

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*), *tashīl alhamza* (pronouncing the glottal stop between glottal stop and the glottal fricative), *alibdal* (substitution), *alqalb almakāni* (metathesis), *alnaql* (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 *allāmāt* (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-ishmām* (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 [ī], [ā], or [ū]), 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 Alssidīq (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. Taghlab (d. 141/758), Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767), Harūn b. Musa al-A'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'lqira'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). The seven Qur'an readers along with the two ruwāt (sing. rāwi), which means the transmission of their modes of reading to their students are listed in Table 1.

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	Nafī'	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	Alsūsi	261/875	Aldūri	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

easiest for you'

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 *Qāri'* 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), Khalaf (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'anic 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 *Shādhah* (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 (*shadhdhah*) 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'anu '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, Thaḳīf, 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'.

- (iii) 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'anu 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 [ح – ħ] and replaced it with the voiced pharyngeal fricative [خ – ẖ], as in: [*hatta ħi:n*] – for a while, Q37:178) which Huthayl speakers pronounced as: [*ḥatta ḥi: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 [خ – ẖ], as in: [ʔanna] – (indeed) was pronounced as: [ḥanna]. In a similar vein, the tribe of Asad used ungrammatical forms of language, as in: [*taʔlamu:n*] instead of the grammatical form [*taflamu:n*] – you (plural) know).
- (iv) The expression (*sab'ah* – seven) also means: 'seven topics or seven disciplines which the Qur'an 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.'
- (v) 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 (*ghafurun rahīm* – forgiving and merciful) by (*sami'un basīr* – hearing and seeing). This claim is linguistically and stylistically flawed. An in-depth text linguistic analysis of Qur'anic 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-tanasuq al-sawti fi al-iq'*) 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'anic recitation. The companions chose to read some Qur'anic *ayāt* differently than the canonical 'Uthmanic recindment. The phonetically-based diverse modes of reading involved vocalic or diacritic variances. Thus, this mode of reading concentrated on the variant phonological forms which a given Qur'anic 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'ānan faraqnāhu*] – 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'ānan farraqnahu*] where the consonant [r] in [*faraqnāhu*] is geminated [*farraqnāhu*], and [*fi: ṣamadīn mumaddadah*] – in towering columns, Q104:9) which has a different mode of reading as: [*fi:ṣumudin mumaddadah*] where the *fatha*, i.e., the short vowel [a] in [*ṣamadīn*] is replaced by the *dammah* represented by the short vowel [u] in [*ṣumudin*]. The phonetically-oriented mode of reading can be represented by several phonological forms of the same expression. For instance, the verb [*ṣabada*] – to worship, Q5:60) has 16 modes of reading all of which are irregular and are nominalised nouns of the verb [*ṣabada*], 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-tanasuq 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 [*ḥafu:ran raḥi:ma*]– ever forgiving and merciful), [*assami:ṣ alḥali:m*] – 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'anic words with regards to the phonetically-oriented mode of reading. In his *Ma'ani al-Qur'an.*, 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 /r/. Thus, stylistically, [wal-lajli ʔiḍa: jasr] – By the night when it passes, Q89:4 should have a different mode of reading which is adopted by other Qurʾan reciters: [wal-lajli ʔiḍa: jasri:] because the spelling of the word [jasri] is with a final letter /i/. However, the sound /i/ is deleted in order to achieve rhythmical phonetic symmetry and phonetic consonance in Q89 which is dominated by *ayah*-final words that end with the sound /r/, 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 /n/ in order to achieve symphonious phonetic consonance with the other *ayah*-final words (al-kafirun – disbelievers) and [taʔbudu: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:/. The reason for this phonetically-oriented mode of reading is to achieve rhythmical phonetic symmetry with the overall phonetic environment of the surah where *ayah*-final words predominantly end with the sound /n/ as in Surat al-Shuʾraʾ.

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 juʔḍanu lahum fajaʔta ʔru:n] – They will be given no chance to offer any excuses, Q77:36) where the word [fajaʔta ʔru:n] – to offer excuses) ends with a nasal sound /n/ rather than dropping the sound /n/ to get [fajaʔta ʔru]. The major reason for having [fajaʔta ʔru:n] with a final sound /n/ is to achieve rhythmical 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: juqḍa: ʔalajhim fajamu:tu:] – They will neither be finished off by death, Q35:36), the word [fajamu: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] [fajamu:tu:n]. Instead, this word has undergone phonetic ellipsis where the sound /n/ is dropped in order to achieve rhythmical 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 Qurʾanic exegesis founded by Ibn Masʾud (d. 32/653) as a new exegetical method in Qurʾanic 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-qiraʾah al-tafsiriyyah), 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 Qurʾanic 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 [ʔatʔharu] – purer) which may occur in the nominative case: [hunna ʔatʔharu 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 [ʔtʔharu] can also occur in the accusative case: [hunna ʔtʔhara lakum] – They (my daughters) are purer for you, i.e., the phonetic change is represented by the short vowel /a/, i.e., (fathah) at the end of the word. Similarly, the verb [jaḍi:q] – to be depressed) can either end with a short vowel /u/ as [jaḍi:qu]; thus, we get: [jaḍi:qu sʔadri] – I shall be depressed, Q26:13), or end with a short vowel [a] as [jaḍi:q]; thus, we get: [jaḍi:qa sʔadri] – I shall be depressed.

(2) The word form remains the same but the meaning changes due to change in its grammatical function, as in: [rabbana ba:ʔid bajna 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: [rabbana ba:ʔada bajna 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: [ʔunḍʔur ʔila al-ʔiḍʔa:mi kajfa nunʔizuha:], Q2:259) where the expression [nunʔizuha:] 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 [nunʔiruha:], and the meaning becomes: (Look at the bones how

We re-create them). Other examples of change in spelling are: [māliki] – master, Q1:4) and [maliki] – (king), [annabijju – the Prophet, 3:68) and [annabi:ʔu] – the prophet), [almunādi:] – the caller, Q50:41) and [almunadi – the caller, and [al-sirāt^ʔ] - path, Q1:5) and [al-s^ʔirāt^ʔ] - path.

(4) The doubling of consonants, as in: [jat^ʔhurna], Q2:222), we have the voiceless pharyngealized alveolar stop [t^ʔ] 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 [t^ʔ] and the voiceless glottal fricative [h]: [jat^ʔʔahrna]; thus, the meaning is: (their menstruation has finished and they have taken a complete bath). Similarly, in Q15:15, the expression [sukkirat] – to have been 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^ʔlum) with a single [k] as [sakarāt] – to neutralize something, to stop it from functioning) and the initial letter [s] is given the short vowel [a]. Similarly, in: [tusaqit^ʔ] – 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: [tassaqat^ʔ] – (to 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: [alʕihn almanfu:] – fluffed up wool, Q101:5) where [alʕihn] occurs but in another mode of reading, the synonymous expression [as^ʔs^ʔu:f] is used instead: [as^ʔs^ʔu:f almanfu:] – (fluffed up wool). Also, in: [fas^ʔaw] – to proceed, Q62:9) is replaced by a synonym [fam^ʔdu:] – (to go). In a similar vein, [ʔun^ʔdu:ru:na] – to wait for us, Q57:13) has three other modes of reading which employ the synonyms [ʔamhilu:na] – to grant us a respite), [ʔax^ʔxi:ru:na] – (to delay us), and (arqibuna – to wait for us). Also, Q19:90: [taka:du alssama:wa:tu jatafat^ʔʔarna minhu] – (The heavens almost rupture therefrom) has an irregular mode of reading due to the replacement of [tatafat^ʔʔarna] – to rupture) by its synonym [jatas^ʔaddaʕna] – to crack, rupture): [taka:du alssama:wa:tu jatas^ʔaddaʕna minhu]. Similarly, Q36:26 has two distinct modes of reading: [in ka:nat ʔilla s^ʔaihatan wa:hidatan] - There was just one blast, Q36:29) where we have [s^ʔaihatan] – (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:nat ʔilla (zaqjatan) wa:hidatan] - There was just one loud shout). Similarly, in Q15:15 [sukkirat ʔabs^ʔa:runa] – our eyes have been dazzled), the verb [sukkirat] – to be dazzled) is replaced by the synonym [suh^ʔhirat] – 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: [t^ʔalh mandu:d] – clustered acacia, Q56:29) where we have [t^ʔalh - acacia, bananas) but in another mode of reading this expression changes to [t^ʔalʕ] – (fruit); thus, we get: [t^ʔalʕ mandu:d] – (clustered fruit).

(7) The foregrounding and backgrounding of an expression, as in: [dʒa:ʔat sakratu almawti bilhaqqi] – 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: [dʒa:ʔat sakratu lhaqqi bilmawti] – (The intoxication of the truth will bring death). Also, in: [fajaqtulu:na wajuqtalu:n] – They kill and are killed, Q9:111) and [fajuqtalu:na wajaqtulu:n] – (They are killed and kill), and in: [faʔaḏa:qaha aḏahu liba:sal dʒu:ʕi walʕawfi] – God made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear, Q16:112) whose alternative mode of reading is: [faʔaḏa:qaha aḏahu liba:sal ʕawfi wal dʒu:ʕi] - God made it taste the envelopment of fear and hunger.)

(8) The addition, deletion, and substitution by synonyms, as in: [θumma ʕalaqna nut^ʔfata ʕalaqatan faʕalaqnal ʕalaqata muḏʕatan faʕalaqnal muḏʕata ʕiḏ^ʔa:man fakasawnal ʕiḏ^ʔa:ma laḥman] – 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 [ʕalaqa] - to make, create) is replaced by the synonym [dʒaʕala],

(ii) the conjunction [fa] – (then) in [faʕalaqna] is replaced by the synonymous conjunction [θumma] – (then),

(iii) the addition of [waʕas^ʔaban] – (and nerves),

(iv) the addition of a co-referential pronoun [-hu] – (it) referring to [ʕas^ʔaban] – (nerves), and

(v) the deletion of [alʕiðʕa:ma] – (the bones).

The new mode of reading is: [θumma dʒaʕalna nuʕfata ʕalaqatan faʕʒaʕalnal ʕalaqata muʕʕatan θumma dʒaʕalnal muʕʕata ʕiðʕa:man waʕasʕaban fakasawnahu lahman] – 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: [ʔinna ha:ða ʔaʕi: lahu: tiʕun watiʕu:na naʕjatan walija naʕʕʕatun] - Indeed, my brother has ninety-nine ewes and I have one ewe, Q38:23) but in a different mode of reading, we have: [inna ha:ða aʕi: lahu: tiʕun watiʕu:na naʕjatan (unθa:) walija naʕʕʕatun] - Indeed, my brother has ninety-nine (female) ewes and I have one ewe) where the adjective (unθa:) – (female) is added for stress. Also, in: [ʔammal ʕula:mu faka:na ʔabwa:hu muʔminaini] - As for the boy, his parents were believers, Q18:80) but the alternative mode of reading adds the expression [ka:firan] – (he was a disbeliever) to specify the noun [alʕula:mu] – (the boy) and the addition of [waka:na] – and were); thus, we get: [ʔammal ʕula:mu faka:na (ka:firan) waka:ana ʔabwa:hu muʔminaini] - 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: [wama: ʕamilathu ʔajdi:him] – and what their hands have made, Q36:35) whose alternative mode of reading deletes the letter [hu] of [ʕamilathu] – to make); thus, we get: [wama ʕamilat ajdi:him] – (and what their hands have made).

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

(10) Change in morphological form, as in: [jaʕriʕu:n] – (they are building, Q7:137) whose verb form is [ʕarusha] – to build) but the other mode of reading is: [jaʕruʕu:n – they are building) whose verb form is [ʕariʕa] – 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) *alidghām alkabīr*

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 [arraḥīmi mālik] (Q1:4-3). In this example, the vowel [i] is dropped and [m] assimilates with [m] to form a geminated [m], [arraḥīmmālik] 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 [manāsikakum] (Q2:200), Abu 'Amr geminates them as [kk], [manāsikkum]. Abu 'Amr also reads phrases such as [fajakīdu laka kajda] (Q12:5) as geminated /kk/ [fajakīdu lakkajda]. 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 *idghām saghīr* without nasalization whether 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 *Almutamāthlain* (two adjacent sounds)

Almutmāthlain 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 [ġ]), 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 [tʰ] across word boundaries as in [ʔaθqalat daʕawa] becomes [ʔaθqaladdaʕawa] (Q7:189).
[wa qalat tʰāʔifatun] becomes [wa qalatʰ tʰaʔifatun] (Q3:72).
- (ii) All of the *Qurra'* agree to assimilate [ð] when followed by its pharyngealized counterpart [ðʕ] as [ʔi ð ðʕalamu:] which becomes [ʔiðʕ ðʕalamu:].
- (iii) All the *Qurra'* agree to assimilate the sun [l] with the dentals, alveolars and postalveolars as in [alʕams] [aldi:n] [alnafs] which become [aʕʕams] [addi:n] [annafs] respectively.
- (iv) Al-Kisāi assimilates [l] when followed by [n] as in [bal nattibiʕu] which becomes [ban nattibiʕu] (Q2:170).
- (v) Ibn Amer, Hamza and Al-Kisāi assimilate [d] with [ð] as in [faqad ðalla] which becomes [faqadð ðalla] (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 ʔala], (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 [ʔi] as in [wa la jaʔba aʕhadāʔu ʔiðā mā duʕū] (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 aʕhadāʔu jiðā mā duʕū].
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 ʕhadāʔa ʔiðhadāra] (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 ʕhadāʔa jiðhadāra].
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 ðʕāʔa ʔummatan rasūluḥā] (Q23:44), 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 ðʕāʔa wummatan rasūluḥā].
5. When the glottal stop [ʔi] at the end of a word is followed by another word beginning with the glottal stop [ʔa] as in [man fissamāʔi ʔan] (Q67:16), the first glottal stop is pronounced as a full-fledged glottal stop while the second glottal stop is pronounced as a palatal approximant [j], [man fissamāʔi jan]. The phonological process of *tashīl alhamza* is in the *Qira'āt* of Nafi', Ibn Kathīr, and Abu 'Amr; and the reason behind this phonological change for these readers is that the Arabs find it difficult to pronounce two adjacent glottal stops without changing the second one to an easier mode of reading. Ibn 'Amir and the readers of Alkufa read in two full-fledged adjacent glottal stops.

5.4 *Alibdāl (substitution)*

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

- 1) Qunbul, as transmitted from Ibn Kathir, reads [asʕirātʕ] as [asirātʕ] in [ʔihdina asʕiratʕ almustakīm] (Q1: 6) where he substitutes /sʕ/ by [s].
- 2) Hamza reads [alsʕirātʕ] as [alzʕirātʕ] in [ʔihdina asʕirātʕ almustakīm] (Q1:6) where he substitutes [sʕ] by [zʕ].
- 3) Abdu 'Amr reads [wa ʔiðā rrusulu ʔuqittat] (Q77:11) as [wa ʔitðā rrusulu 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 ʔiða stajʔasa arrusulu] (Q12: 110). Albazzi lengthens the first vowel [a] and drops the glottal stop [ʔ] in the word [stajʔasa] which becomes [stājasa]. Table 2. shows the possible metathesis examples in the Qur'an based on the modes of reading.

Table 2. Metathesis in the seven Qira'at

	Albazzi	Others	
[tajʔasu:]	[tājasu:]	[tajʔasu:]	Q12, 87
[stajʔasa]	[stājasa]	[stajʔasa]	Q12, 110
[stajʔasu:]	[stājasu:]	[stajʔasu:]	Q12, 80
[jajʔas]	[jājas]	[jajʔas]	Q12, 31
[đijāʔan]	[đīāan]	[đijāʔan]	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] \longrightarrow [manāmana] (Q3:99)
 [wabilʔāχirati] \longrightarrow [wabilāχirati] (Q2:4)

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

- [alqurʔān] \longrightarrow [alqurān] (Q17:9)

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

- [difʔ] \longrightarrow [dif] (Q16:5)
 [milʔ] \longrightarrow [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 [tafaʕʕal] or [tafaʕal] as geminated [tt] in 31 positions in the Qur'an as in

- [walā tajammamu:] \longrightarrow [walāttajmmamu:] (Q2:267)
 [ʔinna allaḏi:na tawaffāhum] \longrightarrow [ʔinna allaḏi:na ttawaffāhum] (Q4:97)
 [walā tadʒassasu:] \longrightarrow [walā ttadʒassasu:] (49:12)

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

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

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

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

- [baʕīran] \longrightarrow [baʕīran] (Q:14)
 [mīrāθ] \longrightarrow [mīrāθ] (Q57:10)

The above rule will have the following form:



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

- (i) [alχijaratu] (Q28:68) and [jarawna] (Q25:22) because [r] is separated from [j] by a vowel
- (ii) [fī rajb] (Q22:4) because [r] occurs in the beginning of a word and followed by an open vowel.
- (iii) [ruʔu:sihim] (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 [āṛāʕajhi] (Q18:18), [ħasʕirat] (Q4:90), [ʕākiran] (Q16:121). However, [r] in the following verses is not depharyngealized because the close vowel [i] and the [r] occur across word boundaries.

[ʕala alkuffāri ruhamāʔu] (Q48:29), [bi raʕīd] (Q11:97), [li ruqijjika] (Q17:93).

3) When [ra] is preceded by a consonant in the medial position (except sʕ, tʕ 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. Alraʕāt in the seven Qiraʕat

	Warsh	Others	Surah
[wizrak]	[wizrak]	[wizrak]	Q94:2
[almihrāb]	[almihrāb]	[almihrāb]	Q3:39
[a ḏḏkra]	[a ḏḏkra]	[a ḏḏkra]	Q43f:5
[sihrun mubi:n]	[sihrun mubi:n]	[sihrun mubi:n]	Q6:7
[misʕran]	[misʕran]	[misʕran]	Q2:61
[fitʕrataḥāh]	[fitʕrataḥāh]	[fitʕrataḥāh]	Q30:30
[falḥāmilāti wiqra]	[falḥāmilāti wiqra]	[falḥāmilāti wiqra]	Q51:2

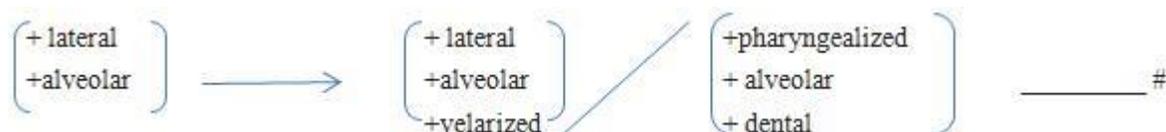
5.9 Allamāt (the voiced alveolar laterals)

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

- 1) When [l] is preceded by one of the following pharyngealized consonants: [sʕ, ḏʕ or tʕ], it is velarized. However, When [l] is followed by [sʕ, ḏʕ or tʕ], it is de-velarized.

Table 4. Allamāt in the seven Qiraʕat

Warsh	Others	Surah
[asʕalāta]	[asʕalāta]	Q29:45
[ḏʕalamahum]	[ḏʕalamahum]	Q16:33
[altʕalāq]	[altʕalāq]	Q2:227
[lasaḥatʕahum]	[lasallatʕahum]	Q4:90
[fastaḥlaḏʕa]	[fastaḥlaḏʕa]	Q48:29
[waljtalatʕaf]	[waljtalatʕaf]	Q18:19



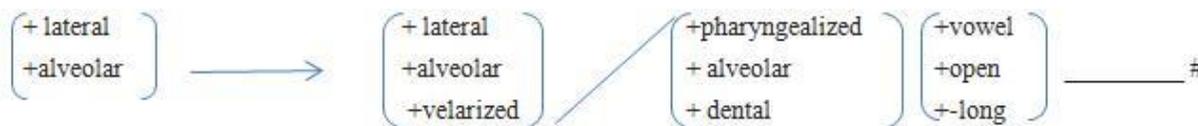


Table 5. Allamāt in the seven Qira’at

Others	Warsh	Sūrah
[as ^s alata]	[as ^s alata]	Q29:45
[fas ^l alχit ^ā b]	[fas ^l alχit ^ā b]	Q38:20
[wa ma: δ ^ā alamu:na]	[wa ma δ ^ā alamu:na]	Q2:57
[juδ ^l lamu:n]	[juδ ^l lamu:n]	Q4:49
[fant ^ā alaqu:]	[fant ^ā alaqu:]	Q68:23
[hatta mat ^l laʃil fadʒr]	[hatta mat ^l laʃil fadʒr]	Q97:5
[fisālan]	[fisālan]	Q2:233
[ʔafat ^ā āla]	[ʔafat ^ā āla]	Q20:86

However, when [l] is followed by a close back vowel [u], it is devalarized as in [laδ^āallu:], (Q30:51), and [tat^lluʃ] (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.

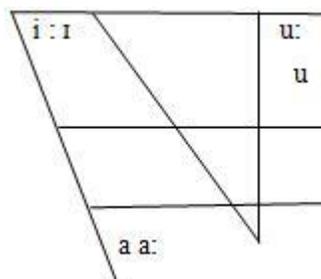


Figure 1. Arabic vowels

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

	Qalūn	Ibn 'Amir	'Asim	Wars h	Abu 'Amr	'A	Hamza	Alkis āi	Ibn Kathīr
alimālah alsughra	√	√	√	√	√				X
alimālah alkubra					√	√	√		X

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* cannot be 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], [ʕi:ḏ] as [ʕūiḏ], (Q11:44), [ḏʕi:ʔa] as [ḏʕūiʔa] (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] (Almulk:27) with *Ishmām* as shown in the table 7.

Table 7. Al-ishmām in the seven Qira'at

	Hishām	Al-Kisāi	Ibn Thakwān	Nafi'	Others
[qi:la]	[qūila]	[qūila]	[qi:la]	[qi:la]	[qi:la]
[ʕi:ḏ]	[ʕūiḏ]	[ʕūiḏ]	[ʕi:ḏ]	[ʕi:ḏ]	[ʕi:ḏ]
[ḏʕi:ʔa]	[ḏʕūiʔa]	[ḏʕūiʔa]	[ḏʕi:ʔa]	[ḏʕi:ʔa]	[ḏʕi:ʔa]
[si:qa]	[sūiqa]	[sūiqa]	[suiqa]	[si:qa]	[si:qa]
[hi:la]	[hūila]	[hūila]	[hūila]	[hi:la]	[hi:la]
[si:ʔa]	[sūiʔa]	[sūiʔa]	[sūiʔa]	[si:ʔa]	[si:ʔa]
[si:ʔat]	[sūiʔat]	[sūiʔat]	[sūiʔat]	[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 [fatu:bu: ʔila: bariʔikum] (Q2:54) as [bariʔikum] 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 [i]. Al-Dūri transmitted from Abu 'Amr reads the vowel [u] with *ikhtilās* in [jaʔmurūikum], [jaʔmurūhum], (Q7:157), [jansʕurūikum], (Q67:20), [juʕʕirūikum] (Q6:109), and [bāriʔikum] (Q2:54). In all these examples, the vowel [u] that follows [r] is read as an extra short and less rounded vowel [ū]. Similarly, the vowel [i] that follows [r] in the last example is read as an extra short [ī] according to Al-Dūri, transmitter of Abu 'Amr.

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

Verse	Al-Duri	Others
[jaʔmurukum]	[jaʔmurūikum]	[jaʔmurukum]
[jaʔmuruhum]	[jaʔmurūhum]	[jaʔmuruhum]
[jansʕurukum]	[jansʕurūikum]	[jansʕurukum]
[juʕʕirukum]	[juʕʕirūikum]	[juʕʕirukum]
[bāriʔikum]	[bāriʔūikum]	[bāriʔikum]

6.4 Alrawm

Alrawm is the process of lip gesture alluding to the vowel in the pause position with an extra short vowel [ī], [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 [i] as a trace of the dropped vowel in the pause position.

Table 9. Alrawm in the seven Qira'āt

	Hamza		Hisham		Others
[annabaʔ]	[annabaʔi]	[annaba]	[annabaʔi]	[annaba]	[annabaʔ]
[hamaʔ]	[hamaʔi]	[hama]	[hamaʔi]	[hama]	[hamaʔ]

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 [i:], [a:], [u:]. 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 [a:] or extra long [a:]. Warsh and Hamza read the *muttasil* as an extra long vowel [a:], while the rest of the Qurraa read the *muttasil* as a long vowel [a:]. Warsh and Hamza also lengthen the *munfasil* as an extra long vowel [a:], while 'Asim, Ibn 'Amer and Al-Kisā'i read the *munfasil* as a long vowel [a:]. Qalūn, Ibn Kathīr, Al-Sūsī and Al-Dūri read the *munfasil* as a half long vowel [aː].

Table 10. Vowel Lengthening in the seven Qira'at. (v::) extra-long; (Ishba') (v:) long, (tawassut), (v˘) half long (qasr)

	Warsh	Hamza	'Asim	Ibn 'Amir	Al-Kisāi	Qalūn	Ibn Kathīr	Al-Sūsī	Al-Dūri
Almuttasil	v::	v::	v:	v:	v:	v˘	v˘	v˘	v˘
Almunfasil	v::	v::	v:	v:	v:	v˘	v˘	v˘	v˘

(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 [rabbihī] (Q2:285) and [ṣalajhi] (Q2:158).

6.6 Vowel Elision

Abu 'Amr reads [rusulunā] (Q57:25) and [birusulinā] (Q57:27) as [ruslūnā] and [biruslīnā] respectively by deleting the vowel that follows [s]. He also reads [rusulukum] (Q40:50) and [rusuluhum] (Q40:83) as [ruslūkum] and [ruslūhum] respectively by deleting the vowel that follows [s]. However, if the word [rusul] is attached to the third person singular in the object case [rusulihī] 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 [ʔuḏun] (Q9:61) and [alʔuḏun bil ʔuḏun] (Q5:45) and [ʔuḏunaihi] (Q31:7) by deleting the vowel that follows [ḏ].

Table 11. Vowel Elision in the seven Qira'at

	Abu 'Amr	Nafe'	Others
[rusulunā]	[ruslnā]	[rusulunā]	[rusulunā]
[birusulinā]	[biruslinā]	[birusulinā]	[birusulinā]
[rusulukum]	[ruslukum]	[rusulukum]	[rusulukum]
[rusuluhum]	[rusluhum]	[rusuluhum]	[rusuluhum]
[rusul]	[rusul]	[rusul]	[rusul]
[rusulihī]	[rusulihī]	[rusulihī]	[rusulihī]
[subulana]	[sublana]	[subulana]	[subulana]
[ʔuðun]	[ʔuðun]	[ʔuðn]	[ʔuðun]
[alʔuðun bil ʔuðun]	[alʔuðun bil ʔuðun]	[alʔuðn bil ʔuðn]	[alʔuðun bil ʔuðun]
[ʔuðunaihi]	[ʔuðunaihi]	[ʔuðnaihi]	[ʔuðunaihi]

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 [fuʕu:l], and [j] is the medial consonant, the first vowel [u] will be changed into [i] as in [buju:t] will be read as [biju:t] (Q33:53), [ʕuju:n] as [ʕiju:n] (Al-Shu'rāʕ:147), [alʕuju:b] as [alʕiju:b] (Q5:109), [ʃuju:ʒ] as [ʃiju:ʒ] (Q40:67) respectively. Qalūn, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Amir, Shu'bah, Al-Kisā'i, and Hamza read [buju:t] with vowel [i] [biju:t], and others with vowel [u] [buju:t]. Hamza and Shu'bah read [alʕiju:b] while the others read [alʕuju:b]. Ibn Kathīr, Shu'bah, Hamza, Al-Kisā'i and Ibn Thakwān read [ʕiju:n] and [ʃiju:ʒ] with the vowel [i] but the others read them with the vowel [u] [ʕuju:n] and [ʃuju:ʒ]. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Thakwān, Hamza and Al-Kisā'i read [dʒuju:bihinna] (Q24:31) with the vowel [i] while the others read [dʒuju:bihinna] with the vowel [u].

Table 12. Vowel Change in the seven Qira'at

Qalūn	Ibn Kathīr	Ibn 'Amir	Shu'bah	Al-Kisā'i	Hamza	Ibn Thakwān	Others
[biju:t]	[biju:t]	[biju:t]	[biju:t]	[biju:t]	[biju:t]	[buju:t]	[buju:t]
[alʕuju:b]	[alʕuju:b]	[alʕuju:b]	[alʕiju:b]	[alʕuju:b]	[alʕiju:b]	[alʕuju:b]	[alʕuju:b]
[ʕuju:n]	[ʕiju:n]	[ʕuju:n]	[ʕiju:n]	[ʕiju:n]	[ʕiju:n]	[ʕiju:n]	[ʕuju:n]
[ʃuju:ʒ]	[ʃiju:ʒ]	[ʃuju:ʒ]	[ʃiju:ʒ]	[ʃiju:ʒ]	[ʃiju:ʒ]	[ʃiju:ʒ]	[ʃuju:ʒ]
[dʒuju:bihinna]	[dʒiju:bihinna]	[dʒuju:bihinna]	[dʒuju:bihinna]	[dʒiju:bihinna]	[dʒiju:bihinna]	[dʒiju:bihinna]	[dʒuju:bihinna]

- (ii) Hafs, Hamza and Al-Kisā'i read [dʒiθijja] (Q19:68), [ʕitijja] (Q19:69), and [sʕilijja] (Q19:70), with the vowel [i], while the others read them with the vowel [u] [dʒuθijja] [ʕutijja] and [sʕulijja].

Table 13. Vowel Change in the seven Qira'at

	Hafs, Hamza and Al-Kisā'i	Others
[dʒiθijja]	[dʒiθijja]	[dʒuθijja]
[ʕitijja]	[ʕitijja]	[ʕutijja]
[sʕilijja]	[sʕilijja]	[sʕulijja]

- (iii) Hamz and Al-Kisā'i read [faliʔimmihī] (Q4:11) and [fi: ʔimmihā] (Q28:59) with the vowel [i] after the glottal stop [ʔ], while the others read them with the vowel [u] [faliʔummihī] and [fi: ʔummihā].

Table 14. Vowel Change in the seven Qira'at

	Hamza, Alkisasi	Others
[faliʔummihi]	[faliʔimmihi]	[faliʔummihi]
[fi: ʔummiha]	and [fi: ʔimmiha]	[fi: ʔummiha]

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 [ʔ] 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 [r]), 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 [ī], [ā], or [ū]), (v) vowel lengthening, (vi) vowel elision, and (vii) vowel change.

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