

Qur'anic Rasm and Its Relationship with Interpretation and Understanding

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Abstract. An understanding of RASM can help to prevent errors in transcription and maintain the sanctity of the Qur'an. The aims are to explore the essence of the Qur'anic RASM and its relationship with the interpreting and understanding the holy verses. This study employs the library method of collecting, reading, recording, and analyzing, then elaborates on a deep understanding of the relevant scholarly literature from journal databases, books, and scientific articles. The study results reveal that RASM Al-Qur'an or The RASM of Utsmani is the procedure for writing the Qur'an that was established during the Ustman Bin Affan, adhering to specific rules. Some ulama that RASM Al-Qur'an is *tauqifi*, but the majority hold that is not *tauqifi*. Then, the relationship between The RASM of Utsmani and the understanding of the Qur'an lies in the fact that, in the early days of Islam, the Quranic manuscript (*mushaf*) did not have diacritical marks (punctuation marks) or line. This difficulty became more pronounced as the Islamic world expanded into non-Arab regions, such as Persia in the east, Africa in the south and other non-Arab areas in the west.

Keywords:

Rasm, Mushaf, Diacritical Marks

Introduction

The term RASM, linguistically, means "trace" or "mark" (*atsar*). The RASM is synonymous with terms like *khat*, *kitabah*, *zubur*, and *rasm*. The vowels and symbols in the Qur'an are called RASM, which also helps in determining *tartil* and *tajweed* rules. A number of guidebooks from Arabic literature experts provide examples, guidelines, and techniques for reading RASM to make it easier to understand. Understanding the basics of the Arabic alphabet (*hijaiyah* letters) is a crucial first step in accurately reading RASM, as the ability to read RASM heavily relies on one's grasp of these letters. Thus, it can be understood that the science of Quranic RASM is the study of the unique methods used in writing the Quranic manuscript, encompassing both the orthography of its words and the forms of its letters (Muntafi'ah, Septiana, Wildan, & Wakhid, 2022).

The Quran is the holy book revealed by Allah SWT to the Prophet Muhammad SAW through the angel Gabriel, intended to be conveyed to humanity. The Quran is also the primary source of Islamic teaching and guidance for human life. Rahmi (2017) states that Muslims adhere to the belief that the Qur'an is the fundamental source of religious teachings. The relationship between RASM and the Qur'an is one of interdependence. RASM serves as a marker for reading the Qur'an, influencing the comprehension of the context and meaning of

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the Qur'anic surah. Therefore, studying RASM is crucial for a deeper comprehension of the messages contained within the Qur'an.

Thus, the primary issue addressed in this study is the critical role that the Qur'anic RASM (script) plays in the accurate interpretation and understanding of the Qur'an. Despite the fundamental importance of RASM in preserving the original pronunciation, meaning, and orthography of the Qur'anic text, there remains a significant gap in scholarly understanding regarding how variations and specific characteristics of RASM influence the interpretation and practical application of Qur'anic teachings. Additionally, the historical development and pedagogical approaches to teaching RASM are underexplored, leading to potential discrepancies in the transmission and comprehension of the holy text.

By studying RASM, a Muslim can more effectively comprehend the messages conveyed by Allah SWT in the Qur'an, thereby strengthening the relationship between humans and their creators. This assertion is corroborated by [Ismail, Abdullah, & Saïd \(2020\)](#), mastering RASM skills will enhance Qur'anic recitation because some RASM spellings differ from conventional spellings and can increase confidence in the content if the verses revealed by Allah SWT. An understanding of RASM can help to prevent errors in transcription and maintain the sanctity of the Qur'an. Without comprehending the messages contained in the Qur'an, individuals will be unable to take lessons from it and implement its teaching daily lives.

In the pursuit of understanding the essence of the Qur'an, particularly in relation to RASM, several fundamental questions arise, inviting us to delve deeper and comprehend the complex relationship between this Qur'anic script method and the processes of interpretation and understanding of the holy verses. The key questions that will be the primary focus of this book are:

1. What is the history and significance of the Qur'anic RASM?

Detailing the historical journey of RASM Al-Qur'an as a writing method, as well as its significance and evolution in the context of developing the holy text.

2. How does RASM affect the interpretation of Qur'anic verses?

Analyzing the impact of the visual characteristics of RASM on various interpretations of Qur'anic verses by scholars and the Muslim community.

In order to make a valuable contribution towards a deeper understanding of the Qur'an, I am determined to write a paper that explores the essence of the Qur'anic RASM and its relationship with the interpreting and understanding the holy verses. Unveiling the Depth of RASM Al-Qur'an involves exploring the history and significance of RASM Al-Qur'an as a method of Qur'an writing, comprehensively detailing the various forms and variants of RASM found in Qur'anic text. Analyzing the influence of RASM on interpretation will examine how the visual characteristics of RASM affect the interpretation and meaning of Qur'anic verses and highlight the correlation between RASM structure and evolving theological interpretations.

Method

This paper presents a detailed analysis of research on Qur'anic writing with the Utsmani writing method. It employs the library method of collecting, reading,

recording, and analyzing (Faiz, Soleh, Kurniawaty, & Purwati, 2021). It then elaborates on a deep understanding of the relevant scholarly literature. The researchers conducted a systematic search in journal databases, books, and scientific articles to compile a synthesis of information supporting the research arguments, ensuring a solid theoretical foundation for study.

Results and Discussion

Results

The Qur'anic RASM and its Relationship with Interpretation and Understanding

The position of the RASM of Utsmani is a matter of contention among ulama, with differing opinions regarding the nature of the writing pattern. Some argue that it is the Prophet's instructions, while others maintain that it is the *ijtihad* of companions. Their respective positions are as follows:

The first group (*Majority of Ulama*) believes that the RASM of Utsmani is *tauqifi*, arguing that the scribes of revelation were companions appointed and trusted by the Prophet Muhammad. It is therefore unlikely that the companions would make an agreement (*ijma'*) in matters contrary to the will and blessing of the Prophet. The inconsistencies in the writing of the Qur'an cannot be evaluated solely based on standard writing norms; there are deeper, undisclosed secrets behind these patterns. The writing style was also preserved by the companions and the following generation (*tabi'in*). This is supported by Madzkur (2012), who asserts that the RASM of Utsmani is demonstrated *tauqifi* in origin.

Amin (2020) states that the Utsmani RASM is *tauqifi*, even though the *khat* violates the rules of *nahwu* (grammar) and *sharaf* (morphology) and *khat* is easy to cause misreading if it is not given a harakat, especially for ordinary people. However, some *ulama* argue that the RASM of Utsmani is not *tauqifi*, but only a procedure for writing the Qur'an (Shodiqoh, 2019). This is also reinforced by the statement of Almas, Chandra, & Rojak (2023), who note that some *ulama* believe the script follows a *tauqifi* pattern, while others believe it follows a *taufiqi* pattern. Additionally, there is criticism of the Utsmani mushaf in terms of its content, which some view as excessive. The Shia (*Kaum Siah*) believes that the Utsmani mushaf is missing two surahs, known as *al-Khal'u* and *al-Hafdu* (Aqsho, 2016).

Thus, according to this option, the law of following the RASM of Utsmani is obligatory, as this pattern is considered to be that of the Prophet's directive (*taufiqi*). This reason is based on a narration that Prophet Muhammad explained the method of writing the revelation to one of the *Kuttub* (scribes of revelation), namely Mu'awiyah about the procedure for writing revelation (Shodiqoh, 2019). Therefore, this pattern must be preserved, even if it deviates from standardized writing conventions. Furthermore, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and Imam Malik argued that it is forbidden to write the Qur'an against the RASM of Utsmani. Nonetheless, this pattern has been widely accepted by the majority of Ulama (*Jumhur Ulama*) (Sholikhah, Mardiaty, & Rosyidah, 2020).

The second group of ulama posits that the writing pattern in the RASM of Utsmani is not *taufiqi*, but rather the *ijtihad* of the companions. There is no evidence in the Prophet regarding the specific writing pattern of the revelation. In fact, a

narration cited by Rajab Farjani suggests that the Prophet Muhammad commanded that writing of the Qur'an but did not provide technical instructions for its writing, nor did he prohibit any specific writing styles. Consequently, different writing styles of the Qur'an in their manuscript (*Mushaf*). Some wrote a Qur'anic word according to its phonetic sound, while others added or omitted letters, understanding that these were simply methods. Therefore, it is permissible to write the Mushaf with the patterns of past writing or new patterns.

In this regard, they state the following: the forms and styles of writing are merely symbols. Therefore, any form and style of Quranic writing that guide correct reading can be justified. Conversely, the RASM of Utsmani, which differs from The RASM of Imla'I as we know it, complicates matters for many people and can lead to difficulty and confusion for readers (Sholikhah et al., 2020).

The third group asserts that writing the Qur'an using the RASM of Imla'I can be justified, but this is specifically for laypeople. For Ulama or those who understand the RASM of Utsmani are still obligated to preserve its originality.

The third opinion is more moderate and more in line with the conditions of the Muslim community. Indeed, there is no clear text that makes it obligatory to write the Qur'an with the RASM of Utsmani. Nevertheless, the consensus of the Qur'anic scribes (*the writers*) using the RASM of Utsmani should be respected, as it serves as a reference whose continued existence is of paramount importance to the Islam community. Currently, a significant number of Muslims do not understand the RASM of Utsmani. Additionally, many Muslim are unable to read Arabic script. In order to facilitate the reading of the Qur'an, it would be beneficial to provide an alternative writing system, such as Latin script.

Nevertheless, the Qur'an with the RASM of Utsmani must be preserved as a standard when needed. Similarly, the writing of Qur'an verses in scientific works, the RASM of Utsmani absolutely required because its status has entered the category of reference and the writer has no reason to ignore it.

Of the three opinions mentioned above, the author leans towards the view that the complete writing of the Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims must follow and adhere to the RASM of Utsmani, considering the following points:

1. To ensure that Muslims worldwide have a holy book with a uniform writing style, in accordance with the original guidelines.
2. The writing style of the Qur'an in the RASM of Utsmani, even if it is not *taufiqi*, at least represents the consensus (*ijma'*) of the Prophet's companions. The consensus of the companions holds legal authority and must be followed, including in the writing of the Qur'an in the RASM of Utsmani when intended as the complete holy book (Usuo, 2007).

However, Zaman (2018) states that the mushaf is merely a device. There is no issue with the community using any mushaf because the recitation of the Qur'an heavily relies on the aspect of *talaqqi*, the continuity of the *sanad*, and the transmission chain, rather than solely on the script, *rasm*, or writing style.

The Relationship Between Utsmani Script and Understanding the Qur'an

In the beginning, the mushaf of the companions differed significantly from one another. They recorded the Qur'anic revelation without a standardized writing style, as the notes were primarily for personal use, with no intention of passing them on to future generations. Among them, some included additional notes from the explanation of Prophet Muhammad, while others added certain symbols known only to the writers. In fact, there is diversity in the way the Qur'anic recitation (*qira'at*) due to dialectical differences (*lahjah*) tribes from various regions (Khaeroni, 2017).

In the early days of Islam, the Qur'anic Mushaf did not yet have punctuation marks and lines. The Utsmani Mushaf was not as it is known today with punctuation marks. There were also no signs in the form of dots, making it difficult to distinguish between the letters *ya* and *ba*. Likewise, between *sin* and *shin*, between *tha* and *zha*, between *jim*, *ha*, and *kha* and so on. The companions did not encounter difficulties reading the text, as they primarily relied on memorization. However, the process of compiling the Qur'an into one mushaf occurred during the caliphate of Umar Bin Khattab, after the Prophet death (Pramono, 2017).

However, difficulties began to arise as the Islamic world expanded into non-Arab regions such as Persia in the East, Africa in the South, and various other non-Arab territories in the West. This issue was recognized by the leaders of the Islamic world. When Ziyad ibn Abihi served as the governor of Basra, Iraq, during the reign of Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (661-680 M). Another narration mentions that during the reign of Ali ibn Abi Thalib, he instructed Abu Al-Aswad Al-Duwali to create diacritical marks to avoid misreading the Qur'an, especially for those who did not have it memorized. Ad-Duwali complied after encountering a critical misreading case in Surah At-Taubah. Under the governor's order, Ad-Duwali introduced diacritical marks: a dot above the letter for the upper vowel (*fathah*), a dot below the letter for the lower vowel (*kasrah*), the dhammah sign in the form of a small *wau* between two letters, and without any sign for dead consonants (Rohimin, 2016). This is further supported by Aqsho (2016b), who explains that Hudzaifah Ibnu Al-Yaman sought counsel with Utsman due to the prevalence of discord surrounding the interpretation of *qiraat* (different readings of the Qur'an). Hudzaifah requested Utsman to swiftly address the situation to eliminate these disputes among the Muslim community. Due to these various issues, the period of Usman bin Affan can be regarded as a crucial era in the development of RASM Al-Qur'an (Fawaid, 2014).

Subsequently, the development of RASM al-Qur'an advanced rapidly in the following periods. Khalifah Abdul Malik ibn Marwan instructed Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Saqafi to create Qur'anic letter signs or diacritical marks for the Qur'anic script. He delegated this task to Nashid ibn 'Ashim and Yahya ibn Ma'mur, two students of Ad-Duwali. These two individuals added dots to certain letters that were similar to each other. It is not surprising that several Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia use RASM Al-Qur'an. One such institution is the Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Asy'ariyyah, Kalibeber, Wonosobo, which employs the RASM al-Utsmani style (Hafizi & Ardani, 2022).

Thus, the existence of the Qur'anic RASM at the time of Utsman bin Affan positively contributed to maintaining the unity and accuracy of Qur'anic recitation by clarifying letters and diacritical marks, facilitating memorization through standardized writing, and preserving the uniformity of Quranic recitation worldwide. These positive impacts demonstrate that the Utsmani script focused solely on the writing process of the Qur'an not on its meaning. Therefore, the meaning of the Qur'an remains preserved through various disciplines, including *tafsir*, *qira'at* science (the study of Qur'anic recitations), and Arabic grammar. Meskipun demikian, Mendrofa et al., (2024) reveals that Utsmani RASM has certain limitation, specifically its inability to capture phonetic sounds or recitations, thereby failing to record phonetic information or melodic aspects of the recitation. This limitation stems from the Utsmani RASM's exclusive focus on the writing of letters and diacritical marks, without encompassing the elements of recitation or tajweed. Moreover, the advantages and disadvantages of this system can vary depending on the perspectives and needs of Individual Muslim or Islamic communities.

Based on the discussion above, it reveals multiple perspectives on the nature and implication of the RASM of Utsmani, highlighting a need for comprehensive analysis in several key areas. They are; a) understanding the historical authenticity and scholarly consensus requires a detailed examination of primary sources, historical narratives, and theological arguments; b) investigating the impact of RASM variations on interpretation necessitates an interdisciplinary approach, combining linguistics, theology, and cognitive science; c) addressing pedagogical challenges involves evaluating existing educational methodologies and developing new strategies that accommodate the diverse needs of learners; and d) the tension between standardization and accessibility requires a nuanced analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of maintaining a uniform script versus adopting alternative scripts. As a result, the findings can inform policies and practice in Qur'anic education, support the development of inclusive and affective pedagogical tools, and help balance the preservation of tradition with the demands of modernity. Ultimately, this research can contribute to a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the Qur'an, fostering a more informed and engaged Muslim community.

Conclusion

RASM Al-Qur'an or The RASM of Utsmani is the procedure for writing the Qur'an that was established during the Ustman Bin Affan, adhering to specific rules. Some ulama that RASM Al-Qur'an is tauqifi, but the majority hold that is not tauqifi. Rather, it is a consensus on the writing style agreed upon by Utsman and accepted by Muslim community, making it obligatory for everyone of following when writing the Qur'an. No one is permitted to deviate from it. RASM Al-Qur'an is the system or pattern by Ustman bin Affan and his companions for the writing of the Qur'an, related to the copies sent to various regions and cities, as well as Mushaf Al-Imam that was in Utsmani's possession.

The relationship between The RASM of Utsmani and the understanding of the Qur'an lies in the fact that, in the early days of Islam, the Quranic manuscript

(*mushaf*) did not have diacritical marks (punctuation marks) or line. The Utsmani *Mushaf* was not like the current versions that are equipped with such marks. Furthermore, there are no the forms of dots to distinguish between letters, making it difficult to differentiate between characters such as *ya* and *ba*. This difficulty became more pronounced as the Islamic world expanded into non-Arab regions, such as Persia in the east, Africa in the south and other non-Arab areas in the west.

Suggestion

The author hopes that this paper on "RASM Al-Qur'an and Its Relationship with Interpretation and Understanding" will provide insights and lessons on how RASM Al-Qur'an is connected to the interpretation and understanding of the Qur'an. The author welcomes criticism and suggestions to help improve the writing of this paper in the future.

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