

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *I'RAB* IN AL-TABARI AND AL-MISHBAH TAFSIR: IMPLICATIONS FOR QUR'ANIC MEANING VARIATIONS**Siti Nurdinah¹, Ahmad Mantiq Alimuddin², Resy Mulyani³, Dewi Sartika⁴, Delima Afriyanti⁵, and Seti Alhani Asyifa⁶¹ Institut Agama Islam Imam Syafii Indonesia, Indonesia² Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Nurul Falah Airmolek, Indonesia³ Institut Agama Islam Imam Syafii Indonesia, Indonesia⁴ Institut Agama Islam Imam Syafii Indonesia, Indonesia⁵ Institut Agama Islam Imam Syafii Indonesia, Indonesia⁶ Universitas Al-Azhar Cairo, Egypt**Corresponding Author:**

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Article Info

Received: December 7, 2025

Revised: March 14, 2026

Accepted: May 16, 2026

Online Version: June 20, 2026

Abstract

Differences in *i'rab* analysis in Qur'anic exegesis have the potential to produce variations in meaning that impact theological, legal, and semantic aspects; however, comparative studies on its application in classical and contemporary exegesis remain limited. This study aims to analyze the comparative use of *i'rab* in Tafsir Al-Tabari and Tafsir Al-Mishbah and to explain its implications for variations in the meaning of the Qur'an. The study employs a qualitative approach using library research through a comparative (*muqāran*) method. The data were analyzed based on five purposefully selected verses, including: Surah Ali 'Imran [3]: 7, Surah Al-Ma'idah [5]: 6, Surah Al-Waqi'ah [56]: 79, Surah Al-Ahzab [33]: 33, and QS Al-Baqarah [2]: 37. The analysis involved comparing *i'rab* forms, linguistic arguments, the use of qira'at and riwayat, as well as their implications for interpretation in both exegetical works. The results of the study show that in QS Āli 'Imrān [3]: 7 and QS Al-Ma'idah [5]: 6, differences in *i'rab* have direct implications for theological interpretation and the establishment of legal rulings, whereas in QS Al-Waqi'ah [56]: 79, QS Al-Ahzab [33]: 33, and QS Al-Baqarah [2]: 37, the function of *i'rab* develops through syntactic relations, the determination of referents, and the elaboration of meaning. Al-Tabari tends to use *i'rab* as the basis for tarjih, combined with qira'at and riwayat, whereas Quraish Shihab integrates grammatical analysis with historical, social, and contextual approaches. This study shows that *i'rab* not only serves to explain grammatical structure but also forms the basis for the formation of variations in meaning in accordance with each exegete's methodological orientation.

Keywords: *I'rab*, Al-Tabari's Tafsir, Al-Mishbah's Tafsir, Variations In Meaning, Comparative Exegesis



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Journal Homepage

<https://research.adra.ac.id/index.php/lingeduca>

How to cite:

Nurdinah, S., Alimuddin, A. M., Mulyani, R., DewiS., Afriyanti, D., & Asyifa, S. A. (2026). Comparative Analysis of *I'rab* In Al-Tabari and Al-Mishbah Tafsir: Implications for Qur'anic Meaning Variations. *Lingeduca: Journal of Language and Education Studies*, 5(3), 204–213. <https://doi.org/10.70177/lingeduca.v5i3.4081>

Published by:

Yayasan Adra Karima Hubbi

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is regarded as the primary source of Islamic teachings, revealed in Arabic with complex linguistic characteristics. This complexity requires an understanding that relies not only on translation but is also supported by a mastery of Arabic linguistics, particularly grammar (nahwu) through i'rab analysis (Fauziah et al., 2025). In the study of nahwu, i'rab serves to determine the grammatical function of a word based on changes in the vowel marks at the end of the word so that the syntactic and semantic relationships between words can be accurately understood (Uzmi & Aprilla, 2025). Differences in i'rab analysis not only affect linguistic aspects but can also lead to variations in interpretation and legal implications (Nurfazri et al., 2025). This phenomenon can be observed in Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 6, through the phrase *wa arjulakum/wa arjulikum*, which has led to differing views among scholars regarding the proper method of wudu (Al-Tabari, 1976). This example demonstrates that i'rab analysis plays a fundamental role in the construction of the Qur'an's meaning and serves as one of the key tools in the methodology of exegesis (Ridho & Bakar, 2025).

The role of i'rab in exegesis has been a focus of attention for exegetes since the classical period and has continued to evolve into the contemporary era (Saifunnuha, 2024). Al-Tabari's Tafsir is one example of classical exegesis that relies on hadith, qira'at, and grammatical arguments as the basis for determining the meaning of verses (Kurdi, 2024). In contrast, M. Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Mishbah maintains linguistic analysis as the foundation of exegesis but expands upon it by considering historical, social, and contextual aspects to ensure the Qur'an's message remains relevant to the needs of modern society (Rizky et al., 2025). These differences in methodological orientation demonstrate that i'rab analysis is not used uniformly by every exegete but is influenced by the scholarly paradigms and interpretive contexts that underlie their work (Rahman, 2020).

This development is in line with the growing academic interest in the relationship between i'rab and the construction of meaning in the Qur'an. The study by Saleh et al. (2026) confirms that i'rab not only functions as a syntactic marker but also plays a role in constructing meaning through the interconnection between grammatical structure and interpretive context. Demirdöven (2024) demonstrates that variations in i'rab can lead to diverse interpretations of the same verse, while Nabilah et al. (2025) found that differences in i'rab have direct implications for semantic interpretation, particularly in verses with ambiguous syntactic structures. Nevertheless, these studies generally still focus on the analysis of i'rab within a specific verse, surah, or exegetical work, and thus have not yet explained how differences in exegetical paradigms influence the use of i'rab in constructing the meaning of the Qur'an.

These limitations point to a research gap that opens the door to a comparative study between classical and contemporary exegesis. A comparison between Al-Tabari's exegesis and Al-Mishbah's exegesis is important because they represent two distinct interpretive paradigms: the classical paradigm, which relies on tradition and linguistic argumentation, and the contemporary paradigm, which integrates linguistic analysis with a contextual approach. An analysis of these two exegeses is expected to elucidate how differences in methodological orientation influence the use of i'rab in constructing variations in the meaning of the Qur'an. Furthermore, this study holds academic relevance in bridging Qur'anic linguistic studies with exegetical methodology, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between grammatical structure and the construction of meaning.

Based on this research gap, this study offers a novel approach by positioning i'rab as an epistemological instrument in the construction of the Qur'an's meaning through a comparative analysis of Tafsir al-Tabari and Tafsir al-Mishbah. Unlike previous studies, which have mostly examined i'rab in isolation, this study seeks to analyze how the differing methodological orientations of the two exegetes influence the use of i'rab in shaping meaning across theological, legal, and semantic-hermeneutical dimensions. Therefore, this study aims to identify the similarities and differences in i'rab analysis in both commentaries and to explain

their implications for variations in the meaning of the Qur'an. The results of this study are expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of Qur'anic linguistic studies and exegetical methodology, while also enriching our understanding of the relationship between grammatical structure and the process of interpreting verses.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of library research. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on the analysis, interpretation, and comparison of the concept of *i'rab* in exegetical works, rather than on hypothesis testing or statistical analysis. The primary data sources for this study include Tafsir Al-Tabari, Tafsir Al-Mishbah, books on the *i'rab* of the Qur'an, as well as scholarly literature related to Arabic linguistics, nahwu, and exegetical methodology. The analysis was conducted using the *muqāran* (comparative) exegesis method by comparing the interpretations of the two exegetes regarding verses that have the potential for variations in *i'rab*. To ensure a systematic comparison and minimize subjectivity, this study established several analytical parameters, namely: (1) the form and function of the *i'rab* used in the verses under examination; (2) the linguistic arguments underlying the determination of *i'rab*, including the application of grammatical rules, qira'at, and hadith traditions; (3) the methodological orientation of each exegete in utilizing *i'rab* analysis to construct the meaning of the verse; and (4) the implications of differences in *i'rab* analysis on the construction of meaning, in terms of theological, legal, and semantic-hermeneutical aspects. Based on these parameters, this study is expected to produce a comparative analysis that is more focused, systematic, and academically sound. (Zed, 2008; George, 2008).

In substance, this study employs a comparative exegetical approach combined with Arabic linguistic analysis. The *muqāran* exegetical approach is used to compare Al-Tabari's and Quraish Shihab's interpretations of verses that have potential variations in *i'rab*, while Arabic linguistic analysis is used to examine the syntactic functions, grammatical relationships, and semantic consequences of the *i'rab* forms under discussion. Thus, this study not only compares the results of the exegesis but also examines how Arabic grammar functions in shaping exegetical arguments.

A comparative study was employed to identify the similarities, differences, and methodological tendencies of the two exegetes. This method is relevant because the research subjects consist of two works of exegesis from different periods and intellectual contexts, namely *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari as a representation of classical exegesis and Tafsir Al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab as a representation of contemporary Indonesian exegesis. Using a comparative method, the analysis focuses on the relationship between differences in *i'rab*, interpretive choices, and the resulting variations in meaning (Pickvance, 2001; Ragin, 2014).

The primary data for this study consist of Al-Tabari's *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* and M. Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Mishbah. Secondary data includes books on Qur'anic *i'rab*, classical nahwu literature, books on classical and contemporary tafsir methodology, as well as articles from SINTA-accredited national journals and reputable international journals discussing *i'rab*, Qur'anic linguistics, qira'at, and tafsir studies. Supporting texts such as *I'rāb al-Qur'ān* by Al-Nahhas, *Al-Tibyān fī I'rāb al-Qur'ān* by Al-'Ukbari, and *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* by Abu Hayyan were used as linguistic triangulation materials.

Research Target/Subject

This study focuses on five verses of the Qur'an, namely Surah Ali 'Imran [3]: 7, Surah Al-Ma'idah [5]: 6, Surah Al-Waqi'ah [56]: 79, Surah Al-Aḥزاب [33]: 33, and QS Al-Baqarah [2]:

37. The verses were selected using purposive sampling, which involves determining the sample based on academic considerations aligned with the research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These five verses were selected because they met several criteria: they are explicitly discussed in Tafsir Al-Tabari and Tafsir Al-Mishbah; they contain potential variations in i'rab or syntactic relations that influence meaning construction; and they have implications for theological, legal, and semantic aspects. Furthermore, each verse represents distinct grammatical issues, thereby enabling a more comprehensive comparative analysis. The selection of verses for this study can be outlined as follows:

Tabel 1. Basis for Determining Surahs and Verses

Surah Name and Verse Number	Basis for Determination
QS Āli 'Imrān [3]: 7	This verse contains differences in the analysis of waqf that have implications for the concept of ta'wīl.
QS Al-Ma'idah [5]: 6	In this verse, variations in the i'rab of the phrase wa arjulakum/wa arjulikum influence the derivation of the ruling on wudu.
QS Al-Waqi'ah [56]: 79	This verse gives rise to differences in interpretation regarding the phrase al-muṭahharūn.
QS Al-Aḥzab [33]: 33	This verse relates to the scope of the meaning of Ahl al-Bayt.
QS Al-Baqarah [2]: 37	This verse demonstrates the implications of grammatical analysis for the interpretation of

Based on the table above, these five verses were selected based on methodological and substantive considerations so that they could represent the variations in the use of i'rab that lead to differences in interpretation from both classical and contemporary exegetical perspectives.

Research Procedure

Data analysis was conducted in stages using a comparative (*muqāran*) approach with three levels of analysis: syntactic, semantic, and interpretive. The first stage began with identifying the i'rab forms, grammatical functions, and syntactic relationships in the verses under study based on classical nahwu rules. The second stage compares the explanations in Tafsir Al-Tabari and Tafsir Al-Mishbah regarding the same verse using four analytical indicators, namely (1) the i'rab forms chosen by each exegete, (2) the arguments used in determining i'rab, including rules of nahwu, qira'at, hadith traditions, and other linguistic aspects, (3) the methodological orientation of the exegesis, as reflected in the emphasis on hadith, linguistic analysis, or a contextual approach, and (4) the implications of differences in i'rab for the construction of meaning in the theological, legal, and semantic dimensions (Al-Dhahabi, 2000).

Next, the results of the analysis of each verse were synthesized to identify patterns of similarities and differences in the use of i'rab in both commentaries, thereby allowing the methodological tendencies of each exegete to be formulated. To enhance the credibility of the findings, the validity of the data was tested through source triangulation and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing the interpretations of the two exegetes with books on Qur'anic i'rab, classical grammatical literature, and other relevant exegeses, while theoretical triangulation was carried out by integrating perspectives from the fields of grammar, semantics, qira'at, and exegetical methodology. In addition, the results of the analysis were reviewed through peer debriefing with academics who are experts in the fields of grammar and exegesis to confirm the consistency of the interpretations and the accuracy of the analysis.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques. The steps involved identifying verses containing variations in *i'rab* or syntactic relations that affect meaning, reviewing the interpretations of these verses in Tafsir Al-Tabari and Tafsir Al-Mishbah,

recording the forms of *i'rab* used by each exegete, grouping the data based on the type of syntactic difference and its implications for meaning, and compiling a comparative matrix to facilitate analysis.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Data condensation was performed by selecting interpretive segments directly related to *i'rab* and variations in meaning. Data presentation was carried out in the form of comparative tables containing the verse, the focus of *i'rab*, Al-Tabari's analysis, Al-Mishbah's analysis, and implications for meaning. Conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns of similarities, differences, methodological tendencies, and the contribution of *i'rab* to variations in interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Summary Table of the Results of a Comparative Analysis of *I'rab* in Al-Tabari's Tafsir and Al-Mishbah's Tafsir

Verse	Grammatical Analysis	Al-Tabari's Commentary	Al-Mishbah's Commentary	Implications of Meaning
Surah Al-Imran: 7	The Status of "wa al-rāsikhūna fi al-'ilm"	Tends to favor <i>isti'nāf</i>	Accommodates two possibilities	Differences in authority regarding interpretation
Surah Al-Mā'idah: 6	<i>I'rab</i> wa arjulakum	Supports two qira'at	Explains the two qira'at contextually	Differences in the ruling on washing or wiping the feet
Surah Al-Wāqī'ah: 79	Grammatical analysis of al-muṭahharūn	The purified angels	The majority of scholars and the context of the Mushaf	Differences regarding who may touch the Qur'an
Surah Al-Aḥzāb: 33	Grammatical analysis of ahl al-bayt	Manshub as ikhtisāṣ	Explaining the expanded meaning of the Prophet's family	Differences in the scope of Ahlul Bait
Surah Al-Baqarah: 37	<i>I'rab</i> kalimāt	The phrase as maf'ul bih	Explaining the semantic function of the phrase "taubat"	Variations in the emphasis of the meaning of Adam's repentance

An analysis of the five selected verses shows that *i'rab* in exegesis does not always manifest itself directly as differences in the final vowel marks of words. In some verses, such as QS Āli 'Imrān [3]: 7 and QS Al-Mā'idah [5]: 6, variations in *i'rab* are clearly evident and have a direct impact on interpretation. In other verses, such as QS Al-Wāqī'ah [56]: 79 and QS Al-Baqarah [2]: 37, *i'rab* interacts with the referential context, syntactic relations, and semantic development. Thus, this analysis not only highlights the technical differences in *i'rab* but also explains how grammatical mechanisms serve as a gateway to interpretive variations.

In Surah Āli 'Imrān, verse 7, there is the phrase *وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ*, which serves as an important example of differences in *i'rab* analysis in Qur'anic exegesis. The main issue lies in the syntactic position of the phrase *وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ*, specifically the function of the letter wāw, which can be understood as either wāw al-'atf or wāw al-*isti'nāf*. If positioned as wāw al-'atf, the phrase is linked to the word Allah, so the meaning of the verse indicates that

both Allah and those deeply versed in knowledge know the interpretation of the mutashabih verses.

Conversely, if understood as *wāw al-isti'nāf*, the phrase marks the beginning of a new sentence affirming that only Allah knows their interpretation, while those with profound knowledge merely affirm their faith in these verses. Al-Tabari presented both possibilities but ultimately favored the second opinion. This choice is not based solely on the narrations of the Companions but also has a strong linguistic foundation. Syntactically, the presence of the restrictive pattern *إِلَّا اللَّهُ* forms a *qaṣr* (restriction) structure that grammatically indicates the exclusivity of the subject with respect to the predicate “knowing the interpretation.” If the phrase *وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ* is connected via the *wāw al-'atf*, then this restrictive function becomes less consistent because it expands the subject that had previously been limited by the *istisnā* construction. Therefore, the placement of the *wāw* as a *wāw al-isti'nāf* is considered more consistent with the syntactic structure of the verse while maintaining the continuity of meaning established by the sentence structure. Al-Tabari's choice demonstrates that the process of *tarjih* is not only based on the authority of the *hadith* but also takes grammatical coherence into account as a basis for determining meaning. Thus, *i'rab* analysis serves as an epistemological tool that links linguistic aspects with interpretive methodology in determining the meaning of a verse (Al-Tabari, 1976).

Quraish Shihab, in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, does not categorically reject either possibility. He explains that both *i'rab* analyses have a strong foundation in the tradition of exegesis. However, he emphasizes that these differences need not be viewed as contradictory, as each conveys a distinct epistemological message. If *wa al-rāsikhūna* is interpreted as a conjunction (*'ataf*) with the word Allah, then certain scholars may grasp some of the interpretation (*takwil*). Conversely, if understood as a new clause (*isti'nāf*), then true knowledge remains with Allah alone (Shihab, 2002). The difference in *i'rab* in this verse yields significant theological implications regarding the limits of human capacity to understand the mutasyabihat verses. This finding aligns with Demirdöven's (2024) research, which demonstrates that variations in the Qur'an's syntactic structure can result in differences in interpretive orientation and theological interpretation.

In Surah Al-Mā'idah, verse 6, we find one of the most famous examples of the influence of *i'rab* on the derivation of legal rulings, namely in the phrase *وَأَرْجُلُكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ*. In the *naṣb* qira'ah, it is read as *arjulakum*, whereas in the *jarr* qira'ah, it is read as *arjulikum*. Al-Tabari explains both qira'at as well as the respective grammatical arguments for each. In the *naṣb* reading, the word *arjulakum* is linked via *'ataf* to *wujūhakum*, thereby indicating the obligation to wash the feet during wudu. In the *jarr* reading, the word is linked to *bi ru'ūsikum*, thus conveying the meaning of wiping the feet (Al-Tabari, 1976).

Although he acknowledges the validity of both qira'at, Al-Tabari is more inclined to favor the opinion that requires washing the feet, basing his argument on the *hadiths* of the Prophet, the practice of the majority of the Companions, and the consistency between the qira'at and the textual evidence. Conversely, Quraish Shihab views the two qira'at not as two conflicting opinions, but as an expression of the flexibility of Islamic law that allows for application according to specific circumstances. According to him, washing the feet is the rule that applies under normal circumstances, whereas wiping can be understood in the context of a dispensation (*rukhsah*), such as when wearing *khuff* (Shihab, 2002). This difference demonstrates that variations in *i'rab* do not stop at the linguistic level but influence the process of deriving legal rulings (*istinbāt*). Grammatically, the difference in the syntactic relationship between the phrase *أَرْجُلُكُمْ/أَرْجُلُكُمْ* and the preceding word determines whether the object is linked via the *'ataf* construction to *فَاغْسِلُوا* (so wash) or to *وَامْسَحُوا* (and wipe). It is this difference in syntactic relations that gives rise to two distinct legal consequences, since in *usul al-fiqh*, the determination of legal rulings depends heavily on the grammatical functions of sentence elements as indicators of meaning (*dalālah al-lafẓ*). Thus, *i'rab* functions as an epistemological instrument that bridges linguistic structure with the process of legal determination, so that a change in the syntactic position of a term can alter the direction of the resulting normative interpretation. This finding

reinforces the results of Bahri's (2024) research, which states that variations in i'rab in the Qur'an are one of the key factors underlying differences in fiqh perspectives among scholars

In Surah Al-Wāqī'ah, verse 79—“لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ” the focus of analysis is not on the differences in i'rab harakat, but rather on the syntactic functions of the sentence elements that influence the determination of meaning. In this construction, the word الْمُطَهَّرُونَ functions as the subject (*fā'il*) of the verb يَمَسُّهُ following an *istisnā'* pattern, while the determination of the referent of the pronoun هُ depends on the syntactic relationships among the sentence components and the context of the verse as a whole. Al-Tabari interprets this pronoun as referring to the hidden book (*kitāb maknūn*), so that الْمُطَهَّرُونَ is understood as the purified angels who are able to touch that book (Al-Tabari, 1976). Thus, the focus of the analysis of this verse is not on variations in i'rab forms, but rather on how grammatical functions within the sentence structure serve as the basis for determining referents and constructing meaning. This verse was selected as the subject of this study because it demonstrates that i'rab analysis plays a role not only in changes in vowel marks or word position but also in the syntactic relationships that determine the direction of interpretation. Therefore, this verse represents another dimension of i'rab analysis: its role in explaining the relationships between sentence components, which have implications for semantic interpretation and exegesis.

Quraish Shihab accepts the interpretation that interprets al-muṭahharūn as angels as one interpretation that has a strong basis, but he also explains the development of the views of scholars who link the verse to the Qur'anic manuscripts so that al-muṭahharūn are understood as people who are in a state of purity (Shihab, 2002). The results of the comparative analysis show that the difference between the two commentators does not lie in determining the grammatical function of the word al-muṭahharūn, but rather in the methodological orientation in developing the meaning that arises from the syntactic structure of the verse. Al-Tabari maintains a meaning that is oriented to the textual context of the verse by making syntactic relations as the basis for determining the referent, while Quraish Shihab utilizes the same grammatical structure to open up the possibility of expanding the meaning according to the development of understanding of fiqh and contextual needs. This finding shows that the function of i'rab in interpretation does not always produce variations in meaning through changes in grammatical position, but also through differences in the way the commentators utilize syntactic relations in constructing meaning. Thus, the comparative contribution of this research shows that i'rab not only plays a role as an instrument of linguistic analysis, but also as an epistemological basis that allows for the emergence of different interpretation orientations even though they are based on the same grammatical structure. This finding is in line with the research results of Saleh et al. (2026) which emphasized that the function of i'rab in the Qur'an is not limited to determining syntactic functions, but also forms semantic relations that form the basis for developing meaning in the interpretation process.

In Surah Al-Aḥzāb, verse 33: إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ, the phrase *ahl al-bayt* is the focus of the *i'rab* analysis. Al-Tabari explains that this phrase is in the *manshūb 'alā al-ikhtiṣāṣ* case. In the rules of *nahwu*, *ikhtiṣāṣ* is used to emphasize a specific group that is the subject of discussion. Thus, this verse places special emphasis on the Prophet's family as the recipients of divine attention (Al-Tabari, 1976).

Quraish Shihab accepts this grammatical analysis but expands the discussion to include semantic and historical dimensions. He points out that the shift in the pronoun from the feminine form in the preceding section to the masculine form in this phrase opens up room for interpretation regarding who exactly is included among the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Therefore, in addition to grammatical aspects, Al-Mishbah also considers *hadith* traditions in determining the scope of meaning (Shihab, 2002). The results of the analysis show that *i'rab* serves as a starting point that subsequently develops into a broader theological and historical discourse. Thus, *i'rab* not only functions as a syntactic tool but also serves as a starting point for the development of theological and historical discourse in exegesis. This finding supports the view of Nabilah et al.

(2025), who state that *i'rab* analysis contributes to explaining the context and the expansion of the meaning of Qur'anic verses.

In Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 37: *فَقَلَّمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ*, the differences in *i'rab* are not as pronounced as in the previous verses because the word *kalimāt* is generally understood as a *maf'ūl bih* received by Prophet Adam from Allah. However, this verse remains relevant for understanding how syntactic structure forms the basis for the development of meaning. Al-Tabari emphasizes the traditional explanation regarding the nature of *kalimāt* as a prayer of repentance taught to Adam (Al-Tabari, 1976).

Quraish Shihab not only explains the syntactic function of the word but also highlights the psychological and spiritual dimensions it contains. According to him, the use of the plural form *kalimāt* indicates that Adam's process of repentance did not occur through a single statement, but rather through a series of divine teachings and guidance. Thus, although there is no sharp difference in *i'rab*, there is a difference in the exploration of the semantic implications derived from the syntactic structure of the verse (Shihab, 2002).

Overall, the results of the analysis and discussion of QS Āli 'Imrān [3]: 7, QS Al-Ma'idah [5]: 6, QS Al-Waqi'ah [56]: 79, QS Al-Ahzab [33]: 33, and QS Al-Baqarah [2]: 37 show a consistent pattern in the use of *i'rab* by both commentators. In QS Āli 'Imrān [3]: 7 and QS Al-Ma'idah [5]: 6, Al-Tabari uses the analysis of *i'rab*, *qira'at*, and narration as the main basis for conducting *tarjih* on the meaning that is considered the strongest. The same pattern is also seen in QS Al-Waqi'ah [56]: 79, QS Al-Ahzab [33]: 33, and QS Al-Baqarah [2]: 37, where grammatical arguments are used to determine the syntactic relations, referents, and meaning of the verses before being linked to a broader interpretation. In contrast, in all these verses, Quraish Shihab continues to utilize *i'rab* analysis as a linguistic basis, but does not make it the sole basis for interpretation. Grammatical analysis is combined with historical, social considerations, and the general purpose of the verses to produce a more contextual and applicable interpretation. The pattern that appears consistently across all research objects shows that the difference between the two commentators lies not in their acceptance of the importance of *i'rab*, but in their epistemological orientation in utilizing it. Al-Tabari places *i'rab* as the main instrument in the *tarjih* process which is integrated with *qira'at*, the history of the companions, and classical Arabic traditions, while Quraish Shihab positions *i'rab* as one of the interpretative tools developed together with contextual analysis to explain the breadth of the meaning of the Qur'an.

This finding is in line with the study of Dhiya and Farhan (2025) which shows that Al-Tabari's *tarjih* method is built through the integration of linguistic arguments and narration, while also strengthening Rubini's (2025) findings regarding the contextual character of Tafsir Al-Mishbah which remains grounded in linguistic foundations. Thus, this study confirms that the epistemological function of *i'rab* lies not only in determining grammatical structure, but also in its role in forming variations in meaning that have implications for theological, legal, and social aspects. This finding strengthens the results of research by Bahri (2024), Demirdöven (2024), and Saleh et al. (2026) which emphasize that the syntactic structure of the Qur'an is one of the main factors that shape the diversity of interpretations. Therefore, the integration of *nahwu* analysis, semantics, and tafsir methodology is an important approach in the development of contemporary Qur'anic studies.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that *i'rab* plays an important role in the formation of the Qur'an's meaning and functions as one of the epistemological tools in the process of interpretation. Through a comparative analysis of QS Āli 'Imrān [3]: 7, QS Al-Ma'idah [5]: 6, QS Al-Waqi'ah [56]: 79, QS Al-Ahzab [33]: 33, and Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 37, it was found that variations in *i'rab*, syntactic relations, *qira'at*, and interpretive context can lead to differences in theological, legal, and semantic understanding.

The results of the study show that Al-Tabari tends to use *i'rab* as a tool for determining meaning based on qira'at, hadith, and the rules of classical Arabic. In contrast, Quraish Shihab employs *i'rab* as one of several interpretive tools, combined with contextual, historical, and social approaches. This difference indicates that the function of *i'rab* in exegesis depends not only on linguistic structure but also on the methodological paradigm employed by the exegete.

This study confirms that *i'rab* cannot be understood merely as a technical aspect of language, but rather as a tool that contributes to the construction of meaning and the dynamics of Qur'anic exegesis. These findings underscore the importance of integrating the disciplines of nahwu, semantics, qira'at, and exegetical methodology in the development of contemporary linguistic studies of exegesis. Furthermore, this study demonstrates both continuity and transformation in the methodology of exegesis, from the classical tradition represented by Al-Tabari to the modern contextual approach represented by Quraish Shihab.

This study confirms that *i'rab* cannot be understood solely as a technical aspect of language, but rather as a tool that contributes to the formation of meaning and the dynamics of Quranic interpretation. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating the disciplines of nahwu, semantics, qira'at, and tafsir methodology in developing contemporary linguistic studies of tafsir. Furthermore, this study demonstrates continuity and transformation in tafsir methodology, from the classical tradition represented by Al-Tabari to the modern contextual approach represented by Quraish Shihab.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, authors used ChatGPT and DeepL to improve language quality, translation grammar, and readability. After using this tool, authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology

Author 5: Supervision; Validation.

Author 6: Writing

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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