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IJIER: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Educational Review, Vol.3, No.3, 2026: 2469–2484
Available online at: https://ssed.or.id/journal/ijier
ISSN 3047-0706

The Controversy over Iʿrāb and Its Implications for the Interpretation of Surah At-Taubah [9]:122: A Systematic Literature Review from the Perspective of Linguistic Tafsir

Kontroversi Iʿrāb dan Implikasinya terhadap Penafsiran Surah At-Taubah [9]:122: Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis dari Perspektif Tafsir Linguistik

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Abstract: *Interpretations of Qur'an 9:122 depend partly on how grammatical relations and plural pronouns are connected to the verse's discourse context. Studies of this verse have mainly examined Islamic education, tafaqquh fī al-dīn, pesantren, and the social dimensions of learning, and none of the 14 articles mapped in this review centers on the verse's iʿrāb and the antecedents of its plural pronouns. This qualitative study combines a systematic literature review of 14 articles, narrative synthesis, and textual analysis of Abū Ḥayyān's commentary on the verse in Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ. The analysis identifies three readings: the pronouns refer to the group that travels to study and later instructs its people; li-yatafaqqahū refers to those who remain with the Prophet, while wa-li-yundhirū refers to the returning group; or the group learns through wartime experience and instructs its people after returning. Abū Ḥayyān treats the first reading as al-ẓāhir outside a war context and, in his final preference (tarjīḥ), emphasizes seeking and deepening religious knowledge. The findings show that grammatical forms establish plurality, purpose, and temporal relations but do not alone identify the groups; context and exegetical reasoning are also needed. The educational relevance for source verification and responsible communication is a pedagogical implication, not a direct interpretation of the verse. The study is limited to 14 journal articles and one primary commentary.*
Keywords: *Iʿrāb; Pronoun Reference; Qur'an 9:122; Linguistic Exegesis; Systematic Literature Review*

Abstrak: *Pemaknaan QS al-Taubah [9]:122 sebagian bergantung pada cara hubungan gramatikal dan pronomina jamak dikaitkan dengan konteks wacana ayat. Penelitian tentang ayat ini umumnya mengkaji pendidikan Islam, tafaqquh fī al-dīn, pesantren, dan dimensi sosial pembelajaran, dan tidak satu pun dari 14 artikel yang dipetakan dalam tinjauan ini berfokus pada iʿrāb ayat dan anteseden pronomina jamaknya. Penelitian kualitatif ini memadukan tinjauan literatur sistematis terhadap 14 artikel, sintesis naratif, dan analisis tekstual atas penafsiran Abū Ḥayyān terhadap ayat tersebut dalam Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ. Analisis menemukan tiga pembacaan: pronomina merujuk kepada kelompok yang berangkat untuk belajar lalu menyampaikan pengetahuan kepada kaumnya; li-yatafaqqahū merujuk kepada kelompok yang tinggal bersama Nabi, sedangkan wa-li-yundhirū merujuk kepada kelompok yang kembali; atau kelompok yang berangkat memperoleh pemahaman melalui pengalaman perang lalu memberi peringatan kepada kaumnya setelah kembali. Di luar konteks perang, Abū Ḥayyān menilai pembacaan*

pertama sebagai al-ẓāhir dan dalam tarjīḥ akhirnya menekankan pencarian serta pendalaman ilmu agama. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa bentuk gramatikal menandai jumlah jamak, tujuan, dan hubungan waktu, tetapi tidak cukup untuk memastikan identitas kelompok; konteks dan penalaran tafsir juga diperlukan. Relevansi temuan bagi verifikasi sumber dan tanggung jawab menyampaikan ilmu merupakan implikasi pedagogis, bukan penafsiran langsung ayat. Penelitian ini terbatas pada 14 artikel jurnal dan satu tafsir primer.
Kata Kunci: *Iʿrāb; rujukan pronomina; QS al-Taubah [9]:122; tafsir linguistik; tinjauan literatur sistematis*

Introduction

Interpreting Qur'anic verses through linguistic analysis requires attention to linguistic form, syntactic structure, and exegetical context. In Arabic studies, iʿrāb identifies a word's grammatical function and its relationship to other elements in a sentence, helping clarify clause relations and the participants in an action (Amir et al., 2025). Differences in iʿrāb may also affect interpretation: a study of Qur'anic legal verses shows how alternative grammatical analyses can yield differences in meaning (Syed Mohamed, 2022), and another study examines the implications of iʿrāb differences for the meaning of verses in Surah Ali ʿImrān (Mohd Shapee & Abdullah, 2022). Disagreement over iʿrāb may therefore extend beyond terminology or parsing and shape the interpretation of a verse.

This issue is evident in Qur'an 9:122, particularly in the sequence لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ. The verse describes a group going forth from each community and connects this departure with deepening religious understanding and warning their people upon return. The relationship between the group that goes forth and the plural subjects of لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا and وَلِيُنْذِرُوا, however, is not self-evident. In his commentary on the verse, Abū Ḥayyān discusses several possible referents for these pronouns. This ambiguity affects how the passage relates to the preceding clause and which group is understood to learn, give the warning, and receive it. As a related linguistic study, Elhag (2021) examines derivation and its effect on meaning in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* but does not address these pronoun-reference alternatives directly.

This study uses Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī's *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* as its primary source because it examines Abū Ḥayyān's treatment of Qur'an 9:122 rather than comparing linguistic tafsirs or treating one work as representative of the entire tradition. Previous research describes Abū Ḥayyān's attention to linguistic and grammatical analysis (Abdullah & Masood-Ur-Rehman, 2022), and other studies examine his exegetical approach and principles in this commentary (Abdulah, 2024; Ghazlāwī, 2022; Khalaf & Saleh, 2023). The specific reason for selecting this work, however, is that in his commentary on the verse Abū Ḥayyān records several possible referents for the pronouns in لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا and وَلِيُنْذِرُوا and relates them to the verse's structure. This makes the passage suitable for examining how grammatical possibilities and exegetical context inform interpretation. Although al-Zamakhsharī's *Al-Kashshāf* could provide a useful comparison, a systematic comparison of linguistic tafsirs falls outside this study's scope. The analysis therefore compares the possibilities presented by Abū Ḥayyān and limits its interpretive conclusions to the passage under consideration (Abdullah & Masood-Ur-Rehman, 2022).

Previous studies of Qur'an 9:122 have addressed a range of educational and social themes. Badrudin (2012) examines the concept of the learner in the Qur'an, while Nihayah

(2016) discusses Islamic education. Azkiya et al. (2022) approach the verse through the theme of diaspora, and Sarina (2022) examines its pedagogical implications for learning and teaching. Other studies discuss *tafaqquh fī al-dīn* in relation to Islamic education (Machfudz, 2020) and pesantren (Akit et al., 2023); educational principles, values, and objectives (Karimah et al., 2025; Sulam et al., 2023); the virtue or obligation of seeking knowledge (Fatimah et al., 2023; Nashr et al., 2024); intellectual jihad and the pursuit of knowledge (Abdurohman et al., 2024; Ustadzi, 2020); learning motivation (Izzan & Mubarok, 2025); and the position of knowledge in Islam (Romdhoni & Fauziah, 2023). Overall, the 14 studies mapped in this review predominantly address educational and social questions; none makes the iʿrāb and antecedents of the verse's plural pronouns its main focus. A related linguistic study by Syed Mohamed (2022) examines how differences in iʿrāb affect the meaning of Qur'anic legal verses. The present study addresses a more specific question: how Abū Ḥayyān evaluates competing pronoun referents in Qur'an 9:122 and what interpretive implications follow.

The initial mapping points to this study's focus: the relationship between grammatical analysis and the interpretation of Qur'an 9:122, particularly the sequence لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا, وَلِيُنْذِرُوا, and إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ. The 14 earlier articles are used to map how the verse has been studied and which themes have received attention, while *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* is examined directly for its linguistic analysis. Abū Ḥayyān's discussion of the possible referents and their relation to the verse's structure is analyzed from the commentary itself (al-Andalusī, n.d.). This distinction makes clear that the 14 articles are not all studies of the iʿrāb controversy and that one exegetical work is not taken to represent the entire tradition of linguistic exegesis (Akit et al., 2023).

The study addresses four questions. First, what themes, approaches, and findings characterize the 14 studies of Qur'an 9:122 included in the review? Second, how does *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* explain the grammatical structure of Qur'an 9:122, particularly the sequence لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا, وَلِيُنْذِرُوا, and إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ? Third, how does Abū Ḥayyān explain the possible pronoun referents and the relationships among elements in the verse? Fourth, what interpretive implications do these analyses have for identifying the group that deepens its religious knowledge and the group that gives the warning? The study aims to describe the linguistic analyses in the primary source, explain their interpretive implications, and map earlier studies of the verse.

The systematic literature review (SLR) answers the first question by identifying and selecting publications that explicitly discuss Qur'an 9:122. Its corpus comprises 14 journal articles, whose themes, approaches, and contributions are synthesized narratively. Separately, *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* serves as the primary source for the textual analysis that addresses the other three questions. The study therefore uses 15 sources in total, but only the 14 articles form the SLR corpus. The SLR maps previous research and positions the study within it, whereas the textual analysis examines Abū Ḥayyān's grammatical readings and their interpretive implications. Accordingly, the study does not claim that Qur'an 9:122 has never been studied. It connects the literature map with a focused analysis of grammatical choices in one linguistic commentary.

The novelty of this study lies in connecting two strands of research that have remained separate. The mapped literature on Qur'an 9:122 concentrates on educational and social themes, and related linguistic studies address iʿrāb and derivation in other contexts, but none of the 14

articles analyzes the competing referents of the verse's plural pronouns. This leaves unanswered how a linguistic exegete weighs these referents and what that weighing implies for identifying who learns, who warns, and who is warned. The study contributes a focused textual analysis of Abū Ḥayyān's treatment of these readings, set against a systematic map of earlier research on the verse, and aims to show how grammatical form and exegetical context jointly shape interpretation.

Method

This qualitative study combines a systematic literature review (SLR) and narrative synthesis with textual and exegetical analysis. The SLR addresses the literature-mapping question by identifying, selecting, and mapping scholarly journal articles that discuss Qur'an 9:122 (Xiao & Watson, 2019). The identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion process is reported using an adaptation of PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), and the search strategy follows the reporting guidance of PRISMA-S (Rethlefsen et al., 2021). The findings from the articles are synthesized narratively (Campbell et al., 2020; Rodgers et al., 2009), while the verse in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* is analyzed exegetically.

The searches were conducted on 14 October 2026. The electronic searches yielded 74 records, and 8 supplementary records were added, giving 82 records before duplicates were removed. Figure 1 shows the flow of records through each stage. Records were checked against journal, repository, or publisher pages to confirm their relevance and full-text availability; this was a verification step after retrieval, not a separate search source (Page et al., 2021).

The search terms were used in Indonesian, English, and Arabic. They included "QS At-Taubah 122" AND iʿrāb; "At-Taubah 9:122" AND (syntax OR pronoun); "At-Taubah ayat 122" AND (tafsir OR pendidikan); "tafaqquh fiddin" AND "At-Taubah 122"; إعراب 122 التوبة; 122 التوبة مرجع الضمير ليتفقهوا; and ليتفقهوا ولينذروا إعراب. Variants in the surah's name, verse number, transliteration, and related terms were used to broaden the search. No start year was specified, and the end date was the date of the last search (Snyder, 2019).

The SLR included scholarly journal articles that treated Qur'an 9:122 substantively and provided accessible full text. This restriction defines the review as a map of journal-article research, not an exhaustive inventory of all works on the verse or its iʿrāb. Books and theses were therefore excluded from the SLR corpus. To support the linguistic analysis, relevant works were considered separately as textual comparators: *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* is the primary exegetical source, while Darwīsh's *Iʿrāb al-Qurʾān wa-bayānuhu* provides a grammatical analysis of verse 9:122 for comparison (Darwīsh, 1992). The review's findings are consequently limited to the 14 included journal articles; they do not establish how frequently the verse's iʿrāb is discussed across books, theses, or the broader exegetical tradition.

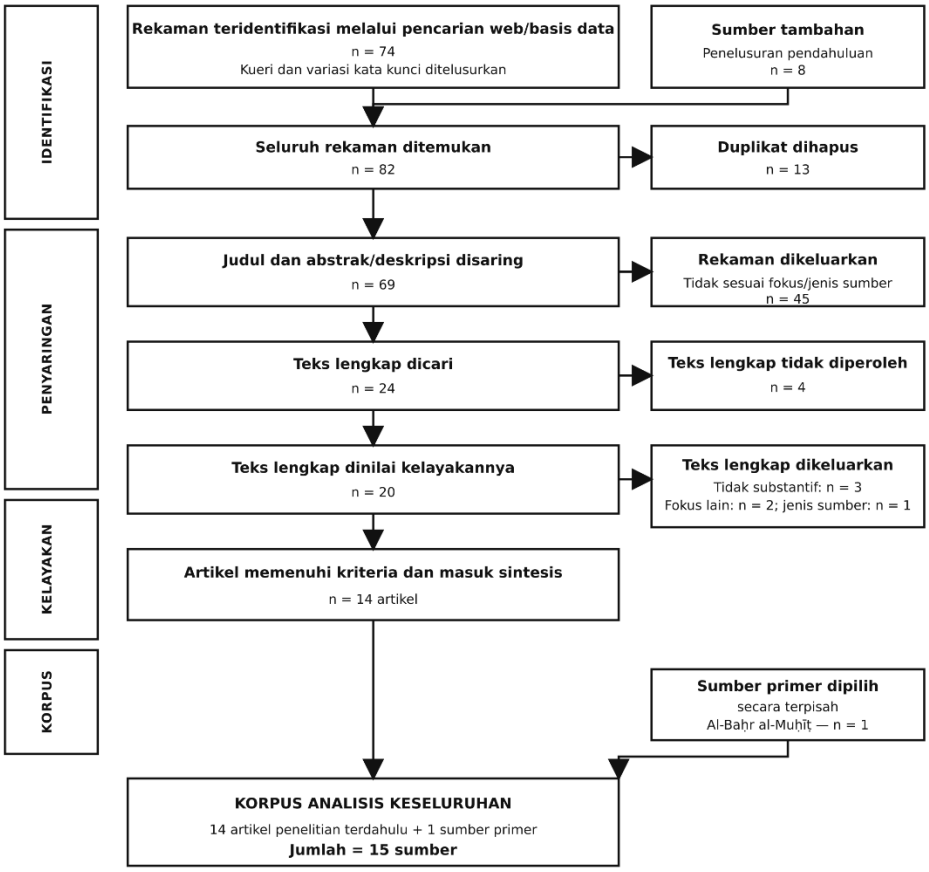


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram

The identification and selection process involved removing duplicates, screening titles and abstracts or descriptions, retrieving full texts, and assessing full-text eligibility. After 13 duplicates were removed, 69 records were screened. Forty-five were excluded because they did not match the review's focus or source-type criteria, leaving 24 full texts for retrieval. Four full texts could not be obtained. Of the 20 full texts assessed for eligibility, 6 were excluded: 3 for lacking substantive discussion, 2 for focusing on another topic, and 1 for not meeting the source-type criteria. The remaining 14 journal articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the synthesis. The included articles are listed in Table 1, and the primary exegetical source is presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Corpus of previous studies

No.	Study	Focus and relevance to this study
1	Badrudin (2012), "Peserta Didik dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Interpretasi QS. at-Taubah: 122 and al-Kahfi: 60)," Al-Fath, 6(1), 50–69.	Examines the concept of the learner through Qur'anic exegesis of two verses, including Qur'an 9:122.
2	Nihayah (2016), "Konsep Pendidikan Islam dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Surat at-Taubah Ayat 122," Al Ulya: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 1(1), 27–38.	Discusses Islamic education in relation to deepening religious knowledge and sharing it with others.
3	Machfudz (2020), "Tafsir Tematis Al-Qur'an and Hadits terhadap Ayat 'Tafaqquh Fiddin' (Relasi Epistemologis Ayat and Pendidikan Islam)," Qolamuna, 5(2), 201–222.	Connects tafaqquh fī al-dīn with Islamic education and the communication of religious knowledge.

No.	Study	Focus and relevance to this study
4	Ustadzi (2020), "Jihad Intelektual Generasi Milenial: Muqobalah QS. At-Taubah Ayat 122 and Pesan Perdamaian dalam Syair Al-Jihad wal-Ijtihad," At-Turas: Jurnal Studi Keislaman, 7(1), 1–15.	Examines the verse in relation to intellectual jihad and a message of peace.
5	Azkiya et al. (2022), "Diaspora dalam Pandangan Al-Qur'an (Telaah QS. At-Taubah Ayat 122)," Jurnal Riset Agama, 2(1), 1–12.	Reads the verse through the themes of diaspora, education, and sharing knowledge.
6	Sarina (2022), "Implikasi Pedagogis Al-Qur'an Surat At-Taubah Ayat 122 (Analisis Kajian Tafsir terhadap Kewajiban Belajar Mengajar)," Jurnal Eksperimental, 11(1).	Discusses the verse's pedagogical implications for learning, teaching, and the division of educational roles.
7	Akit, Fatkhurrohman, and Nasokah (2023), "Konsep Tafaqquh Fiddīn dalam Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren (Kajian Al-Qur'an Surat At-Taubah Ayat 122)," Al-Jabiri: Jurnal Ilmiah Studi Islam, 2(1).	Examines the concept of tafaqquh fiddin in the pesantren education system and its contextualization.
8	Fatimah, Nasokah, and Sofwan (2023), "Konsep Pendidikan Islam tentang Keutamaan Ilmu (Kajian QS. At-Taubah Ayat 122)," Al Ghazali, 6(1), 37–47.	Examines the merits of knowledge and deepening religious understanding based on the verse.
9	Sulam, Zulhaini, and Akbar (2023), "Analisis Prinsip-Prinsip Pendidikan dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Studi Tafsir Surah At-Taubah Ayat 122)," JOM FTK UNIKS, 3(2), 93–109.	Maps educational principles derived from interpretations of the verse.
10	Romdhoni and Fauziah (2023), "The Position of Science from the Islamic Perspective (Analysis of Surat al-Taubah Verse 122)," AL-IKHSAN: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies, 1(1), 14–18.	Discusses the status of knowledge and its relationship to religious values through interpretation of the verse.
11	Abdurohman et al. (2024), "Menelaah Jihad bagi Penuntut Ilmu: Kajian Tafsir Surat At-Taubah Ayat 122 and Analisis Pendidikan Pesantren," Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia, 5(1), 27–34.	Connects jihad in the pursuit of knowledge with the role and relevance of pesantren education.
12	Nashr, Khaliq, and Athoillah (2024), "Urgensi Menuntut Ilmu and Kesetaraannya dengan Jihad Fi Sabilillah: Tafsir Surat At-Taubah: 122," TARQIYAH: Jurnal Pendidikan and Literasi, 2(2).	Discusses the merits of seeking knowledge, jihad, and the division between farḍ ʿayn and farḍ kifāyah.
13	Izzan and Mubarok (2025), "Motivasi Belajar dalam Al-Qur'an At-Taubah Ayat 122: Studi Ilmu Pendidikan Islam," MASAGI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, 3(2), 34–39.	Examines learning motivation and the merits of deepening religious knowledge based on the verse.
14	Karimah, Surahman, Sumarna, and Nabila (2025), "Tarbawi Values in QS. at-Taubah:122 as the Foundation of Islamic Educational Objectives," Jurnal Studi Sosial Keagamaan Syekh Nurjati, 5(2), 198–207.	Formulates the verse's educational values as a basis for Islamic educational objectives.

Table 2. Primary exegetical source

No.	Source	Role in the study
1	Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* (1420 AH), commentary on Qur'an 9:122.	Primary source for analyzing iʿrāb, pronoun reference, clause relations, and interpretive implications.

The corpus consists of 14 journal articles that met the selection criteria and one primary exegetical source. The 14 articles map the focus, approaches, and findings of previous studies on Qur'an 9:122, including education, *tafaqquh fī al-dīn*, jihad in the pursuit of knowledge, and other related themes. The primary exegetical source is Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī's *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, which was purposively selected for linguistic analysis and was not counted as an article in the PRISMA process. The analytical corpus therefore comprises 15 sources: 14 journal articles and one exegetical work.

Article data were extracted using a matrix recording publication details, aims, methods, exegetical sources, focus on the verse, main findings, and relevance to this study. For the narrative synthesis, each article was assigned one primary category based on its main analytical focus, either thematic or interpretive discussion of the verse or direct linguistic analysis of its iʿrāb, syntax, or pronoun reference. Other topics, such as education, *tafaqquh fī al-dīn*, and jihad in the pursuit of knowledge, were recorded as secondary themes.

The 14 articles were analyzed through narrative synthesis. *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* was analyzed separately as the primary exegetical source, with attention to the sequence لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ. Extraction from this source covered the grammatical constructions discussed, possible pronoun referents, relationships between clauses, linguistic opinions cited or selected by Abū Ḥayyān, and their interpretive implications.

Research traceability was maintained by recording queries, search sources, publication metadata, links, selection decisions, exclusion reasons, extraction results, and locations of discussion in the primary source. The conclusions are limited to the 14 articles retrieved and analyzed and to the interpretation of Qur'an 9:122 in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*. The findings are not intended to represent all literature on the verse or the entire tradition of linguistic exegesis.

Results and Discussion

Grammatical analysis of Qur'an 9:122 in Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ

The grammatical analysis relates the sequence لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ to the preceding clause, فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ. Syntactically, مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ identifies the group from which the *ṭāʾifah* comes, while طَائِفَةٌ is the subject of نَفَرَ. The clause thus describes a group departing from each community, rather than the entire community departing. The referent of the plural pronouns in the purpose clauses, however, requires exegetical interpretation. In the non-war reading, Abū Ḥayyān states: "والضمير الذي في ليتفقهوا عائد على الطائفة النافرة، وهذا هو الظاهر" ("The pronoun in *li-yatafaqqahū* refers to the departing group, and this is the apparent reading") (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, p. 525). He also records alternative readings in which the pronouns refer to different groups, depending on the context of departure and those who remain (al-Andalusī, n.d.).

In لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا and وَلِيُنْذِرُوا, the lām introduces two purposes connected to the departure or division of roles under discussion. Both verbs are *fiʿl muḍāriʿ manṣūb* after *lām al-taʿlīl*; their subjunctive marker is the deletion of *nūn* because they belong to *al-afʿāl al-khamsah*, while *wāw al-jamāʿah* functions as a plural *fāʿil*. The repeated lām in وَلِيُنْذِرُوا marks a second purpose coordinated with the first. In وَلِيُنْذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ, قَوْمَهُمْ is the object of the warning. The phrase إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ provides a time clause for the act of warning: إذا introduces the temporal clause, *wāw al-jamāʿah* in رَجَعُوا is its subject, and هِمْ- in إِلَيْهِمْ marks the party toward whom the return is directed. These forms indicate number and grammatical relations but do not lexically name the groups; identifying their antecedents still requires contextual interpretation.

Abū Ḥayyān records several readings. In a context where النفير is not understood as a military expedition, *wāw al-jamāʿah* in لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا refers to الطائفة النافرة, the group that sets out to learn about religion; he describes this as الظاهر in that context. In another possibility, associated with the dispatch of a military force, the pronoun in لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا may refer to the group that remains with the Prophet. In this reading, the group that departs is the subject of وَلِيُنْذِرُوا and, after returning, informs the group that stayed about the legal rulings that developed during its absence. Abū Ḥayyān explains that this reading assumes an unexpressed clause about the other group that remained (جملة محذوفة), so the relationship between the groups is reconstructed from context.

He also records the view that the pronoun in لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا refers to those who set out for battle, with *tafaqquh* understood as learning through witnessing God's support and the believers' victory. They then warn their people after returning. Abū Ḥayyān's preferred interpretation, however, emphasizes the encouragement to seek knowledge and deepen religious understanding. He relates the departure of some people to learn to the need to ensure that the region and families are not left without protection: some carry out the task of protecting the community, while others learn and share their knowledge after returning. The verse thus connects knowledge with social responsibility and the community's continuity (al-Andalusī, n.d.). Table 3 summarizes the grammatical analysis and its interpretive consequences.

Table 3. Grammatical analysis of Qur'an 9:122

Element	Grammatical function or relationship	Interpretive consequence
طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ	The group that forms the core of the نَفَرَ clause; مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ limits the group's origin.	The verse presents the departure of some members of a group, not all believers at once.
لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا	Purpose verb; واو الجماعة functions as a plural pronominal subject.	The pronoun may refer to the group that departs to learn or to the group that remains, depending on the contextual reading.
وَلِيُنْذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ	Purpose verb coordinated with لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا; واو الجماعة functions as a pronominal subject.	The common reading connects the warning with the group that has acquired knowledge.
إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ	Temporal clause; واو الجماعة in رَجَعُوا marks the returning group, while هِمْ- in إِلَيْهِمْ marks the party toward whom they return.	The direction of return and identity of the party being warned are established through the exegetical relationship between groups, not by word forms in isolation.

The grammatical subject must be distinguished from the antecedent assigned by the exegete. Morphologically, *wāw al-jamāʿah* marks a plural subject in لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا and وَلِيُنْذِرُوا, while هِمْ in إِلَيْهِمْ marks a plural referent; these forms do not, by themselves, identify the groups involved. Darwīsh's parsing supports this grammatical distinction (Darwīsh, 1992, vol. 4, p. 195). Abū Ḥayyān discusses the possible antecedents in context. In one reading, the pronoun in لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا refers to the departing group, which later warns its people, and he describes this reading as الظاهر (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, p. 525). In another reading, the pronoun in لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا refers to those who remain with the Prophet, while the departing group warns them upon its return. Abū Ḥayyān explains this reading by positing an omitted clause indicating that another group remained (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, pp. 525–526). Thus, the forms establish grammatical number and relations, while the identification of their referents depends on the exegetical context (al-Anṣārī, 1985; Darwīsh, 1992; Qurṭubī, 1964; Sibawayh, 1988).

Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ explains the verse's purpose and temporal structure while allowing for more than one identification of the agent. The lām connects the departure with deepening religious understanding and giving a warning, while إذا رجعوا إليهم specifies the time and direction of the communication. The pronoun referents, however, cannot be determined from verb morphology alone. Abū Ḥayyān evaluates their relationships through the context of departure, the group that stays, and the social function of each. This analysis identifies possible interpretations; it does not automatically establish a single legal consequence.

Pronoun reference and the relationships among elements in Qur'an 9:122

The issue centers on the relationship between pronominal forms and the context Abū Ḥayyān uses to identify their referents. His commentary does not assign every plural *wāw* a single fixed referent. Instead, he considers several contexts for النفير: departure to seek religious knowledge, the dispatch of a military force, and learning through experience in battle. These contexts produce different configurations of agents and recipients of the warning, although the wording of the verse remains unchanged (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, pp. 525–526; Ṭabarī, 2001).

In the first possibility, the pronoun in لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا refers to الطائفة النافرة. The same group carries out two actions that are sequential in meaning: it sets out to deepen its religious understanding and then warns or informs its people after returning. إِذَا رَجَعُوا establishes when the communication takes place, while قَوْمَهُمْ and إِلَيْهِمْ connect the returning group with the community addressed. This reading makes *tafaqquh* and *indhār* part of a circulation of knowledge rather than two separate activities. Abū Ḥayyān describes this as الظاهر in a nonmilitary context, and his final preference also emphasizes seeking knowledge.

In the second possibility, the pronominal subject of لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا is the group that remains with the Prophet, while the agent of وَلِيُنْذِرُوا is the group that departs and returns. The two purpose clauses therefore have different antecedents. For this relationship to be understood, the exegete posits a group that remained behind, an element not stated explicitly in the text (جملة محذوفة). The returning group informs them about newly applicable religious rulings. This analysis shows that identifying a referent also involves ellipsis and information structure; it is not enough to assign both verbs the same referent simply because both use *wāw al-jamāʿah*.

Abū Ḥayyān records a third possible reading in which the departing group is the agent of *tafaqquh*, understood as learning through witnessing divine support and victory in battle. He then states his preference: "وَالَّذِي يَظْهَرُ أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ إِنَّمَا جَاءَتْ لِلْحَضِّ عَلَى طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ وَالتَّفَقُّهِ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ" ("What appears to be the case is that this verse urges the pursuit of knowledge and deepening understanding of God's religion"). The interpretive difference concerns the pronouns' referents and the sense of *tafaqquh*, not a change in the wording of the verse (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, p. 525; Ibn ʿĀshūr, 1984).

This study does not treat other commentaries as a comparative corpus. Its analysis of grammatical options and pronoun referents focuses on Abū Ḥayyān's *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*. The 14 journal articles, not additional tafsir works, form the SLR corpus and are used to map previous studies of Qur'an 9:122. The discussion of competing readings is therefore limited to Abū Ḥayyān's commentary; a systematic comparison with other exegetes lies beyond this study's scope. Table 4 maps the three readings that Abū Ḥayyān records.

Table 4. Mapping possible pronoun referents

Reading	**Antecedent of واو لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا in الجماعة**	**Agent of وَلِيُنْذِرُوا and referent of إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ**	**Status in Abū Ḥayyān's discussion**
Departure to seek knowledge	The group that departs to deepen its religious understanding.	The same group warns its people after returning.	Described as الظاهر in this context; consistent with Abū Ḥayyān's preference for encouraging the pursuit of knowledge.
Division of groups in a military context	The group that remains with the Prophet.	The departing group warns those who remained after returning. This reading presupposes an omitted clause indicating that another group stayed behind.	An alternative reading explained through an implied clause.
Learning through wartime experience	The group that departs.	The departing group learns through witnessing divine support and victory, then warns its people after returning.	An alternative recorded by Abū Ḥayyān, but not his final preference.

The synthesis addressing the third research question shows that identifying the antecedents affects the relationship between groups. If the pronouns refer to the same group, the pursuit of knowledge leads to sharing it with the community. If the referents differ, the verse depicts an exchange of knowledge between the group that stays and the group that returns, with ellipsis forming part of the explanation. In both readings, grammatical form sets the range of possibilities, while context and the exegete's reasoning determine which reading is considered more appropriate.

Pronoun reference as a contextual exegetical issue

This verse shows that identifying pronouns involves more than noting person and number. The *wāw al-jamāʿah* in يَتَفَقَّهُوا and يُنْذِرُوا marks plural agents, while the ـهُمْ forms in قَوْمَهُمْ and إِلَيْهِمْ mark plural parties associated with an agent or the direction of an action. These forms provide important linguistic constraints but do not explicitly name the groups. The exegete must still

relate them to the noun طَائِفَةٌ, the group that remains, and the context of النفير. In other words, grammatical analysis explains what the structure may connect, whereas identifying the referent requires discourse-based and exegetical reasoning.

The three configurations recorded by Abū Ḥayyān can be compared through three questions: who learns, who communicates, and to whom the knowledge is conveyed. In the reading where the departing group is the referent of both verbs, the same group learns and communicates at different points in time. In the reading that assigns different referents to the two verbs, the group that stays and the group that departs have complementary roles, and the explanation requires an implied clause. In the reading based on learning through wartime experience, the departing group remains the subject of the learning, but the source of that learning is interpreted as historical experience. This comparison presents the exegetical variations as differences in relationships, rather than disagreements over the wording of the verse.

Abū Ḥayyān's *tarjīḥ* should be read as an assessment of contextual fit, not as a dismissal of every possibility he records. When he regards a referent as *al-ẓāhir* in a particular context and reinforces the encouragement to seek knowledge at the end of his discussion, he illustrates an argumentative procedure: linguistic form is read alongside the historical setting and the purpose of the discourse. This is consistent with the use of grammar and iʿrāb in exegesis, while remaining an exegete's interpretive choice that can be compared with those of others.

Several studies in the corpus address themes related to knowledge and education. Akit et al. (2023) examine *tafaqquh fī al-dīn* in pesantren education, Fatimah et al. (2023) discuss the merits of knowledge, and Sarina (2022) considers the pedagogical implications of learning and teaching. Their reported focus is educational, not the identification of pronoun antecedents; this review therefore does not claim that they assume a single referent. Abū Ḥayyān's analysis adds a linguistic dimension to these themes. He considers whether the pronouns refer to the same departing group, to different groups of learners and returners, or to a group whose learning arises from wartime experience. He treats the first reading as *al-ẓāhir* in a non-military context and ultimately emphasizes seeking knowledge (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, pp. 525–526). This analysis clarifies how the verse's grammatical structure allows different relationships between learners and the communities they address. It complements the corpus's educational interpretations by making those textual possibilities explicit, rather than correcting the studies or attributing to them a position they do not state.

Implications for those who deepen religious knowledge and give warnings

In Abū Ḥayyān's preferred reading, the two functions form a process: knowledge is acquired and then conveyed to the community (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, p. 525). In the passage he quotes from al-Zamakhsharī's *Al-Kashshāf*, *indhār* is linked to guidance and advice: "إِنْذَارَ قَوْمِهِمْ وَإِرْشَادَهُمْ وَالنَّصِيحَةَ لَهُمْ" (al-Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH, vol. 3, p. 108; quoted in al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, p. 525). In this passage, *indhār* thus involves guiding and advising the community as well as warning it. From an educational perspective, this link between learning and communicating knowledge may be read alongside the *tarbawi* values discussed by Karimah et al. (2025). This is a pedagogical implication, not a claim about the verse's grammatical meaning.

This relationship aligns with themes found in the corpus while also extending them. Studies of learners and educational aims (Nihayah, 2016) consider who learns and which values education should cultivate; studies of pesantren and the merits of knowledge (Akit et al., 2023) explain the setting and orientation of deeper learning; and pedagogical studies of teaching and learning (Sarina, 2022; Sulam et al., 2023) focus on educational processes. Abū Ḥayyān's reading brings these layers together through a functional relationship: learning does not end with personal mastery but carries the responsibility of sharing knowledge with the community. This is a synthesis of previous research and the primary source, not a claim that all the articles use the same exegetical framework.

The findings have a limited pedagogical implication. In teaching Qur'an 9:122, learners can compare how different pronoun referents change the relationship between those who deepen their religious understanding, those who return, and the community receiving their knowledge. This exercise encourages careful attention to grammatical evidence and exegetical context. It is a teaching application of the analysis, not an empirical finding or a direct interpretation of the verse.

The sequence of *tafaqquh* and *indhār* may inspire an accountable learning cycle as an educational application, not as a direct interpretation of the verse: students examine sources, check technology-generated answers against reliable references, discuss context and the limits of their knowledge, and then communicate what they have learned accurately to others. In religious education, this could involve comparing digital answers with exegesis and primary sources, explaining why a claim is acceptable or needs correction, and citing sources when sharing material. Teachers guide reasoning and ethical conduct rather than simply providing answers, while students become both seekers and communicators of knowledge. The verse's relevance thus lies in the responsibility to connect knowledge with social benefit.

Implications for contemporary education and digital transformation

Abū Ḥayyān's three readings assign different roles to those who learn and those who receive knowledge: the same group may learn and then teach its people; learners and returning groups may have complementary roles; or learning may arise from the departing group's wartime experience (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, pp. 525–526). Asking learners to compare these antecedents, as proposed above, connects the grammatical analysis to corpus studies on learning and teaching responsibilities (Sarina, 2022) and on *tafaqquh* in pesantren education (Abdurohman et al., 2024; Akit et al., 2023), without implying that those studies use Abū Ḥayyān's pronoun analysis. This exercise makes visible the relationship between grammatical form and exegetical context. It is a proposed teaching application, not a direct interpretation of the verse or an empirically tested intervention (Abdurohman et al., 2024; al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, pp. 525–526; Machfudz, 2020).

The second implication concerns the quality of knowledge. The term *tafaqquh* suggests a process of deepening understanding, while *indhār* directs that knowledge toward others. In education, this process should distinguish memorized information, conceptual understanding, the ability to evaluate sources, and the ability to explain knowledge to others. Students could prepare referenced notes, test arguments against their sources, and present their findings to another group. Learning would then be assessed not only by the amount of material collected

but also by the ability to work with it responsibly and communicate it without distorting its meaning. This extends the corpus articles' discussion of learning motivation to questions about the purpose and responsibility that follow learning (Izzan & Mubarok, 2025).

One possible activity is to compare an AI-generated answer about Qur'an 9:122 with the verse, Abū Ḥayyān's interpretation, and one or two other commentaries. Students identify claims supported by references, points that require verification, and the difference between source quotations and their own conclusions. They then explain their findings to classmates and cite primary sources. Teachers assess the research process, accurate attribution, reasons for accepting or rejecting an output, and how corrections are communicated. This makes technology part of source-literacy and responsible communication exercises, rather than a replacement for teachers or reading. The principle is consistent with the distinction maintained in this article: the verse and exegesis are analyzed as sources, while AI is treated as a contemporary pedagogical context (Romdhoni & Fauziah, 2023).

This application also relates to the social risks of sharing unchecked information. Inaccurate religious summaries may spread quickly because they appear convincing and are easy to copy. Education should therefore make room for withholding judgment when evidence is insufficient, acknowledging uncertainty, and consulting teachers or qualified sources when a matter requires scholarly authority. This does not mean that every student is immediately authorized to issue religious rulings. The role of a knowledge communicator in education is more limited: to explain material studied, cite its basis, and state the limits of their understanding. This qualification prevents the educational analogy from expanding *indhār* into a claim of authority that the verse analysis does not discuss (Sarina, 2022).

Contribution of the findings to linguistic exegesis and educational studies

The 14 journal articles mapped in this review predominantly address educational and social themes related to Qur'an 9:122; none centers on the verse's grammatical alternatives and competing pronoun antecedents. Related linguistic studies examine the effect of iʿrāb differences on the meaning of Qur'anic legal verses (Syed Mohamed, 2022) or derivation and meaning in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* (Elhag, 2021), but do not analyze the competing pronoun readings of this verse. This study's contribution is to connect the SLR map with a focused textual analysis of Abū Ḥayyān's treatment of these readings. It shows how different antecedents assign roles to those who learn, return, and communicate knowledge, and how context informs Abū Ḥayyān's preference (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, pp. 525–526). For linguistic exegesis, the analysis clarifies the interaction between grammatical form and exegetical context; for educational studies, it provides a text-based perspective on the relationship between learning and communicating knowledge.

These findings may inform three areas of work. First, research on educational exegesis can clearly distinguish quotations from primary sources, synthesis of previous literature, and the author's pedagogical recommendations. Second, teaching exegesis can invite students to examine how a change in antecedent changes the roles represented in a verse, showing that grammatical choices have interpretive consequences. Third, religious digital-literacy education can train learners to verify content, preserve context, and communicate information proportionately. These areas require further research and testing in different schools, pesantren,

or learning communities; this study does not empirically measure the effectiveness of these strategies.

Conclusion

This study finds that, within the 14 journal articles mapped, all focus on thematic or interpretive questions related to Qur'an 9:122; none directly analyzes the verse's iʿrāb or competing pronoun antecedents. In *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, Abū Ḥayyān records three readings: the pronouns refer to a group that departs to seek knowledge and later instructs its people; the learners are those who remain with the Prophet while the returning group informs them, with an omitted clause inferred; or the departing group learns through wartime experience and warns its people after returning. He treats the first reading as *al-ẓāhir* in a non-military context and ultimately emphasizes seeking and deepening religious knowledge (al-Andalusī, 1420 AH, vol. 5, pp. 525–526). The grammatical forms mark purpose, plurality, and temporal relations but do not alone determine the groups' identities. Contextual interpretation therefore shapes how the verse's roles of learning and communicating knowledge are understood. This is the study's specific contribution to linguistic exegesis and to educational discussions of the verse.

The findings offer a text-based pedagogical implication: learners can compare the three readings and explain how each assigns the roles of learning, returning, and communicating knowledge. This is a proposed application, not an empirical result or a meaning stated directly by the exegete. The study is limited to 14 journal articles retrieved under the stated search criteria and one primary tafsir; books and other linguistic sources are outside the SLR corpus. The pedagogical implication has not been tested in educational settings. Future research could expand the search to books, theses, and Qur'anic iʿrāb works; compare Abū Ḥayyān with other commentaries; and empirically examine how comparing pronoun readings supports the teaching of tafsir.

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