The Typology of Approaches to the Science of the Interrelatedness of the Qur'ānic Chapters

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Abstract

The present article addresses the typology of the approaches to the science of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters. To this end, this science has been bought under typological analyses from the viewpoints of the past and contemporary scholars. In the approaches of the past scholars, topics such as the narrative origins and the backgrounds of this science, the chainlike relationship between chapters, the thematic relationship between chapters, and the structure (architecture) theory of the Qur'ān have been discussed. On the other hand, the approaches of the contemporary scholars to this science have addressed the interrelatedness of the chapters in the light of theories such as "the unity of the Qur'ān", "the conceptual and contextual connectedness of the qur'ānic discourse", Sa'īd Ḥawwā's holistic approach in his book *al-Asās*, and a new approach entitled "symmetric order". Then, the article analyzes the ups and downs of this science and the reasons for them, and examines the development capacities of each of the foregoing approaches. It seems that the appearance of the interdisciplinary studies of the Qur'ān in the contemporary era outlines a promising future for this style of the qur'ānic studies.

Keywords

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Introduction
The science studies based on the philosophy of science are among the critical methods in all branches of knowledge. These days, such studies have attracted lots of attention and their efficiency, effectiveness, and transformativeness have been approved by epistemological discussions. These studies specify a transparent and clear image of the ups and downs of science (the history of science), the scope of approaches in one branch of science, the classification of the discussions of a certain science, the sociology of the science, etc. This transparent image of a branch of science can, on the one hand, lead to the identification of its strengths and weaknesses and, on the other hand, reveal the study caveats of a branch of science; all these investigations help us to manage a branch of knowledge. There are a number of important questions in this regard: what are the best ways taken in a certain science so far? What factors have affected its ups and downs? What measures should be taken to improve its status?

The relationships and the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters along with the analysis of the ordering system of the chapters are among the most difficult and challenging topics of the qur'ānic sciences. This topic attracts the researchers now more than any time in history.

One of the main discussions in the discussion of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters is the examination of the formation and evolution of this science during history, because the advancement of this science helps the exegetes to interpret the Qur'ān more accurately and profoundly. Therefore, the historical evolution of this science from the early centuries of Islam to the contemporary era is addressed in the article at hand and then, an examination of the traditional and modern approaches within this science is offered. Consequently, first the conceptual analysis of the terms used in the history of science, the denotative as well as the terminological meaning of *munāsibat* (i.e. interrelationship) in the qur'ānic studies, and the meaning of the word *approach* are discussed.

The science of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters
The word *munāsibat* in Arabic denotes resemblance, conformity, and closeness (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993, vol. 1: 756; Muṣṭafawī, 1982, vol. 12: 93) or the existence of an association and relationship between two people or two things (Ḥussaynī Wāsiṭī, 1993, vol. 2: 430). In the terminology of the qur'ānic studies, the "science of the *munāsibāt* of the Qur'ān is a branch of knowledge through which the reasons for the arrangement of the elements of the Qur'ān are known and this science reveals the rhetorical mysteries of the Qur'ān, as its outcome is the confirmation of the agreement of the meanings with the needs of the audience" (Biqā'ī, 1994, vol. 1: 5). This science

discusses the existing connections between the qur'ānic chapters and discloses the hidden ties.

The history of the science of interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters
One of the appropriate and efficient methods of doing a scientific study and achieving more precise results is the historical investigation of a science that takes into account the ups and downs and the reasons for those fluctuations and the effects and influences of a science and seeks to set the grounds for development. The expression "the history of science" denotes that science is a system that – along with a set of events and movements and an analytic history – aims at finding the reasons for these events and movements. These reasons can be found either in the science itself or in the system of the qur'ānic sciences, and sometimes their effects are from the systems of the qur'ānic sciences (Pākatchī, 2007: 2-20).

The history of science seeks to demonstrate the viewpoints toward a certain topic during the history and the accumulated scientific experiences in that branch of knowledge so as to help advance that science. The benefits of such studies include helping the researcher to examine more precisely the propositions of a science or attain a more authentic view – which is often done through setting the grounds and preparing certain preliminary conditions; knowing the pitfalls of the previous studies in argumentation so as to be avoided by the present authors; knowing the causes of the issues in that science, and enhancing its methods ('Alīpūr, 2003: 106-107).

Definition of the approach
Approach is the collective angle, horizon, perspective, and attitude of the scholars and experts toward the appearance of a certain theory or thought. In fact, approach "is a way to approach the question, to hunt the theory and entrap the hypothesis, while method is used as a tool to criticize and evaluate the obtained hypothesis; therefore, approach is related to the collection while method is about judgment." (Qarāmalikī, 2007: 228-229). In the study at hand, the term approach is defined as the stance and viewpoint of the scholars toward the appearance of a certain theory and thought. What we are trying to find here regards different patterns that have existed in suchlike qur'ānic studies.

The typology of the approaches to the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters in prior scholars' views
It can be said that the science of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters has gone through four stages from the early centuries of Islam to the middle ages: the origins and backgrounds; the linear relationship between the

neighboring chapters; the thematic relationship between the neighboring chapters; and the structure (architecture) of the Qur'ān.

Origins

The first stage of the critical history of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters regards the backgrounds of the creation of this science. The qur'ānic sciences have been initially formed based on Ḥadīth and so, the first grounds of the reflection of the qur'ānic sciences teachings should be sought in the narrations. This science has been initially manifested in the narrations on the groups of chapters and *Taḥzīb al-Qur'ān* narrations, and since the Prophet of Islam (s) and the Imams from the Prophet's lineage (a) or the Companions and the Successors of the Companions of the Prophet of Islam (s) have created classifications for the qur'ānic chapters, their act can indicate that in their view, there have been interrelationships among these groups of chapters.

Taḥzīb al-Qur'ān narrations

Ḥizb is one of the secondary classifications of the Qur'ān content. To define *ḥizb*, Sakhāwī writes, "it is said that the elements of the Qur'ān, the *ḥizb*s of the Qur'ān have the same meaning and I believe that the term *qur'ānic ḥizb* is taken from the word *ḥizb*, which means a group, because they constitute a group, family, and collection of the qur'ānic verses." (Sakhāwī, 1998, vol. 1: 382-383). His assertion connotes that in the past, the words *juz'* and *ḥizb* were used interchangeably in the Qur'ān, but now *ḥizb* is a constituent part of a *juz'*. It seems that in the past, the literal meaning of the word *ḥizb* has been used rather than its contemporary terminological meaning.

Sakhāwī narrates on the classifications made during the lifetime of the Prophet of Islam (s). He writes, "Abū 'Ubayd has narrated a tradition at the end of which he says, 'it was asked from the Companions of the Prophet of Allāh 'how do you divide the Qur'ān into *ḥizb*s?' They said, 'we divide the Noble Qur'ān into *ḥizb*s this ways: three chapters, five chapters, seven chapters, nine chapters, 11 chapters, 13 chapters, and the *extended ḥizb* that includes the Qāf chapter onward to the end of the Qur'ān.'" (ibid: 384).

It can be said that since there has been made a certain type of classification of the qur'ānic chapters by the Noble Prophet (s), there exists a certain continuation and interrelationship among each of these classes and a specific order is present among them. These narrations show that there have been people who believed in the existence of a relationship between qur'ānic chapters, but they have not undertaken any scientific endeavor to address this point as a scientific discussion.

Narrations on the chapter groups

The chapters of the Qur'ān have been divided into several groups based on their order or their opening verses. This indicates connectedness among collections of the chapters. With groups of chapters we mean several chapters that have one or some common aspects and can be divided into neighboring and non-neighboring types. The neighboring chapters are those that are in one group and at the same time are located next to each other. On the other hand, the non-neighboring chapters are those that are in one group but are not located next to each other. Each of these two types can be further divided using *sunna* and free investigation.

Those Qur'ān researchers who have used the narrated or sunna method for the investigation of the neighboring chapters believe that since the Noble Prophet (s) has divided the Qur'ān in a tradition into four sections, we can deem them connected. The Noble Prophet (s) has said in a tradition, "God gave me the long chapters of the Noble Qur'ān instead of Torah and the *mathānī* (counterpart) chapters instead of the Psalms, and with the endowment of the *extended ḥizb* chapters made me superior to other prophets … (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 2: 601).

Similarly, the use of the narrated method in the non-neighboring chapter has been mentioned in another tradition from the Prophet (s). According to a narration, he has put the four chapters of Hūd, the Event, the Tidings, and the Emissaries in one group. It is noted in a tradition narrated by Ibn 'Abbās that "a person told the Noble Prophet (s), 'Oh Prophet of Allāh, how quickly have you got old!' The Noble Prophet (s) said, 'the chapters Hūd, the Event, the Tidings, and the Emissaries made me old.'" (Ṣadūq, 1997: 233; Ḥurr 'Amilī, 1986, vol. 6: 172; Fattāl Neishābūrī, 1996, vol. 2: 476). In another narration, it is asserted that the Prophet (s) recited the chapters the Emissaries, the Overwhelming, and the Resurrection in his morning prayer (MīrMuḥammadī Zarandī, 1999: 100). It is noteworthy that after the establishment of the chapter interrelatedness, this last case was never mentioned as a type of knowledge in the Qur'ānists' discussions and was not examined.

Despite the general agreement and connection of the concepts and intentions of the chapters of a group, it seems that each chapter groups has an independent feature and looks at and expresses a similar issue from different angles (Bazargān, 2000: 13). Therefore, in the light of the foregoing issues, it can be said that the collector of the Qur'ān in the early days of Islam has taken into account the groups of chapters and has ordered the Qur'ān based on such logic.

Chainlike relationship among neighboring chapters

As a follow-up to the discussion on the chapter agreement in the Noble

Qur'ān, a viewpoint was formed claiming that the beginning of a chapter is similar to the end of the previous chapter and a close connecting bead connects the two chapters together. This special connection is closer to the stylistic and verbal ties. The first person who paid attention to the chapter interrelationship science was Abū Bakr 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. Ziyād (d. 324/936). It has been said about him that when a verse was recited in his presence, he asked questions like "why this verse is located next to the other one? What is the point in putting this verse next to the other one?" (Zarkishī, n.d., vol. 1: 132). In this classification, the relationship of the end of a chapter to the beginning of the next one – and the way it connects all chapters of the group and creates a chainlike, unbreakable connection – has been taken into account.

The first person who noted the relationship between the end of a chapter and the beginning of the next one is Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1153) (Ṭabrisī, 1993, vol. 4: 422). After him, Fakhr Rāzī (d. 606/1210) takes into account this type of relationship and emphasizes the connection between the verses of a chapter and the first verse of the next chapter (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999, vol. 25: 23). Then appears Abū Ja'far b. Zubayr Gharnāṭī (d. 708/1309) who wrote a separate book on the chapter relationship entitled *al-Burhān fī munāsiba tartībsuwar al-Qur'ān.* Zarkishī (d. 794/1392) also allocated part of his book to the discussion of chapter interrelatedness and wrote that, "When you look at the beginning of any chapter you find that it has a complete relationship with the ending of its preceding chapter, which is sometimes overt and at other times covert" (Zarkishī, n.d., vol. 1: 38).

After a while, Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar Biqā'ī (d. 885/1480) authored a book entitled *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa al-suwar* in which he noted this issue (q.v.: Biqā'ī: 1994). After this era, the science of chapter interrelatedness was spread in a way that Suyūṭī (d. 911/1506) wrote a book named *Tanāsuq al-durar fī tanāsub al-suwar* about the interrelationship and connection of the chapters and another book entitled *Marāṣid al-maṭāli' fī tanāsub al-maqāṣid wa al-maṭāli'* on the interrelationship of the beginnings and endings of the chapters. He has also devoted a chapter of the book *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* to the discussion of the interrelatedness among the chapters and verses. In the book *Tanāsuq al-durar*, he mentions the chapters of the Qur'ān one by one and expresses aspects of relationship between each chapter with its preceding and succeeding chapters, with some aspects being more important for him.

Thematic relationship among neighboring chapters
In the following stances to chapter interrelatedness, we face viewpoints that have moved away from the previous chainlike view and believe that there is

a thematic relationship between the qur'ānic chapters, i.e. the second chapter might continue or complete the preceding chapter and explicate its content. Sometimes the content of the two chapters might have a reciprocity relationship. Fakhr Rāzī has deemed a close relationship between Abundance and Small Kindness chapters and believes a reciprocity relationship exists between them (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999, vol. 32: 307). Suyūṭī is another figure who believes in both the linear relationship and the thematic interrelatedness among the neighboring chapters and has specified and explained how the content of these chapters are thematically interrelated. He has offered a general principle and believes that it is present in the whole Qur'ān. He writes, "Verily the principle that I have attained from the exploration of the Qur'ān is that each chapter is an extrapolation and explication of the congested and complex parts of the previous chapter, and each chapter follows the previous one and this fact is present in the majority of the qur'ānic chapters, be them long or short (Suyūṭī, 1985: 65). He also asserts that each chapter of the Qur'ān explains the content of the previous chapter and frees it from briefness and conciseness. For instance, the Cow chapter is an extrapolation and explication of all brief and congested statements of the Opening chapter. He has tried to show the explanations of the verses of the Opening chapter in the Cow chapter (ibid: 66).

The structure (architecture) of the Qur'ān
The consideration of the structure (architecture) of the Qur'ān is one of the viewpoints that the traditional scholars of the qur'ānic sciences have not forgotten and have put forth theories about it. Like the elements of a building, the qur'ānic chapters are interrelated and because of this, some scholars have tried to examine the chapters collectively. Those who believe in this view assert that the relationship between the chapters should not be considered as chainlike, but rather, the structure of the Qur'ān should be viewed in a three-dimensional manner, and the whole of the Noble Qur'ān should be regarded through a bottom-up view (i.e. the structure of the chapters should be analyzed via the so called telescopic method), because the view toward the order of the Qur'ān has firstly been chainlike, but now it is spatial, and the order of the Qur'ān should be analyzed by way of this new stance. It seems that the question Suyūṭī has raised in *Tanāsuq al-durar* in the discussion on the position of the stars is a reference to this analysis style. He states,

> Praise be to God who sent his Book in the best style … and divided it into chapters and verses … and he bestowed upon me his blessing and made me able to look at the position of his stars and [this way] opened doors for me to enter into his treasures of knowledge and to extract knowledge from them (ibid., 1983: 24).

In other words, the comparison of the Noble Qur'ān to the sky and the position of the qur'ānic chapters to the position of the stars in the sky, each with its specified position that is well-thought and due to a certain reason, and all these short and long distances are wise and are worthy of reflection and examination. Accordingly, this might be the first model and allegory for the specification of the structure (architecture) of the Qur'ān. That is to say, the Qur'ān is like the sky and the chapters and their positions are like the stars. Undoubtedly, such an allegory for the architecture of the Qur'ān is taken from the last verses of the Event chapter that says, "Furthermore I call to witness the setting of the Stars, and that is indeed a mighty adjuration if ye but knew, that this is indeed a Qur'ān Most Honourable, in Book well-guarded, which none shall touch but those who are clean: a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds." (Q56: 75-80).[1]

Typology of the contemporary approaches to the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters

Research on the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters has received even more attention in the contemporary era and this trend is growing day by day. The following lines address the classification and introduction of these attitudes.

Specification of the chapter interrelationship in the light of the chapter pair system

The theory of the chapter pair system has been offered by Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, the Pakistani Qur'ān researcher. He has adopted this approach from his instructor Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī. Farāhī believed that the structural order and coherence of the Qur'ān is an attribute other than the thematic coherence of its verses. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, his pupil, expanded this opinion and used it in his important interpretive work, *Tadabbur al-Qur'ān.*

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī's approach to the Qur'ān is direct, holistic, and comprehensive. It is direct in that it is mainly based on the study of the Qur'ān itself. In addition, it is holistic since it is based on this premise that the Qur'ān is a comprehensive book and it should be analyzed accordingly. He believes that the present architecture of the Qur'ān is based on the Order principle and the interpreter should discover its order. He examines the order first in the separate chapters, then in the chapters pairs, and finally in the chapter clusters.

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1. For the present manner of the arrangement of the verses in the chapters of the Qur'ān, some models have been offered. Some of the people who have this view are Sa'īd Ḥawwā, Farāhī-Iṣlāḥī and Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Ra'ūf, whose ideas will be addressed in the modern approaches section.

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī believes that at one level, each chapter is a unified and connected whole but at a higher level, it is comprised of the pairs of chapters. At this level, the Opening chapter is the introduction of the Qur'ān and some of the chapters belong to the pairs. For instance, the Women, the Table Spread, Spoils of War, Repentance, Ibrahim, and the al-Ḥijr chapters belong to the chapter pairs. Some chapters are introduced as complements to other chapters. Examples include the Light and the Private Apartments that are complements for the Believers and the Victory chapters, respectively. In the chapter pair proposal, 82 chapters of the Qur'ān are considered as chapter pairs. In his commentary, Iṣlāḥī considers the chapters of the Qur'ān as having a pair except for some chapters. In order to identify the chapters as pairs, he emphasizes the thematic similarity of the two chapters (Āqā'ī, 2009: 76).

Specification of the chapter interrelatedness in the light of the double chapter system

Another theory for the specification of the architecture of the Qur'ān based on the double chapter system is the chapter symmetry. This viewpoint has been suggested by Muḥammad 'Alī Lisānī Fishārakī in his book *Chapter studies: the structural research method for the Noble Qur'ān*. The novelty of his viewpoint is in how he depicts this system. In order to specify this system, he offers the following model. He writes in this regard that to specify the pair of a qur'ānic chapter, after the Opening chapter, the even-numbered chapters are paired with the odd-numbered chapters following them, and this trend continues to the Letter Qāf chapter. After this chapter, the odd-numbered chapters are paired with the even-numbered chapters that follow them. As a result, the Opening and the Letter Qāf chapters have no pairs (Lisānī Fishārakī, 2015: 123).

The specification of the chapter interrelatedness in the light of the chapter group system

In Farāhī-Iṣlāḥī stance, not only each chapter is a unit, but there is a logical connection among all chapters of the Qur'ān, because they have been placed one after the other in the existing order of the Qur'ān. Each group is considered like a unit that starts with a Meccan chapter and ends with a Medinan one. The qur'ānic chapters combine together in larger groups, too. In the chapter group system, the Clans chapter is the complement of a group of chapters. Like each and every chapter, each group has a separate pillar and content, and of course involves themes from other groups, too, which are considered secondary compared to the pillar of the group, and the role of every chapter in every group is to present a certain aspect of that pillar (Akramī, 2011: 93-94).

The interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters in the light of Saʿīd Ḥawwā's theory

Unity at the level of chapter regards the thematic and structural ties between chapters. It was Saʿīd Ḥawwā who suggested this theory for the first time. He has tried to provide new viewpoints in the domain of the unity of the Qur'ān and has introduced the examination of the unity of the Qur'ān as one of his goals in writing the book *al-Asās fī al-tafsīr*. To show the topical unity at the chapter level, he has divided the Qur'ān into four types based on a tradition from the Prophet (s): the Ṭiwāl (lengthy ones) from the Cow chapter to the end of Repentance chapter; the Mi'īn (hundreds) chapters from the Jonah chapter to the end of the Story chapter; Mathānī (counterparts) from the Spider chapter to the end of the Letter Qāf chapter, and the Mufaṣal (extended group) from the Winnowing Winds chapter to the end of the Qur'ān.

Saʿīd Ḥawwā believes that the qur'ānic chapters can be grouped into four types and 24 collections. To identify the collection related to each type, he usually uses verbal signs and sometimes spiritual evidences and insists that in most cases, there is no other way to discern the boundaries of these collections other than the adoption of these signs and its resulting conceptual coherence (Ḥawwā, 1993, vol. 3: 3335). Among the most important signs he has used are the Detached Letters at the beginning of some chapters. He believes that one of the functions of the Detached Letters is helping the reader to understand the qur'ānic unity and in fact, in his view, the Detached Letters are the keys to understanding the general unity of the Qur'ān (ibid, vol. 6: 3251). Another sign that he uses to identify the collections is the initiation of the chapters with an oath (ibid, vol. 8: 4673). Yet another sign for him is the similarity of the content of the chapters (ibid: 4611).

As mentioned earlier, his criteria for the identification of the chapter axis are a collection of verbal and spiritual evidences that in his view imply the unity of topic and axis of them, including the similarity of the beginning and ending verses of the chapter with the axis verse or verses[1] and the adoption of the requirements of the unity theory. The axes of each section or collection of chapters are arranged in the same order that is present in the Cow chapter. Therefore, the axial verse of a chapter of a collection should be placed – according to the arrangement of the verses of the Cow chapter – between the axial verses of the preceding and succeeding chapters (ibid, vol. 5: 2622).

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1. Ḥawwā believes that each chapter has an axial topic. This is made of one or some verses of the Cow chapter and is called the axial verse.

He has another classification that he uses for the specification of the content coherence and connectedness of some chapters of the Qur'ān. The name of this classification is *zumra* and is applied to some chapters with common thematic features, like the *Ḥawāmīm zumra* in the beginning of the Forgiver chapter (ibid, vol. 8: 4925) and the end of the Sand Hills chapter (ibid: 5288), in which he discusses the themes of these chapters and the presence of interrelatedness in them.

The interrelatedness of the chapters in the light of the conceptual and contextual connectedness in the qur'ānic discourse

Connectedness is a linguistic mechanism that addresses the textual structure, textuality, and the meaning relationship among texts and deals with the practical investigation of the constituting units of a specific text. That is to say, we can provide textual analysis at different levels of language including morpheme, word, sentence, and clause. The purpose of this analysis is to facilitate the understanding of the text by the reader ('Abd al-Ra'ūf, 2008: 339). When connectedness stance is applied to the qur'ānic discourse, the qur'ānic text takes the form of a "downward cone". It is because of this that the lengthier chapters are placed at the beginning and the shorter ones at the end of the Qur'ān.

One of the features of the qur'ānic text is its textual extensiveness. Understanding this feature needs knowing the content and contextual references. In the qur'ānic discourse, some stylistic and linguistic changes are seen that might seem complicated, which should have relations at minor and major levels to achieve the textual extensiveness and sequentiality. Connectedness at the major level deals with two types of semantic relationship. The first is the conceptual and intertextual relationship inside each chapter due to the conceptual and textual cohesion. Within each chapter with these conditions, the textual extensiveness and sequentiality might be realized. The second level is the conceptual and intertextual references between two sequential chapters (ibid: 343).

Connectedness in the qur'ānic chapters at the major level includes connectedness between the beginning and ending of a qur'ānic chapter, connectedness between the ending of a chapter and the beginning of the next chapter, connectedness between the beginning of two successive chapters, and connectedness between the two successive chapters in a way that the second chapter expresses the content of the first one (ibid: 349-350). Intra- and inter-verse connectedness are also two main forms of connectedness at the major level where the intra-verse connectedness deals with the semantic, phonetic, and syntactic features inherent in a verse and the inter-verse

connectedness keeps the conceptual and textual ties in the qur'ānic discourse despite the huge number of the qur'ānic words (ibid: 351-352).

'Abd al-Ra'ūf believes that there is a robust conceptual and textual connection between two successive chapters. For instance, references to the prophets, people's denial of them, and the annihilation of the former faithless peoples are made in the successive chapters of Joseph, Thunder, Ibrahim, and al-Ḥijr. Sometimes, the co-occurrence of a chapter with its neighboring chapter completes the concepts of the preceding or succeeding chapter. This way, through the understanding of the connectedness, we attain a deeper understanding of the qur'ānic discourse and on the other hand, understand the qur'ānic meanings as well as the short- and long-term strategic goals of the Qur'ān for each and every qur'ānic proposition and their reasons in a more profound manner (ibid: 368).

Therefore, without a conceptual and textual connectedness, a text is nothing but a set of propositions, because these two are considered as the main criteria of textuality, and a lack of semantic connectedness damages the meaning of the text.

The interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters in the light of the theory of symmetric order

Another method used in the specification of the chapter relationship is the theory of "Rhetorical analysis". It was Michel Cuypers who first used this theory to analyze the structure of the Food chapter.

In the Rhetorical analysis model, the text is ordered based on a chain of symmetries in a way that if a part of the text is seen, the other part will surely be found. This found part is related to the first part, and this relationship can be close or distant. These symmetries exist in three forms: parallel, reverse parallel, and circular (Cuypers, 2010: 6-9).

Accordingly, in order to propose a hypothesis on the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters, some believe that as the qur'ānic chapters have been built based on the symmetric order, two successive chapters are symmetric.

The analysis of the approaches to the science of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters

The foregoing discussion was on a two-level classification based on the synchrony and diachrony model for the typology of the noble Qur'ān chapter interrelatedness. However, an analytic investigation of these approaches can help us to better understand this science. Accordingly, the approaches of this science are analyzed and investigated via three angles. First, the best capacities for the advancement of this science are sought. In the second step, the ups and downs of this science and their reasons are analyzed. The third

analysis examines the guiding capabilities of the science of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapter.

The analysis based on the capacities for the advancement of science

It seems that among these approaches, two viewpoints have more capacity for the development and deepening. The first viewpoint is a collection of stances that seek to specify the double, paired, or Rhetorical analysis in the qur'ānic chapters. This movement is, on the whole, successful and is still capable of being researched more and deeper.

What is more important and complex here is the investigation of the qur'ānic system and architecture that cannot be known only via linear models. That is to say, although the interrelatedness between adjacent chapters can be seen using a little reflection and the theories about it can be defended, it seems that the system, architecture, and structure that prevails the arrangement of the chapters in the Qur'ān should be sought. To start such a movement, Suyūṭī's viewpoint in which the position of the chapters in the Qur'ān is likened to the position of the stars in the sky can be considered as the basis of the further research in this regard.

The analysis of the ups and downs of this science

The analyses of the ups and downs of this science indicate that this science in the present days has become more expanded and more profound compared to the past. This evolution can be specified in the following manner. Unlike the past viewpoints, the present-day stances have tried to practically provide a bigger volume of their experiences of this interrelatedness. For instance, Saʿīd Ḥawwā explicates his viewpoint in the book *al-Asās fī al-tafsīr*. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes a special book in this regard to explain and specify his lookout. In his *Tadabbur al-Qur'ān*, he starts the interpretation of each chapter by investigating the relationship of each chapter with the ones before and after it. Lisānī Fishārakī has repeatedly presented his viewpoint in workshops named *chapter studies* and a huge volume of scientific production in this regard has been produced by him and his pupils, but these works have not been organized yet. However, there rarely survives such a huge volume of works among the past scholars and in many cases, the explication of the relationships between the qur'ānic chapters has been very brief, in a way that mostly one or two aspects of the relationship have been taken as sufficient.

One of the causes for such advancement can be the appearance of the movement of the return to the Qur'ān and the increase in the presence of the Qur'ān in human life. In the present era, one of the strong cultural movements in all Muslim world is the invitation to "return" to the Qur'ān

and that the Qur'ān can set the grounds for the worldly and otherworldly bliss of the Muslims, along with the proposition of such viewpoints that the cause for much of our underdevelopment is the removal of the Qur'ān from our lives. Consequently, a surge of the qur'ānic studies with various motivations and approaches were formed to investigate the unknown or less-known dimensions of the Qur'ān such as the chapter interrelatedness discussions.

The appearance and expansion of the linguistic philosophies and modern changes in the language sciences in the contemporary era is another reason for the changes of this science in these days. The contemporary era is the time of the popularity of the linguistic philosophy systems. This global scientific and cultural atmosphere has had a direct effect on the text-oriented sciences such as religious sciences in general and the Qur'ān studies in particular, in a way that discussions such as the language of religion and then the language of the Qur'ān were formed. On the other hand, the expansion and deepening of the hermeneutic discussions – that address the textual understanding – and the appearance of phenomenological approaches in textual studies and on the other hand, the amazing advancement in sciences such as textual criticism, semantics, linguistics, semiotics, etc. brought about a revolution in the textual studies throughout the globe, and the expanse of these changes reached the Qur'ān studies. This offers the prospect of deeper, more expansive, and more beautiful changes in this science.

The analysis based on the guiding role of this science

With regard to the role and importance of this science in the guiding dimensions of the Qur'ān, we can make a distinction between two domains. The first dimension is proving the legitimacy and miraculous order of the Noble Qur'ān. One of the issues about the Qur'ān that has been previously suggested by the orientalists as a doubt about the Qur'ān was the lack of organization in the Noble Qur'ān's presentation of its topics. That is to say, the arrangement of the chapters in the Qur'ān has not been done based on the time of revelation, topics, place of revelation, audience, etc. Accordingly, they have taken this as the disorganization of the qur'ānic text and a sign for its inauthenticity. That is, the Noble Qur'ān is a text that has taken its form during several centuries. This has been a base for many doubts in this regard. Deep studies in this domain can help remove and reject such conceptions about the Noble Qur'ān, find reasons for the legitimacy of the Noble Qur'ān, and take out a big external barrier to the guidance offered by the Qur'ān.

On the other hand, the textual studies to discover the prevalent order in the arrangement of the qur'ānic chapters have taken an interpretive and guiding manner, and this issue has especially been noted in the Rhetorical

analysis and the chapter pair system. Therefore, the followers of these approaches seek to provide a novel ground for the understanding and interpretation of the Noble Qur'ān. This can provide the researchers with new dimensions of the qur'ānic guidance.

Conclusion

This study has provided and classified the suggested approaches to the science of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters from the past to the present. The following points can be offered as the findings of the current study.

1. The interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters has witnessed four stages in its formation and evolution. First, this science was first formed within the Ḥadīth science, a fact that is evident in the *taḥzīb al-Qur'ān* narrations and chapter groups. In this phase, there is no mention of such science and viewpoint in Qur'ān studies.

2. In the second phase, the chainlike connection of the neighboring chapters is taken into account. This type of connection refers to the relationship between the ending of a chapter and the beginning of the following chapter. As an outstanding example, take Ṭabrisī who has used this type of connection in his interpretation.

3. In the third phase, the main emphasis is on the thematic relationship between the neighboring chapters. In this type of relationship, the second chapter might be a follow-up or completer of the chapter before it and might explicate it. It is sometimes possible for two chapters to have a reciprocal relationship.

4. In the last phase, the Qur'ān structure (architecture) theory is proposed. Believers in the Qur'ān structure assert that the relationship between chapters should not be deemed as linear, but rather, the chapter should be looked at in a three-dimensional and spatial manner to see what type of order governs the chapters. These three dimensions are as follows.

   a. New approaches to the science of the interrelatedness of the qur'ānic chapters have been offered in theories such as "the unity of the Qur'ān", "the conceptual and contextual connectedness in the qur'ānic discourse", the holistic approach of Sa'īd Ḥawwā in the book *al-Asās*, and the new approaches entitled "symmetric order".

   b. In the contemporary era, the volume of the scientific productions in this science has sharply increased compared to the past. The reasons for this increase and the blossoming of this science in the

present era can be Muslim's revived interest in the Qurʾān in the present era and the proposal of the "return to the Qurʾān" theory as well as the prosperity and expansion of the linguistic and literary sciences in the current time.

c. The most important finding of this article is the fact that the driving force of this science is comprised of the interdisciplinary discussions. Accordingly, if we can make strong ties between this science and literature, art, linguistics, narratology, etc. and use the findings of humanities – especially the linguistic and literary sciences – in this science, it will progressively proliferate.

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