciters. However, phonetic analysis alone cannot fully explain reading variations, as performance features are connected with transmission, linguistic structure, and semantic implications.

3.2.3 Linguistic-Structural Dimension

The linguistic-structural dimension examines variations according to their relationship with Arabic linguistic structures, including morphology, syntax, and lexical forms. This dimension explains how different readings operate within the framework of Arabic language possibilities.

This dimension addresses the question:

What linguistic structure underlies the variation?

It includes:

Morphological differences in word forms.

Syntactic variations and grammatical possibilities.

Lexical variations supported by Arabic usage.

Classical scholars such as Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī emphasized the linguistic justification of readings by demonstrating their conformity with Arabic structures. Nevertheless, linguistic analysis represents one aspect of variation and must be examined within the wider framework of transmission and authenticated recitation.

3.2.4 Semantic and Interpretive Dimension

The semantic and interpretive dimension focuses on the meanings generated by variations among Qur'anic readings and their contribution to expanding interpretive understanding. Differences among readings may reveal complementary meanings without implying contradiction within the Qur'anic text.

This dimension addresses the question:

What semantic function does the variation produce?

It examines:

Expansion of meanings through multiple readings.

Interpretive implications derived from different forms.

The relationship between linguistic variation and exegetical interpretation.

Classical exegetes and scholars of Qur'anic sciences highlighted the interpretive value of authentic readings, considering them a source of richness in understanding Qur'anic meanings. However, semantic analysis remains dependent on the authenticity and linguistic structure of the transmitted reading.

3.2.5 Orthographic Dimension

The orthographic dimension examines the relationship between Qur'anic readings and the Uthmānic script (rasm al-muṣḥaf). Since the early Qur'anic manuscripts were based on a consonantal writing system capable of accommodating multiple readings, orthography represents an important analytical dimension in understanding the preservation of reading diversity.

This dimension addresses the question:

How does the written form relate to the transmitted reading?

It includes:

Compatibility between readings and Uthmānic script.

The role of script in preserving multiple recitational possibilities.

The interaction between written representation and oral transmission.

Although Uthmānic orthography contributes significantly to explaining certain variations, it does not independently determine readings. Rather, its function emerges through its interaction with transmission, performance, and linguistic structures.

4. Discussion

4.1 Position of the Proposed Model in Relation to Classical and Modern Approaches

The proposed framework should be understood as a methodological extension of classical Qirāʾāt scholarship rather than a replacement of previous classifications. Classical scholars developed important approaches for preserving and explaining Qur'anic readings, including transmission-based classifications, uṣūl/farsh organization, linguistic explanation (tawjīh al-qirāʾāt), and studies of Uthmānic orthography.

However, these approaches were generally developed according to specific scholarly objectives. Transmission-oriented works focused on authentication and preservation, linguistic studies emphasized Arabic structures, and exegetical works explored semantic implications. Although these contributions provide essential foundations, they do not always present an integrated framework explaining the interaction among the different levels of variation.

The proposed model addresses this methodological gap by reorganizing these contributions within a multidimensional framework that considers transmission, performance, linguistic structure, semantics, and Uthmānic script as interconnected dimensions of a single phenomenon.

4.2 Contribution of the Proposed Model

The main contribution of the framework lies in moving the study of Qur'anic reading variations from fragmented classification toward integrated analysis.

First, it distinguishes between different levels of variation by separating the source of variation, its mode of realization, its linguistic structure, its semantic function, and its relationship with the written text.

Second, it bridges classical Qirāʾāt scholarship with contemporary interdisciplinary approaches by providing a conceptual structure suitable for linguistic, textual, manuscript, and digital studies.

Third, it offers a methodological foundation for future research by defining the analytical unit of Qur'anic reading variation as a multidimensional entity rather than a single linguistic or phonetic feature.

4.3 Scientific Implications and Future Research Directions

The proposed framework contributes theoretically by providing a comprehensive perspective on Qur'anic reading variations as an integrated knowledge system shaped by transmission, performance, language, meaning, and script.

Methodologically, it provides criteria that may support comparative studies, digital classification projects, and advanced analyses of Qirāʾāt data.

Future research may apply the model to selected Qur'anic examples, develop structured databases of reading variations, explore computational approaches, and investigate its educational applications in Qirāʾāt teaching.

4.4 Limitations

As a theoretical study, this research does not provide an empirical evaluation of the proposed framework through a large corpus of Qur'anic examples. Therefore, future studies are needed to test its analytical effectiveness, refine its categories, and explore its practical applications.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to develop an integrated theoretical and methodological framework for classifying variations in Qur'anic readings. It was based on the observation that previous scholarship, despite its significant contributions, has often examined reading variations through partial perspectives related to transmission, performance, linguistic explanation, semantic interpretation, or Uthmānic script.

Through a descriptive-analytical and conceptual approach, the study examined the foundations of Qirāʾāt classification and reorganized classical and contemporary insights into a multidimensional analytical framework. The findings demonstrate that Qur'anic reading variation is not a single-level phenomenon but an interconnected system involving transmission, performance, linguistic structure, meaning, and orthography.

Accordingly, the study proposed a five-dimensional classification model consisting of:

Transmission dimension.

Performance and phonetic dimension.

Linguistic-structural dimension.

Semantic and interpretive dimension.

Orthographic dimension.

The proposed model contributes to Qirāʾāt studies by moving beyond isolated classifications toward an integrated analytical perspective. It does not replace classical approaches; rather, it reorganizes their contributions within a framework capable of explaining the relationships among different levels of variation.

The study also highlights the importance of transmission as the foundational criterion for understanding Qur'anic readings, while

demonstrating that linguistic, semantic, and orthographic analyses provide complementary perspectives for interpreting the nature and function of variations.

Although the proposed framework is theoretical, it provides a foundation for future research, including applying the model to selected Qur'anic examples, developing structured databases of reading variations, and exploring interdisciplinary approaches involving linguistics, textual studies, and digital humanities.

In conclusion, this study presents a flexible methodological framework that contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Qur'anic reading variations and opens new possibilities for future theoretical and applied research in Qirāʾāt studies.

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7. Author Declaration

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