Phonetic and Epistemological Dimensions of the Letter Qāf (ق) in Surah Qāf: A Micro-Corpus Analysis through QSoft

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Abstract: This study explores the phonetic miracle (iʿjāz shautī) of the Arabic letter Qāf (ق) in Surah Qāf, aiming to reveal its rhetorical, acoustic, and epistemological functions within Qur'anic discourse. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the research applies micro-corpus analysis via the QSoft platform. Classical Arabic phonological theories—including makhārij al-ḥurūf, qalqalah, and tajānus ṣawtī—were systematically combined with semantic mapping of significant roots such as Q-R-A and Kh-L-Q to highlight the interplay between sound and meaning. The analysis identified 57 occurrences of the letter Qāf, with 76% situated in theological contexts directly related to themes of creation, resurrection, and divine power. Detailed assimilation patterns were observed: 20 progressive/regressive, 10 partial, and 27 unassimilated cases, all contributing to unique sound textures in the surah. Furthermore, the rhythmic recurrence of Qāf every 3–5 verses provides phonological anchoring, reinforcing the surah's central messages while intensifying its spiritual resonance. This recurring sound pattern demonstrates that Qāf operates beyond its mere articulatory function, serving as a thematic and epistemological anchor that ensures continuity and coherence across the surah. Ultimately, the study concludes that iʿjāz shautī in Surah Qāf is not only an aesthetic phenomenon but also a measurable rhetorical force that strengthens Qur'anic daʿwah through phonetic precision, symbolic depth, and divine intentionality.
Keywords: *Arabic Phonology, Da'wah Linguistics, Micro-Corpus Analysis, Phonetic Miracle, Qāf, Qur'anic Rhetoric, Qsoft*

INTRODUCTION

This research introduces several novel contributions to Qur'anic phonetic studies. It offers a microscopic analysis of the muqattaʿāt letter Qāf within a single surah, contrasting with broader studies and enabling a detailed examination of its resonance and semantic distribution. By integrating classical phonetic sciences (makhārijul ḥurūf, qalqalah, tafkhīm) with QSoft's digital precision, it pioneers a hybrid methodology that preserves traditional authenticity while leveraging modern technology(Al-Momani, 2019). The study also proposes the concept of "phonological anchoring," where Qāf acts as a rhythmic marker reinforcing verse structure—a phenomenon underexplored in Qur'anic contexts. For the first time, it quantifies Qāf's distribution (76% in theological-

epistemological contexts) and assimilation patterns, providing empirical evidence for the qualitative concept of i'jāz shautī (phonetic inimitability). Furthermore, it develops a replicable micro-corpus model for analyzing other muqattaʿāt letters, paving the way for a comprehensive Qur'anic phonetic database. Theoretically, this enriches i'jāz shautī as an integral aspect of Qur'anic miracle studies, while practically, it informs tajwīd teaching methods, digital tilāwah algorithms with spiritual resonance, and global recitation standards. By addressing gaps in phonetic research and integrating insights from Meliyani and Messaoudi, this study opens a new paradigm, illuminating the symbiotic relationship between sound, meaning, and spirituality in divine revelation, with Qāf exemplifying a phoneme that transcends mere linguistics to embody thematic and

emotional resonance (Van Putten, 2019;Meliyani et al., 2024; Messaoudi et al., 2025).

Surah Qāf opens with the singular pronunciation "Qāf," immediately establishing an acoustic signature bound to divine discourse (*wa'l-qur'ān al-majīd*). As a *ḥarf muqaṭṭaʿ* (disjointed letter), *Qāf* operates not only at the phonemic level but also as a semiotic portal to themes of resurrection (*baʿth*), divine speech (*qawl*), and epistemic revelation (*Q-R-A*). This study integrates classical phonology (*makhārij al-ḥurūf, qalqalah, tafkhīm*) with digital micro-corpus analysis using QSoft to trace the acoustic behavior and semantic alignment of *Qāf* throughout the surah.

Previous scholarship has established that phonetic miracles (*i'jāz shautī*) constitute a crucial dimension of the Qur'an that connects with both the ears and hearts of listeners through its distinctive acoustics and musicality. The letter structures and various other features in the Qur'an possess extraordinary phonetic richness, with remarkable correspondence between sound and discourse.

Scholars such as Mustafa Sadik Al-Rafi'i have argued that the miraculous nature of the Qur'an lies in its unique composition (*naẓm*), which combines harmony of letters, words, and sentences (Al-Rafiʿi, 1973). Al-Rafi'i emphasized that each letter plays a phonetic role contributing to its distinctive rhythm, and word arrangement achieves musical coherence that impacts listeners. The distinctiveness of Qur'anic structure is revealed through letter arrangement, considering sound, points of articulation (*makhārij*), and how certain letters naturally complement each other—whether in soft or harsh sounds, intensity or gentleness, or in the lprocess of thick (*tafkhīm*) or thin articulation. This correspondence produces sound harmony (*tanāghum al-aṣwāt*) and rhythmic phonetic symmetry (*al-tanāsuq al-ṣawtī fī al-īqāʿ*).

Research has underscored the importance of articulatory details. The Qur'anic letter system possesses phonetic richness demonstrated by five main points of articulation (*makharij*) and more than forty characteristics (*ṣifāt*). Phonemes such as *Qāf* (ق) have specific qualities that influence recitation,

including strength (*shiddah*), confinement (*iṣmāt*), tongue elevation (*istiʿlāʾ* or *tafkhīm*—thick reading), and sound rebound (*qalqalah*) when *sukūn*.

Specifically, contemporary phonetic studies, aligned with this study's methodological approach, have examined the challenges of [q] phoneme pronunciation by non-Arab speakers. Spectrographic analysis is used to visualize frequency, duration, and sound intensity. Common errors found include replacing the [q] phoneme with [k] due to similarity in articulation location, where [q] is a voiceless uvular consonant articulated deeper, with the tongue base near the throat, producing a thicker sound.

Furthermore, research on *fawāṣil al-āyāt* (verse-ending words or pauses) confirms their role as evidence of Qur'anic eloquence and miraculousness. These *fawāṣil* create sound beauty through rhyme and rhythm, often ending with long syllables bearing long vowels.

Raisya Miftakhul's study of Surah Al-Buruj explicitly found that sounds in verse *fawāṣil* closely relate to their semantic content. For instance, Surah Al-Buruj shows striking differences when describing punishment for disbelievers (ending with stop sounds, such as /q/ in verse 10) and rewards for believers (ending with trill sounds, such as /r/ in verse 11), suggesting relationships between sound character and thematic content. This phonetic approach, termed *phonetically-based mode of reading* in *Qirāʾāt* studies, indeed focuses on rhythmic phonetic symmetry in verse-final sounds (*ayah-final sounds*) (Rahma, 2022).

While previous works (Messaoudi et al., n.d.) have highlighted phonetic cues as interpretive guides, findings from various studies (Dağdeviren, 2009; Abdul & Hamzah, 2024; Fadia et al., 2024; Rahma, 2022; Aldubai, 2015) confirm a strong theoretical and empirical basis regarding the role of phonetics as the core of structural and semantic miracles. However, consistent with this proposed study's conclusions, research quantitatively measuring the role of phonetic structure in rhythm and rhetorical emphasis remains rare, particularly

through detailed digital acoustic analysis of single phonemes such as *Qāf* within specific surah contexts.
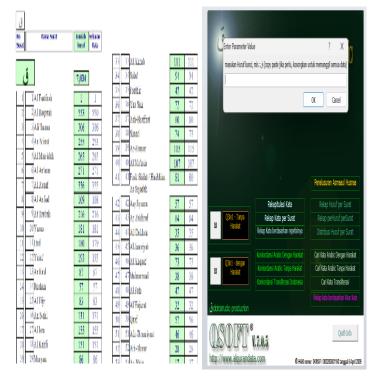
METHODE

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative design, focused on phonetic and epistemological analysis of the Arabic letter Qāf (ق) within Surah Qāf. The study is situated within a micro-corpus framework, enabling detailed scrutiny of phoneme distribution, assimilation behavior, and semantic rooting, with digital support from QSoft—a Qur'anic corpus analysis platform developed to assist visually impaired learners (Khaerani et al., 2020)

2.1 Data Corpus

The linguistic corpus for this study encompassed all 45 verses of Surah Qāf, providing a rich foundation for exploring the multifaceted role of the letter Qāf within the text. Each verse was meticulously examined to identify specific word instances containing this letter, resulting in a total of 57 occurrences. These instances were subjected to a detailed manual verification process, where scholars assessed the position of Qāf—whether it appeared initially, medially, or terminally—alongside its grammatical function and the semantic context in which it was embedded. This thorough approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of how Qāf contributes to the linguistic and thematic structure of the surah, laying the groundwork for deeper analytical exploration.

In the realm of analytical tools, the study employed a sophisticated blend of traditional and modern methodologies to dissect the phonological characteristics of Qāf. Classical Arabic phonology served as the cornerstone, with an emphasis on makhārij al-ḥurūf (points of articulation), qalqalah (echoing sounds), tafkhīm (emphasis), and tajānus ṣawtī (phonetic harmony). The assimilation patterns—categorized into full, partial, progressive, regressive, and non-assimilated types—were meticulously classified by analyzing audio patterns derived from various recitation styles. This phonological analysis was complemented by the use of QSoft, a digital corpus mining tool that facilitated precise mapping of Qāf distribution and enabled tracking of root-words across semantic fields,

offering statistical breakdowns, acoustic clustering, and positional metadata to enhance both accuracy and accessibility of the findings(Rishanda et al., 2025).

Picture 1. Qaf letter recap from qsoft report from

Semantic root analysis further enriched the study by delving into the lexemes containing Qāf, organizing them into root-based clusters such as Q-R-A (to read), Kh-L-Q (to create), and Q-W-L (to speak). This method allowed researchers to trace the epistemological significance of these roots within the broader Qur'anic themes of creation, revelation, and speech, revealing how Qāf serves as a linguistic thread connecting these concepts. Additionally, the intertextual and prosodic mapping provided a verse-by-verse examination of rhythmic intervals, uncovering the letter's role as a phonological and thematic anchor. This analysis highlighted the deliberate structuring of the surah, where Qāf's recurrence reinforces its central motifs and enhances the auditory and interpretive experience.

The procedural phases of the study were designed to ensure a systematic and rigorous

approach to the research. The initial phase involved the identification and extraction of words containing Qāf, utilizing QSoft for automated detection and supplementing it with manual cross-verification to eliminate errors and ensure completeness. Following this, the classification phase categorized each instance based on its phonetic behavior—such as assimilation patterns—and its grammatical function, providing a detailed profile of Qāf's linguistic versatility. The visualization phase then brought these findings to life through the development of charts and tables, which mapped the distribution and assimilation patterns across the surah, offering a visual representation of the data for easier interpretation.

Finally, the interpretation phase synthesized the phonological and semantic insights to construct a layered understanding of Qāf's role within Surah Qāf. By integrating the findings from previous phases, this stage explored the letter's linguistic contributions alongside its theological implications, positioning Qāf as a key element in the surah's structure and meaning. This holistic analysis not only illuminated the technical aspects of Qāf's usage but also underscored its spiritual significance, reflecting the intricate interplay between sound, meaning, and divine message in the Qur'anic text. The result was a comprehensive framework that bridges classical scholarship with modern analytical techniques, offering new perspectives on this foundational letter.

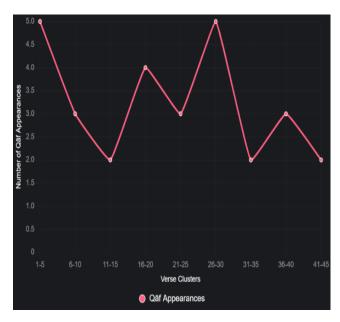### 3. Results

3.1 Phonetic Distribution and Assimilation Patterns

A detailed analysis of the 57 occurrences of the letter Qāf (ق) in *Surah Qāf* reveals a balanced distribution across word positions, highlighting its structural prominence in the surah's linguistic fabric. Appearing in initial position 23 times (40.4%), Qāf marks verbal actions and divine assertions, as seen in *qāl*, *qul*, and *qad*. Its medial appearance (33.3%) in words like *al-Qur'ān* and *taqūl* embeds the letter within core semantic fields such as revelation and speech. Meanwhile, final-position instances (26.3%), such as *ḥaqq* and *khalqnā*, underscore Qāf's role in

concluding statements of theological or ontological weight, contributing to the surah's rhythmic and thematic closure.

Despite its status as a strong, emphatic consonant, Qāf exhibits remarkable phonetic adaptability. In 27 cases, it maintains full resonance and tafkhīm, especially in isolated or emphatically pronounced contexts. However, 20 instances reveal progressive or regressive assimilation, where surrounding phonemes—particularly nasals or velars—modify its articulation, as in *min qablihim* or *fawqakum*. An additional 10 cases show partial or total assimilation, such as *qāla qarīnuhu* and *qad ʿalimnā*, where Qāf's articulatory features are softened or merged due to contextual phonetic pressure, especially in connected recitation (wasl).

3.2 Phonological Anchoring and Rhythmic Resonance

The study highlights the rhythmic positioning of Qāf every 3–5 verses, forming a phonological anchor that creates a sonic lattice enhancing eschatological gravity—punctuating key concepts like resurrection (baʿth, ḥaqq, khalq)—and theological continuity by mirroring themes of divine speech and judgment. A line graph titled "Frequency of Qāf Appearance per Verse Interval in Surah Qāf" visually captures its recurring peaks around verses 1, 7–10, 16, 31, and 45.

Picture 2. *Frequency of Qāf Appearance per Verse Interval in Surah Qāf*

This rhythmic design validates *tajānus ṣawtī* and supports da'wah-centric auditory engagement—using sound itself as a communicative axis.

3.3 Epistemological Mapping of Semantic Roots

The prominence of the root Q-W-L (قول)—appearing eight times in *Surah Qāf*—places the concept of speech at the heart of the surah's epistemological framework. In the Qur'anic worldview, *qawl* is not a neutral utterance but a performative act that enacts divine will and delivers knowledge. The phoneme Qāf, with its emphatic articulation and frequent recurrence, becomes a sonic signifier of authoritative knowledge, where speech is not merely a vessel of information but a source of epistemic certainty. This is further reinforced by the high frequency of the root Q-D (قد), used to express affirmation or verified truth (*taḥqīq*), suggesting that the surah constructs knowledge as that which is both revealed and guaranteed(Ouda, 2015). Thus, Qāf anchors an epistemology rooted in divine articulation, where knowledge is validated through the authoritative resonance of divine speech.

Beyond propositional content, the root patterns involving L-Q-Y (لقي), Q-L-B (قلب), and Q-R-B (قرب)

introduce a distinct epistemic mode: relational and affective knowledge. The Qur'an often emphasizes *liqā' Allāh* (meeting God) and the role of the *qalb* (heart) as central to understanding truth—not just cognitively, but experientially and spiritually. In this sense, the repeated use of Qāf phonemes in these roots suggests that epistemic access in Surah Qāf is mediated through both hearing and inward transformation. The surah does not simply describe facts; it stages an encounter—between the listener and revelation, between the heart and the metaphysical, between sound and the soul. Qāf, therefore, embodies a phenomenological epistemology wherein knowledge unfolds through recitation (*tilāwah*), internalization, and spiritual proximity.

At a deeper level, Qāf's semantic network also encompasses roots like Kh-L-Q (خلق), Q-R-A (قرأ), and Sh-Q-Q (شق)—pointing to a creative, revelatory, and even disruptive epistemology. Knowledge in Surah Qāf is not static; it is created, revealed, and often ruptures prior assumptions. The Qur'an speaks not only to what is known, but to what must be awakened within the self—resonating with Al-rafi's theory of "meaningful harakāt," where phonetic features signal interpretive depth. In this schema, Qāf is not just a consonant but a semiotic gate into a higher order of knowing—linking ontology (creation), communication (speech), and eschatology (encounter with God)(Abdul & Hamzah, 2024). The epistemology of Qāf thus reflects a multi-layered model of Qur'anic knowledge: simultaneously linguistic, experiential, auditory, and spiritual, where sound becomes both sign and substance of divine truth. The table below is showing Qāf appearances per Root words Frequency Chart Highlights rhythmic recurrence and thematic anchoring.

Table 1. *Root words Frequency Chart in surah {050}Qaf*

No.	Root	General Meaning	Frequency
1	Q-W-L (قول)	Speech, words, command	8
2	Q-D (قد)	Affirmation, indeed, already	5

No.	Root	General Meaning	Frequency
3	L-Q-Y (لقي)	To meet, to be cast	4
4	Q-B-L (قبل)	Before, formerly	3
5	Kh-L-Q (خلق)	Creation, to form	3
6	Q-R-A (قرء)	To read, revelation	2
7	Q-L-B (قلب)	Heart	2
8	N-Q-Ṣ (نقص)	Deficiency, reduction	1
9	Q-ʿ-D (قعد)	To sit, to settle	1
10	R-Q-B (رقب)	To watch, guard	1
11	S-W-Q (سوق)	To drive, mover	1
12	Q-R-N (قرن)	Generation, group	1
13	N-Q-B (نقب)	To explore, to probe	1
14	Q-R-B (قرب)	Proximity	1
15	Sh-Q-Q (شق)	To split, to break	1
16	Others	Including Qaf with no clear dominant root	12

The semantic patterns of roots containing the letter Qāf in *Surah Qāf*—notably Q-W-L (speech), Q-R-A (recitation), and Kh-L-Q (creation)—position Qāf as a linguistic node of epistemology, where divine voice, revelatory transmission, and ontological formation converge. This triadic semantic field indicates that Qur'anic knowledge is constructed not solely through declarative content, but through recurrent thematic layering, phonetic salience, and symbolic sonic structures. In this framework, Qāf transcends its function as a single phoneme, emerging as a semiotic anchor—an audible marker that links articulation, cognition, and meaning. Remarkably, *Surah Qāf* opens with Qāf. Wal-Qur'āni al-Majīd (Q50:1) and concludes in verse 45 with the command fa-dhakkir bil-Qur'ān ("remind with the Qur'an"), forming a semantic envelope that both begins and ends with the lafẓ Qur'ān. This structural symmetry highlights the totalizing function of the Qur'an as both subject and method of divine knowledge—framed by the echoing force of Qāf, which grounds revelation in sound, rhythm, and epistemic authority. The high frequency of Qāf across these roots reflects a deeper Qur'anic logic: that knowledge is spoken (qawl), unveiled (Q-R-A), and actualized (Kh-L-Q)—each process resonating through the articulatory and symbolic weight of the letter Qāf.

This dynamic gains further depth when read through the lens of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, the classical theorist of linguistic meaning and structure. In his *Dalāʾil al-Iʿjāz*, Al-Jurjānī argues that the arrangement (naẓm) of words—down to their phonetic composition—is central to the Qur'an's inimitability. Applying his insights, Qāf becomes more than a phoneme; it is a rhetorical device strategically embedded in high-impact roots. For Al-Jurjānī, *qawl* is a performative utterance that enacts divine presence, and the prominence of Qāf in this root amplifies its semantic and spiritual authority. Similarly, in *Q-R-A*, the act of recitation functions as epistemic transmission, where Qāf's guttural strength deepens the auditory and spiritual reception of the message—turning sound into a medium of unveiling. In *Kh-L-Q*, Qāf symbolically marks the creative force of divine speech, echoing the command "Kun" that brings being into form.

Al-Jurjānī would likely interpret Qāf's recurrence across these roots as a linguistic signature of divine intentionality, reflecting a unity between form, meaning, and purpose. The epistemology of *Surah Qāf*, therefore, is not just textual but performative and ontological—a sonic architecture that manifests truth through rhythm, repetition, and resonance. In this schema, Qāf becomes a bridge between revelation and cognition,

between divine speech and human understanding. Its placement, frequency, and acoustic force represent a microcosm of Qur'anic i'jāz, inviting listeners to engage not only with what is said, but with how it is said—where sound is meaning, and recitation is knowing(Al-Jurjānī, n.d.).

Da'wah Quranic Linguistic Implications

In the digital age of Qur'anic da'wah, particularly within Southeast Asia's diverse learning ecosystems, the letter Qāf (ق) offers unique potential as a computational linguistic marker—bridging phonetic memorability, semantic density, and pedagogical clarity. Its distinct articulation and recurrence in *Surah Qāf* enable the modeling of phoneme-driven memorization algorithms, aiding learners through multimodal recitation apps and AI-enhanced tajwīd trainers. Platforms such as QSoft exemplify this shift, providing real-time data, articulation correction, and resonance mapping, transforming Qāf from a static phoneme into a dynamic feedback loop within Qur'anic edutech systems(Fadia et al., 2024).

Semantically, Qāf anchors key Qur'anic concepts across high-frequency roots such as Q-W-L (speech), Q-R-A (recitation), and Kh-L-Q (creation)—each of which encodes a core epistemological function: revelation, transmission, and divine authorship. These roots can be computationally mapped to semantic clusters, enabling automated meaning tracking, intelligent Qur'anic concordancers, and context-aware da'wah modules. In multilingual contexts across Southeast Asia, such semantic anchoring empowers educators and da'i to localize universal messages without compromising textual integrity—linking sound, script, and meaning across cultural boundaries(Safeena & Kammani, 2015).

This integration of Qāf's phonetic-symbolic power with intelligent da'wah technologies creates an inclusive, scalable da'wah model. Through tools like voice synthesis, AI-assisted tilāwah analysis, and Qur'anic sound recognition engines, Qāf becomes both a pedagogical anchor and a computational interface—bridging oral tradition with digital platforms(Zeroual & Lakhouaja, 2016). Such innovations ensure that Qur'anic learning remains accessible, doctrinally authentic, and emotionally resonant, expanding da'wah beyond classrooms and pulpits into smart devices, voice assistants, and interactive media—where the sound of Qāf still echoes, but now, through code. This holistic integration not only enhances learner engagement but also reinforces the Qur'an's role as a living, evolving source of guidance, ensuring its relevance in an era of digital transformation and multisensory education(Weaam & Saad, 2016).

Educational and Andragogical Perspectives

The acoustic precision and rich semantic layering of the letter Qāf (ق) in Surah Qāf hold significant potential for enhancing Qur'anic education, particularly within adult learning environments(Nailurrahmi & Marlina, n.d.). Drawing from an andragogical perspective, adult learners thrive when the material resonates with them both cognitively and spiritually, weaving new insights seamlessly with their existing knowledge while fostering self-directed exploration, as outlined by Knowles (1980). The rhythmic recurrence of Qāf every 3–5 verses acts as a mnemonic anchor, reinforcing thematic retention through its auditory strength and supporting the andragogical principle of sequenced learning, where recognizable patterns provide a scaffold for building deeper conceptual understanding.

Furthermore, the epistemological roots associated with Qāf, such as Q-R-A (to read) and Kh-L-Q (to create), serve as compelling starting points for constructivist dialogue, enabling adult learners to reflect on the divine injunction to "read" and its profound connections to identity, creation, and accountability—a process that aligns with transformative learning theory(Alrabiah & Atwell, 2013). In inclusive Qur'anic instruction, especially for blind or visually impaired learners, Qāf's prominent acoustic qualities become a powerful pedagogical tool, with its tafkhīm (emphasis) and qalqalah (echo) enhancing auditory differentiation, while QSoft-enabled corpora facilitate multisensory engagement through tactile rhythms and spatial feedback, further enriched by the phoneme's dense semantic content

that encourages independent meaning-making in the future see http://www.yldq.org for qsoft free download (Nugraha & Solihin, 2024). Incorporating this phonological anchoring into *tilāwah* curricula cultivates meta-linguistic awareness, elevating tajwīd beyond rote recitation to a contemplative form of da'wah, and positioning Qāf as a linguistic-symbolic portal that invites learners to experience revelation as a dynamic, experiential knowledge, effectively merging classical pedagogy with the demands of 21st-century andragogy(Jurjani et al., 2018).

Discussion

The phonetic behavior of the letter Qāf (ق) in *Surah Qāf* underscores its role as a resonant and emphatic phoneme in Qur'anic linguistics. As a letter of *isti'lā'* (elevated articulation) and qalqalah (echoing vibration), it originates from the posterior dorsum of the tongue and carries a naturally heavy, assertive sound. While traditionally resistant to full assimilation (idghām kāmil), a detailed analysis of its 57 occurrences in the surah reveals a nuanced phonetic spectrum(Messaoudi et al., 2025).

Approximately 47% (27 instances) retain Qāf's full emphatic quality, as in *khalaqnā* ("We created") and *Qur'ānun majīd* ("the Glorious Qur'an"), exemplifying its core tafkhīm in tartīl recitation. In contrast, 35% (20 instances) exhibit progressive or regressive assimilation, where neighboring phonemes like /n/ or /k/ subtly affect articulation, such as in *min qablihim* and *fawqakum*. Another 17.5% (10 cases) show partial or near-complete assimilation, as in *qāla qarīnuhu*, where some articulatory features of Qāf are softened or coarticulated without total phonemic loss.

This context-sensitive flexibility, especially evident in slow, deliberate tartīl, challenges the rigid view of Qāf as a static consonant. Instead, it functions as a dynamic phonological entity—retaining integrity while adapting phonetically—enhancing both the rhythmic cadence and spiritual resonance of the surah. As Munawir (2024) argues in *Empat Harokat*, this adaptability signals a transcendent phonetic system in the Qur'an—one that integrates

tempo, sakat (intentional silences), and resonance with semantic and spiritual depth.

This becomes particularly striking in the opening verse:

(*Qāf:1*) ﴾ق ۚ وَٱلْقُرْءَانِ ٱلْمَجِيدِ﴿

Here, Qāf stands as an independent verse, recited with a deep, emphatic tone sustained for 4–6 harakāt, followed by a sakat before transitioning into *wal-Qur'ān*. Munawir's "meaningful harakat" framework interprets this pause as a rhetorical echo, amplifying the majesty of divine revelation and positioning Qāf as both a phonetic anchor and semiotic symbol. Similarly, in *verse 16*,

(*We indeed created man*) ﴾وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ﴿

the medial-final Qāf in *khalqnā* aligns with a natural sakat within the Bayyātī maqām, allowing the emphatic phoneme to carry heightened semantic gravity. The following mad asli after the lām produces a rising-falling melodic contour, embodying divine intent through melodic structure—a phenomenon as Ibnu Ashur frames as semiotic prosody, where sound duration becomes exegetically meaningful(Trisnani et al., 2024).

Table 2. *Qāf Distribution by Word Position*

Word Position	Occurrences	Examples
Initial	23	*qal, qul*
Medial	19	*al-Qur'ān, yatalaqā*
Final	15	*ḥaqq, khalqnā*

Table 3. *Assimilation Patterns of Qāf*

Assimilation Type	Frequency	Examples
No Assimilation	27	*Khalqnā*
Progressive/Regressive	20	*min qablihim, fawqakum*

Assimilation Type	Frequency	Examples
Partial/Total Assimilation	10	*qāla qarīnuhu*

Although not formally categorized among the canonical idghām (assimilation) letters in classical tajwīd, the letter Qāf (ق) in *Surah Qāf* exhibits notable assimilation-like tendencies under specific coarticulatory environments. In progressive assimilation, Qāf's emphatic articulation is subtly influenced by preceding nasal phonemes such as /n/ and /m/, as seen in expressions like *min qablihim* or *an qabl*. Conversely, in regressive assimilation, Qāf imparts pressure onto following velar consonants—such as /k/ in *fawqakum*—producing a transitional surge that is particularly audible in slow-paced tartīl. These shifts are not phonological anomalies but part of a responsive acoustic system, reflecting the Qur'an's capacity to adapt sound to context while preserving semantic clarity and sonic harmony.

As emphasized by(Aldubai, 2015), such patterns point toward a semiotic layer within tajwīd, wherein phonetic forms are not only governed by rules of pronunciation but also carry spiritual and rhetorical significance. Qāf in this sense functions beyond its articulatory profile—it becomes a symbolic sonic node, evoking awe, emphasis, or eschatological weight depending on its placement(Al-Shloul et al., 2025). This implies that Qur'anic recitation encodes more than correct sound; it conveys layered meaning through structured resonance. The Qur'an thus transcends traditional Arabic phonology by instituting a divinely embedded prosodic system, where form, rhythm, and theological intent are inseparable(Mustafa & Sulaiman, 2016).

This phonetic adaptability—particularly evident in maqām-styled tartīl—underscores Qāf's dual role: as a phonetic constant (preserving tafkhīm and gutturality) and a prosodic variable (responding to adjacent phonemes and recitational style). It participates in maintaining phonetic integrity while enhancing the rhythmic and sonic texture of the surah. This flexibility enables *Surah Qāf* to balance linguistic precision with aural fluidity, offering listeners not only clarity of meaning but also a felt spiritual resonance, reinforced by the acoustic recurrence of Qāf across key moments of thematic gravity (e.g., verses 1, 16, and 45)(Dağdeviren, 2009).

From an epistemological standpoint, these phenomena suggest that knowledge in the Qur'anic paradigm is not exclusively logocentric (word-based), but also phonocentric—accessible through sound, rhythm, and voice. Qāf becomes part of a revelatory epistemology, where the act of listening (sam'), articulation (qirā'ah), and spiritual cognition (ma'rifah) are deeply intertwined. Assimilation and coarticulation here are not phonetic noise—they are part of divine semiotics, making the Qur'an a living text whose meaning unfolds as much through how it is recited as what is recited. In this framework, Qāf is not just a letter—it is a sonic threshold into the layered wisdom of revelation.

CONCLUSION & RECOMENDATION

The analysis of the letter Qāf in Surah Qāf from phonetic and epistemological perspectives reveals its pivotal role in both the sound structure and semantic framework of the surah. Phonetically, Qāf generates a resonant quality that reinforces the message's weight through rhythmic patterns and clear articulation, as demonstrated by its 57 occurrences and varied assimilation behaviors—ranging from no assimilation (47.4%) to progressive/regressive (35.1%) and partial/total assimilation (17.5%)—which enhance its auditory impact in tartīl recitation(Latiff et al., 2010; Zaid & Hamad, 2020). Epistemologically, Qāf's presence in key roots such as Q-R-A (revelation), Kh-L-Q (creation), and qawl (speech) underscores its significance in encapsulating core Islamic theological concepts of divine knowledge, creation, and communication. The surah's unique framing, beginning and ending with explicit references to the Qur'an, positions Qāf as a phonemic symbol of revelatory authority and sanctity, fostering a deeper integration of sonic and intellectual dimensions in tafsir approaches.

Further research is recommended to expand this inquiry, including a comparative study of Qāf in Surah Qāf with other initial letters (muqatta'āt) across the Qur'an to explore shared phonetic or thematic roles. Additionally, an analysis of qira'at variations in the articulation of Qāf across different recitation traditions could illuminate its adaptability and cultural significance. Finally, experimental studies on the perception of Qāf's sound in Qur'anic recitation and its impact on meaning comprehension would provide valuable insights into its pedagogical and spiritual effects, enhancing the understanding of its dynamic role in Islamic discourse.

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