

**A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF INFORMATIVE, INTERROGATIVE, AND
DECLARATIVE UTTERANCES IN TAWJEEH AL-QIRA'AT AL-
MUTAWATIRAH**

***UMA ANÁLISE RETÓRICA DE DISPOSIÇÕES INFORMATIVAS,
INTERROGATIVAS E DECLARATIVAS EM TAWJEEH AL-QIRA'AT AL-
MUTAWATIRAH***

***UN ANÁLISIS RETÓRICO DE DECLARACIONES INFORMATIVAS,
INTERROGATIVAS Y DECLARATIVAS EN TAWJEEH AL-QIRA'AT AL-
MUTAWATIRAH***

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ABSTRACT: Research into *Al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah* (authentic modes of recitation) is very limited. This paper, therefore, aims to explore the rhetoric of *al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah* in light of Arabic rhetorical manifestations. Such manifestations include informative, interrogative, and declarative utterances. The researchers employed an analytical approach to analyze the instances of selected *al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah* in the Quran, whereby such utterances were carefully examined. The study revealed that the rhetoric of *al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah* manifests in their meanings. The meanings of *Qira'at* can be deepened when we attempt to figure out their underlying rhetorical manifestations. Additionally, the hidden meanings of *Qira'at* can be discovered when we combine the meanings of *Qira'at*. It was envisaged that this study could advance our knowledge regarding the role of different modes of citations in understanding the meanings of the Quran.

KEYWORDS: Arabic utterances. Al-Qira'at al-Mutawatirah. Rhetoric.

RESUMO: *A pesquisa sobre al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah (modos autênticos de recitação) é muito limitada. Este artigo, portanto, tem como objetivo explorar a retórica de al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah à luz das manifestações retóricas árabes. Tais manifestações incluem enunciados informativos, interrogativos e declarativos. Os pesquisadores empregaram uma abordagem analítica para analisar as instâncias selecionadas de al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah no Alcorão, em que tais declarações foram cuidadosamente examinadas. O estudo revelou que a retórica de al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah se manifesta em seus significados. Os significados de Qira'at podem ser aprofundados quando tentamos descobrir suas manifestações retóricas subjacentes. Além disso, os significados ocultos de Qira'at podem ser descobertos quando combinamos os*

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significados de Qira'at. Previu-se que este estudo pudesse avançar nosso conhecimento sobre o papel dos diferentes modos de citações na compreensão dos significados do Alcorão.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Expressões árabes. Al-Qira'at al-Mutawatirah. Retórica.*

RESUMEN: *La investigación sobre Al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah (modos auténticos de recitación) es muy limitada. Este artículo, por lo tanto, tiene como objetivo explorar la retórica de al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah a la luz de las manifestaciones retóricas árabes. Tales manifestaciones incluyen enunciados informativos, interrogativos y declarativos. Los investigadores emplearon un enfoque analítico para analizar los casos de al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah seleccionados en el Corán, mediante el cual tales declaraciones fueron examinadas cuidadosamente. El estudio reveló que la retórica de al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah se manifiesta en sus significados. Los significados de Qira'at pueden profundizarse cuando intentamos descifrar sus manifestaciones retóricas subyacentes. Además, los significados ocultos de Qira'at se pueden descubrir cuando combinamos los significados de Qira'at. Se prevé que este estudio podría avanzar en nuestro conocimiento sobre el papel de los diferentes modos de citas en la comprensión de los significados del Corán.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Expresiones árabes. Al-Qira'at al-Mutawatirah. Retórica.*

Introduction

Informative, interrogative, and declarative utterances are crucial in understanding the context of a statement. As opposed to an interrogative statement, an informative statement refers to a statement that is either true or false in itself, for example, “knowledge is useful”. In this instance, usefulness is attributed to knowledge. This attribute is a fact and hence does not require evidence (AL-HASHIMI, 1980. p. 55). Informative utterances in the divine scriptures, such as the words of Allah and Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him), must be believed. Therefore, some research scholars have defined an informative utterance as “a statement that is potentially true if it coincides with reality and or according to the informer’s belief; it is false, however, if it does not coincide with the reality, or it is described as such according to the informer’s belief” (WAHBAH; AL MUHANDIS, 1979, p. 88). The declarative utterance, on the other hand, is a statement that cannot be described as true or false (QASIM; DIB, 2003, p. 282).

Linguistically, the word *Balaghah* (rhetoric) has the base form of the word *Balaghah* which means to reach something. You often say I *Balaghtu* (I reached) when you reached a particular place. In addition, the word *Bulaghah* means the livelihood level a person aspires for. Similarly, a person can be “described as *Baleegh* i.e. eloquent when they reach the required level of *Balaghah*” (IBN FARIS, 1979, p. 301-302). There are various branches of Arabic

rhetoric and each branch includes several types. In this paper, we only focused on four types of Arabic utterances, namely informative, interrogative and declarative. Quranic *Qira'at* (modes of recitations) are closely related to Arabic and Islamic studies branches. Some sciences are based on the modes of recitations, and thus, we can find that various forms of Arabic rhetoric are derived from *al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah* (authentic modes of recitation). This analysis, therefore, focuses on informative, interrogative, and declarative Arabic utterances in *al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah*.

Results and Discussion

Informative and Interrogative Statements

There were several forms of *al-Qira'at al-Mutawtirah* involving informative and interrogative utterances. Many scholars who carefully examined these two types of utterances believe that both informative and interrogative forms can have interrogative meaning depending on the context. Therefore, the mode of recitation which involves informative utterance can be informative but can also have declarative meaning (ABDELGELIL *et al.*, 2021a; 2021b; 2021c; 2021d). Thus, it is recommended to read both modes of recitation to reflect on their meaning and discover rhetorical interpretations that can be figured from this diversity (ABDELGELIL *et al.*, 2020a; 2020b; AL-JAMAL, 2005). For example, Allah says in the Quran “They said, “Are you indeed Yusuf? He said, “I am Yusuf” (QURAN 12: 90). There are two modes of recitations for this verse; one mode involves informative utterance, whereas the other is interrogative. Ibn Katheer and bu Ja’afar read this verse in its informative form *Innaka* “You are” whereas the rest of the reciters (or scholars) read it in its interrogative form i.e. “Are you?” (IBN AL-JAZARI, [21--?], p. 372).

Qira'at scholars commented on each *Qira'ah*. They mentioned that the informative meaning of the verse “you are Yusuf” can be suggested from Prophet Yusuf’s (Peace be upon him) reply “I am Yusuf.” Had they questioned him, he would have answered either positively or negatively. However, because the brother of Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him) did not recognize him, he confirmed to them that he is Josef (IBN KHALAWAYH, 1981, p. 198). As regards the other mode of recitation which involves interrogative utterance, “the first letter *Hamzah* implies interrogation whereas the second *Hamzah* is part of the particle *inna*” (IBN KHALAWAYH, 1981, p. 198). This, for instance, can be analogical to the statement “you are in the house” (IBN ZANJALAH, 2014, p. 363). In this regard, Al-Jamal (2005) indicates that *Qira'at* scholars have approached the easy way when discussing the two modes of recitation of

this verse. In this approach, the diversity of modes of recitation does not necessarily entail diverse meaning, nor does it reveal the secrets of *Qira'at*, since the diversity of meaning shows the inimitability of *Qira'at* (AL-JAMAL, 2005, p. 383).

Regarding the *Tafseer* references that deal with rhetoric, we found that Al-Jamal's (2005) view is quite accurate. Imam Zamachshari, for instance, made a good statement on the informative reading of this verse. He stated that Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him) made an exclamatory statement as he repeated confirmation. If someone asked how the brothers of Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him) recognized him, the answer would be they felt that he is Yusuf because they could guess that from his voice and they were also quite sure that the statements can only be made by someone who belongs to Ibrahim's religion rather than a king from Egypt. However, there are some other views on how they could recognize their brother. Some *Tafseer* scholars stated that the brothers of Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him) could recognize him after he smiled and they could see his teeth. Others mentioned that they could only know him after he had taken the crown off his head and they knew the mark on his head which is similar to his parents' Ya'qoob and Sarah. Another possible question might be why Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him) replied to them about himself and his brother by saying "I am Yusuf and this is my brother" even though they knew his younger brother? In this regard, Zamachshari indicates that this is a clarification of their question (AL-ZAMACHSHARI, 1987, p. 502).

It is worth mentioning that informative utterances can be made through interrogation. For example, Allah (S.W.T) says "And this is the favor with which you reproach me, that you have enslaved the Children of Israel" (QURAN 26: 22). In this verse, Prophet Musa (Peace be upon him) replied to Pharaoh, "this is a favor" but it is interrogative "Is this a favor? Therefore, Ibn Katheer's view on this is quite right that both modes of recitation are correct (AL-FARSI, 1987, p. 501). Another example is where both modes of recitations can be used; one may say that the brothers of Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him) certainly recognized their brother. In this sense, the informative mode is clear. When Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him) saw their miserable conditions, he told them that he is Yusuf (AL-JAMAL, 2005, p. 384). Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him) talked to his brothers in a brotherly manner rather than reproaching them (AL-ZAMACHSHARI, 1987, p. 501).

Informative and Declarative Statements

The rhetorical manifestations of informative and declarative statements are reflected in *al-Qira'at al-Mutawatirah*. For example, Allah (S.W.T) says, “And when it became clear to him, he said, “I know that Allah has power over all things” (QURAN 2: 259). There are two modes of recitation for this verse. First, *Qira'at* scholars, such as Hamzah and Kisa’I, read this verse “Qala alamu” (I know that) with a continuant *Hamzah*, which suggests a declarative utterance. Whereas most scholars read the verse “Qala a’alamu” with *Hamzah*, which indicates informative utterance.

The rhetoric of Quranic *Qira'at* also manifests in various instances of *al-Qira'at al-Mutawatirah* in which there are informative and declarative utterances. For example, Allah (S.W.T) says, “And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer” (QURAN 2: 125). Different scholars read the verse differently. For instance, Nafi’ and Ibn Amir read the first word with *Fathah*, while the rest of the scholars read it with *Kasrah* (IBN AL-JAZARI, [21--?], p. 222). The first reading by Nafi’ and Ibn Amir with *Fathah* is informative and indicates what the first generation of believers used to do; they used to take the standing place of Abraham as a place for prayer. However, the recitation with *Kasrah* by the rest of the scholars suggests declarative utterance, which means an order to take the standing place of Abraham as a place of prayer (AL-QAISI, 1984, p. 263).

Additionally, Imam Al-Qaisi discusses the different modes of recitation of the verse “qala a’alamu” which has been read in two modes. According to Al-Qaisi, the recitation with *Hamzah* suggests an informative utterance which means that the person talks about himself when he saw the power of the Almighty Allah regarding the resurrection of the dead. The person admitted that the Almighty Allah has power over all things. Nevertheless, the recitation with *Hamzat al-Wasl* suggests a declarative utterance. In this sense, when the person knew for sure that the resurrection takes place, he addressed himself by saying, “I know that this is an absolute truth”. This imperative utterance cannot be made by the almighty Allah as He had shown the man His powers and the man knew this truth for sure. Thus, it is pointless that the Almighty Allah orders the man to know this truth; instead, it is the man who addresses himself (AL-QAISI, 1984, p. 312-313).

Conclusion

In this paper, we conducted a rhetorical analysis of informative, interrogative, and declarative utterances in *Tawjeeh al-Qira'at al-Mutawatirah*. According to the findings, the rhetoric of Quranic *Qira'at* can be figured out by reflecting their meanings. Likewise, the meanings of *Qira'at* can be deepened when we attempt to figure out their underlying rhetorical manifestations. Additionally, the hidden meanings of *Qira'at* can be revealed when we combine the meanings of *Qira'at*. This analysis could advance our understanding of the meanings of the Quran from the perspectives of different modes of recitation. However, this paper is limited to the rhetorical analysis of utterances; further research may focus on systematic textual and contextual analyses regarding the distinctiveness of Quranic *Qira'at* and their meanings.

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