



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Rhetoric of Shifting Between Pronouns and Numbers in the Qur'an: Selected Examples from Juz al-Ahqaf

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Dec 22, 2024	The study aims to uncover the instances of deviation and their rhetorical secrets by examining a stylistic phenomenon in the Qur'anic structure, with a focus on selected verses from Juz al-Ahqaf. The deviation in the Qur'anic text surprises the reader, as it deviates from the expected structure based on known Arabic rules. The researchers used a descriptive-analytical approach to study the phenomenon of deviation in the Qur'an, specifically in Juz al-Ahqaf, using selected examples. The scientific value of this study lies in its approach to exploring the depths of the Qur'anic text, revealing its rhetorical secrets, and analyzing their impact on the Qur'anic context, with a focus on interpreting meanings and guiding the reader toward the most accurate understanding. The study concluded that the purpose of deviation is not merely for aesthetic and artistic value, but to reveal the subtle rhetorical nuances that the Qur'anic text embodies.
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### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of turning away is one of the rhetorical miracles that characterize the Qur'anic word, unveiling a timeless expression miraculous in its eloquence. Ibn Wahb is among the earliest scholars to identify this phenomenon, which he termed "morphology." He stated: "Morphology involves shifting words from the addressed person to the third person, and from singular to plural."<sup>(1)</sup> Al-Zamakhshari, in his definition, referred to the phenomenon as "turning," explaining that it can involve shifting from the third person to the addressee, from the addressee to the third person, or from the third person to the speaker. He described this shift as a stylistic practice that enhances the impact of speech. Transitions from one style to another refresh the listener's attention, making them more alert and engaged, as opposed to maintaining a single, monotonous pattern. <sup>(2)</sup> The essence of Al-Zamakhshari's statement is that "turning" serves two purposes. The first is general and applies to all its forms: it captures the recipient's attention and provides enjoyment by presenting shifts that defy their expectations of the usual linguistic structure. The second is specific, highlighting the unique meanings and suggestions conveyed by each form of "turning" in the context in which it occurs. <sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[] Ishaq bin Ibrahim bin Wahb, Al-Burhan fi Wujuh al-Bayan, edited by Dr. Hafni Muhammad Sharaf (Cairo: Matab'at al-Shabab, - Matab'at al-Risala, 1389 AH / 1969 CE), p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>[] Mahmoud Jar Allah Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashaf 'An Haqa'iq al-Tanzil wa 'Ayun al-Aqawil fi Wujuh al-Ta'wil, (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifa, 3rd ed., 2009), Vol. 1, pp. 28-29.

<sup>3</sup>[] Hassan Tabl, Asluub al-Iltifaat fi al-Balagha al-Qur'aniya, (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1998), p. 26.

This does not mean that the transition from one style to another is confined to the terms "morphology" or "deflection," as there are other types of shifts, including alternation and others.<sup>(4)</sup> This study focuses on examining the phenomenon of adul (deviation) in the Qur'anic structure within Juz al-Ahqaf (Part Twenty-Six). It explores changes in word forms, including transitions between singular, dual, and plural forms, as well as shifts in pronouns between direct speech, absence, and implicit or explicit references. Verses were selected to represent each type of deviation. The study first identifies areas of deviation, then examines the reasons behind these shifts by reviewing the opinions of commentators. Finally, it determines the purpose of these deviations and weighs the interpretations, either favoring one or accepting them all.

### Problem Statement

The problem of this study is summarized in answering the following key questions:

1. What are the rhetorical secrets of deviation in the Qur'anic text?
2. How does the shift affect the Qur'anic context?
3. What are the types of deviation in the Qur'anic text?
4. What rhetorical insights emerge when interpreting structural shifts in the Qur'anic context?

### Study Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

1. Identifying the locations and types of deviation in the Qur'anic text.
2. Understanding the rhetorical secrets behind these deviations.
3. Explaining the impact of these shifts on the Qur'anic context.

### Scientific Value of the Study

The scientific value of this study lies in:

- Contributing to the evaluation of different interpretations and meanings.
- Providing a deeper exploration of the Qur'anic text.
- Analyzing rhetorical secrets and their contextual significance.
- Highlighting how these shifts prioritize certain interpretive meanings.

### Study Limitations

The study focuses on the phenomenon of deviation within Qur'anic contexts, with the Holy Qur'an serving as its primary source.

### Previous Studies

Several studies have addressed the Qur'anic text, focusing on linguistic, legal, and rhetorical aspects of its miraculous structure. Notable studies include:

1. **"The Alternation Between the Singular, Dual, and Plural Forms in the Holy Qur'an: A Rhetorical Study of Structural Transformations"** by Abdul Rahman bin Raja Allah Al-Sulami (2014). This study explored the rhetorical impact of alternation between different grammatical forms.

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<sup>4</sup>[ ] Ahmed Matloub, *Mu'jam al-Mustalahat al-Balaghiya wa Tataruha*, pp. 294-303, (Lebanon: Dar al-Arabiyya li al-Mawsu'at, 1st ed., 2006), p. 294. Ahmed Muhammad Weiss, *Al-Inziyah min Manzour al-Dirasat al-Asluobiya*, (Beirut: Majd Al-Mu'assasa al-Jami'iyya li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 1st ed., 2005), p. 33.

2. **"The Morphological Structure Between Turning Away and Turning Around"** by Muhammad Bashir Bey (2015). This study investigated hidden stylistic phenomena in the Qur'an, focusing on morphological shifts.
3. **"The Method of Attention in the Holy Qur'an and Its Effect in Persuading the Recipient: Surah Yunus as a Model"** by Abdel Baqi Mahnawi (2017). This study highlighted how stylistic shifts in Surah Yunus influence the addressees.

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

In their research, the two researchers followed the descriptive and analytical approach to study the phenomenon of deviation in the Holy Qur'an, specifically the Al-Ahqaf section, which contains selected examples.

### Research plan:

The study consists of four sections, the first of which is "Introduction," which contains a discussion of the specific subject of the title, and its boundaries in terms of topic, scope, and method. The second is "The First Section," which discusses shifting pronouns between speech and absence, speaking, concealment, and manifestation. Thus, the speech shifts from implicitness to absence, from speaking to absence, from absence to speech, and finally from speech to absence. The third is "Second Section," which discusses changing numbers between singular, dual, and plural, as the change occurs from singular to plural, from dual to plural, and from plural to dual. The fourth is a "Conclusion," with which the study ends, in which the functions and purposes of modification in the Qur'anic text are examined.

### The First Section: Change in Speech (Pronouns)

The first section includes four demands as follows:

#### First Topic: From Concealment to Manifestation

God Almighty says:

**{But they marveled that a warner had come to them from among themselves, so the disbelievers said, "This is a strange thing."} (Qaf:2).**

The position of deviation in this verse lies in the phrase **"so the disbelievers said."** The context suggests that implicit reference would have been more consistent, as the preceding phrases ("they marveled," "from among themselves") are implicit. Based on Arabic linguistic rules, the expected continuation would be **"and they said."** However, the verse intentionally shifts to an explicit reference, surprising the reader.

The commentators differed in their interpretations of this shift. Some suggested that God intended to expose their obstinate disbelief upon receiving the news of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), who came as both a warner and a member of their own community. Others emphasized that the explicit mention highlights the profound astonishment of the disbelievers, rooted in their entrenched disbelief.<sup>(5)</sup> And implicitly mentioning them, then making it apparent, serves to indicate their obstinacy with this statement, recording their disbelief in it, or connecting their astonishment at the resurrection to their astonishment at the mission. This is exaggerated by placing the explicit reference in place of the pronoun, thus creating a story that may seem ambiguous when the reference is unclear, only to be clarified by what follows it, or in general when referring to something omitted.

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<sup>5</sup>( ) Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashaf, Vol. 1, p. 1043. Muhammad bin Yusuf Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, Tafsir al-Bahr al-Muhit, edited by Abdul Mawjud Adel and others, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 3rd ed., 2010), Vol. 8, p. 120.

Munther explained this and further elaborated on it, for he entered into denial; the first being to rule out the possibility that someone like them would be preferred over them, and the second being to limit the power of God Almighty to something lesser than what they perceive.

While the two researchers support all these opinions combined to explain the shift from implicitness to apparentness, they also add that God, Glory be to Him, wanted to clarify the faith of these people, revealing that Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not one of them, despite being among them. However, after his mission, he would no longer be one of them. This is because they were stubborn and disbelieved in him and his message. Therefore, the manifestation here was intended to rebuke and criticize them before the mission, when they were one group. The phrase "of them" reflects this, while after the mission, they were divided into two groups: those who believed and were guided, and those who went astray and disbelieved.

### The Second Topic: Who Spoke in Absence

God Almighty says:

**{We have granted you a clear victory \* That God may forgive you your past and future sins, and complete His blessings upon you, and guide you to a straight path.}** (Al-Fath: 1-2).

The deviation here is represented in the phrase "May God forgive you" where the expected phrasing would be "We have forgiven you." Why, then, was the verb attributed to the apparent word of majesty, rather than speaking in the first person?

God Almighty clarified that the conquest is a reason for forgiveness. Some may ask: How was the conquest of Mecca a reason for forgiveness? The answer is that the conquest is the action of God, not the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), making it the cause for forgiveness. The conquest is a result of jihad against the disbelievers, working to elevate the religion, remove polytheism, and perfect the souls that were previously deficient. This action gradually becomes a choice, freeing the oppressed from tyranny.<sup>(6)</sup> Thus, the reason for this attention is the gradual progression of actions: the conquest comes first, followed by forgiveness. Therefore, He did not say "And We forgave" to make the conquest the cause of forgiveness.

While Abu Al-Saud believes that the focus on the name highlights that each action organized in the path of His purpose originates from the Almighty, from a perspective distinct from that of others, and is rooted in one of His divine attributes, the Most High. <sup>(7)</sup> While Al-Alusi sees that attributing forgiveness to Him—Glory be to Him—indicates that it is one of the actions He undertakes through His exalted self, whereas the conquest is something He accomplishes through mediators. <sup>(8)</sup> This means that forgiveness is solely from His actions—the Almighty—and that is why the word of majesty was used. As for the conquest, it is from God through mediators and causes.

Ibn Ashour further explained that the verb "**to forgive**" was attributed to the exalted name of Majesty. The apparent expectation was that it would be attributed to the hidden pronoun intentionally to emphasize the forgiveness. The use of the apparent name makes the message more receptive to the listener and heightens their awareness. This is to draw attention to the predicate and its relationship, because this predicate refers to a new noun that the Messenger, peace and blessings

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<sup>6</sup>(J) Abdullah bin Umar al-Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1st ed., 1418 AH), Vol. 5, p. 126. Al-Hussein bin Abdullah al-Taybi, *Futuh al-Ghayb fi Kashf 'an Qina' al-Rayb*, edited by Hamza al-Bakri, (Dubai: Dubai International Quran Award, 1st ed., 2013), Vol. 14, p. 369.

<sup>7</sup>(J) Muhammad bin Muhammad Abu Saud al-'Amadi, *Irshad al-'Aql al-Salim ila Mazaya al-Quran al-Karim*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1437 AH), Vol. 8, p. 104.

<sup>8</sup>(J) Mahmoud Shihab al-Din al-Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani fi Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim wa al-Sab' al-Mathani*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1999), Vol. 2, p. 91.

be upon him, was unaware of. Therefore, the subject did not appear in the phrase **"and He will complete His blessings upon you and guide you."** This is because God's blessings upon the Prophet are well-known, as is His guidance. Instead, it was stated that these blessings would increase. <sup>(9)</sup>

The meaning of his statement is that the reason for drawing attention is to focus on what will come after the conquest: the forgiveness of the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, for his past and future sins. It is as if this were a form of "gratitude from God—Glory be to Him—for His Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, and for the believers, for what He has bestowed upon them in terms of tranquility, victory, conquest, and all that He has promised them." Therefore, it is fitting that the current context in the surah reflects the theme of gratitude. <sup>(10)</sup> The researchers support the views of Al-Alusi and Ibn Ashour regarding the explanation for the shift, noting that its purpose is to draw attention to what follows the conquest: the forgiveness of the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, for his past and future sins. This shift also reveals the name of God's Majesty to magnify the significance of the matter in the Messenger's (peace and blessings be upon him) soul. Forgiveness comes solely from God Almighty, while the conquest was prepared by God through His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) and the believers. Therefore, the attention drawn here is rhetorical, intended to awaken the soul and shift focus. It moves from one state to another, containing elements of gratitude, honor, and elevation of the status of the addressee—the most honorable Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him). This rhetorical shift also emphasizes that God Almighty alone forgives sins, with no intermediaries between the servant and his Lord.

### The Third Topic: From Backbiting to Speech

God Almighty says:

**{Obedience and a well-known speech. Then, if the matter is decided, they would have been right by God; it would have been better for them. So, would it be expected of you that you spread corruption on earth and sever your ties of kinship?}** [Muhammad: 21-22].

The deviation in the two verses is found in the phrases "You were appointed" and "You turned away". The speech takes the form of backbiting regarding those in whose hearts is disease, as indicated by the phrases "If only they were truthful" and "it would have been better for them". These people had turned away from fighting and were hypocritical in their words. Given the context, it would have been more appropriate to say "they would have turned away" to remain consistent with the earlier backbiting pronoun. So why was there a shift from backbiting to direct speech, violating the expected linguistic structure?

The commentators argue that the shift from the third person to the second person serves to emphasize and rebuke, addressing those whose hearts are diseased. It is a reprimand for their evil actions, asking: "Is it expected of you, when you take charge of people's affairs and command them, to cause corruption?" <sup>(11)</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>() Muhammad al-Taher bin Ashour, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, (Tunis: Dar al-Tunisia li al-Nashr, 1984), Vol. 26, pp. 147-148.

<sup>10</sup>() Muhammad Hussain al-Tabatabai, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, (Beirut: Al-A'lami Foundation for Publications, 1st ed., 1997), Vol. 18, p. 261.

<sup>11</sup>() Al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashaf*, Vol. 1, p. 1021; Al-Taybi, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Vol. 14, p. 350; Muhammad bin Yusuf Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, *Tafsir al-Bahr al-Muhit*, edited by Adel Abdul Mawjud and others, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 3rd ed., 2010), Vol. 8, p. 81; Ahmed bin Yusuf al-Samin al-Halabi, *Al-Durr al-Masun fi Uloom al-Kitab al-Maknun*, edited by Ahmad al-Kharrat, (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2008), Vol. 9, p. 662; Abu al-Su'ud, *Irshad al-Aql al-Salim*, Vol. 8, p. 98; Al-Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 26, p. 68; Muhammad Hussain Salama, *Al-I'jaz al-Balaghiy fi al-Quran al-Karim*, (Cairo: Dar al-Afaq al-Arabiya, 1st ed., 2002), p. 309.

The researchers' opinion is that the speech, initially in the form of backbiting, occurred when the hypocrites were reluctant to participate in the fighting. Their hearts were turning away from the battle, and had they believed in God at that time, it would have been better for them. Since they turned away when the fighting began, God shifted to direct speech to confront them with the truth of their hypocrisy. It is as if the speech was aimed at them during the moment of fighting, indicating that if they did not fight, they would return to their pre-Islamic state of corruption, spreading disobedience, bloodshed, and division—things that Islam had united them against. All the commentators emphasize this rebuke and intensify it.

#### Fourth Topic: From Speech to Backbiting

God Almighty said:

**﴾And know that among you is the Messenger of God. If he had obeyed you in most matters, you would have cursed him, but God loves him. Faith and its adornment are in your hearts, and He hates for you disbelief, immorality, and disobedience—these are the ones who are rightly guided.﴿** [Al-Hujurat: 7]

The deviation in this noble verse lies in the phrase "They are the rightly guided." The pronoun shifts from addressing the second person to the third person. The context would typically follow the linguistic convention of direct address, with phrases such as "know, obey you, curse you, love you, your hearts, hate you," and therefore "you are the rightly guided." So, what is the purpose of this shift?

Commentators have noted that the speech in this verse was directed to the Muslims. However, the shift in pronouns serves to abstract the speech and address some of them for correction, clearing them of the characteristics of the disbelievers and praising their actions. Love for faith, attraction to it, and hatred for disbelief and its related vices were qualities of some among them, but not all. To preserve unity and encourage those who lacked these qualities, the context shifts and the speech becomes that of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), who describes them as "the rightly guided." By referring to them as "those", using the third person, it serves both as praise for those who embody these qualities and as an encouragement for others to adopt them. <sup>(12)</sup> The disjunctive pronoun has benefits that are evident in three aspects:

1. **Verbal Benefit:** This refers to the notification at the beginning of the sentence that what follows is a predicate, not a dependent part. Therefore, it is called a "chapter" because it separates the predicate from the dependent, and it is essential for the meaning of the speech.
2. **Moral Benefit (Emphasis):** Some Kufans referred to it as support because it strengthens and confirms the speech. Emphasis brings multiple meanings of brevity. The first type is **real brevity**, where the speech indicates a brief meaning without the disjunctive pronoun, and the pronoun confirms this meaning. The second type is **brevity with exaggeration**, where the pronoun highlights the shortness in an exaggerated sense.
3. **Moral Benefit (Specialization):** The pronoun also serves to specify or focus on a particular meaning.<sup>(13)</sup>

This is what Ibn Ashour anticipated from the significance of the disjunctive pronoun in his statement "they are the rightly guided" regarding brevity, which refers to the moral maturity or guidance of

<sup>12</sup>( ) Al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashaf*, Vol. 1, p. 1035; Abu al-Su'ud, *Irshad al-Aql al-Salim*, Vol. 8, p. 129; Al-Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 26, p. 148; Ibn Ashour, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, Vol. 26, p. 237; Al-Tabatabai, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, Vol. 18, p. 318.

<sup>13</sup>( ) Jamal al-Din al-Ansari Ibn Hisham, *Mughni al-Labib 'An Kutub al-A'rib*, edited by Mazen al-Mubarak and Muhammad Ali Hamdallah, (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1964), p. 549; Fadel al-Samarai, *Ma'ani al-Nahw*, (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr li al-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 1st ed., 2000), Vol. 1, pp. 49-50.



individuals. It indicates that among them, some were not characterized by this maturity. They were immersed in immorality when they were ensnared by it, but if they had abandoned it, they would have attained moral maturity and guidance. <sup>(14)</sup>

This is what Ibn Ashour anticipated from the significance of the disjunctive pronoun in his statement "they are the rightly guided" as referring to exclusivity, specifically a singular type of guidance. It indicates that a group among them does not possess this guidance, as they became entangled in immorality, but if they abandoned it, they would be among the rightly guided.

Thus, the ultimate purpose of the shift is exclusivity. Without the change in the context from direct speech to the third person, the meaning would not have been fully realized. Additionally, the emphasis derived from the pronoun helps distinguish the rightly guided from others, further reinforcing the focus on this distinction. The shift in speech also serves to attract attention and engage the listener, which is the secret behind the rhetorical shift. Ibn al-Athir's description is accurate when he said: "Know, O you who seek knowledge of eloquence, that shifting from one form of speech to another is only due to a specific necessity that requires it. It is not something one does in speech except someone who understands the symbols of eloquence and rhetoric, who has explored their secrets and searched for their hidden treasures. You will not find this in every speech, for it is one of the most challenging aspects of rhetorical science, the most difficult to understand, and the most elusive in its application." <sup>(15)</sup> This is confirmed by the eloquence of Qur'anic vocabulary.

### **The Second Section: Variation in Number (Singularity, Duality, and Plural)**

This section includes three topics as follows:

#### **First Topic: From Individual to Plural**

God Almighty says:

**﴿And We have certainly empowered them in that which We have empowered you in and assigned to them hearing, eyes, and hearts, but they are of no use. They heard nothing, nor did their eyes or hearts perceive anything, because they denied the signs of God, and what they used to mock at overtook them.﴾** [Al-Ahqaf: 26]

The place of modification in the verse is in His saying: "hearing" and "their hearing." The apparent context in the verse suggests that it should say: "hearing" and "their hearing" because what follows is pluralized ("sights"/"their eyes", "hearts"/"their hearts"). So, why did He unify hearing and not combine it with a plural form?

Some commentators explain that hearing is unified because it is a source, and sources are not pluralized or dualized. They suggest that there is an implied omission in the Qur'anic text, and the interpretation is: "the place of their hearing", meaning they do not hear the truth nor benefit from it. He meant "on their hearing" just as He said "on their hearts." The omission indicates that the speech refers to the same idea. Hearing, being a genus noun, can apply to both the few and the many, so it is not pluralized. <sup>(16)</sup> Al-Zamakhshari supports him in this when he says: "He united the hearing just as He united the stomach in His saying: (Eat in part of your stomach and be pure). They do that if there

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<sup>14</sup>(Ibn Ashour, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, Vol. 26, p. 237.

<sup>15</sup>(Nasr Allah bin Muhammad Diya' al-Din bin al-Athir, *Al-Mathal al-Sa'ir fi Adab al-Katib wa al-Shair*, edited by Ahmad al-Houfi and Badawi Tabbana, (Cairo: Dar Nahdat Misr, 2nd ed.), Vol. 2, p. 180.

<sup>16</sup>(Al-Fadl bin al-Hasan al-Tabarsi, *Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafseer al-Quran*, (Beirut: Dar al-Uloom, 1st ed., 2005), Vol. 1, p. 58; Al-Hussein bin Mas'ood al-Baghawi, *Ma'alim al-Tanzeel*, edited by Muhammad al-Namr and others, (Damascus: Dar Tiba, 1989), Vol. 1, p. 65; Abdullah bin Ahmad al-Nasafi, *Madarik al-Tanzeel wa Haqa'iq al-Taweel*, edited by Yusuf Badawi, (Beirut: Dar al-Kalim al-Tayyib, 1st ed., 1998), Vol. 1, pp. 45-46.

is a sense of confusion, but if it does not believe, it is like your saying: (Their horse and their garment), and you want the plural, they reject it, and you can say the hearing." A source in its origin, and the sources are not combined so the origin is hinted at <sup>(17)</sup>.

Whoever contemplates the verses of the Holy Qur'an will notice that hearing, sight, and heart are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in thirteen places, in all of them hearing came singly in its wording and advanced in its order, and sight came collectively in the wording, and next in mention. <sup>(18)</sup> And if the multiplicity symbolizes the distinction of the enumerated, then the singularity indicates unity and lack of disparity, and hearing was united in contradiction to what the apparent proportionality dictates of combining them, just as sight was combined in reference to the unity of hearing and their lack of disparity in perceiving sounds, in contrast to sight, which varies in perceiving visible objects according to their ability. On monitoring and Focus, and capture the minutest parts, so the Qur'an preferred to single out the hearing in every place that required its plural, which occurred in conjunction with a plural or connected with a plural. <sup>(19)</sup> As in the verses of Al-Baqarah (7) and Al-Mulk (23).

As Muhammad Rashid Rida mentions in Tafsir al-Manar, the mind has many facets in perceiving intelligibles, and people are not equal in this regard. It is pluralized because people differ in their abilities to perceive and interpret intelligibles, and in the various ways they engage with them. In contrast, hearing is unified, as people's hearing is equal in perceiving what is heard, with no difference in how they hear sounds. Sight, however, resembles the mind in its differences and diversity, as it is a powerful aid to the intellect in perceiving intelligibles. Since there are many types of visible objects, sight provides the mind with a wide range of material, just as hearing is limited to the perception of sound. <sup>(20)</sup>.

One modern researcher took an insightful approach in explaining the phenomenon of deviation, basing his opinion on the sciences of anatomy and physiology. He argued that the reason for singling out hearing and combining sight is not due to the unification of the perceptions of hearing and the multiplicity of perceptions of sight, but rather due to the unification and multiplicity of the means of perception themselves. Regarding the sense of hearing, it has been proven that the center of auditory perception in the brain is supplied by a single cerebral nerve, known as the "eighth nerve." In contrast, the sense of sight relies on four nerves working together: the second nerve, the third nerve, and the fourth and sixth nerves. <sup>(21)</sup>

After presenting the differences in opinions regarding the secret behind singling out hearing without pluralizing it in the Qur'anic text, it becomes clear that most scholars have raised questions about abrogation, rather than trying to find a single, agreed-upon reason to explain the secret of the singularity of hearing. As a result, opinions were divided. Some said that the infinitive form is not pluralized, and thus hearing is used in the singular form. These include Al-Baghawi, Al-Zamakhshari, and Al-Nasafi. However, isn't sight also an infinitive? Why was hearing singled out when both are infinitives? Why then was sight pluralized when it is also an infinitive? Others, like Al-Tabarsi, argued that the infinitive indicates both the singular and plural, which explains why hearing is singular in

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<sup>17</sup>() Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashaf, Vol. 1, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup>() Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, Al-'Adul Bayn Siyyagh al-Ifrad wa al-Tathniya wa al-Jam' fi al-Quran al-Karim: Dirasah Balaghiya li Tahawulat al-Binya, Majallah Jami'at Umm al-Qura li 'Ulum al-Lughah wa Adabaha, No. 12 (2014), pp. 165-166.

<sup>19</sup>() Muhammad al-Amin al-Khudari, Al-I'jaz al-Balaghiy fi Siyyagh al-Alfaz: Dirasah Tahliliyyah li al-Ifrad wa al-Jam' fi al-Quran, (Cairo: Matba'at al-Hussein al-Islamiyya, 1st ed., 1993), p. 69.

<sup>20</sup>() Muhammad Rashid Rida, Tafsir al-Manar, (Cairo: Dar al-Manar, 2nd ed., 1947), Vol. 1, p. 144.

<sup>21</sup>() Tabl, Asluub al-Iltilfaat, p. 90.



the verse, even though it can imply a plural meaning. If this is the case, then why was sight not singularized as well, considering it too is an infinitive?

As for Al-Amin Al-Khudari's interpretation of the unification of hearing, he attributes it to the unity of hearing in perceiving sounds. However, another scholar disagrees, attributing the unity of hearing to the unity of the means of perception, rather than the unity of hearing's perception itself. Muhammad Rashid Rida confirmed in his interpretation that people's hearing is equal in perceiving what is heard.

While the two researchers support the interpretations of Al-Amin Al-Khudari and the author of Al-Manar regarding the secret of justice, they lean towards another opinion. They argue that the shift in this verse towards singularity, rather than plurality, is due to the unity of the message brought by the Messengers (peace be upon them). All human beings have heard the message of monotheism. When God Almighty bestowed upon human beings the sense of hearing, it was meant for them to hear the message of monotheism that His messengers preached and to reflect upon it. They heard it from the peoples who perished before them, peoples who rejected the truth, so that the audible message would serve as a proof against them. The message addressed to their ears was one, and everyone heard it in the same way, even if there were multiple messengers. The ways of demonstrating miracles differed, their responses varied, and their hearts differed in receiving the message. Not everyone perceives the message in the same way, and not everyone feels it in their hearts equally. Some believe, while others disbelieve. Therefore, God unified hearing, sight, and hearts, and He is the Most High and All-Knowing.

### The Second Topic: From Dual to Plural

God Almighty says:

**﴿"One's 'devilish' associate will say, 'Our Lord! I did not make them transgress. Rather, they were far astray 'on their own'.' Allah will respond, 'Do not dispute in My presence, since I had already given you a warning. My Word cannot be changed, nor am I unjust to 'My' creation.'"[Qaf: 50:27-28]**

The place of deviation in this noble verse lies in the Almighty's saying: "Do not dispute." Given the context, it seems more fitting for the verse to say "Do not dispute" because the reference is about a man and his companion together. So, what is the purpose of this attention?

Ibn Ashour believes that the words of God Almighty are directed at the two groups—those who followed and those who did not. The prohibition of quarreling between them reflects the disbelieving souls' claim that their gentler companions had oppressed them. When the companions rejected this claim, the disbelieving souls returned to accusing them, leading to a quarrel. Therefore, the Almighty said: "Do not dispute in My presence." <sup>(22)</sup>

While al-Tabatabai comments on the shift in the phrase "Do not dispute", he explains that the speaker is Allah (Glory be to Him), addressing them as if it were a single speech directed at all the tyrannical disbelievers and their associates. This is then broken down into individual addresses to each person and their companion, similar to saying "Do not dispute between yourselves before me." The meaning is: "Do not dispute with Me; there is no benefit for you in doing so after I have already conveyed My warning to you regarding those who associate partners with Me and commit oppression." <sup>(23)</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> [Ibn Ashour, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, Vol. 26, pp. 213-215.

<sup>23</sup> [Al-Tabatabai, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, Vol. 18, pp. 355-356.

As for Abdul Nasser Mashari, he says: "This was the address of the disbeliever on the Day of Judgment, blaming his companion and disavowing him. The use of the plural in 'Do not dispute' instead of the dual, far from the reason of glorification, is intended for reprimand and censure." <sup>(24)</sup>

The clear implication of the previous interpretations is that the shift from the dual to the plural form is due to the nature of the dispute, which stems from the argument between the disbelievers and their companions. On the Day of Judgment, the disbelievers will gather in one place, and each disbeliever will dispute with their companion. The dispute will therefore be shared among all of them, which is why Allah (Glory be to Him) addresses them collectively, saying: "Do not dispute in My presence" The address is directed at both the disbelievers and their companions as a whole, in addition to serving as a rebuke and reprimand.

### The Third Topic: From Plural to Dual

God Almighty says:

{Indeed, the believers are but brothers, so make peace between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.} [Al-Hujurat: 10]

The shift in the verse occurs in the phrase "between your brothers", where the plural form is changed to the dual. Despite the apparent context, which would suggest the use of the plural form "between your brothers" or "among your brothers", the dual is used here. What is the reason behind this shift, and what is its purpose?

Some commentators have suggested that the dual form refers to the smallest number between whom discord and dispute can occur. Thus, if reconciliation is required between two people, it becomes more obligatory when the number increases. Therefore, the plural is used for reconciliation, as the discord among a larger group is more damaging than between two individuals. Al-Zamakhshari supports this view, saying: "If you ask why the dual was mentioned instead of the plural, I would say that the least number for discord is two. If reconciliation is necessary between two, then it becomes even more obligatory when more people are involved. The corruption caused by discord among many is greater than that among two." Some scholars have also said that the reference to the two brothers refers to the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, which was supported by Abu Hayyan. <sup>(25)</sup>

While al-Baydawi believed that the verse is an example of using the apparent form in place of the implied one for emphasis, he argued that the dual form is used to specifically highlight the necessity of reconciliation and to stress its importance. This is because the discord and corruption caused by fighting are amplified, and reconciliation is more urgent. Abu al-Su'ud supported this view, agreeing that the dual reference emphasizes the critical need for peace between individuals, especially considering the greater harm caused by conflict. <sup>(26)</sup> In Ruh al-Ma'ani, Al-Alusi mentions that the verse is read in the plural form because the majority pronounce it in the dual form. However, the plural usage signifies a group, meaning that any two or more Muslims who engage in conflict are being addressed. The addition of the plural form also contributes to the meaning of gender, similar to the expressions "Labbayk" and "Saadiq". Al-Alusi also notes that "أخوان" (ikhwan) is commonly used to refer to "brothers" in the sense of friendship, while "أخوة" (ukhuwah) is typically used to denote "**brotherhood**" in the context of kinship or familial ties. Both terms can sometimes be used interchangeably depending on the context, as they both reflect a deep connection between

<sup>24</sup>() Abd al-Nasser Mashari, Dallah al-'Adul al-Sarfiyy fi al-Quran al-Karim, [Unpublished PhD Thesis], (Algeria: University of Al-Hajj Lakhdar, Batna, 2014), p. 59.

<sup>25</sup>() Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashaf, p. 1038; Abu Hayyan, Al-Bahr al-Muhit, Vol. 8, p. 111.

<sup>26</sup>() Al-Baydawi, Anwar al-Tanzil, Vol. 5, p. 691; Abu al-Su'ud, Irshad al-Aql al-Salim, Vol. 8, p. 121.

individuals, whether through kinship or friendship. <sup>(27)</sup> A different group of scholars interpreted the verse with the understanding that the term "أخويكم" (your two brothers) refers to the two factions mentioned earlier in the verse: ("If two parties among the believers fight, make peace between them") [Al-Hujurat: 9]. Although the verse is commonly recited as "بين إخوانكم" (among your brothers) in the plural form, some have also read it with the dual form, "بين أخويكم", to refer specifically to these two factions. <sup>(28)</sup>

When the concept of brotherhood among the believers is fully realized, the verse shifts from saying "make peace between the two factions" to "make peace between your two brothers." This new description arises from the earlier declaration that "the believers are but brothers." As a result, it is appropriate to apply the term "brothers" to the two factions. The dual form was used here to reflect the two groups of believers, emphasizing the idea that each faction is like a brother to the other. This reflects the deep bond of unity and brotherhood that should exist among the believers, even when there is conflict between them. <sup>(29)</sup>

It seems that all the previous interpretations are plausible and can be applied to the Quranic text. However, the most likely interpretation is the first one, which was adopted by Al-Zamakhshari and those who supported him. The researchers believe that the shift in the verse could be attributed to the fact that the two individuals referred to represent their respective factions during reconciliation. It is unreasonable to discuss every individual within a faction during the process of reconciliation. Therefore, it makes sense that one person would speak on behalf of their group or tribe, serving as a representative. And Allah knows best.

## CONCLUSION:

This is a semantic study of a rhetorical phenomenon that aimed to uncover instances of deviation in the Qur'anic structure, focusing on selected verses from Juz al-Ahqaf. The study was built around two main topics, with each examining the shifts in pronouns and number. It began with an introduction and ended with this conclusion.

In summary, here are the key findings reached by the researchers:

1. **The Role of Deviation in the Qur'anic Text:** The shifts (or *iltifāt*) served multiple functions in the Qur'anic text, fulfilling rhetorical and aesthetic purposes while also achieving a religious aim. These shifts elevated the significance of individual words in the Qur'anic verses, revealing the eloquence and beauty of the Qur'an. Among the rhetorical purposes of deviation in the Qur'anic text were emphasis, reprimand, gratitude, honor, exaggeration, and more.
2. **The Role of Context in Determining Meaning:** The Qur'anic context plays a crucial role in determining the intended meaning of the deviation. The context helps to reveal the specific rhetorical nuance that is carried by the verse, thereby enriching the overall understanding of the text.

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<sup>27</sup>() Al-Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 26, p. 152.

<sup>28</sup>() Ibn Zanjalah, Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad, *Hujjat al-Qira'at*, edited by Saeed al-Afghani, (Beirut: Dar al-Resalah, 5th ed., 1997), p. 675.

<sup>29</sup>() Ibn Ashour, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, Vol. 26, p. 254.

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