

Criticism towards Quranic Text with Mutawatir Status

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Abstract

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

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

Introduction

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

of the details as it was being practiced by the *qira'at*, *fiqh* and *uṣul* scholars (Al-Jazari, 1980; Al-Nuwayri, 1986).

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

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

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

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

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

Results and Discussions

Analysis on the criticisms of *Qira'at Mushkilah* were found out that the confusing polemic was coming from the confused Muslim scholars. Besides that, the rejection factors were existed from the scholars who seek for the mistakes in the Quran and studied about the criticisms of the Quran.

Rejection Factors of Quranic text with *Mutawatir* status (*Qira'at Mutawātirah*) in *Qira'at Mushkilah*

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

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

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

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. It was based on the repetition of the *ḥurūf jarr* (prepositions), for example: “تساءلون به وبالأرحام”.
2. The method was used in poetry and the scholars (al-Zamakhshari and others) were accepting to set Arabic language with two unknown verses. However, the same

method was not accepted to be used with the *Qirā'āt* Imam Hamzah and Mujahid eventhough both of them were the Salaf scholars in the Qur'ānic knowledge.

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

Qur'ānic *rasm* (Qur'ānic orthography) and Lack of Arabic Language Proficiency

Allah Almighty says in Chapter al-An'am, verse 137:

وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ

The perplexing in this verse was at the *Qirā'āt* Imam Ibn 'Amir, which was at the recitation with diacritical *kasra* [single line symbol below a letter] in the word, “شركائهم”. According to al-Zamakhshari (n.d), *rasm* (orthography) with the shape of *ya'* at the word was the reason for Ibn 'Amir to recite the word with *majrurr* (diacritical *kasra* [single line symbol below a letter]) recitation differ to those who recite it with *ḍammah* (waw symbol above a letter: وُ) “شركاؤهم”. Furthermore, the *rasm* (orthography) of the word was in the same form in his *muṣhaf* (Qur'ānic manuscript).

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

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

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

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

Quranic *dabt* (Quranic diacritical marks or symbols)

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

Sha'ban (1999) stated that Goldziher asserted the disagreements in *qirā'āt* related to the Arabic *khaṭ* (calligraphy) that was used in the 'Uthmānī *mushaf* ('Uthmānī manuscript). There were no Qur'ānic diacritical marks or symbols which shown the *irāb* (grammatical status; the correct diacritical marks to determine the meaning of words). According to the orientalist, the disagreements happened because there were no proper diacritical marks or symbols. The *qirā'āt* was developed since the era of Sayyidina 'Uthmān RA.

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

The *qirā'at* disagreement was based on the narration and not from the diacritical marks or symbols, because if many type of *qirā'at* can be created from the *rasm* (orthography), there will be no used the teaching of the *qāriy'* with every delivered *mushaf*

(Shukri et al., 2001). The clear rejection towards this critique was the existence of many verbal languages in the *mushaf*. The orthography can be read with many recitation, however the *qurra'* (Quranic readers) disagreement was only in the certain part of the recitations. For example, “ملك” was narrated in few part in the Quran. The first part in the Chapter al-Fatihah, the *qurrā'* (Quranic readers) recited it with two different recitations, with *l* and without *l*. Meanwhile, there were no disagreement in other part of the Quran, and the word “ملك” can be recited with many type of recitation based on the orthography or Arabic linguistic (Shukri et al., 2001). Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi al-Nahwi (n.d) listed eight types of recitation for the word “ملك”, but only two types were used for recitation. Therefore, it showed that the *qira'at* narrated by *al-mushafahah* and *al-sama'* (*talaqqi* method) and not based on the orthography or calligraphy of the *mushaf* (al-Qadi, n.d).

Fabrication of *Qira'at* Narration Chain

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

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

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

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

This matter was clear to show that Qatadah admitted that the killing was real as stated by the exegetes. Therefore, the interpretation by Qatadah was opposed from his *qira'at*. Based on the given evidences, the *qira'at* by Qatadah was a forgery or fraud. If the *qira'at* was valid, his interpretation would be same as Goldziher but he interpreted the killing was real as

mentioned by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir. Therefore, it was proven that his *qira'at* was incorrect and fraud (Qadi, n.d).

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