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Ali al-Sayis's Attitude toward the Qirā'āt Sab'ah in Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām: A Methodological Analysis

M. Fahmi¹; Ahmad Mahfud²; Moh. Fuad Salim³

Abstract

*This study examines Ali al-Sayis's stance toward the Seven Qirā'āt in Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām, with a focus on methodological analysis and its implications for the interpretation of Islamic legal verses. The primary issue addressed is the lack of in-depth research on how Ali al-Sayis integrates the variant readings of the Seven Qirā'āt into the process of legal derivation (istinbāt al-aḥkām), despite the significant potential of qirā'āt in shaping the meaning of legal verses. The study aims to critically assess Ali al-Sayis's approach and methodology in responding to the Seven Qirā'āt and to analyze their relevance and contribution to the construction of contemporary Islamic law. This research employs a **qualitative**–descriptive method using library research techniques, with Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām as the primary source and Manna' al-Qattān's principles of the Seven Qirā'āt as the analytical framework. The **findings** show that al-Sayis adopts a selective yet open approach toward sound qirā'āt, adhering to the criteria of linguistic eloquence (faṣāḥah), conformity with the 'Uthmānic script (rasm 'Uthmānī), and the authority of the transmission chain (sanad). This approach not only demonstrates al-Sayis's methodological depth but also offers important implications for the development of contemporary Qur'anic studies—particularly in positioning qirā'āt as linguistic instruments that enrich interpretation without violating textual authority. Consequently, the **study reinforces** the understanding that qirā'āt can play a significant role in reconstructing modern fiqh in a more adaptive, contextual, and responsive manner to the needs of the present era..*

Keywords: Tafsīr Āyāt Al-Aḥkām; Legal Derivation; Istinbath; Methodology of Tafsīr.

¹ UIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia,

Corresponding Email: fahmitubanfahmituban@gmail.com

² UIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia, Email: achmahfud6@gmail.com

³ Imam Malik Collage Sharia and Law Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Email: fuadsalim2105@gmail.com

Introduction

Ali al-Sayis, in *Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām*, employs a comparative approach across the four Islamic legal schools—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali—objectively and without sectarian bias. He consistently selects the strongest opinions based on a thorough analysis of textual evidence. This work specifically focuses on Qur'anic verses that serve as the foundation for the establishment of Islamic legal rulings (*ahkam*) [1]. However, studies that specifically examine Ali al-Sayis's stance toward the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* (the Seven Canonical Readings) remain rare, leaving a gap in academic research [2]. Although his work emphasizes the interpretation of legal verses through comparative scholarly opinions and linguistic analysis, he has not explicitly discussed the impact of *qirā'āt* variations on juristic interpretation.

This raises an important question: to what extent did al-Sayis consider the variations in *qirā'āt* as a basis for legal reasoning (*istinbāt al-ḥukm*), especially given that *qirā'āt* can significantly influence the meaning of Qur'anic verses? [3] An interesting discourse arises from the potential tension between al-Sayis's objective methodology and the complexity of *qirā'āt* authority. On one hand, al-Sayis tends to prioritize interpretations he deems most rational and pays great attention to their relevance in modern human contexts [4], suggesting an openness to *qirā'āt* that support interpretive flexibility) [5]. On the other hand, juristic studies generally give precedence to *mutawātir qirā'āt* (those transmitted through mass narration with confirmed authenticity), which are always prioritized over *shādhah* (irregular) readings in the process of *tarjīḥ* (weighing opinions).

This study aims to explore in depth the perspective and methodology of Ali al-Sayis in addressing the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* within *Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām*, particularly how these Qur'anic recitational variants influence interpretation and the formulation of Islamic legal rulings. The research also examines the relevance and contribution of the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* to the construction of Islamic law from al-Sayis's perspective. To understand the position and contribution of the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* in legal interpretation according to Ali al-Sayis, it is essential to review several previous studies related to this theme.

Several relevant studies include one titled "*Penafsiran Muhammad Ali Al-Sayis dan Muhammad Ali Al-Sabuni tentang Ad'iyah dalam Tafsir Ayat Al-Ahkam Qs. Al-Ahzab [33] : 4-5*", [6] which discusses the differing exegetical approaches of al-Sayis and al-Sabuni, particularly in interpreting *qisās* (retributive justice) verses. Al-Sayis tends to take a descriptive approach without *tarjīḥ*, while al-Sabuni prefers the opinions of the majority (*jumhūr*). Another study, "*Qiraat pada Ayat-Ayat Ahkām dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Hukum Fikih*" [7], focuses on analyzing the

variations of *qirā'āt* in legal verses as one of the main causes of juristic disagreement.

A further study titled "*Keragaman Qira'at dan implikasinya terhadap tafsir ayat-ayat Hukum Keluarga serta relevansinya dengan Undang-Undang nomor 1 tahun 1974.*"[8] highlights how variations in Qur'anic readings affect the interpretation of family law verses and contribute to differences in *istinbāt al-ḥukm* among scholars. Meanwhile, the study "*Pembelaan Ahruf Sab'ah dan Qiro'at Sab'ah Sebagai Disiplin Ilmu Alquran*"[9] presents Abu Hayyan's efforts in defending the authority of the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah*. It outlines the historical background of Qur'anic recitational diversity, which corresponds to the various Arabic dialects, as well as the pivotal role of *qirā'āt* scholars whose readings remain authoritative today.

Unlike these previous studies, the present research specifically focuses on the integration of the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* into al-Sayis's exegetical methodology of legal verses, analyzing its influence on legal reasoning (*istinbāt al-ḥukm*) and connecting it with the contemporary relevance of Islamic law.

Method

To achieve this objective, the study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach using library research, focusing on an in-depth analysis of *Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām* by Ali al-Sayis as the primary source for examining his attitudes and methodology toward the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah*. Manna' al-Qattān's principles of the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* in *Mabāḥith fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* serve as the theoretical framework for assessing the validity of the readings [10]. The analysis is conducted by classifying al-Sayis's approach based on three main criteria: conformity to Arabic linguistic rules, consistency with the Uthmanic script, and the authenticity of the transmission chain (*sanad*).

The analytical process in this study is carried out through several sequential stages. First, the researcher examines *Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām* to identify all legal verses discussed by Ali al-Sayis in which he employs variants of *qirā'āt*. Second, each *qirā'ah* variant—whether *mutawātir*, *shādhḍah*, or *qirā'ah tafsīriyyah*—is collected along with its exegetical context. Third, all of the collected data are classified using the three criteria of sound *qirā'āt* established by Manna' al-Qattān: compliance with Arabic grammar, conformity with the Uthmanic script, and the strength of the *sanad*. Fourth, the researcher analyzes al-Sayis's stance toward each reading to determine whether he accepts it as an authoritative *qirā'ah*, uses it as an interpretive aid, or rejects it as a basis for legal rulings.

Fifth, the analysis proceeds by assessing the extent to which these *qirā'āt* variations influence the interpretation of legal verses—whether they produce

juridical implications or merely enrich the linguistic dimension. Sixth, based on these findings, the researcher maps al-Sayis's pattern of selecting *qirā'āt* to reveal his methodological tendencies in employing them for legal derivation (*istinbāt al-aḥkām*). Finally, this pattern is synthesized and connected to *qirā'āt* theory and modern legal-exegetical methodologies to derive implications for the development of contemporary Qur'anic studies.

Result and Discussion

The Theoretical Principles of the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* According to Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān

Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān outlines three essential conditions for a Qur'anic reading (*qirā'ah*) to be deemed valid according to the scholars of *qirā'āt*:

1. Conformity with the Arabic Language – The recitation must be consistent with the linguistic structure of Arabic in terms of grammar (*nahw*), morphology (*ṣarf*), and rhetoric (*balāghah*). It is acceptable whether the reading follows one dialect or another, as Qur'anic recitation is a prophetic tradition transmitted through authentic chains, not based on personal opinion or rational reasoning [11].
2. Conformity with the Uthmanic Script – The reading must be in harmony with the written form of the Qur'an as compiled during the caliphate of Uthman ibn 'Affan, even if only by probability. The Companions (*ṣaḥābah*, may Allah be pleased with them) exercised *ijtihād* when writing the Uthmanic *muṣḥaf*, drawing on their knowledge of various dialects and readings. For example, they wrote the word "الصراط" (*al-ṣirāt*) in the verse "*ihdīnā al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*" using the letter "ṣād" instead of "sīn," which is the original letter of the word [12]. This allows the word to be read as "السرّاط," even though it differs from the written form. However, both readings are linguistically sound and convey the same meaning, making them equally valid. In such cases, the *ishmām* (rounding of the lips as if pronouncing a ḍammah without producing the sound) becomes a permissible variant [11].
3. Authenticity of Transmission (*Sanad*) – The reading must have a reliable and continuous chain of transmission that can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or his Companions.[10] Some Arabic linguists have criticized certain *qirā'āt* on the basis that they deviate from standard Arabic grammar or are weak linguistically.[13] However, Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān emphasizes that it is the authentic *qirā'āt* themselves that should serve as the foundation for Arabic linguistic norms, not the other way around. He supports this view by citing the statements of Ibn al-Jazarī, Abu 'Amr al-Dānī, and Zayd ibn Thābit, who all stressed the importance of following verified

narrations in determining authentic Qur'anic readings, rather than relying solely on grammatical rules or linguistic preferences [10].

Based on the textual analysis presented above, Ali al-Sayis's stance toward the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* can be examined in depth through the lens of these three fundamental conditions proposed by Mannā' al-Qattān, namely:

Conformity with Arabic Linguistic Rules (*al-Faṣāḥah*)

Ali al-Sayis applies strict linguistic criteria when evaluating *qirā'āt*. For instance, the *qirā'ah* "مَلِك" (*malik*, without an alif) in Surah al-Fātiḥah [1]:4 is accepted by him because it fully adheres to the grammatical and morphological rules of the Arabic language, even though it differs from the standard written form "مَالِك" (*mālik*) [14]. He explains that this difference does not violate linguistic principles but rather represents a legitimate grammatical variation within Arabic usage.

Similarly, al-Sayis's stance toward the *qirā'āt* in Surah al-Muzzammil [73]:20, particularly regarding the variation in the phrase "أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثِي اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثُهُ" ("less than two-thirds of the night[14], and half of it, and a third of it"), demonstrates his careful and profound approach to understanding the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* by giving due attention to linguistic, semantic, and contextual dimensions of revelation.

Al-Sayis explains that the word "أَدْنَىٰ" (*adnā*) linguistically means "closer" or "less," and in this verse it is understood as "less than." He notes that the majority of readers (*jumhūr al-qurrā'*) recite "وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثُهُ" (*wa niṣṣfahu wa thuluthahu*) in the accusative case (*naṣb*), functioning as adverbial expressions of time that specify the phrase "less than two-thirds of the night." Hence, the verse means that Allah knows that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions perform night prayer in varying portions—sometimes less than two-thirds of the night, sometimes less than half, and sometimes less than a third[14]. This reading emphasizes flexibility and ease in performing night worship according to individual capacity.

Meanwhile, al-Sayis also discusses the *qirā'ah* of Nāfi', who reads "وَنِصْفِهِ وَثُلُثِهِ" (*wa niṣṣfihi wa thuluthihi*) in the genitive case (*jar*) [15], coordinating these words with "two-thirds of the night[14]." Thus, the meaning becomes that Allah knows the Prophet and his companions pray for varying portions of the night—less than two-thirds, less than half, and less than a third—alternately.

Furthermore, al-Sayis elaborates on the word "تَابَ" (*tāba*), which in Arabic originally means "to return" or "to turn back." In this verse, it carries two principal interpretations:

1. Meaning of Forgiveness (*Maghfirah*)

In the *qirā'ah* of Nāfi' and similar readings, where “يُصْفِهِ” and “تَلْتَهُ” are read in the genitive form, the phrase “فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ” (*fā-tāba 'alaykum*) is interpreted as Allah's forgiveness for the believers' shortcomings in fulfilling the command of night prayer. In this sense, Allah pardons those who, at times, can only rise for less than a third of the night, even though the initial command required half the night. This indicates Allah's mercy in accepting human effort, even when it falls short of perfection.

2. Meaning of Ease and Alleviation (*Takhfif*)

In the majority reading, where “نُصْفُهُ” and “تَلْتَهُ” are read in the accusative form, the phrase “فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ” signifies Allah's granting of ease and relief from difficulty. That is, Allah alleviated the initial burden by transforming the earlier, more demanding command into one that is lighter and more manageable [14]. This interpretation underscores that Allah facilitates worship in accordance with human capability.

Ali al-Sayis's stance toward the *qirā'āt* in Surah al-Muzzammil [73]:20 is thus scholarly, open-minded, and balanced. He accommodates authentic *qirā'āt* variations and interprets the verse contextually, emphasizing the divine mercy, forgiveness, and leniency embedded in the Qur'anic command. In doing so, al-Sayis demonstrates how the *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* can serve as a rich and dynamic source of understanding in Qur'anic studies, rather than a cause of rigidity or restriction.

Conformity with the 'Uthmānic Script (*al-Rasm al-'Uthmānī*)

Ali al-Sayis emphasizes tolerance within the limits of the 'Uthmānic script. He accepts the *qirā'ah* of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ – “وله أخ أو أخت من أم” [16] in Surah al-Nisā' [4]:12, because it remains consistent with the writing conventions of the 'Uthmānic *muṣḥaf*, even though it includes an element of interpretive elaboration [14]. Similarly, the *qirā'ah* “وَأَرْجُلُكُمْ” (read with *kasrah*, genitive case) in Surah al-Mā'idah [5]:6 is explained by al-Sayis as a phenomenon of *jar bi-l-mujāwarah* (“influence by proximity”), which still falls within the accepted boundaries of *rasm* tolerance. Al-Sayis clarifies that this verse presents two possible readings concerning the word “أَرْجُلُكُمْ” (“your feet”):

1. Accusative Reading (*Naṣb*)

In this reading, “وَأَرْجُلُكُمْ” functions as the direct object (*maf'ūl*) joined (*mawṣūl*) with the previous words “وَجُوهُكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ” (“your faces and your hands”). Thus, the meaning is a command to wash the face, the hands up to the elbows, and the feet up to the ankles. This reading conforms to the 'Uthmānic *rasm* and is supported by the continuous practice of the

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions, who consistently washed their feet up to the ankles during ablution (*wuḍūʿ*). It also represents the legally established (*ijmāʿ*) position that washing the feet is an obligatory component of *wuḍūʿ*.

2. Genitive Reading (*Jar*)

In this reading, “أَرْجُلُكُمْ” is in the genitive case (*majrūr*) due to the grammatical rule of *jar bi-l-mujāwarah* (case assimilation due to proximity), as seen in other verses such as Surah Hūd [11]:26. In this context, the *jar* reading of “أَرْجُلُكُمْ” is interpreted as a subtle indication of moderation in using water when washing the feet [14], since the feet are the body part most exposed to dirt and thus may lead to wastefulness if washed excessively.

Ali al-Sayis interprets the *jar* reading as a result of *jar bi-l-mujāwarah* – a form of inflection that “follows” the case of a neighboring word rather than reflecting its actual syntactic function. Although some scholars mention the possibility of interpreting the *jar* reading on the basis of *jar bi-l-mujāwarah*, major exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ʿAṭīyyah, and al-Zamakhsharī do not treat it as the principal analysis for this verse. Indeed, al-Qurṭubī discusses both readings – *naṣb* and *jar* – yet he emphasizes that there is scholarly consensus (*ijmāʿ*) that the feet must be washed, not merely wiped [17]. Moreover, employing *jar bi-l-mujāwarah* as a basis for establishing a legal ruling is considered an anomalous (*shādh*) approach, as the strength of this grammatical principle does not match that of established rules of syntax.

Meanwhile, Ibn Masʿūd's reading “فَأَقْطَعُوا أَيْمَانَهُمَا” is not treated by al-Sayis as a *mutawātir qirāʾah* nor as an independent legal proof. Nonetheless, he still employs it as a *qirāʾah tafsīriyyah* that reinforces the view that the hand to be cut is the right hand. Al-Sayis explains that the canonical reading “فَأَقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا” – with the plural form *aydi* as an instance of *muqābalah al-jamʿ bi-l-jamʿ* – indicates that each thief has only one hand amputated [14]. He then stresses that the hand to be cut is the right hand, based on scholarly consensus, while Ibn Masʿūd's reading serves to clarify a meaning aligned with that consensus, even though it does not meet the *rasm* criteria required for establishing legal rulings.

Thus, al-Sayis does not reject this reading outright; rather, he situates it within the domain of exegesis, not legal derivation (*istinbāṭ al-aḥkām*). This stance demonstrates that non-*mutawātir* (*shādh*) *qirāʾāt* may be accepted by him as semantic support, but not as independent juridical evidence – reflecting at the same time his selective approach in positioning *qirāʾāt* outside the *mutawātir* framework.

Authentic Chain of Transmission (*Sihhatu al-Sanad*)

Al-Sayis emphasizes the authenticity of transmission. He acknowledges the *mutawatir* qira'at, such as the recitations of Nafi' and Ibn Kathir in QS. Al-Muzzammil:20, because their chains of transmission are continuous up to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through routes that make collusion impossible. He also analyzes the credibility of the transmitters of Ibn 'Amir's qira'ah "ما ننسخ" in QS. Al-Baqarah:106 by verifying the narrators' integrity ('*adl*) and accuracy (*dhabt*).

Conversely, Ali al-Sayis's stance toward the *sab'ah* qira'at related to the recitation "إذا قمتم إلى الصلاة وأنتم محدثون" (when you stand for prayer while in a state of impurity), which falls under the category of *qira'at shadhdhah* (irregular or anomalous recitation), demonstrates a very cautious and contextual approach. In this text[14], Ali al-Sayis argues that such *shadhdh* recitation cannot be used as a legal basis to obligate ablution (*wudhu*) before every prayer; rather, it should be understood only as a recommendation (*mandub*).

Ali al-Sayis refers to several hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that indicate performing ablution while already in a state of purity (*taharah*) brings reward, such as the hadith: «من توضأ على طهر كتب له عشر حسنات» [18] ("Whoever performs ablution while in a state of purity will be granted ten good deeds"). This hadith shows that performing ablution in a state of purity is a recommended act, not an obligation.

Furthermore, Ali al-Sayis also cites the incident when the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) performed the five daily prayers with one ablution on the day of the Conquest of Makkah. At that time, Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) said to him:

قال له عمر: يا رسول الله صنعت شيئاً لم تكن تصنعه، فقال عليه الصلاة والسلام:
عمداً صنعته يا عمر.

"O Messenger of Allah, you have done something you do not usually do." The Prophet replied, "I did it deliberately, O Umar" [19].

This event confirms that performing ablution before prayer is not a repeated obligation but may be done once for several prayers as long as one remains in a state of purity [14]. Thus, Ali al-Sayis uses this argument to reject the *shadhdh* recitation that implies the obligation of performing ablution before every prayer based on that qira'ah.

Table 1. Al-Sayis's Stance on the Qirā'āt Based on Three Fundamental Criteria

Verse	Qirā'āt Variant	al-Sayis's Position	Legal Implication
Qur'an 1:4	«مَلِكِ» (without alif) vs. «مَالِكِ»	Accepts both readings because they are linguistically sound, conform to <i>naḥw-ṣarf</i> rules, and represent legitimate grammatical variants.	Causes no legal differences; only enriches the meaning: "Sovereign of the Day of Retribution" and "Owner of the Day of Retribution."
Qur'an 73:20	«وَنُصْفُهُ وَتُلْثُهُ» (accusative, majority reading)	Considers the accusative reading valid linguistically. Meaning: it describes the varying proportions of <i>qiyām al-layl</i> (less than $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, or $\frac{1}{3}$ of the night).	Indicates <i>takhfif</i> (alleviation): the obligation of night prayer becomes flexible according to one's ability.
Qur'an 73:20	Genitive reading (Nāfi'): «وَنُصْفِهِ وَتُلْثِهِ»	Accepted as a sound <i>qirā'ah</i> ; offers a different nuance while remaining linguistically correct.	Emphasizes <i>maghfirah</i> (forgiveness): Allah pardons believers' shortcomings in performing <i>qiyām al-layl</i> .
Qur'an 4:12	Reading of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās: «وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ مِنْ أُمِّ»	Accepted as a <i>qirā'ah tafsīriyyah</i> , not <i>mutawātirah</i> . Consistent with the script and exegetical context.	Supports the inheritance share of maternal siblings, though not used as an independent legal proof.
Qur'an 5:6	«أَرْجُلُكُمْ» (accusative)	Preferred by al-Sayis; conforms to the Uthmanic script and the Prophet's practice.	Establishes washing the feet as obligatory in <i>wuḍū'</i> .
Qur'an 5:6	«أَرْجُلُكُمْ» (genitive)	Explained as a possible case of <i>jar bil-mujāwarah</i> ; tolerated within the script.	Interpreted as an indication of water conservation, not as a legal basis for requiring <i>mash</i>

			(wiping) over the feet.
Qur'an 5:38	Reading of Ibn Mas'ūd: «فَأَقْطَعُوا أَيْمَانَهُمَا»	Not accepted as a <i>mutawātir qirā'ah</i> ; used only for semantic clarification.	Supports the consensus that the hand to be cut is the right hand, but not as an independent legal proof.
Qur'an 2:106	Reading of Ibn 'Āmir: «مَا نَنْسَخْ»	Accepted due to its sound <i>sanad</i> and trustworthy transmitters.	Does not alter the legal ruling; simply reinforces the general meaning of <i>nasakh</i> .
Irregular (shādhah) reading related to wuḍū'	«إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَأَنْتُمْ مُحْدِثُونَ» (interpreted as requiring wuḍū' before every prayer)	Rejected as a legal basis because it is not <i>mutawātir</i> and contradicts authentic ḥadīth.	Establishes that performing <i>wuḍū'</i> before each prayer is not obligatory but recommended.

Table 1 demonstrates al-Sayis's methodological attitude toward the *qirā'āt* by highlighting his consistent distinction between linguistic validity, exegetical value, and juridical authority. Across the examples presented, al-Sayis shows a clear commitment to accepting variant readings that are linguistically sound, conform to Arabic grammatical principles, and are supported by reliable transmission, while carefully limiting their impact on legal rulings unless supported by *mutawātir* evidence.

In Qur'an 1:4, al-Sayis's acceptance of both *maliki* and *māliki* illustrates his view that multiple authentic readings may coexist without generating legal divergence. Instead, these variants function to enrich theological meaning, portraying Allah simultaneously as Sovereign and Owner of the Day of Retribution. This approach underscores his preference for semantic complementarity rather than legal differentiation. A similar pattern appears in Qur'an 73:20, where both the accusative and genitive readings are acknowledged as linguistically valid. Al-Sayis interprets the accusative form as indicating flexibility (*takhfif*) in the obligation of night prayer, while the genitive reading emphasizes divine forgiveness (*maghfirah*). Notably, neither reading is employed to establish a rigid legal command, reflecting al-Sayis's sensitivity to the broader ethical and spiritual dimensions of the text.

With regard to Qur'an 4:12 and Qur'an 5:38, al-Sayis accepts non-mutawātir readings as qirā'āt tafsīriyyah that may clarify meaning but cannot function as independent legal proofs. These cases reveal his cautious stance toward solitary or explanatory readings, which he values for interpretive support while subordinating them to the dominant legal framework established by consensus and sound prophetic practice. In the case of Qur'an 5:6, al-Sayis clearly prioritizes the accusative reading *arjulakum*, aligning it with the Uthmanic script and established Sunnah to affirm the obligation of washing the feet in *wuḍū'*. Although he tolerates the genitive reading as grammatically possible, he restricts its legal implication, interpreting it as an indication of water conservation rather than a mandate for wiping the feet. This reflects his principle that legal rulings must rest on the strongest textual and practical evidence. The example of Qur'an 2:106 further reinforces al-Sayis's balanced methodology. While he accepts Ibn 'Āmir's reading due to its reliable transmission, he emphasizes that it does not introduce a new legal ruling but merely strengthens the general concept of abrogation (*nasakh*). Finally, al-Sayis's rejection of irregular readings related to *wuḍū'* demonstrates his firm boundary between accepted qirā'āt and *shādhdhah* variants. Despite their apparent legal implications, such readings are dismissed when they contradict authentic ḥadīth, resulting in the conclusion that renewing *wuḍū'* before every prayer is recommended rather than obligatory.

Table 1 illustrates that al-Sayis adopts a principled and hierarchical approach to the qirā'āt: linguistic and exegetical richness is welcomed, but juridical authority is reserved for readings that are mutawātir, textually sound, and corroborated by established Sunnah and scholarly consensus. Overall, Ali al-Sayis's stance toward the Seven Qirā'āt in this case is selective and critical. He does not accept anomalous (*shādhdhah*) readings that conflict with the principles of fiqh or authentic ḥadīth. Instead, he situates such readings in their proper context—as recitations that cannot serve as the basis for obligatory legal rulings, but only as readings that imply recommendation or virtue. This approach demonstrates that al-Sayis prioritizes harmony between qirā'āt, linguistic rules, and the authoritative sources of Islamic law, thereby preserving the integrity of the Qur'anic text while safeguarding the purity of the Shari'ah.

Nevertheless, al-Sayis does not always utilize variant qirā'āt in his legal explanations. This is evident, for example, when he interprets other legal verses without presenting their qirā'āt variants. Such instances indicate that his use of qirā'āt in legal analysis is not applied universally to every verse, but selectively and only when he deems them contextually relevant.

The Position of *Qirā'āt* in Ali al-Sayis's Method of *Tarjīh*

Al-Sayis's approach to *qirā'āt* demonstrates that he views the variant readings of the Qur'an as an important element of exegesis, though he does not regard them as a primary source of legal rulings. For al-Sayis, *qirā'āt* possess epistemological value, yet their function is primarily as linguistic indicators and semantic enhancers (*mu'ayyid*), rather than as independent legal proofs [14]. In other words, he acknowledges the authority of *qirā'āt*, but their use in legal derivation (*istinbāt al-aḥkām*) is selective, contextual, and not systematic.

In several legal verses, al-Sayis does employ *qirā'āt* differences to grasp semantic variations that help clarify the intent of the Sharī'ah. For instance, in Qur'an 73:20, he explains the distinction between the genitive and accusative readings, which produce two different emphases: *takhfīf* (alleviation) and *maghfirah* (forgiveness). Here, *qirā'āt* are used to reinforce the exegetical direction, not to formulate new legal rulings. This mirrors the approach of Abū Ja'far al-Naḥḥās in his work *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*[20]. Such examples show that *qirā'āt* may function as supporting considerations in *tarjīh*, but not as the primary determinant.

In other cases, such as Qur'an 5:38, al-Sayis prioritizes the *mutawātir* reading «فَأَقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا» when discussing the ruling on amputation of the hand. However, he still cites the reading of Ibn Mas'ūd «فَأَقْطَعُوا أَيْمَانَهُمَا» as a *qirā'ah tafsīriyyah* that reinforces the conclusion that the right hand is to be amputated. This indicates that he does not reject *shādhdhah* readings outright; rather, he employs them in an explanatory capacity, not as legal foundations [21]. A similar practice is found among other exegetes, such as al-Qurṭubī, who holds that not every legal verse must be accompanied by an exposition of all its *qirā'āt* variant.

Despite recognizing the importance of *qirā'āt*, al-Sayis does not consistently examine all variant readings for every legal verse. Some verses that actually contain significant *qirā'āt* differences—such as the word *yaṭhurna* in Qur'an 2:222, where Shubah, Ḥamzah, al-Kisā'ī, and Khalaf read «يَطْهَرْنَ» with *tashdīd* (from *ṭaṭahhara*, meaning to bathe after attaining purity), while other *qurrā'* read «يَطْهَرْنَ» without *tashdīd* (from *ṭahura*, meaning to cease menstruation [22]). are not discussed in his tafsīr. This pattern indicates that he does not treat *qirā'āt* as a fixed method in legal derivation, but rather as an auxiliary tool when the variation adds interpretive value.

Although al-Sayis accepts certain *shādhdhah* readings as aids to meaning, he does not provide a clear methodological boundary for when such readings may be used in exegesis and when they should be disregarded. This ambiguity appears in his discussion of the amputation ruling, where he upholds consensus (*ijmā'*) as the primary basis without examining the historical

relationship between the formation of this *ijmā'* and the existence of alternative readings such as Ibn Mas'ūd's «أَيْمَانُهُمَا», which also refers to the right hand but is not among the *mutawātir* readings and thus not used as legal evidence by later scholars [14]. Methodologically, it remains relevant to ask whether the *ijmā'* emerged after the reading of Ibn Mas'ūd had ceased to be used—thereby making its exclusion understandable—or whether it emerged while the reading was still known [24], in which case it may have contributed to reinforcing the scholars' consensus [25],[26],[27],[28],[29],[30]. Since al-Sayis does not address this chronological aspect, his application of *shādhdhah* readings appears selective and lacking a fully consistent framework.

Ali al-Sayis clearly aligns with the mainstream of 20th-century al-Azhar scholarship, particularly in his objective comparative approach to legal schools and his moderate stance toward *qirā'āt*. He accepts *mutawātir* readings as authoritative in interpretation and employs *shādhdhah* readings in a limited way as semantic enhancers, reflecting the tendencies of modern Egyptian reformist thought [2],[31],[32],[33],[35]. As noted by A. Fadhil, al-Sayis also writes in a contemporary scholarly style.

From the standpoint of *qirā'āt* theory, his position most closely aligns with Ibn al-Jazarī, as both emphasize the three conditions for a valid reading (conformity with Arabic grammar, the Uthmanic script, and a sound *sanad*) [23],[36],[37],[38],[39],[40]. In exegetical practice, however, his approach resembles that of al-Zarqānī, who treats *qirā'āt* primarily as linguistic instruments rather than independent legal sources [41],[42],[43],[45]. His similarity to Abū Shāmah is more partial, limited mainly to cautious acceptance of readings, though al-Sayis tends to be more flexible. Thus, it can be concluded that al-Sayis follows the general methodological pattern of modern Azhari scholarship while still exhibiting an independent character in his utilization of *qirā'āt*.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Ali al-Sayis's attitude toward the *qirā'āt* is selective, critical, and well-measured. He consistently adheres to the three foundational conditions—linguistic eloquence (*faṣāḥah*), conformity with the 'Uthmānic script (*rasm 'Uthmānī*), and the validity of the transmission (*sanad*)—and positions the *qirā'āt* as linguistic instruments for interpreting legal verses rather than as independent juridical proofs. Through his analysis of the variant readings in Sūrat al-Fātiḥah, al-Muzzammil, and al-Mā'idah, it becomes clear that al-Sayis accepts sound readings as a means of enriching meaning, while rejecting anomalous (*shādhdhah*) readings as legal evidence when they conflict with hadith or scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*). Accordingly, this research

contributes significantly to clarifying how qirā'āt can be handled methodologically without blurring the boundaries between their textual authority and the requirements of legal derivation.

Al-Sayis's methodological posture carries direct implications for contemporary qirā'āt studies as well as for the renewal of Islamic jurisprudence. For modern qirā'āt scholarship, this study reaffirms the importance of distinguishing between *mutawātir* qirā'āt as textual foundations and *shādhdhah* qirā'āt as tools of semantic clarification. For the reconstruction of modern fiqh, al-Sayis's approach offers an integrative model that combines linguistic inquiry, comparative madhhab analysis, and contextual sensitivity. Through such an approach, the qirā'āt can function as a supporting element in developing Islamic law that is more adaptive, moderate, and aligned with the principles of ease in the Sharī'ah—while still upholding authoritative standards within Qur'anic sciences.

Author Contributions

M. Fahmi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Ahmad Mahfud:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Moh. Fuad Salim:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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Conflict of Interest

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