

# THE EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF MASCULINITY-FEMININITY IN THE CONTEXT OF QIRĀ'ĀT

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## Article Information

**Article Types:** Research Article, **Received:** 01 May 2025, **Accepted:** 07 December 2025, **Published:** 31 March 2026, **Cite as:** Saylan, Nesriřah. "The Examination of the Concept of Masculinity-Femininity in the Context of QirĀ'Āt". *Journal of Academic Research in Religious Sciences* 26/1 (March 2026): 405-432.

DOI: 10.33415/daad.1688584



## Abstract

The qirĀ'Āt's are related to the wording of the Qur'Ān and therefore, are connected to the Arabic language. In this context, linguistics and grammatical issues are at the center of the differences in qirĀ'Āt. One aspect of these rules is the concept of masculinity and femininity, which is among the perspectives of qirĀ'Āt differences. The existence of words described as feminine despite lacking feminine markers, the use of certain words in both masculine and feminine forms through semantic extension, the presence of a gap between the verb and its subject, and the issues related to plural words are some of the reasons for disagreements regarding masculine or feminine readings. Such differences are found across authentic, shadh, and all other types of recitation. In this study, the phenomenon of masculinity and femininity has been examined in the context of Qur'Ānic recitation. One of the objectives of this study is to identify these issues in qirĀ'Āt and tafsir sources and to conduct a comparative analysis of opinions on the subject. Through this approach, the study aims to demonstrate that the differences in masculine or feminine readings do not contain any inconsistencies, contribute to a deeper understanding of the Qur'Ān, and provide a unique perspective by enriching the meaning of the Qur'Ān's interpretation.

**Keywords:** Recitation, Seven Recitations, Arabic Language, Masculine, Feminine.

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# Müzekkerlik-Müenneslik Olgusunun Kıraatler Bağlamında İncelenmesi

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## Makale Bilgisi

**Makale Türü:** Araştırma Makalesi, **Geliş Tarihi:** 01 Mayıs 2025, **Kabul Tarihi:** 07 Aralık 2025, **Yayın Tarihi:** 31 Mart 2026, **Atıf:** Saylan, Nesrişah. "Müzekkerlik-Müenneslik Olgusunun Kıraatler Bağlamında İncelenmesi". *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 26/1 (Mart 2026): 405-432.

DOI: 10.33415/daad.1688584



## Geniş Özet

Bu çalışmada müzekker ve müennes okuyuşlara dair kıraat ihtilafları ve bu ihtilafların hüccetlendirilmesinde kullanılan deliller incelenmektedir. Müzekkerlik-müenneslik konusu Arap dilinin de en temel konuları arasında yer almaktadır. Kıraat ilmi, Kur'an-ı Kerim'in Arapça olarak nazil olması sebebiyle, lafız temelli bir disiplin olarak Arap dilinin ses, yapı ve gramer kurallarıyla doğrudan ilişkilidir. Bu bağlamda kıraat ihtilaflarının odağında Arap dilbilimi ve gramer konuları yer almaktadır. Örneğin lafzın son harfinin harekesinin i'râbla bağlantılı değişimi, fiillerin farklı şigalarla okunması, müzekkerlik ve müenneslik ile alakalı okuyuşlar, kelimenin tekil veya çoğul okunması gibi birçok husus doğrudan Arap dili kurallarıyla ilişkilidir. Nitekim kıraat farklılıklarının önemli bir kısmının temelinde Arap dilbilimi ile Arap lehçeleri yer almaktadır. Bunlar arasında yer alan konulardan biri de müzekker veya müennes okuyuşla ilgili kıraat farklılıklarıdır. Nitekim Arapçada lafızlar cinsiyet açısından müzekker ve müennes olarak iki kategoriye ayrılmıştır. Tefîl vezninden sıfat olan müzekker ifadesi, lügatte dişinin zıddı, sert, sağlam, çetin, güçlü, cesur anlamlarına gelmektedir. İstilâh manası ise müennesliğin zıddı, müennes olması için gerekli alametleri taşımayan, "هَذَا" sözüyle işaret edilen her şeydir. Tefîl babında sıfat olan müennes ifadesi ise lügatte yumuşaklık ve zayıflık manasında kullanılmaktadır. İstilâh anlamı ise müenneslik alametlerinden birini taşıyan ve kendisine "هَذِهِ" sözüyle işaret edilen kelimedir. Hakiki müzekkerlik ve müenneslik vasıflarını barındırmayan lafızlar ise mecâzi müzekker ve müennes

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olarak isimlendirilmektedir. Müennesliğin tâ-i merbûta, elif-i memdûde ve elif-i maksûre olmak üzere üç alameti bulunmaktadır. Bu alametlerden içinde Arapçanın da bulunduğu bütün Sâmî dillerde kullanılan tâ-i merbûta olduğu ve diğer iki alametın bazı modern lehçelerden kalktığı ve yerini tâ-i merbûtaya bıraktığı ifade edilmiştir.

Arap dilinde ifadeler arasındaki bağlantılardan biri de kelimeler arasındaki uyumdur. Bunlar içerisinde yer alan müzekkerlik-müenneslik uyumu, Arap dilinin de en temel konuları arasında yer almaktadır. Bu uyum, tabii olan lafız ile uyulan kelimenin mutabakat içerisinde olmasıdır ki buna cinsiyet uyumu denilmektedir. Müzekkerlik-müenneslik uyumu, çeşitli dilsel ve bağlamsal nedenlerle kıraatlerde farklılık arz edebilmektedir. Özellikle lafız-mana ayrımında, kelimenin lafzının esas alındığı durumlarda farklı bir okuma biçimi, mananın esas alındığı durumlarda ise farklı bir kıraat şekli ortaya çıkabilmektedir. Bu durum, ifadenin müzekker ya da müennes olarak okunmasına doğrudan etki ederek kıraat farklılıklarının oluşmasına zemin hazırlamaktadır. Ayrıca ifadenin hakiki müennes olmaması, Arap dilinde müenneslik alameti taşımadıkları halde dişil olarak nitelenen kelimelerin bulunması, hamletme yöntemiyle bazı lafızların mana yönünden hem eril hem de dişil olarak kullanılması, fiil ile fâilin arasında fâsılanın olması müzekker veya müennes okuyuşla ilgili ihtilafların diğer nedenleri arasında yer almaktadır. Arap dilinde müzekkerlik-müenneslik uyumu, kelimenin sayısal durumuyla yakından ilişkilidir. Lafzın müfred, müsennâ veya cemi' olması, ifadenin uyum açısından alacağı biçimi değiştirmektedir. Bu bağlamda, çoğul olarak kullanılan kelimelerin delaletindeki farklılıklar, müzekker veya müennes okuyuşla ilgili kıraat ihtilaflarının nedenlerinden biri olarak gösterilmiştir. Özellikle, çoğul kelimelerin azlığa delalet etmesi ve cemi' teksirlerin durumu gibi hususlar, müzekker veya müennes okunmada çeşitli farklılıklara yol açmıştır. Nitekim çoğul olarak kullanılan kelimelerin azlığa delalet etmesi, cemi' teksirlerin durumu gibi hususlar müzekker veya müennes okunmasında ihtilafa sebep olmuştur.

Müzekker veya müennes okunuşla ilgili kıraat vecihleri sahih ve şâz olmak üzere tüm okuyuşlar arasında görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada kıraat-i seb'a'da yer alan müzekker veya müennes okunuşla ilgili kıraat ihtilafları incelenmiştir. Müzekker veya müennes okunuşla ilgili vecihleri incelemeyi hedefleyen bu çalışmada yöntem olarak literatür taraması ve metin analizi teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda kıraat ihtilafları arasında yer alan müzekker veya müennes okuyuşla ilgili hususlar kıraat ve tefsir kaynaklarında tespit edilmiş ve bu konuyla alakalı ilim ehlinin görüşlerinin mukayeseli olarak incelenmiştir. Ayrıca çalışmada müzekker veya müennes okuyuşla alakalı kıraatlerin ihticâcında kullanılan deliller incelenmiştir. İhticâc lafzı bir şeyi delillendirmek, teyid etmek, temellendirmek manasına gelmektedir. İhticâcın istilâh anlamı ise kıraatlerin sahihini zayıfından ayırarak sahîh kıraatlerin tespit edilmesi ve bu kıraatlerin âyet, isnâd, Mushaf hattı gibi naklî ve dilsel hüccetlerle temellendirilmesidir. Müzekker veya müennes okunmasının hüccetlendirilmesinde kullanılan delillerden biri ayetlerdir. Bu metotta bazen ayetin siyak ve sibakından, bazen de müzekker veya müennes okunmasının başka ayetlerdeki kullanımından delil getirilmiştir. Sahabe ve tabiûnun kıraatleri de müzekker veya müennes okuyuşunda ihticâc olarak kullanılan bir diğer delildir. Arap diliyle irtibatlı olan bu okuyuşların hüccetinde kullanılan diğer deliller ise Arap şiiiri, kelâmı ve lehçelerdir. Zikredilen bu delillerle müzekker veya müennes okuyuşların Arapça

dilbilim, gramer ve lehçelerle bağlantısı açıklanarak kıraat- Arap dili bağına temas edilmiştir.

Müzekker veya müennes okunan vecihler arasında çeşitli deliller ileri sürmek suretiyle âlimler tercihte de bulunulmuştur. Bu tercihlerde bazen Arapça kaideler bazen de kıraat âlimlerin çoğunluğunun okuyuşu etkili olmuştur. Sonuç olarak müzekker veya müennes okuyuşla ilgili kıraat ihtilafları, Arap dili grameri ve lehçeleri gibi dilbilimsel unsurlarla alakalı meseleler arasında yer almaktadır. Bu kıraat ihtilaflarının nedenleri incelendiğinde, gramer yapıları, lehçe farklılıkları ve Arap dilinin diğer özellikleriyle irtibatlı olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Ayrıca müzekker veya müennes okuyuşlarla ilgili ihtilafların herhangi bir uyumsuzluk barındırmadığı, bu kıraat farklılıklarının Kur'an'ın anlaşılmasına katkı sağladığı ve Kur'an'ın yorumlanmasında mana zenginliği açısından ayrı bir bakış açısı kazandırdığı kıraat-Arap dili çerçevesinde açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kıraat, Yedi Kıraat, Arap Dili, Müzekkerlik, Müenneslik.



## Introduction

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This study identifies the variations in recitation concerning masculine and feminine pronunciations in the Qur'ān and analyzes the evidences used to justify these differences. The main objective of the research is to demonstrate that these variations do not reflect any grammatical inconsistency, but rather constitute a coherent and systematic part of Arabic grammar. Additionally, the study aims to examine in detail how the agreement between masculine and feminine forms is established within the context of Qur'ānic qirā'āt. Gender agreement is one of the fundamental grammatical topics in the Arabic language, as words are generally classified into two categories: masculine and feminine. The term *mudhakkar*, which is an adjective derived from the *tafīl* pattern, means “opposite of feminine”, “firm”, “solid”, “tough”, “strong” and “brave” in the lexicon. In terminological usage, it refers to anything that is the opposite of femininity, does not bear the necessary markers of femininity, and is referred to with the word “هَذَا” (*hādhā*).<sup>1</sup> The feminine expression, which is an adjective in the *tafīl* form, is used in the dictionary to mean softness and weakness. In terminology, it refers to a word that carries one of the signs of femininity and is indicated

<sup>1</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad Ibn Mukarram Ibn 'Alī Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Manẓūr Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Cairo: Dār al-Maārif, 1119), 3/1507-1509; Abū al-Fayz Muḥammad al-Murtazā Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Razzāk al-Husayn al-Dhabidi, *Tāj al-'arūs min javāhir al-kāmus* (Quvayt, 1982), 11/376-387.

by the word “هذه” (hādhihi).<sup>2</sup> Masculine and feminine nouns are divided into two categories: real (ḥaqīqī) and metaphorical (majāzī). A masculine noun that has a corresponding feminine form of the same kind, such as “أسد” (‘asad) and “رجل” (rajul) are called real masculine (ḥaqīqī mudhakkar). Similarly, feminine nouns that have a corresponding masculine form, such as “امرأة” (imra’ah) and “لبوة” (labwah) are called real feminine (ḥaqīqī mu’annath). Words that do not inherently possess the characteristics of real masculinity or femininity are classified as metaphorical masculine (majāzī mudhakkar) and metaphorical feminine (majāzī mu’annath).<sup>3</sup> There are three signs of femininity in Arabic: tā’ marbūṭa (ة), alif mamdūda (اء), and alif maqsūra (ى).<sup>4</sup> It has been stated that among these signs, the tā’ marbūṭa is used in all Semitic languages, including Arabic, and that the other two signs have been removed from some modern dialects, being replaced by the tā’ marbūṭa. Accordingly, instead of “بيضاء, صحراء” (bayḍā’, ṣaḥrā’) the forms “بيضة, صحرة” (bayḍah, ṣaḥrah) are used; instead of “حبلى, سلمى” (ḥublā, salmā) the expressions “حبله, سلمة” (ḥublah, salmāh) are preferred. The reason for this is explained as facilitating the language by using one common marker of femininity instead of three separate ones.<sup>5</sup>

The qirā’āt are related to the pronunciation of the Qur’ānic text, which was revealed in Arabic. In this context, Arabic linguistics and grammar play a central role in qirā’āt. For example, variations in the i’rāb (grammatical inflection) affecting the final vowel of a word, different verbal conjugations (ṣiḡhah), variations related

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 1/145-146; al-Dhabidī, *Tāj al-‘arūs*, 5/157-160; Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd Ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-Balaghā*, thk. Muhammad Bāsil (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1414), 1/35.

<sup>3</sup> Ismā‘il Ahmad ‘Umāyirah, *Zāhirat al-tanīth bayn al-lughāt al-‘Arabiyya wa al-lughāt al-sāmiyya* (‘Amman: Dār al-Hunayn, 1993), 18; İzzet Marangozoğlu, “Kur’ân’da Müzekker-Müennes Uyumsuzluğunun Haml Yöntemi Bağlamında İncelenmesi”, *Turkish Journal of Religious Education Studies* 13 (2022), 165.

<sup>4</sup> Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā Ibn Ziyād al-Farrā’, *al-Mudhakkar wa al-mu’annath* (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1989), 51-52.

<sup>5</sup> Abū al-Barakat Abd al-Rahmān Ibn al-Anbārī, *al-Bulgha fī al-farq bayn al-mudhakkar wa al-muannath* (Cairo, 1970), 63; Kadri Yıldırım, “Arap Dilinde Müzekkerlik - Müenneslik Ayırımına Dil Felsefesi Açısından Bir Yaklaşım”, *EKEV Academy Journal* VII/15 (2003), 197-198.

to masculine and feminine forms, and differences in singular or plural readings are all matters connected to Arabic grammatical rules. Most of these qirā'āt differences are rooted in Arabic linguistics, particularly in Arabic syntax, morphology and dialectal variations making the study of qirā'āt deeply intertwined with these specific branches of Arabic language studies. Among the key topics within this domain are the differences in qirā'āt based on masculine and feminine forms. A literature review reveals that studies on masculinity and femininity in this context have primarily been conducted within the field of Arabic morphology (şarf) and syntax (naḥw). In this context, several academic works have addressed the topic of masculinity and femininity in the Arabic language. These include Ahmet Şimşek's master's thesis titled *Masculine and Feminine Agreement in the Arabic Language*, İzzet Marangozoğlu's study, *An Examination of Masculine-Feminine Agreement in the Qur'ān through the Ḥaml Method*, Kadri Yıldırım's article, *A Philosophical Linguistic Approach to Masculine-Feminine Agreement in the Arabic Language*. However, our study specifically focuses on the qirā'āt of masculine and feminine forms in the seven qirā'āt (al-qirā'āt al-sab'). We analyze the evidence and arguments used to justify these different readings. Thus, our article presents an original contribution by differentiating itself from previous studies in terms of both scope and content. Moreover, disputes over masculine and feminine verb forms are widely found in both saḥiḥ qirā'āt. Investigating these variations under a dedicated heading within the context of qirā'āt is of significant scholarly importance.

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### 1. The Reasons for Disputes Related to the Pronunciation of Masculine or Feminine

One of the connections between expressions in the Arabic language is the harmony between words. This harmony occurs in matters such as grammatical inflection, masculinity-femininity, definite-indefinite, singular, dual, and plural.<sup>6</sup> Among these, the harmony between masculinity and femininity refers to the agreement between the word and the word it matches, which is called gender agreement.<sup>7</sup> This harmony may vary at times due to various rea-

<sup>6</sup> Mustafa Ghalayini, *Jāmi'u al-durūsi al-'Arabīyah* (Bairut: Maktabat al-'Asriyyah, 1414), 3/171.

<sup>7</sup> Jamal al-dīn Ibn Yūsuf al-Ansārī Ibn Hishām, *Sharh qatr al-nidā wa ball al-sadā*, thk. Baraqat Yūsuf Habbūd (Bairut: Dār al-Fikr, 1433), 267-269.

sons. It should be noted that some of these issues pertain to the general grammatical rules of the Arabic language. For example, while the morphological form of a word in Arabic grammar may differ as masculine or feminine, this situation can change when the meaning is considered in the context of the Qur'ān. This difference affects whether the expression is pronounced as masculine or feminine and leads to variations in the qirā'āt. Additionally, the fact that the expression is not literally feminine, the presence of words in the Arabic language that are described as feminine although they do not carry the feminine marker, the use of certain words both in a masculine and feminine sense through a method called shifting meaning, the existence of a gap between the verb and its subject, and issues related to the status of plural words are also among the other reasons for disputes regarding masculine or feminine pronunciation. The reasons for these disputes will be examined under sub-headings with examples.

### 1.1. Not Being a True Feminine

The fact that the word is not regarded as a true feminine noun has led to a dispute over whether the attributed verb should be read in the masculine or the feminine form. The verse “لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النَّسَاءُ” (lā yaḥillu laka an-nisā'u)<sup>8</sup> can be given as an example regarding this issue. In the relevant verse, the verb “لَا يَحِلُّ” (lā yaḥillu) was read by Abū 'Amr (d. 154/771) as “لَا تَحِلُّ” (lā taḥillu) in the feminine form. However, other qirā'āt scholars recited it in the masculine form as “لَا يَحِلُّ” (lā yaḥillu) with the letter “ي” (yā').<sup>9</sup> The reason for the masculine form of the verb in the mentioned verse is explained by the fact that the word “النِّسَاءُ” (an-nisā'u) is not a true feminine noun, although it appears in the plural form. Therefore, the verb is used in the masculine form.<sup>10</sup> After these two readings are transmit-

<sup>8</sup> al-Aḥzāb 33/52.

<sup>9</sup> Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. al-'Abbās Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-Sab'a fi al-Qirā'āt*, thk. Shawkī Ḍa'if (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1119), 523; Abu'l-Hayr Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Yūsuf Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr fi al-qirā'āt al-'ashr*, thk. 'Alī Muhammad Dabbā' (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, ts.), 2/349.

<sup>10</sup> Abū Muhammad al-Qaysī Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf 'an wujūh al-qirā'āt al-sab' wa ilalihā we hijajihā* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1997), 2/199; Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd Ibn 'Umar Ibn Muḥammad Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḥ*

ted in the sources, it is pointed out that a difference in meaning arises between them. When read with the letter “ت” (tā'), it refers to all women, while when read with the letter “ي” (yā'), it indicates that the statement refers to not all women, but rather a part of them.<sup>11</sup> The linguist al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), after transmitting both readings, pointed out that reading with the letter “ت” (tā') is more appropriate in terms of Arabic, due to its inclusive meaning, as it refers to all women.<sup>12</sup> Another example related to this issue is the variation in recitation of the phrase “يَتَفَيَّأُ ظِلَالُهُ” (yatafayya'u zilāluhu)<sup>13</sup> in the verse. According to reports, Abū 'Amr recited it in the feminine form as “تَتَفَيَّأُ” (tatafayya') with two “ت” (tā') letters. However, other recitation imams read it in the masculine form as “يَتَفَيَّأُ” (yatafayya'u) with the letter “ي” (yā').<sup>14</sup> The reason for these different readings is that the word “ظِلَالٌ” (zilālu) is not regarded as a true feminine noun. Consequently, the recitation of “يَتَفَيَّأُ” (yatafayya'u) attributed to the majority of the reciters has been preferred. Makkī b. Abū Ṭālib also reported this preference using the expression “وهو اختيار” (wa huwa ikhtiyār).<sup>15</sup> In this context, al-Qurtubī (d. 671/1273), after transmitting the mentioned recitation, also noted that Abū Ubayd (d. 224/838) preferred this reading.<sup>16</sup>

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## 1.2. Having a Pause Between the Verb and the Subject

One of the disagreements mentioned regarding the reading of masculine or feminine forms is the separation between the verb and the subject. An example of this can be found in the reading of the

*al-tanzil wa 'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl*, thk. 'Adil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Majūd - 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwiz (Riyadh: Maktabat al-'Ubeykān, 1998), 5/86.

<sup>11</sup> Abū Abd Allah Muḥammad Ibn Ahmed Ibn Abū Bakr al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi' li ahkāmi al-Qur'an wa al-mubayyin limā tadammānahū min al-sunnah wa āyi al-furqān*, thk. Abd Allah Ibn Abd al-Muhsin al-Turkī (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 2006), 17/199.

<sup>12</sup> Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā b. Ziyād Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'an* (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1983), 2/346; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīli āyi al-Qur'an*, thk. 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥijr, 2001), 19/550-551.

<sup>13</sup> an-Naḥl 16/48.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'a*, 374.

<sup>15</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/37-38.

<sup>16</sup> al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi'*, 12/333.

expression “وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ” (wa-lā yuqbalu minhā shafā‘ah)<sup>17</sup> in the verse. Ibn Kathīr (d. 120/738) and Abū ‘Amr (d. 205/821) read the verb as “وَلَا تُقْبَلُ” (wa-lā tuqbalu) with the letter “ت” (tā) due to the feminine form of the word “شَفَاعَةٌ” (shafā‘ah). On the other hand, Ibn ‘Āmir (d. 118/736), Āsım, Hamzah (d. 156/773), Nāfi’ (d. 169/785) and Kisā’ī (d. 189/805) read it as “وَلَا يُقْبَلُ” (wa-lā yuqbalu) with the letter “ي” (yā).<sup>18</sup> The reason for reading this expression in the masculine form is explained by the fact that another phrase intervenes between the feminine word and the verb. When there is such a separation between the verb and the feminine word, reading the verb in the masculine form is generally considered more appropriate.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the linguist al-Ahflash (d. 215/830 [?]) stated that when a separator exists between a feminine noun and its verb, it is preferable for the verb to be in the masculine form. However, this rule is not applied universally. al-Ahflash clarified that it should not be extended to intelligent beings and those resembling them, as he found it more logical for the verbs referring to such entities to correspond in gender appropriately. He explained this distinction by citing examples such as “الأرضُ” (al-arḍu) and “الجدارُ” (al-jidāru) noting that since these words refer to inanimate objects, they are considered similar to the dead. Therefore, they are not treated like “الرجُلُ” (ar-rajulu) or “المرأةُ” (al-mar’atu) and full agreement between these nouns and their verbs is not observed. Conversely, in the case of intelligent beings and those resembling them, al-Ahflash emphasized that the grammatical agreement between masculine and feminine forms is carefully observed. He further illustrated this point with examples drawn from Qur’ānic verses.<sup>20</sup> According to al-Ahflash’s interpretation, in the verse “وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَّاصَةٌ”

<sup>17</sup> al-Baqarah, 2/48.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab‘a*, 374; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/212; Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Abd al-Ghanī Shāb al-Dīn al-Dimyātī al-Bannā, *Īthāf fuḍālāi al-bashar fi al-qirā‘ati al-arbaah ‘ashar* (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2006), 177.

<sup>19</sup> Abū al-Hasan Sa‘īd Ibn Mas‘ad al-Awsāt al-Ahflash, *Ma‘āni-l-Qur‘ān* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Hanjī, 1990), 1/95-96; Abū Alī al-Hasan Ibn Abd al-Ghaffār al-Fārisī, *al-Hujja li al-qurrāi al-sab‘* (Bairut: Dār al-Ma‘mūn li al-Turāth, 1991), 2/53; Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Mas‘ūd Baghawī, *Ma‘ālim al-Tanzīl*, thk. Muhammad Abdullah al-Namīr (Riyadh: Dār al-Tayba, 1409), 1/90; al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi‘*, 2/79.

<sup>20</sup> al-Ahflash, *Ma‘āni-l-Qur‘ān*, 1/95.

(wa-law kāna bihim khaṣāṣah)<sup>21</sup> the word “خَصَاصَةٌ” (khaṣāṣah) is feminine. However, since there is a separator between it and the verb, the verb “كَانَ” (kāna) appears in the masculine form. Similarly, in the verse “لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ” (lā yu'khadhu minkum fidyah)<sup>22</sup> the verb “يُؤْخَذُ” (yu'khadhu) is used in the masculine form for a similar reason, despite referring to “فِدْيَةٌ” (fidyah) which is feminine. al-Ahfaṣh pointed out that a similar phenomenon occurs even with intelligent beings when a separator is present. As an example from Arabic speech, he cited the phrase “حَضَرَ الْقَاضِ امْرَأَةً” (ḥaḍara al-qāḍi imra'ah) (A woman came in the presence of the judge). Here, although “امْرَأَةً” (imra'ah) is a feminine noun and refers to an intelligent being, the verb “حَضَرَ” (ḥaḍara) appears in the masculine form due to the presence of the intervening word “الْقَاضِ” (al-qāḍi).<sup>23</sup>

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Another example related to this topic is the verse “وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ” (wa-lam takun lahu fi'ah).<sup>24</sup> In the readings of Hamzah and Kisā'ī this verse is recited in the masculine form as “وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ” (wa-lam yakun lahu fi'ah) using the letter “ي” (yā) instead of “ت” (tā). This is because the feminine noun “فِئَةٌ” (fi'ah) is separated from the verb by the phrase “لَهُ” (lahu), which justifies the use of the masculine verb. However, other Qur'ānic reciters, taking into account the feminine nature of “فِئَةٌ” (fi'ah), read it with “ت” (tā) as “وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ” (wa-lam takun lahu fi'ah). This reading was preferred by the majority of reciters because it aligns with the apparent grammatical structure of the noun.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> al-Ḥaṣhr 59/9.

<sup>22</sup> al-Ḥadīd 57/15.

<sup>23</sup> al-Ahfaṣh, *Ma'āni-l-Qur'ān*, 1/95-96.

<sup>24</sup> al-Kahf 18/43.

<sup>25</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kaṣhif*, 2/62; Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf al-Andalusī Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr al-Muḥīt*, thk. 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-al-Mawjūd - 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwīd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993), 6/123.

### 1.3. Consideration in Terms of Wording or Meaning Distinction

One of the disagreements mentioned regarding whether an expression is read as masculine or feminine is the distinction between the word's literal meaning and its interpretation in terms of its text or meaning. An example of this is the variation in the recitation of the phrase “لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ” (lā takhfā minkum khāfiyah)<sup>26</sup> in the verse. Hamzah and Kisā'i recited the phrase “لَا يَخْفَى” (lā yakhfā) with the letter “ي” (yā') reading it in the masculine form. This is because the word “خَافِيَةٌ” (khāfiyah) in the verse is considered to have the same meaning as the word “خَافٍ” (khāf) and the verb is understood based on its meaning. Therefore, the verse is understood as “لَا يَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافٍ” (lā yakhfā minkum khāf).<sup>27</sup> The early linguist al-Farrā' mentioned both readings and stated that both recitations, which convey the same meaning, are correct. Similarly, he provided evidence from the verse “وَأَخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ” (wa-akhadha alladhīna ḡalamū aṣ-ṣayḡah).<sup>28</sup> In fact, the cited verse has also been recited as “وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ” (wa-akhadhat alladhīna ḡalamū aṣ-ṣayḡah).<sup>29</sup> A preference has also been made among scholars between these two readings. After mentioning these readings, al-Qurtubī, noting that the word “خَافِيَةٌ” (khāfiyah) is not inherently feminine and that the expression “مِنْكُمْ” (minkum) appears between the verb and the feminine noun, reported that Abū Ubayd preferred the masculine reading. On the other hand, Abū Ḥātim (d. 255/869) preferred the feminine reading “لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ” (lā takhfā minkum khāfiyah) because he considered the feminine form of the word “خَافِيَةٌ” (khāfiyah).<sup>30</sup> As seen in the example, in the verse mentioned, the word “خَافِيَةٌ” (khāfiyah) was taken into consideration, leading to the feminine reading “لَا تَخْفَى” (lā takhfā). However, when the mea-

<sup>26</sup> al-Ḥāqqah 69/18.

<sup>27</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/333.

<sup>28</sup> Hūd 11/67.

<sup>29</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, 3/181.

<sup>30</sup> al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi'*, 21/204-205.

ning is taken into account, it has been read in the masculine form as “لَا يَخْفَى” (lā yakhfā).

Another example related to this matter is the verse “أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمْ” (an yakūna lahumu al-khiyarah).<sup>31</sup> The aforementioned verse has been recited by Ibn Kathīr, Nāfi', Ibn Āmir and Abū 'Amr with the letter “ت” (tā') in the form “أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرَةُ” (an takūna lahumu al-khiyarah) in the feminine form. However, other reciters have read it in the masculine form with the letter “ي” (yā').<sup>32</sup> Those who recited with the letter “ي” (yā') have considered the meaning and associated the verb with the expression “الاختيار” (al-ikhtiyār), as the word “الْخَيْرَةُ” (al-khiyarah) in the verse is semantically equivalent to “الاختيار” (al-ikhtiyār). On the other hand, some have recited it with the letter “ت” (tā') considering the literal feminine form of the word “الْخَيْرَةُ” (al-khiyarah). Since the apparent meaning of the text requires this, the preferred opinion among the majority is the second one the reading with the letter “ت” (tā') in the form of “أَنْ تَكُونَ” (an takūna).<sup>33</sup> As seen, when the literal form of the expression is considered, it is recited in the feminine form, while when the meaning is considered, it is recited in the masculine form. However, the preference of the majority of reciters is to consider the literal form of the text.

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#### 1.4. Discrepancies in Plural Words

In the Arabic language, the agreement of gender (masculine and feminine) is also related to the numerical form of the word. Whether a word is singular, dual, or plural affects its grammatical behavior in terms of agreement. One of the reasons for differences in recitation is the variation in the indication of the word when used in the plural form. Indeed, the fact that plural words can indicate scarcity has caused disagreements in whether they are read as masculine or feminine. An example of this issue can be seen in the

<sup>31</sup> al-Aḥzāb 33/36.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'ā*, 522; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/348.

<sup>33</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/198-199.

verse “هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلْمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ” (hal tastawī aẓ-ẓulumātu wa an-nūr).<sup>34</sup> Abū Bakr (d. 193/809), Hamzah, and Kisā’ī have recited the expression “يَسْتَوِي” (yastawī) with the masculine form, using the letter “ي” (yā). However, in the recitation of other qurrā’, it has been read as “تَسْتَوِي” (tastawī) in the feminine form, using the letter “ت” (tā).<sup>35</sup> The reading of the word in the masculine form with the letter “ي” (yā) is explained by the fact that the plural usage of the word “الظُّلْمَاتُ” (aẓ-ẓulumātu) indicates a smaller quantity. Indeed, in Arabic, when a plural expression refers to a smaller number, the verb is often used in the masculine form. In this context, the meaning intended by the word “الظُّلْمَاتُ” (aẓ-ẓulumātu) in the verse is that of “الظلام” (aẓ-ẓulām), and since the verb is linked to this expression, it has been recited in the masculine form. Those who read with the letter “ت” (tā) have recited it in the feminine form, considering the word “الظُّلْمَاتُ” (aẓ-ẓulumātu) as a plural. This is because the apparent reading of the word is in the feminine form, which is what the recitation requires. Furthermore, this reading has been preferred by the majority of the scholars of recitation.<sup>36</sup>

The disagreement regarding the implications of plural terms is another example of the differences in masculine or feminine recitation. An example of this issue can be found in the verse “فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ” (fa-nādathu al-malā’ikah).<sup>37</sup> The recitation of the phrase “فَنَادَتْهُ” (fa-nādathu) has been read in different ways. Hamzah, Kisā’ī, and Khalaf (d. 229/844) have recited it as “فناداه” (fa-nādāhu) (masculine form). Other reciters have read it in the feminine form as “فَنَادَتْهُ” (fa-nādathu).<sup>38</sup> Those who recite the verb with the letter “ت” (tā) consider the word “الْمَلَائِكَةُ” (al-malā’ikah) as feminine. After transmit-

<sup>34</sup> ar-Ra’d 13/16.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab’a*, 358; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/297.

<sup>36</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/19-20.

<sup>37</sup> Āl ‘Imrān 3/39.

<sup>38</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab’a*, 205; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/239; al-Bannā, *İthāf*, 22.

ting this recitation, al-Baghawī explained citing the verse “قَالَتْ الْأَعْرَابُ” (qālat al-a'rāb)<sup>39</sup> as an example—that some words, although masculine in form, may be read as feminine when they are plural and when the verb precedes the subject. Furthermore, the mufassir noted that 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652-653) regarded the word “الْمَلَائِكَةُ” (al-malā'ikah) as masculine wherever it appears in the Qur'ān, and clarified this matter by referring to the opinion of Abū 'Ubayd Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224/838). According to Abū 'Ubayd, Ibn Mas'ūd preferred to pronounce the word with the letter “ي” (yā) rather than “ت” (tā) when there was a difference between these two readings, thus accepting the word as masculine in the Qur'ān. This preference can be understood as a theological objection to the polytheists' claim that “the angels are the daughters of Allah”.<sup>40</sup> al-Nahhās (d. 338/950), after reporting that Abū Ubayd's preference was in line with this approach, criticized the use of the narration attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd as evidence. He argued, “This narration cannot be used as evidence for different readings. In the Arabic language, the expression ‘The men said’ can be used in both masculine and feminine forms, as “قال الرجال” (qāla ar-rijāl) and “قالت الرجال” (qālat ar-rijāl). A similar situation applies to the expression “النساء” (an-nisā). Additionally, in the verse “وَإِذْ قَالَتْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ” (wa-idh qālat al-malā'ikah) the term “الْمَلَائِكَةُ” (al-malā'ikah) is attributed to a feminine verb. However, this does not indicate that the angels are feminine. In response to the polytheists' claims, Allah Almighty's verse “أَشْهَدُوا خَلَقَهُمْ” (Ashhadū khalqahum)<sup>41</sup> should be used as evidence. This verse refutes the idea of attributing gender to the angels, emphasizing that their true nature is beyond human comprehension or assumptions.<sup>42</sup>

Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987), after reporting the aforementioned recitations, stated: When intelligent beings are referred to in the broken plural form using the feminine, they are regarded as

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<sup>39</sup> al-Ḥujurāt 49/14.

<sup>40</sup> Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl*, 2/33.

<sup>41</sup> al-Zukhruf 43/19.

<sup>42</sup> Abū Ja'far Ahmad Ibn Ismā'il Ibn Yūnus al-Nahhās, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 2008), 131.

beings without intellect, similar to non-intelligent entities. For example, the expressions “هي الجنود” (hiya al-judhū), “هي الجمال” (hiya al-jimāl), and “هي الرجال” (hiya ar-rijāl) are attributed to feminine pronouns. This highlights that when certain plural terms, despite referring to masculine beings, are used with feminine pronouns, it can reflect a grammatical or rhetorical usage rather than indicating actual gender. In the verse “قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ” (qālat al-a‘rāb)<sup>43</sup> a similar usage occurs. It is incorrect to claim that these expressions are in the feminine form based solely on their usage in this manner. The reason is that these expressions are not inherently feminine. Similarly, the term “الملائكة” (al-malā’ikah) used in the verse is not actually feminine in essence, despite being linked to a feminine verb. This reflects a grammatical usage rather than an indication of gender, showing that certain terms can be treated as feminine in structure while not necessarily being so in meaning. Indeed, in the Qur’ān, the term “الملائكة” (al-malā’ikah) is associated with both feminine and masculine verbs, and it has appeared in both forms. In this context, in the verse “وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ” (wa-idh qālat al-malā’ikah)<sup>44</sup> the word “الملائكة” (al-malā’ikah) is linked to a feminine verb. However, in the verses “وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ” (wa-al-malā’ikah bāsītū aydihim)<sup>45</sup> and “وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ” (wa-al-malā’ikah yadkhulūna ‘alayhim min kulli bāb)<sup>46</sup> the term “الملائكة” (al-malā’ikah) is associated with masculine verbs. This illustrates that the use of feminine or masculine verbs with the word “angels” does not necessarily imply a fixed gender, but rather reflects different grammatical contexts and structures.<sup>47</sup> The scholars have made a choice between the recitations “فناداه” (fa-nādāhu) and “فنادته” (fa-nādat-hu). For example, al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122), after narrating the difference in recitation regarding the mentioned expression, stated that the feminine reading is more beautiful and preferred the

<sup>43</sup> al-Hujurāt 49/14.

<sup>44</sup> Al ‘Imrān 3/45.

<sup>45</sup> al-An‘ām 6/93.

<sup>46</sup> ar-Ra’d 13/23.

<sup>47</sup> al-Fārisī, *al-Hujja*, 3/37.

recitation “فَنَادَتْهُ” (fa-nādat-hu). He explained this preference by referring to the Arabic linguistic rule that when masculine nouns are in the plural form and the verb precedes them, it should be read in the feminine form. This reflects the grammatical structure of Arabic, where the verb's form aligns with the number and structure of the noun. He pointed out that a similar situation exists in the verse “قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ” (qālat al-a'rāb)<sup>48</sup> and supported his preference by referencing the usage in another verse.<sup>49</sup>

## 2. Evidence Used in the Justification of Readings Related to Masculine or Feminine Pronunciation

Some evidence has been used in the justification of readings related to masculine or feminine pronunciations. The term ihtijāj is the verbal noun of the expression “اِحْتِجَاجٌ” (ihtajja) and means to provide evidence, confirm, or substantiate something.<sup>50</sup> The technical meaning refers to the process of distinguishing the authentic recitations from the weak ones and identifying the correct recitations. It also involves substantiating the preference for these recitations using transmitted and linguistic evidences, such as verses, isnads, and the orthography of the Muṣṣaf.<sup>51</sup> The evidence used in the justification of readings related to masculine or feminine pronunciations will be examined under subheadings with examples.

### 2.1. Bringing Evidence from the Verse

One of the pieces of evidence used in the justification of readings related to masculine or feminine pronunciations is the verses. In this method, evidence is sometimes brought from the usage in another verse, and sometimes from the sibaq (preceding context) and siyaq (following context) of the verse. An example related to

<sup>48</sup> al-Hujurāt 49/14.

<sup>49</sup> Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl*, 2/33.

<sup>50</sup> Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 2/778-781; Ismā'īl Ibn Ḥammād al-Jawharī, *al-Sihāh Tāj al-lughā wa al-sihāh al-'Arabiyyah* (Bairut: Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1990), 1/304.; Nesrişah Saylan, “Tabersī'nin Kiraatlerin Hüccetinde Kullandığı Delillerin İncelenmesi”, *Cumhuriyet Theology Journal*, 23/2 (December 2019): 983.

<sup>51</sup> Abd al-Fattāh Ismā'īl al-Shalabī, *al-Ihtijāj li al-qirā'āt* (Majallah al-Bahs al-'Ilm wa al-Turāth al-'Arabī, ts.), 4/71-76; Nasr Ibn 'Alī aş-Shirazhī Ibn Abū Maryam, *al-Mudāh ft wujūh al-qirā'āt wa ilalihā* (Jidda: Jama't al-Ḥayriyyah, 1993), 1/19; Mehmet Ünal, “Bir Kırâat Terimi Olarak 'Hüccet'in Kavramsal Alanı ve Tarihsel Gelişimi”, *Journal İslamî Araştırmalar* 17/1 (2004), 70-71; Saylan, “Tabersī'nin Kiraatlerin Hüccetinde Kullandığı Delillerin İncelenmesi”, 983.

this topic can be found in the verse “حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا” (hattā idhā jā’a aḥadakumu al-mawt tawaffat-hu rusulunā)<sup>52</sup> where the expression “تَوَفَّتْهُ” (tawaffat-hu) demonstrates a difference in recitation, with variations between the masculine and feminine pronunciations. According to the narration, Hamzah reads it as “تَوَفَّاهُ” (tawaffāhu) while the other reciters read it as “تَوَفَّتْهُ” (tawaffat-hu), with the letter “ت” (tā’) indicating the feminine pronunciation.<sup>53</sup> The reason for this reading has been explained by considering broken plurals as feminine. This reading is evidenced by pointing out that such usage exists in the Qur’ān, and the evidence for this recitation has been established by bringing an example from the usage in another verse. As seen in the verses “فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ” (fa lammā jā’athum rusuluhum bil-bayyināt) “وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلًا”<sup>54</sup> (wa laqad kudhhibat rusulun)<sup>55</sup> and “قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ” (qālat rusuluhum)<sup>56</sup> the use of the feminine form in the verbs associated with the word “رُسُلًا” (rusulun) indicates the feminine usage. Therefore, the recitation “تَوَفَّتْهُ” (tawaffat-hu) has been substantiated by citing these verses as evidence. Hamzah's recitation is substantiated by the explanation that the feminine form is attributed to something that is not genuinely feminine. In the verse “وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ” (wa qāla niswatun)<sup>57</sup> it has been reported that the term “نِسْوَةٌ” (niswatun) is used in connection with a masculine verb, and this usage is in line with the explanation for Hamzah's recitation in this context.<sup>58</sup> As seen, the justification for both recitations has been substantiated by providing evidence from their usage in other verses.

The determination of the masculine or feminine pronunciation has also been made by attributing it to the context and linguistic structure of the verse. In this context, an example can be given re-

<sup>52</sup> al-An’ām 6/61.

<sup>53</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab’a*, 259; al-Bannā, *İthāf*, 265.

<sup>54</sup> al-Mu’min 40/83.

<sup>55</sup> al-An’ām 6/34.

<sup>56</sup> İbrāhīm 14/10.

<sup>57</sup> Yūsuf 12/30.

<sup>58</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 1/435.

garding the verb “يُسْقَى” in the verse “يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ” (yusqā bimā'in wāḥidin).<sup>59</sup> Ibn 'Āmir, 'Āsım and Ya'qūb have read “يُسْقَى” (yusqā) with the masculine form using the letter “ي” (yā). Others, however, have read it in the feminine form as “تُسْقَى” (tusqā).<sup>60</sup> The justification for reading this expression in the feminine form has been made by referencing the usages in the context and linguistic structure of the verse. In this regard, the expression “تُسْقَى” (tusqā) is read in the feminine form because it is attributed to the word “جَنَاتٍ” (jannāt) mentioned earlier, which is feminine. It is also pointed out that the expression “بَعْضَهَا” (ba'ḍahā) in the verse “وَنُفِضِلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأُكُلِ” (wa nufaḍḍilu ba'ḍahā 'alā ba'ḍin fī al-'ukuli) is another evidence. This is because the use of the feminine pronoun “بَعْضَهَا” (ba'ḍahā) in the continuation of the verse, and the absence of the masculine pronoun “بَعْضُهُ” (ba'ḍahu) supports the reading in the feminine form. Both Abū Khātım and Abū Ubayd preferred this reading. Additionally, Abū Amr stated that reading the expression in the feminine form is more beautiful, and he preferred this reading as well.<sup>61</sup> In some sources, the justification for the use of the expression in both masculine and feminine forms has been derived from the usage in the verse. Indeed, the expression “تُسْقَى” (tusqā) in the aforementioned verse is attributed to the word “أَعْنَابٍ” ('a'nābin) which like “الْأَنْعَامِ” (al-an'ām) is a noun that can be treated as either masculine or feminine.<sup>62</sup> As seen, the evidence for reading the expression “يُسْقَى” (yusqā) in either the masculine or feminine form in the mentioned verse has been established by referencing the words used in the context and linguistic structure of the verse.

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<sup>59</sup> ar-Ra'd 13/4.

<sup>60</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'a*, 356-357; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/297; al-Bannā, *Īthāf*, 338.

<sup>61</sup> al-Nahās, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*, 467; Abū 'Abd Allāh Fahr al-dīn Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī, *Mafātīh al-ghayb* (Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 19/9.

<sup>62</sup> al-Ahḫash, *Ma'āni-l-Qur'ān*, 2/401; al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, 13/427.

## 2.2. The Presentation of Evidence from the Recitation of the Companions and Successors

Another piece of evidence used in the recitations regarding the reading of masculine or feminine forms is the recitation of the companions and successors (tābi'ūn). For instance, in the verse “تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ” (tusabbihu lahu as-samawātu as-sab'u)<sup>63</sup> the reading of the word “تُسَبِّحُ” (tusabbihu) in either the masculine or feminine form is supported by the recitation of the companions. According to transmitted reports, the Haramayn school, Abu Bakr and Ibn 'Āmir each read the expression “يُسَبِّحُ” (yusabbihu) in the masculine form with the letter “ي” (yā'). On the other hand, the reading of the other reciters is in the feminine form “تُسَبِّحُ” (tusabbihu) with the letter “ت” (tā').<sup>64</sup> The reason for the masculine reading with the letter “ي” (yā') is explained by the presence of the adverb “لَهُ” (lahu) between the feminine noun and the verb, as well as the fact that the expression “السَّمَوَاتُ” (as-samawātu) is not genuinely feminine.<sup>65</sup> Those who recite the verb with the letter “ت” (tā') as “تُسَبِّحُ” (tusabbihu) pronounce it in accordance with the feminine form of the word “السَّمَوَاتُ” (as-samawātu) considering the apparent meaning of the text. Additionally, evidence from the recitation of the companions has been brought forward regarding the feminine reading of the expression, as Abdallah Ibn Mas'ūd's variant of the verse is “سَبَّحَتْ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ” (sabaḥat lahu as-samawātu) indicating the feminine reading of the phrase.<sup>66</sup> The commentator Ibn 'Atiyyah (d. 541/1147) reported that A'mash also recited in this manner and, by bringing evidence from the recitation of the successors, he argued that the expression should be read in the feminine form as a proof.<sup>67</sup> The verse “لَا تُفَاتِحُكُمْ هُمْ” (lā tufattaḥu lahum)<sup>68</sup> is another

<sup>63</sup> al-Isrā' 17/42.

<sup>64</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'a*, 381; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/307.

<sup>65</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/48.

<sup>66</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/48.

<sup>67</sup> Ibn 'Atiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, 3/460.

<sup>68</sup> al-A'rāf/40.

example related to this issue. In the recitation of Hamzah and Kisā'i, the verse is read with the “ي” (yā) letter in the form of “لَا يُفْتَحُ” (lā yuftaḥu), while in the recitations of other qurrā', it is recited with the “ت” (tā) letter as “لَا تُفْتَحُ” (lā tuftaḥu) with a feminine reading.<sup>69</sup> The masculine reading with the letter “ي” (yā) is explained by the fact that the word “أَبْوَابُ” (abwāb) is not genuinely feminine and there is a separation between the feminine noun and the verb. Additionally, the authenticity of this qirā'ah has been established through the recitation of the companion 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās, whose qirā'ah has also been transmitted in the masculine form with the letter “ي” (yā).<sup>70</sup> Those who recite with the letter “ت” (tā) have done so because they consider the word “أَبْوَابُ” (abwāb) to be feminine. Additionally, a similar reading in the Qur'an has been pointed out as evidence, with the verse “مُفْتَحَةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَبْوَابُ” (muftaḥatan lahum al-abwābu)<sup>71</sup> being cited as a supporting example for the feminine reading. As mentioned, in the cited verse, this expression is used in the feminine form.<sup>72</sup> After narrating the recitations of the masculine or feminine readings in the aforementioned verses, evidence has been presented from the recitations of the companions and successors to support these readings.

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### 2.3. A Proof from Arabic Poetry and Eloquence

In discussions of the variations in Qur'anic recitations, examples from Arabic poetry are sometimes employed as supporting evidence to elucidate the linguistic aspects of the readings. In relation to this, the expression “خُشَّعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ” (khushsha'an abṣāruhum)<sup>73</sup> in the verse can be given as an example of the different readings. Abū 'Amr, Ya'qūb, Hamzah, and Kisā'i recited the phrase in the singular form as “خاشعاً” (khāshi'an). In contrast, other reciters read it in the plural form as “خُشَّعًا” (khushsha'an) with a ḍamma on the letter “خ”

<sup>69</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'a*, 280.

<sup>70</sup> al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi'*, 9/219.

<sup>71</sup> Sād 38/50.

<sup>72</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 1/462.

<sup>73</sup> al-Qamar 54/7.

(khā) and a shadda on the letter “ش” (shīn).<sup>74</sup> The reading of this expression as “خُشَعًا” (khushsha‘an) in the plural form has been explained by the feminine nature of the expression. This feminine usage has been supported with examples from other verses. Indeed, the use of “خَاشِعَةً” (khāshi‘atan) in the verse “خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ” (khāshi‘atan abṣāruhum tarhaquhum dhillatun)<sup>75</sup> and “وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ” (wa khasha‘ati al-aṣwātu lir-raḥmān)<sup>76</sup> with the feminine form “وَخَشَعَتِ” (wa khasha‘ati) indicates that the term is used in the feminine form in these instances.<sup>77</sup> The readings of Ubayy Ibn Ka‘b (d. 33/654 [?]) and Ibn Mas‘ūd from the companions, which also read as “خَاشِعَةً” (khāshi‘atan), support the interpretation of the verse being read in the feminine form.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, the foundation of the recitation mentioned is explained by the Arabic grammatical rule that the singular, plural, masculine, and feminine forms of agent nouns (ism al-fā‘il) are suitable to appear before plural nouns. This type of usage has been exemplified through Arabic poetry and rhetoric, and the mentioned recitation has been justified accordingly. As a matter of fact, the usage of “حَسَنٍ” (ḥasanin) and “حَسَنَةً” (ḥasanatin) in Arabic poetry and rhetoric, as seen in the examples “مررت برجال حسنٍ أَوْجُهُمْ وحسنة أَوْجُهُمْ وحسان أَوْجُهُمْ” (marartu birijālīn ḥasanin awjuhūm wa ḥasanatin awjuhūm wa ḥassānīn awjuhūm) (I passed by men with beautiful faces) and “ورجالٍ حسنٍ أَوْجُهُمْ مِن إِيَادِ بْنِ نِزَارٍ” (wa rijālīn ḥasanin awjuhūm min Iyād ibn Nizār ibn Ma‘d) (And young men with beautiful faces from ‘Iyād Ibn Nizār Ibn Ma‘d), indicates the appropriate use of the masculine and feminine forms. This illustrates that the cited recitation has been substantiated by referencing such examples from Arabic poetry and rhetoric.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab‘a*, 617-618; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/380; al-Bannā, *Īthāf*, 524.

<sup>75</sup> al-Qalam 68/43.

<sup>76</sup> Ṭahā 20/108.

<sup>77</sup> al-Tabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 22/117-118; Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Sarī Ibn Sahl al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān wa I‘rābuhu*, thk. ‘Abd al-Jalīl Abduh Shalabī (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1408), 5/86; al-Fārisī, *al-Hujja*, 6/242-243; Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/297; al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi‘*, 20/78; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr al-Muḥīt*, 8/173.

<sup>78</sup> al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi‘*, 20/78.

<sup>79</sup> al-Tabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 22/117-118; al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, 5/86; al-Fārisī, *al-Hujja*, 5/242-243.

Another example related to this topic is the recitation dispute regarding the word “يَعْشَى” (yagshā) in the verse “يَعْشَى طَائِفَةً مِنْكُمْ” (yagshā ṭā'ifatan minkum).<sup>80</sup> Hamzah, Kisā'ī and Khalaf have recited this phrase in the feminine form as “تَعْشَى طَائِفَةً مِنْكُمْ” (tagshā ṭā'ifatan minkum) with the “ت” (tā') letter. The other reciters, however, have recited it in the masculine form with the “ي” (yā') letter.<sup>81</sup> Those who recite with the “ت” (tā') letter have attributed the verb to the word “أَمْنَةٌ” (amanatan) mentioned earlier in the verse. On the other hand, those who recite with the “ي” (yā') letter have linked it to the word “نُعَاسًا” (nu'āsan) in the verse.<sup>82</sup> The masculine recitation of the expression is supported by the verse “إِذْ يُعْشَى لَكُمْ النُّعَاسَ” ('idh yughashshikumun-nu'āsa).<sup>83</sup> Indeed, in the mentioned verse, the verb is connected to the word “نُعَاسًا” (nu'āsan).

426| db For this reason, linking the expression “يَعْشَى” (yagshā) to “نُعَاسًا” (nu'āsan) is considered more appropriate as it aligns more closely with the verb. Another evidence for the masculine recitation of the mentioned expression is its common usage in Arabic speech in the form of “غَشَيْتَنِي النُّعَاسَ” (ghashshani an-nu'ās) where the word “نُعَاسًا” (nu'āsan) is attributed. Indeed, this expression has not been used in the form of “غَشَيْتَنِي الْأَمْنَةَ” (ghashshani al-amanah) where the word “أَمْنَةٌ” (amanatan) would be attributed.<sup>84</sup> As seen in the example, the proof for the masculine recitation of the expression is provided by citing evidence from Arabic speech.

#### 2.4. Bringing Evidence from Dialects

One of the evidences used in the justification regarding the reading with either a masculine or feminine form is dialects. This issue is present in the difference of readings related to the expres-

<sup>80</sup> Āl 'Imrān 3/154.

<sup>81</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'a*, 217; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/242.

<sup>82</sup> Ibn 'Atīyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, 1/527; al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi'*, 5/370.

<sup>83</sup> al-Anfāl 8/11.

<sup>84</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 1/360.

sion “وَلَيْسَتَيْنِ سَبِيلُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ” (wa litastabīna sabīlu al-mujrimīn)<sup>85</sup> in the verse. Hamzah, Kisā’ī, Khalaf, and Abū Bakr have recited this word as “وَلَيْسَتَيْنِ” (wa li-yastabīna) using the letter “ي” (yā’) that is, in the masculine verbal form. Other qurrâ’ have read it in the feminine form with the letter “ت” (tā’).<sup>86</sup> The use of the word “سَبِيلُ” (sabīlu) in both masculine and feminine forms is pointed out, and the evidence for this is brought from dialects. Indeed, al-Tabarī, while stating that both readings of the expression are equally valid, has reported that these two usages are found in the Arabic dialects. In this context, al-Tabarī mentioned that in the tribes of Tamīm and Najd, the masculine form is used, while in the people of Hijaz, the feminine form is used. Furthermore, al-Tabarī pointed out that both readings are used in the well-known Arabic dialects and are applied in the cities. He also stated that there is no reason in the usage of the masculine or feminine form of the mentioned expression that would lead to one being contrary to or preferred over the other.<sup>87</sup> It has also been reported that the term “سَبِيلُ” (sabīlu) is used in both masculine and feminine forms in the Qur’ān. In the verse “وَإِنْ يَرَوْا” (wa in yaraw sabīla ar-rushdi lā yattakhidhūhu sabīlan)<sup>88</sup> the word “سَبِيلُ” (sabīlu) is accompanied by the masculine pronoun “هُ” (hu). The same situation applies in the continuation of the verse “وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْعَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا” (wa-in yaraw sabīla al-ghayyi yattakhidhūhu sabīlā).<sup>89</sup> In contrast, in the verse “لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ” (lima taşuddūna ‘an sabīli llāhi man āmana tabghūnahā ‘iwajan)<sup>90</sup> the term “سَبِيلُ” (sabīlu) is used in the feminine form.<sup>91</sup> Another verse brought as evidence for the feminine usage of the word “سَبِيلُ” (sabīlu) is the expression “قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي” (qul

<sup>85</sup> al-An’ām 6/55.

<sup>86</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab’a*, 258; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/258.

<sup>87</sup> al-Tabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, 9/277.

<sup>88</sup> al-A’rāf 7/146.

<sup>89</sup> al-A’rāf 7/147.

<sup>90</sup> Āl ‘Imrān 3/99.

<sup>91</sup> al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi’*, 8/397.

hādhihi sabīlī).<sup>92</sup> Indeed, in the mentioned verse, “هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي” (hādhihi sabīlī) the feminine form is used.<sup>93</sup> Among these readings, the preferred view is the one in which the word “سَبِيلٌ” (sabīlu) is in the nominative case and is read with the letter “ت” (tā) in its feminine form. This reading is clearer in terms of meaning and is the recitation of the majority of the qurrā'.<sup>94</sup>

Another example related to this topic is the verse “يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ” (yawma tashhadu 'alayhim alsinatuhum).<sup>95</sup> In the mentioned verse, Hamzah and Kisā'ī have read the expression “تَشْهَدُ” (tashhadu) in the masculine form as “يَشْهَدُ” (yashhadu) with the letter “ي” (yā). It has been reported that the verb “تَشْهَدُ” (tashhadu) is read in the masculine form due to the separation between the verb and the feminine noun. Additionally, the femininity of “السنة” (alsinatu) is not considered literal. However, other reciters have read it in the feminine form as “تَشْهَدُ” (tashhadu) with the letter “ت” (tā). This reading is explained by considering the femininity of the word “السنة” (alsinatu) as being taken into account. It has been pointed out that the expression in question appears in both masculine and feminine forms, and the recitation has been grounded by providing examples from dialects. Indeed, in the dialects of those who use the masculine form, the plural of the word “اللسان” (lisān) is “السنة” (alsinatu). Similarly, the plural of the word “حمار” (ḥimār) is “الاحمرة” (al-aḥmirah) in these dialects. On the other hand, in the dialects of those who wish to make it feminine, the plural form is “السن”.<sup>96</sup> A preference has also been made between these two readings among the scholars. Abū Khatim has preferred the reading with the letter “ت” (tā) which is the recitation of the majority. On the other hand, Abū Ubayd has preferred the reading with the letter “ي” (yā). This

<sup>92</sup> Yūsuf 12/108.

<sup>93</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 1/434.

<sup>94</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 1/434.

<sup>95</sup> an-Nūr 24/24.

<sup>96</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/112.

preference is based on the fact that the feminine noun in the genitive case forms a separation between the verb and the noun, creating a break.<sup>97</sup>

### 3. Making a Preference Between Masculine or Feminine Readings

Scholars have made a preference between masculine or feminine readings, supported by various evidences. In this preference, sometimes Arabic grammatical rules and sometimes the reading of the majority of reciters have been influential. In this context, the verse “أَوَلَمْ تَأْتِهِمُ بَيِّنَةٌ” (awalam ta'tihim bayyinatun)<sup>98</sup> can be given as an example. It is reported that in the verse in question, the expression “تَأْتِهِمُ” (ta'tihim) was recited with the letter “ت” (tā') by Nāfi', Abū 'Amr and Ḥafs. Those who recited it this way have attributed the feminine form to the word “بَيِّنَةٌ” (bayyinatun). On the other hand, other Qur'ānic scholars have recited it with the letter “ي” (yā'), reading it as “يَأْتِهِمُ” (ya'tihim) in the masculine form.<sup>99</sup> Those who recited it this way have not considered the literal wording but rather the meaning. This is because the expressions “بَيِّنَةٌ” (bayyinatun) and “الْبَيَانَ” (al-bayān) are identical in meaning. The ones who read it in the masculine form have explained their recitation by attributing it to the word “الْبَيَانَ” (al-bayān). Furthermore, it has been mentioned among the other reasons for the masculine reading that the femininity of the word “بَيِّنَةٌ” (bayyinatun) is not literal, and that the space between the feminine word and the verb is separated by an object pronoun. Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib stated that the recitation of “يَأْتِهِمُ” (ya'tihim) was preferred due to the majority of Qur'ānic reciters adopting this reading. It has also been reported that Abū 'Ubayd preferred the reading with the letter “ي” (yā') (يَأْتِهِمُ) (ya'tihim) on the grounds that there is a pronoun between the verb and the feminine noun. On the other hand, it is narrated that Ibn Qutaybah favored

<sup>97</sup> al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi'*, 15/183-184.

<sup>98</sup> Ṭahā 20/133.

<sup>99</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'a*, 425.

the reading with the letter “ت” (tā') (تَأْتِيهِمْ) (ta'tihim) in reference to the verse “حَتَّىٰ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ” (ḥattā ta'tiyahumu al-bayyinah).<sup>100</sup>

The verse “تَتَوَفَّاهُم الْمَلَائِكَةُ” (tatawaffāhum al-malā'ikah)<sup>101</sup> is another example related to this issue. Hamzah recited the verse as “يَتَوَفَّاهُمْ” (yatawaffāhum) with the letter “ي” (yā') that is, in the masculine form while other Qur'ānic scholars recited it in the feminine form with the letter “ت” (tā').<sup>102</sup> It has been reported that a preference exists between these two readings. It is conveyed that Abū Ubayd preferred the recitation with the letter “ي” (yā') based on Ibn Mas'ūd's statement, which considers the angels grammatically masculine. Conversely, Ibn Qutaybah preferred the recitation with the letter “ت” (tā') in accordance with the readings of the Āṣim, Ḥaramayn, and Baṣrah schools. Additionally, it has been pointed out that this expression was not read in the feminine form due to the angels being considered feminine, and that the use of the plural form is the reason for this reading. Therefore, Abū Ubayd's preference has been criticized.<sup>103</sup>

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### Conclusion

This study examines the variant readings in the Qur'ān that involve masculine or feminine forms. These variants are analyzed not merely as differences in transmission but also manifestations shaped by the structural possibilities of the Arabic language, evaluated within the framework of their linguistic foundations and their relationship to Arabic grammar. Accordingly, it is demonstrated that a significant portion of qirā'āt differences are directly related to grammatical rules and linguistic structures of Arabic, especially in variants concerning masculine and feminine readings. Within this context, it is observed that certain linguistic features—such as words considered feminine despite lacking explicit feminine markers, expressions that allow for both masculine and feminine usage, grammatical interpretations of plural forms, and the presence of

<sup>100</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/108; al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi'*, 14/166.

<sup>101</sup> an-Naḥl 16/28.

<sup>102</sup> Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'a*, 372.

<sup>103</sup> Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *al-Kashf*, 2/36-37.

intervening elements between verb and subject—serve as the basis for such variations.

Major works in the fields of qirā'āt and tafsīr devote considerable attention to these masculine and feminine variants, often citing the views of scholars along with the evidences used to justify specific readings. These findings suggest that the divergences in qirā'āt are not solely governed by grammatical principles but are also supported by various linguistic and transmitted proofs, including the syntactic and semantic context of the verse, the recitations of the companions and the successors, as well as Arabic poetry and dialects. Through a comprehensive literature review and textual analysis, the study concludes that masculine and feminine readings do not reflect any linguistic inconsistency. On the contrary, they exemplify the flexible structure and expressive richness of the Arabic language. The categories of masculine and feminine in the Qur'ān are not merely lexical distinctions; they are crucial linguistic elements that contribute to semantic variety and interpretive richness. In this regard, the masculine-feminine variants in the qirā'āt are found to play a meaningful role in enhancing the understanding of the Qur'ān, adding depth to its semantic dimensions. Ultimately, these differences illustrate the dynamic interaction between the Qur'ān's verbal structure and Arabic grammar, highlighting that such readings are not mere phonetic alternatives but are powerful tools of expression with both linguistic and semantic significance.

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