

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Allah SWT revealed al-Quran al-Karim with absolute truth and as a guide to distinguish between what is righteous and what is erroneous. It has been promised an eternal preservation by the Owner of His Word - Allah SWT, al-Quran bears many attributes, which among them is “Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord who is] Wise and Praiseworthy”.

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord who is] Wise and Praiseworthy. (Al-Qur'an. Fuṣṣilat 41:42).

This indicates that any omission or addition, intentional or unintentional, is impossible for al-Quran. This status is different from the status of previous Abrahamic books, where none of which are assured preservation as promised by Allah SWT on al-Quran; “Indeed, those who disbelieve in the message [i.e., the Qur’ān] after it has come to them... And indeed, it is a mighty Book.”.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Indeed, those who disbelieve in the message [i.e., the Qur’ān] after it has come to them... And indeed, it is a mighty Book. (Al-Qur’an. Al-Hijr 15:9).

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Al-Quran Writing in the Form of *Muṣḥaf*

Since the commencement of the first revelation in the Cave of Hira, whenever Jibril AS delivers the revelation entrusted to the Prophet SAW, he will never leave him until the revelations have been kept in the heart of the Prophet SAW. As Allah SWT mentioned in Surah Al-Qiyāmah verses 16 to 19:

لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ۚ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ۚ ﴿١٧﴾ فَإِذَا قَرَأَهُ فَاتَّبِعْ

قُرْآنَهُ ۚ ﴿١٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ۚ ﴿١٩﴾

Meaning “Move not your tongue with it, [O Muḥammad], to hasten with it [i.e., recitation of the *Qur’ān*]. Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart] and [to make possible] its recitation. So when We have recited it [through Gabriel], then follow its recitation. Then upon Us is its clarification [to you]. (Al-Qur’an. Al-Qiyāmah 75:16-19).

During the twenty-three years of its gradual revelation, al-Quran was thus stored in the heart of the Prophet SAW. Additionally, Jibril AS reviewed all of the revelations received by the Prophet SAW at the end of Ramadan each year. All of this is done to strengthen Rasulullah SAW’s retention and memory of The Holy Kalāmullah, which he has to impart to his people.

Apart from memorising and reviewing with Jibril AS, Rasulullah SAW took the initiative to preserve the revelations by asking the Prophet SAW’s Companions to write down all the revelations. The Prophet SAW entrusted two companions, Saidina Ali bin Abi Talib RA and Saidina Uthman RA, to write the revelations received in the early

stages in Mecca. However, all of the revelations recorded at the time were not compiled on a single medium, but diversified on several mediums such as bones, palm fronds and animal skins. One of the accounts that demonstrate the existence of writing activity for the text of al-Quran at that time is the narrative of Saidina Umar RA's conversion to Islam after reciting the verses of Surah *Taha* from al-Quran in the house of his sister, Fatimah binti al-Khattāb. The same goes with a hadith from Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri narrated by Imam Muslim (1997) in the book *al-Zuhd wa al-Raqāiq* (hadith no. 3004):

لا تكتبوا عني فمن كتب عني غير القرآن فليمحه

Meaning, that Rasulullah SAW said “Do not take down anything from me, and he who took down anything from me except the Qur'an, he should efface that.”

(Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb al-Zuhd wa al-Raqāiq; Bāb at-Tathabbuti fil Hadīth wa Hukmi Kitābatil 'Ilmi: Abu Sa'id Khudri: Juz' 16:#3004).

That was how al-Quran was transcribed and written in its entirety throughout the Prophet SAW's lifetime. Jibril AS enlightened the Prophet SAW on the sequence of each verse and surah in al-Quran in the final month of Ramadan before his death. Consequently, the Prophet SAW delivered the arrangement to the companions as an edict. That was how the Prophet SAW stressed the details on al-Quran's documentation, so that not a single revelation was not penned before the Prophet SAW's death.

Al-Quran is conveyed in two ways: through memorisation (*hafazan*) and writing. Since the occurrence of Saidina Uthman RA copying the *muṣḥaf* of al-Quran, Muslims have continued to copy the *muṣḥaf* of al-Quran until this day. However, it is extremely unusual to discover a handwritten copy of al-Quran in this age of technology.

This is because the activity of duplicating al-Quran has already employed printing technology, which has shown to be more efficient in terms of production and more

dependable in terms of quality. In terms of presentation, the *muṣḥaf* issued today has undergone several enhancements. Apart from written *muṣḥaf*, *muṣḥaf* in the form of audio are also released through cassettes, CDs, and even other digital formats such as software for computers and applications for smartphones. The visually challenged group requires a *muṣḥaf* in an embossed version that is appropriate for their capabilities. Under a collaborative endeavour between Palestine and Jordan in the 1950s, the first edition of al-Quran *muṣḥaf* in Braille, exclusively for the visually challenged people, was issued.

1.2.2 *Muṣḥaf* al-Quran in Braille writing

Braille Quran refers to the combination of two phrases, which are al-Quran and Braille. Al-Quran is the primary source of entire Islamic teachings that comprise the three fundamental principles of Islam, namely *Aqidah* (faith/creed), *Shariah* (rules/practices) and *Akhlak* (moralities). In terms of language, al-Quran implies recitation, and the name al-Quran is derived from the Arabic word *Qirā'ah*, which means to arrange letters and words in a nicely organised speech (al-Zarqāni, 1994). This is consistent with what Allah SWT has mentioned through surah *al-Qiyāmah:75:16-19*, which mandates every Muslim to read, memorise, comprehend, and apply the contents of the Qur'an in daily life (Norakyairee & Ab. Halim, 2011). Meanwhile, in terms of terminology, we can conclude that al-Quran is the Word of Allah SWT, a miracle revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW through Jibril AS, written in a *muṣḥaf*, narrated by *mutawātir*, and considered as an act of worship for those who read it, which is a miracle even with just one surah (Nuruddin 'Itr, 1993).

Meanwhile, the word Braille is named after Louis Braille, a Frenchman with visual impairment who in the nineteenth century invented writing based on the arrangement of dots to substitute letters and numbers, which is termed as a cell with six dots presently known as the Braille code.

Braille is one of the most popular and relevant touch-based writing systems among those who are blind or visually impaired. Louise Braille, a Frenchman, invented the system which has been around since the 1820s. To present, this system is the most extensively utilised by the visually impaired community worldwide because of several factors, such as touch-friendly adaptability, minimal cost consumption and more space-efficient compared to other embossed writing systems.

A Braille code consists of a single cell made up of six dots grouped in two vertical rows. Three dots on the left and three dots on the right constitute the rows. The first dot is located at the top of the left row, while the second and third dots are located in the horizontal row. In addition, the fourth dot is located at the top of the right side row of the cell opposite the first dot, followed by the fifth and sixth dots, which are located opposite the second and third dots. The figure below depicts the placement of Braille code dots in a cell:



Figure 1.1: Placement of Braille code dots

The six dots in the code can be combined to produce up to 63 coordinates that represent various letters and punctuation symbols. The presence or absence of each

point will constitute a code for a letter or symbol, such as the code for letters in different languages, such as *Rumi* letters, *Jawi* letters, *Hijāiyyah* letters and numerals.

The combination of al-Quran and Braille, which is Braille Quran, refers to the Braille version of al-Quran that employs the fundamental Arabic Braille code to represent the *Hijāiyyah* letters, vowel symbols such as *fathah*, *ḍammah* and *kasrah*, as well as symbols such as *shaddah*, *sukūn*, *madd* and so on.

Producing a Braille version of al-Quran is among the alternatives for visually impaired people to interact with the Quran. The initiative to transcribe al-Quran into Braille began in Palestine in the 1950s. Subsequently, the initiative expanded to numerous other parts of the Islamic world. The Malaysian Association of the Visually Impaired (PERTIS) pioneered the Braille Quran development scenario, which has earned national recognition in Malaysia. It was demonstrated with the publication of the Braille Quran by PERTIS, which ultimately the sole Braille Quran to receive recognition by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) up to this date.

A source from PERTIS asserted that the first Braille *muṣḥaf* of the Quran came in Malaysia around 1952. It was a present from the country of Jordan to Sekolah Kebangsaan Pendidikan Khas (SKPK) Princess Elizabeth, Johor Bahru. It consists of six volumes (30 *juz*), with each volume containing five *juz* of al-Quran printed on both sides (Zakaria, 2008). Besides Jordan, PERTIS had also received Braille Quran from Egypt (1964), Tunisia (1976) and Indonesia (1970s).

Some essential dates and points linked to the chronology of the history of the construction of the Braille Quran in Malaysia may be determined based on the findings of Norakyairee (2013). This chronology may be split into four stages in general:

1. The Braille Quran's Copying Phase

In Malaysia, the phase of copying the Braille Quran began in 1978, when several copying initiatives were undertaken by various parties, particularly those directly involved in learning the Braille Quran, such as PERTIS, as well as teachers in visually impaired special education schools. In the early phases, most initiatives were informal in structure, with copied documents being utilised just internally and not thoroughly, and there was no uniformity. On September 9, 1983, the Malaysian Ministry of Education established a committee to develop the Braille Quran Code using the Grade 2 Braille code for the usage of the visually impaired in Malaysia as a whole. This committee is given the name the Al-Quran Al-Karim Braille Code Committee.

In 1985, Zahari Ghani successfully copied the first complete Braille Quran, which took nearly three years and was based on an Indonesian Braille Quran. The copied Braille Quran was produced on Brailon paper using thermoform technology. It took a week to complete a single copy.

The initiative to copy Braille Quran was furthered by two personnel from PERTIS, which are Muhammad Lee Abdullah and Zakaria Yahya. In the early 1990s, by using the computer system, both of them managed to entirely copy the Braille Quran that was retrieved from Indonesia.

2. The Braille Quran's Printing Phase

The printing phase of the Braille Quran spanned from 1994 to 1997. PERTIS began the printing process for publishing and distribution after successfully copying the Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* using computer. However, it was not until 1996 that PERTIS was able to get JAKIM's participation in reviewing and certifying the Braille Quran that they published. This review process was completed the following year, and the results were reported in a Report of the Braille Quran Revision Working Committee, Darul Quran JAKIM, dated 15 October 1997.

3. The Braille Quran's Publication Phase

With the completion of the review process by JAKIM, the publication process of Braille Quran by PERTIS began. The process was strengthened even further with the recognition from the Ministry of Home Affairs. PERTIS officially published the Braille Quran in 1998.

Simultaneously, the Braille Code Committee, which was designated by Malaysia's Ministry of Education, finished the Grade 2 Braille Quran code, known as the Wasilah Code. Regardless, there is no Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* that has been successfully published using the Wasilah Code until today.

On December 7, 1999, the publication of the Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* (6 volumes) was launched by PERTIS in partnership with the Malaysian Islamic Economic Development Foundation (YPEIM). Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail, the then Minister of National Unity and Community Development, launched this RM50,000 publication initiative. Seven years later, in 2006, the Braille Quran text published by PERTIS was

distributed in Malaysian special education schools for the use of visually impaired students.

4. The Braille Quran's Innovation Phase

At this point, the presence of the Braille Quran *mushaf* has drawn increasing awareness from a variety of parties. The Braille al-Quran *mushaf* innovation began in 2009, with the signing of an MoU between PERTIS and a group of researchers from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (FKM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) in developing the Electronic Braille al-Quran Panel (eBraille al-Quran). The Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MOSTI) funded the creation of this eBraille al-Quran Panel, which was completed in 2011.

In the same year (2009), a group of teachers from Sekolah Kebangsaan Pendidikan Khas (SKPK) Alma, Penang, developed a software called 'Smart Hafaz'. This software intends to assist students with special needs, the visually impaired in particular, to memorise al-Quran with the use of audio techniques (listen and repeat). Moreover, in 2012, a group of researchers from USIM managed to transcribe the book of *Iqra'* (1-6) into Braille. The Braille edition of the *Iqra'* book has been distributed for use by visually impaired students in special education schools throughout Malaysia in partnership with PERTIS and the Textbook Division, KPM. The Braille version of *Iqra'* is also utilised electronically, since it is included with the usage of the Electronic Braille Quran in the eBraille Panel developed by UTM, which has begun to be used more broadly, incorporating various Braille Quran learning centres around Malaysia, including in a few selected schools.

1.2.2.1 Features of the Braille Quran mushaf published by PERTIS

Although the Braille codes used in the printing of Braille Quran *mushaf* across the world are nearly identical, there are several details that particularly identify a publication's *mushaf* of Braille Quran from another. This research will concentrate on the Braille Quran *mushaf* used in Malaysia, namely the PERTIS Braille Quran *mushaf*. PERTIS, the sole publisher of the Braille Quran *mushaf*, has gained recognition from the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) and approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN). In addition, Malaysia has never issued any official document on the method used in writing the Braille version of al-Quran. According to Muhammad Mustaqim's (2013) assessment, among the qualities and techniques of producing the PERTIS Braille Quran *mushaf* are:

1. The Braille Quran texts are read from left to right.
2. PERTIS Braille Quran *mushaf* is written according to *Rasm Imlā'i* method.
3. If there is a word containing letters of *madd* (*alif, waw, ya*) that are recited with *madd*, the vowel symbol for the letter is not written.
4. All letters must be indicated with vowel symbols, except for *lam alif*, which is left without any vowel symbol, as there is no other sound for this letter other than *fathah*.
5. The writing method that differentiates between *alif lam shamsiyyah* and *alif lam qamariyyah*.
6. The use of *madd* marks that exceed two *harakāt*: In the PERTIS Braille Quran, there are several marks used to indicate *madd* with over two *harakāt*, among

them are 3,4,5, dots and 2,4,6 dots (which is only used at the beginning of certain *surah*).

7. The word Allah is written with *fathah ishbā'iyah* mark (4 dots) and not with *fathah* (2 dots) as indicated in the *muṣḥaf* of *Rasm 'Uthmāni* Quran.
8. Words that end with an upper line (*fathah*) and are followed by *fathatain* and *alif* must be written with *alif* before *fathatain*.
9. Only *alif hamzah* on top (أ) or 3,4 dots are accompanied with lines that are used in three conditions; above, below and in front.
10. When two consecutive *hamzahs* appear in the same word, the two *hamzahs* are frequently written with 3,4 dots.
11. Normally the letter *hamzah* in the middle of the word is written according to its original spelling, either with 3,4 (أ) dots or 1,3,4,5,6 (ء) dots as suitable.
12. There is considerable discrepancy and inconsistency in the writing of letters *alif* and small *alif*.
13. The *ibdal alif* to *waw* letter in several words in *Rasm 'Uthmāni* Quran is spelt according to the original spelling in Arabic.
14. No symbols to indicate *tajweed* recitation in al-Quran such as *idgham kāmīl*, *izhār*, *madd* symbols on letters *al-jār* and so on.
15. There are 11 *waqf* symbols used in the *muṣḥaf* of PERTIS Braille Quran.

According to his study findings, there is an element of discrepancy between the *muṣḥaf* of the Braille Quran and the printed *muṣḥaf* text of al-Quran.

1.3 Problem Statement

Allah SWT has revealed in the twenty-seventh verse of *surah al-Kahf* that His words (al-Quran) will not be altered by any party. Allah SWT's words:

وَأْتَلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

And recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. There is no changer of His words, and never will you find in other than Him a refuge.
(Al-Qur'an. Al-Kahf 18:27)

Al-Quran was transmitted in two ways: by memorising through *talaqqi* and *musyafah*, and by writing in the Quran's *muṣḥaf*. Saidina Abu Bakar gathered all the texts of al-Quran in one *ṣuḥuf* due to concern of losing its verses from the deaths of al-Quran memorisers. Saidina Uthman copied Abu Bakr's *ṣuḥuf* and sent it to various key Islamic provinces to be used as a guide to prevent the issue of disputes over the wording of the Quran, which happened among Muslim warriors on the battlefield for the opening of Azerbaijan (Muhammad Bakr Ismail, 1999; Mohd Yusuf Ahmad, 2000; Mohd Rahim Jusoh, 2008; Al-Kurdi, 2008; Al-Sabuni, 2011; Al-Hamad, 2016). The move adopted by Saidina Uthman demonstrates the importance of a sound al-Quran *muṣḥaf* in maintaining the unity of the *ummah*. Since Saidina Uthman standardised the textual writing of the Quran, scholars of the *ummah* have attempted to preserve the form and system of writing through the establishment of a distinct *muṣḥaf* as well as documentation of the system and style of writing known as *Rasm ʿUthmāni*.

Today, practically all Muslim nations take the initiative to print Quranic *muṣḥafs* based on *qiraat* or the majority's practice. Some Islamic nations in the Middle East, for example, have used the *muṣḥaf* published by Mujamma' Malik Fahd in Madinah, Saudi

Arabia as a model for the system of producing the text of the Quran's *mushaf*. Other countries, such as Morocco, England, Tunis, Libya, Pakistan, and India, have a writing system that, from the *rasm* aspect, is very similar to the system of writing the text of Mujamma' Malik Fahd, but there are differences from the perspective of *dabt* because it acknowledges *qiraat* and the practises of the local community. In particular, Malaysia is regarded to comply with almost one hundred per cent of the standards used by Mujamma' Malik Fahd's *mushaf*. The Ministry of Home Affairs has taken on the obligation of maintaining the standard of authoring the text of al-Quran *mushaf*. As a consequence, there is consistency in the manuscripts used in this nation, whether for public or official purposes, such as in education.

However, not everyone is able to employ the al-Quran *mushaf* that is commonly used in society. There are those with visual impairment who require a Braille Quran *mushaf*. Since 1994, the visually impaired in Malaysia have been working on the publication of the al-Quran *mushaf* in Braille. The Malaysian Association of the Visually Impaired (PERTIS) publishes al-Quran *mushaf* in Braille, which was eventually approved by the LPPPQ, KDN in 1997 (Muhammad Mustaqim, 2014). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has adopted this Braille Quran in official teaching and learning sessions in schools. Since the Braille Quran produced by PERTIS is a copy of the Braille Quran published by Yayasan Kesejahteraan Tunanetra Islam (YAKETUNIS), Jogjakarta, Indonesia, it has kept its writing technique based on *Rasm Imlai* (Muhammad Mustaqim, 2014). Additionally, the punctuation marks (*dabt*) used is inconsistent with the *dabt* system used in Mujamma' Malik Fahd's *mushaf*. This problem arose because the process of reproducing the PERTIS Braille Quran did not obtain the essential support from Malaysian al-Quran writing experts owing to a lack of Braille writing abilities.

The presence of the Braille version of the al-Quran *muṣḥaf* developed by PERTIS is indeed greatly useful in allowing the visually impaired community to hold and read al-Quran. However, various challenges have developed afterwards, particularly when the PERTIS Braille Quran is utilised as a text for learning the recitation of the al-Quran in an integrated way for the visually impaired, particularly in mainstream education.

Among the issues encountered is that the theory of writing between modules or methods used as the basic syllabus for the application of Braille Quran reading skills does not coincide with the principle of writing the Braille Quran itself. When we compare the writing principles used in one of the current Braille Quran teaching modules, such as Braille Iqra', which is the official learning curriculum in national schools, there are major discrepancies in terms of the writing principles employed in Braille Quran writing. This is due to the fact that the Iqra' module is mostly *Rasm 'Uthmāni* focused, whilst the text of the Braille Quran is primarily *Rasm Imlāi* orientated. Aside from that, the problem not only involves the *rasm* element, but also the *ḍabt* aspect. This pertains to the application of Braille Iqra' module, which employs a marking system (*ḍabt*) that adheres to the standard of Mujamma' Malik Fahd's published *muṣḥaf*, but the text of the PERTIS Braille Quran adheres to Majeed's al-Quran *ḍabt* system (Mohd Nur Adzam, 2019).

The initial survey conducted by the researcher on the Braille Iqra's method adopted by the KPM discovered a discrepancy between the PERTIS Braille Quran text with the Braille Iqra' text. Differences in spelling and punctuation are examples of such irregularities (Mohd Nur Adzam, 2016). The impact of these discrepancies is, of course, perplexing for students who employ the module to practise reading the al-Quran *muṣḥaf* in Braille.

A more substantial issue arises when there is a misunderstanding of the application of *tajweed* in the al-Quran *muṣḥaf* between users of the Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* and the printed *muṣḥaf*. In the text of the PERTIS Braille Quran, for example, every *harakāt* followed by *madd* letters is omitted entirely (Muhammad Mustaqim, 2013). The lack of *ṣifr mustadir* and *ṣifr mustatīl* marks is another example (Mohd Nur Adzam, 2021). The distinction between parallel and non-parallel *tanwīn* is not applied in the Braille version of *muṣḥaf*, as it is in Mujamma's Malik Fahd's standard of al-Quran *muṣḥaf*. Because of these conflicting elements, it is difficult to incorporate al-Quran reciting learning amongst users of printed al-Quran *muṣḥaf* and users of Braille Quran *muṣḥaf*, since each group requires separate modules and approaches.

Apart from the challenges stated above, there are other implications from the lack of coordination between the two texts of this *muṣḥaf*. For example, when done inclusively between users of a typical *muṣḥaf* and users of a Braille Quran *muṣḥaf*, the activity of *tilāwah*, or more popularly known as *tadārus*, will face challenges in terms of differences in some divisions of *juz* and marking of *sujud at-tilawah* (prostration of recitation).

Hence, research and efforts must be undertaken to harmonise and coordinate the text of the Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* used by the visually impaired with the written Quran *muṣḥaf* text used by the typical group. The *muṣḥaf* writing method with *Rasm ʿUthmāni*, as narrated and applied by al-Quran writing experts, should be incorporated into the text of the al-Quran *muṣḥaf* in Braille. The marking method for Quranic letters (*ḍabt*) in the Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* needs to be upgraded with a more commonly used and popular system. Concurrently, these aspects that need to be enhanced must be thoroughly researched in order to be genuinely ideal for adapting to the nature of Braille writing, as

well as to acknowledge the capacity and uniqueness of the visually impaired persons' sense of touch.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the aforementioned research problems, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the necessity to coordinate the PERTIS Braille Quran with the *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* printed by Mujamma' Malik Fahd from the perspective of the visually impaired as the primary user.
2. To analyse the *Hijāiyyah* letters writing system (*rasm*) and punctuation marks (*ḍabt*) applied in the writing of PERTIS Braille Quran.
3. To coordinate the texts of PERTIS Braille Quran with the texts of *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* theoretically.
4. To reconstruct the text of PERTIS Braille Quran that is oriented to *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* from the aspects of *rasm* and *ḍabt* based on the conducted coordination.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the stated research problems and research objectives, this study was undertaken to discover answers to the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives of the visually impaired persons as PERTIS Braille Quran users on the need to coordinate the Braille Quran text with the *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* text in terms of their *rasm* and *ḍabt*?

2. What are the forms of *Hijāiyyah* letters writing system (*rasm*) and punctuation marks (*ḍabṭ*) employed in the writing of PERTIS Braille Quran?
3. How is the form of coordination on the texts of PERTIS Braille Quran with *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* in terms of *rasm* and *ḍabṭ* theoretically?
4. How is the reconstruction could be with regards to the text of PERTIS Braille Quran that is oriented to *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* from the aspects of *rasm* and *ḍabṭ* based on the conducted coordination?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This study uses ADDIE theory as a conceptual framework. ADDIE is a process that applies concepts and theories in specific content (Dick & Carey, 1996). Therefore, the ADDIE model is widely used by researchers to provide or develop or improve any product. This ADDIE design model was chosen by the researcher because the phases in it are arranged regularly and clearly. The generic term for the five-phase instructional design model consisting of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. Each step has an outcome that feeds into the next step in the sequence. The five phases of ADDIE (Branch, R. M., 2009) are as follows:

1. **Analysis:** During analysis, the designer identifies the learning problem, the goals and objectives, the audience's needs, existing knowledge, and any other relevant characteristics. Analysis also considers the learning environment, any constraints, the delivery options, and the timeline for the project.

2. **Design:** A systematic process of specifying learning objectives. Detailed storyboards and prototypes are often made, and the look and feel, graphic design, user-interface and content is determined here.
3. **Development:** The actual creation (production) of the content and learning materials based on the Design phase.
4. **Implementation:** During implementation, the plan is put into action and a procedure for training the learner and teacher is developed. Materials are delivered or distributed to the student group. After delivery, the effectiveness of the training materials is evaluated.
5. **Evaluation:** This phase consists of (1) formative and (2) summative evaluation. Formative evaluation is present in each stage of the ADDIE process. Summative evaluation consists of tests designed for criterion-related referenced items and providing opportunities for feedback from the users. Revisions are made as necessary.

In this study, the researcher has carried out three initial phases of ADDIE theory which are Analysis, Design and Development. In the Analyze phase, the reviewer analyzes the needs of rebuilding the Quran Braille, in the Design phase the reviewer uses the theory of the five features of *Rasm 'Uthmānī* that are *al-ḥadhf* (ellipsis), *al-ziyādah* (addition), *al-badl* (substitution) and the writing of *Hamzah* and *al-waṣl wa al-faṣl* (connection and separation) and also the documentation of the science of *dabṭ al-muṣḥaf* as laid down by the scholars of Quranic writing science. The Development phase involves the application of all the elements that have been carried out in the design phase.

1.7 Research Framework

The framework of the research provides a broad and general description of the link between the concepts investigated (Sabitha Marican 2005). According to Zetty Nurzuliana (2016), the conceptual framework is tantamount to a map and direction that researchers may use to guide them through the process of studying the elements involved in the research. It includes the factors that contribute to the phenomena under investigation, as well as the variables, theories, and models that underpin the investigation and how these aspects interact with one another. In other words, the conceptual framework of the research tries to offer an overview of the links between the several essential components engaged in the entire investigation.

The first stage is the needs analysis stage, which is to coordinate the texts of PERTIS Braille Quran with *mushaf al-Madīnah*. At this stage, the researcher has identified two elements of need that must be investigated. The first element is the need expressed by the users of the Braille Quran, specifically the visually impaired, while the second element is the need expressed by the researcher himself as a researcher with a background in *Qiraat* and Quranic writing. To investigate the need expressed by the users of the Braille Quran, the researcher gathered data through semi-structured interviews involving several study participants. Participants in this research must be avid users of the Braille Quran while also having learned Quran basics and having experience in teaching it. The researcher chose study participants who exhibit these characteristics so that the information received from the data is more clean-cut and precise. Next, with regards to the researcher's perspective on the need to coordinate those texts, the researcher conducted an in-depth study on the text of the Braille Quran and determine the status and pattern of its writing, particularly in terms of the

application of *rasm* and *ḍabt*. The researcher consequently determined the state of writing and record all of the writing patterns employed in the text of the Braille Quran, whether they are compliant, contravene or have not yet been established in the al-Quran writing based on the proper *rasm* and *ḍabt*.

Subsequently, in the second stage, the researcher conducted the coordination by suggesting a rewrite of the text of the Braille Quran that is not in accordance with the *rasm* and *ḍabt* methods of *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah*. The suggestions presented at this stage were more theoretical as a whole.

Following completion of the theoretical level coordination, the researcher carried out the coordination in practice. The researcher chose a *surah* as a sample for the suggested coordination for this task.

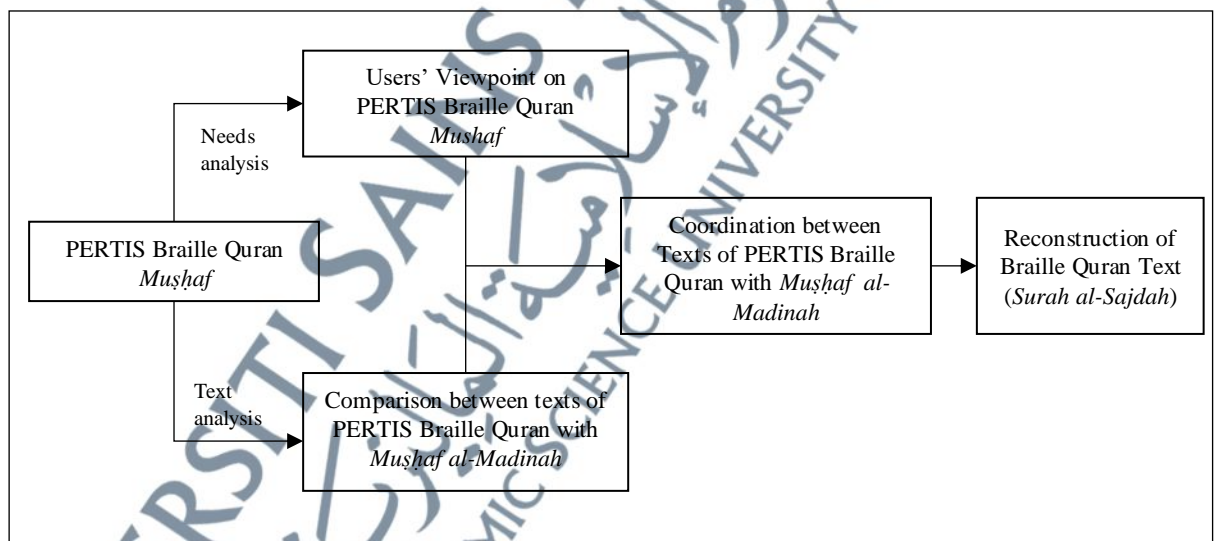


Figure 1.2: Research Framework for Reconstructing *Rasm* and *Ḍabt* in PERTIS

Braille Quran Based on *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah*

1.8 Research Limitations

This study was conducted under certain limitations, most notably in terms of the scope of the study, research participants, research setting and research instruments.

Scope of the study

This research focuses on the coordination of two *muṣḥaf* texts, the Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* and the *muṣḥaf* issued by Mujamma' Malik Fahd, also known as the *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah*. The Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* on which this study is based on is the *muṣḥaf* produced by PERTIS. The *muṣḥaf* was published in six volumes with the title *Al-Quran al-Karim bi al-Kitābah al-'Arabiyyah al-Nāfirah*. It was issued in the year of 2015AD / 1436H. This *muṣḥaf* has been acknowledged by JAKIM and has been authorised by the al-Quran Control and Licensing Board of the Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) on 11 October 2010 with the KDN code: PQ/Q.1001/1.2/QA/304/49/2010. It is the most extensively used Braille manuscript among Malaysia's visually impaired.

This research begins by examining the needs of Braille Quran users for coordination and reconstruction that will follow. The elements of the disparity between the two versions of the *muṣḥaf* are focused on, as are the ramifications of the discrepancy and the needs for its coordination. Following that, the researcher evaluated the text of the Braille Quran and compared it to the text of the *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* used by the typical group. The findings of this comparison will be used by researchers to construct a new Braille Quran that is consistent with the text of the *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah*, as planned. Following the formation of the guidelines, the researcher proceeded with the study procedure by coordinating a portion of the Braille Quran text with the *al-Madīnah*

muṣḥaf text. The researcher selected surah al-Sajdah as a practical example of this coordination.

This study limits its coordination initiative within the boundary of *rasm* and *ḍabt* coordination. Coordination from other areas, such as format factors, in which placing printed pages on Braille pages, and other technical aspects are not included in this research.

Research participants

This study involved seven participants, who were selected from among al-Quran Braille users, to answer the first research question in regards to the views of the visually impaired Braille Quran users on the need to coordinate Braille Quran with *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* from the perspectives of *rasm* and *ḍabt*.

The participants in this study were chosen based on their experience, competence, abilities, and engagement in the usage and teaching of the Braille Quran in Malaysia. The number of participants was limited to seven in order to allow the researcher to organise and detail the study since the researcher would employ a qualitative technique that entails in-depth study and control of many factors, including the validity of the data obtained. Furthermore, the chosen participants have a variety of experiences, with four of them being basic level Braille Quran teachers with experience teaching in mosques, visually impaired learning centres and schools, and the other three are Braille Quran teachers at the Braille Quran learning centres for adults. Among the Braille Quran learning centres chosen are classes offered by the Malaysian Association for Blind (MAB) in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur and in Ipoh, Perak, PERTIS branches in Temerloh, Pahang and Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Braille Quran class in Masjid

Sultan Zainal Abidin, Putrajaya and the Centre of Quranic Studies for Visually Impaired at Menara Majlis Agama Islam Selangor. Six of the research participants are visually impaired, while one is from the normal group of people who are proficient in using the Braille Quran while also actively educating visually impaired students.

Research instruments

This study is based on qualitative research. In the first phase of this study, which is the needs analysis, the researcher used interviewing method as the research instrument to gather information, from users' point of view, regarding the needs of coordination between the texts of Braille Quran with *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah*. Hence, the information gathered from the research participants via the statements provided in the constructed interview questions will be used in this study. As a result, the research findings and information are restricted by the information supplied by the study participants who were chosen.

The researcher then used text analysis techniques to identify the Braille Quran writing system. In addition, past studies' content analysis was employed as material to obtain supporting data.

Based on the results of the needs analysis phase, in the next phase which is the designing and building of the coordination guide, the researcher provided a list of several instances for the purpose of coordination between the two versions of *muṣḥaf*. The coordination during this phase was conducted theoretically.

In the final phase, the researcher practically coordinated both versions of *muṣḥaf* by referring to the coordination achieved in the previous phase, adopting *surah al-Sajdah* as a sample text.

1.9 The Significance of the Study

Field of Quranic Studies

The Quranic studies is a discipline that is continually garnering attention since the findings are applicable to human nature, which demands religion both in this world and in the afterlife. Given current research trends, it is critical that this field be examined utilising contemporary research methodologies so that scientific advancement in this field is not only dominated by classical studies. As a service to the continued expansion of knowledge in the field of Quranic studies, the researcher will attempt to apply research methodologies and instruments that are yet underutilised in thesis studies in this field.

1. Field of Quranic writing and education

By proposing methods and guidelines for writing a more scholarly Braille al-Quran *muṣḥaf* with reference to a genuine and standard method of *muṣḥaf* writing, it is hoped that this study will make a scholarly contribution to the field of writing and education of al-Quran *muṣḥaf* for the visually impaired in particular, and to the study of al-Quran in general. This has the potential to improve the area of Quranic education, particularly the skill of interacting with the Braille al-Quran for the visually impaired.

2. Visually impaired community

This study may be used as a reference for the visually impaired, particularly PERTIS, which is the most significant organisation in Malaysia for the publication of Braille al-Quran and al-Quran lessons to the visually impaired.

Furthermore, this study can be a reference to the Al-Quran Printing Control and Licensing Board (LPPPQ) of the Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) because it contributes to enlightenment on issues related to Braille al-Quran, particularly in terms of writing and copying text other than the consumers' needs and concerns that must be acknowledged in the process of reviewing and approving the *muṣḥaf* for use by this specialneeds group.

3. National Education Policy

This research is extremely relevant to the National Education Policy, which attempts to guarantee that students with special needs have access to suitable and relevant education. This is consistent with the government's approach for implementing the policy, which aims to provide students with special needs with access to quality, relevant, and appropriate education. Furthermore, this research adds to the government's efforts to offer adequate teaching and learning resources that are current and relevant to the talents and requirements of students with special needs.

4. Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia

This research promotes significant value to the Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), which provides Braille Application course in Quran and Sunnah Studies, where Braille al-Quran, the major subject of this study, is one of the specialties of the university with the concept of *naqli* and *aqli* knowledge integration.

1.10 Operational Definitions

To facilitate the discourse of the study, several concepts must be operationally defined and explained within the context of the study. Some of the operational definitions used in this study are as follows:

Rasm and Ḍabṭ

The term *rasm* originates from Arab. Some Arabic dictionaries define this term as an address or a marker. In Arabic, the term *rasm* has synonyms such as *al-khat* (writing), *al-kitābah* (writing) and *al-impla'* (spelling). When it comes to Quranic knowledge, the term *rasm*, more often than not, is applied within two meanings; *Rasm al-Imlā'i* and *Rasm^cUthmāni*. *Rasm Imlā'i* or *Qiyasi* is the writing or spelling of a sentence based on how the letters of the word are spoken. *Rasm^cUthmāni* or *Istilahī* is a style or feature of writing specific words in an Ottoman *muṣḥaf* that differs from *Rasm Imlā'i*. It comprises of ellipsis (*al-Hadhf*), additions (*al-Ziyadah*), placement of *hamzah* (*al-Hamz*), letter substitution (*al-Badal*), separation (*al-Fasl*) as well as connection (*al-Wasl*) and also words that can be read in two *qiraat mutawatirah* but are only written with one of the two. *Rasm^cUthmāni* is named after Saidina Uthman, who is attributed with setting the standard for its writing.

The term *ḍabṭ*, linguistically, is a derived word from the root word that means “to reach the objective of preserving something”. In terms of Quranic knowledge, *ḍabṭ* is defined as “a knowledge with which information about a letter is known in terms of lines, *sukun*, *tasydid*, *madd* or other related things; it is also known as *syakl* (vowel symbols) (Muhaysin, 2002).

Dabt, in other words, is a science connected to punctuation marks in the *Rasm* al-Quran that comprises symbols or lines to discern the sound of specific letters. This punctuation also intends to facilitate the *mushaf* reader to read the *Rasm* al-Quran precisely by designating the letters with a line on the above (*fathah*), bottom (*kasrah*) or front (*dammah*) of letters, among other things.

Reconstruction of the Braille al-Quran Text

The reconstruction intended in this study is in the form of developing the Braille Quran text by PERTIS following the coordination process with the *mushaf al-Madinah*. In the Fourth Edition of Kamus Dewan, the term coordination (*penyelarasan*) is defined as a matter (action, task) of synchronising, adapting. In this study, two *mushaf* texts - both exhibit inconsistencies from the standpoint of the writing system - will be synchronised, which are Braille Quran text and *mushaf al-Madinah* that follow the standard of Mujamma' Malik Fahd. The coordination will be made by assigning one of the *mushaf* as a guide. Between these two *mushaf*, the one with Mujamma' Malik Fahd standard bears more authority and is world-recognised as well as approved authenticity in terms of writing. Accordingly, the coordination process will be carried out by modifying the writing elements in the Braille Quran *mushaf* to be consistent with the *mushaf* produced in accordance with Mujamma' Malik Fahd standards. When the coordination process is finished, a new Braille al-Quran text will be produced.

Braille Al-Quran

The term Braille al-Quran is a combination of the phrases al-Quran and Braille. The combination of al-Quran and Braille, which is Braille Quran, refers to the Braille Quran *mushaf* which applies the basic code of Arabic Braille representing the *rasm* of

Hijāiyyah letters and *ḍabt* (punctuation marks) such as *fathah*, *ḍammah* and *kasrah*, as well as symbols of *shaddah*, *sukun*, *mād* and others (Noornajihan & Kauthar, 2008).

This study focuses on the Braille Quran *muṣḥaf* entitled *Al-Quran al-Karim bi al-Kitābah al-'Arabiyyah al-Nāfirah* published by Persatuan Orang-orang Cacat Penglihatan Islam Malaysia (PERTIS) on 2015AD / 1436H. It will be referred to as the PERTIS Braille Quran within the discourse of this study. This *muṣḥaf* is recognised by JAKIM and licenced by the Al-Quran Printing Control and Licensing Board (LPPPQ) of the Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) in 2010 with approval code KDN:PQ/Q.1001/1.2/QA/304/49/2010. It is the most widely used Braille Quran among Malaysia's visually impaired.

Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah

The *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah* in this study refers to one of the *muṣḥaf* published by Mujamma' Malik Fahd, which is a copy of al-Quran with the *riwayat* (chain of transmission) of Imam *Hafṣ* from Imam *'Aṣim* released according to the writing standard adopted by Mujamma' Malik Fahd, Madinah al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia. This type of al-Quran writing standard is recognised and adopted as a model by the Al-Quran Printing Control and Licensing Board (LPPPQ) of the Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN). This *muṣḥaf* standard serves as a reference in the verification and certification process for all *muṣḥaf* distributed in Malaysia. In this study, this *muṣḥaf* will be called as the *muṣḥaf al-Madīnah*. To acquire the most recent version, the researcher referred to and used digital *muṣḥaf* in the form of an Android smartphones application released by Mujamma' Malik Fahd as the main research material. This digital *muṣḥaf* was chosen since it is more advanced in terms of updating, as the publisher updates it on a regular basis.

1.11 Summary

This chapter has deliberately discussed the introduction of the study, the background of the study, the issues of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the limitations of the study, the significance of the study, and the operational definition for this study. The next chapter will go into further depth on the concerns pertaining to the title of this study, as well as past research, on the writing of al-Quran *mushaf* in general, and writing of Braille Quran *mushaf* in particular, specifically from the standpoint of *rasm* and *ḍabt* knowledge of al-Quran.

