1. Introduction

Qur’an has been the subject of scholarship from time immemorial among Muslims and non-Muslims as well. Its study started with the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his Companions, since the time of its revelation in 7th Century. In spite of the fact that the Qur’an was revealed in the highest level of the classical Arabic, which is the language of the Prophet and his Sahabah, there are number of words and phrases that are seemed unfamiliar or not understandable to some Companions, due to the dialectical variations of the Arabs. Consequently, whenever Companions stumbled on any difficult words or phrases, they quickly rushed to the Prophet for explanation. At various occasions, he provided explanation to many words that were looked difficult. Ibn Mas’ud related that when Sūrah 6 verse 82 “al-adhīna ‘āmanū walam yalbisū Īmānihim bi ‘āmīnā ‘ezīmun …Verily “shirk” associating partner with Allah is the greatest form of shirk (transgression).” The interest of the Prophet in teaching the Qur’an to the Companions was not only giving exoteric and esoteric meaning only, it rather encompassed reading, memorization, and application of the Qur’an into daily life.

After the demise of the Prophet, the Qur’anic studies was remained and later developed by the Companions; who understood the nature of Arabic language, witnessed the revelation of the Qur’an and knew the reasons behind the revelations. Abdullah (2006) also relates that those who involved in such were those who conversant with the nature of Arabic language, knew the overall social context of the revelation, the Prophet’s ways of thinking, the norms, values and customs of the Arabs. The first set of these people were group of ten men, among whom were the first four Caliphs (al-Khulafā’ al Rāshidūn); Ali ibn Abi Tālib (d.40/661) stood in the foreground because of his outstanding and creativity in interpreting the Qur’an. Jalālū al-Dīn al-Sayyūtī (2007) asserts that the remaining six were Ubay bn Ka’b (d. 21/643), ‘Abdulh ikn Mas’ud (d. 30/652), Abū Mūsā al-Asha’r (d. 48/670), ‘Abdūlkh ikn ‘Abbās (d. 64/686), Zayd ibn Thābit (d. 43/665), and ‘Abdūlkh ikn Zubayr (d. 94/712).

Next to the Companions in this exercise, were the Tabi’un, (the followers of the Companions) and
Tabi‘an al- Tabi‘īn. (followers of the followers). It was with the efforts of these people that led to the spread of the Qur’anic scholarship all over the Islamic territories, such as Makkah, Madīnah and Iraq. In this regard, Abdullah ibn Abbās was regarded as the founder of the Qur’anic study at Makkah. Among his pupils were Sa‘īd bn Jubayr (d. 95/713), ‘Ikrima (d. 105/723), al-Dahlākh bn Muzim (d. 105/723) and Atā‘ bn Abī Rabbāh (d. 114/732), Sa‘īd Jābir (H/94), Majāhid bn Jabār ‘Ukrīmah (d.105/725) Mawolā bn Abbās. Also Ubay bn Kab, who was considered by most of Companions as the greater reciter of the Qur’ān. He was the champion of Qur’anic education at Madīnah together with some of his followers like Zayd bn Aslam, Abū al-Alaqah, Muḥammad bn Ka‘ab al-Qurai. In Iraq was Ibn Mas‘ūd and his students; ‘Ulaqah bn Qays, al-Ḥasan al-Basār, Qatadah bn Da‘amah.

However, what was considered as the Qur’anic studies during the Prophet and Companions era was the only interpretation of unusual words by narrations-(tafsīr al-Qur‘ān bil-ma‘thūr); interpretation of unusual words with another Qur’anic passages, or with Prophetic saying. Whenever there was no solution into any ambiguity words in the Qur‘ān and tradition, the Companions felt back to the use of the knowledge of the contexts of the verses and intricacies of the Arabic language in which the Qur‘ān was revealed to solve the problem.

Between the second and the third century of Hijrah, the Qur’anic interpretation was intellectually and religiously developed by the Muslim scholars of different background, by applying personal opinions (ra‘y) as a result of heterogeneous, emergence of political and theologies among the Muslims and upsurge of new disciplines. Consequently, commentaries developed from various field of learnings such as history, philology, theology, linguistics stylistics semantics, rhetoric, et cetera.

Setiawan (2007) avers that the work of Muḥājīd bn Jubbār (104/722), who was one of the students of Ibn Abbās, was regarded as the beginning of the metaphorical interpretation of anthropomorphist expression that was later developed by Mu’taqilītes. At this period, the full work on interpretation of Qur‘ān (tafsīr al- Qur‘ān) appeared for the first time by Abū Ja‘far bn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (310/923) under the name “Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘An Ta‘wil Ay al-Qur‘ān”. Later followed by Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767), Maqātil bn Sulaymān (d.150/767), al-Kisā‘ī (d. 189/805), Abū Ziyād al-Farrā‘ (d. 210/825), Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889).

In the twentieth century, the Qur’anic studies went through remarkable expansion by the Muslims scholars with the aim of reviving Muslim society. Hoping that the Qur‘ān must be in conformity with ideology of the Western worlds, particularly how a Muslim of the twenty-first century should relate to the Qur‘ān. Sayed (2006) notes that amongst the foremost scholars in this regard are; Amān al-Khālīl (d.1966) who was an Egyptian Qur’anic scholar that approached the Qur‘ān from modern linguistic perspective. Following his approach were some of his students, like Nasr Abū Zayd (d.2010), Muḥāammad Aḥmad Khalafālāh (d.1991) and ‘A’ishah Abdur-Rahmān Bintu Shāṭi (d.1998). Also, from India were Shāh Waliyyullāh (d 1762) and Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1898). They emphasized that Taqīd (blind imitation of early scholars) must be rejected, while adoption of Ijtihād (independent judgment) to accommodate fresh ideas in interpretation of the Qur‘ān must be encouraged.

In recent time, the reformist thinkers among the Muslims had attempted to demonstrate the relevance of the Qur‘ān to contemporary life. Amongst such scholars are Muḥāammad Abduh (d. 1905), Muḥāammad Iqbal (d. 1938), Ḥasan al-Banna (d. 1949), Sayyid Qutb (1966), Abū ʿAla Mawdūdī (d. 1979), Murtaza Mutahhari (d. 1979), Fazlur Raḥmān (d. 1988) and Ayatollah Khomeini (d. 1989).

Added to this effort was the contributions of the Orientalists to the field of Qur’anic studies. Over the centuries, western scholars have been making significant contributions into the Qur’anic studies from different perspectives; language, style, Rhetoric, thematic e.t.c. Their interest began with the study of the Arabic-Islamic cultural heritage generally for number of reasons. Later much attention was on the Qur‘ān and its sciences, for reasons being the primary source of Arabic and Islamic culture.

Mohar (2002) claims that between 18th -19th century, attention was shifted from age long approach of Qur’anic studies into its “historical context” by applying new Western literary theories such as, biblical, historical and linguistics theories. In the forefront of these approaches were; Aloy Spernger, William Muir, Theodore Noldeke, Ignaz Goldziher, W. Wellhausen, Leon Caeteni, David Samuel Margoliouth, Ritchard Bell William Montgomery.

Mohar, further explains that recently, the focus of the western scholarship in the field of Qur’anic studies has led to the emergence of the revisionist movement. This movement calls for the critical reviewing of all classical works, by either Muslim scholars or
orientalist on Islam generally and the Qur’an specifically due to some misinterpretations and errors. Therefore, the Revisionist movement proposed the applying new theoretical frame like historical-critical analysis, textual study, structuralism and anthropology criticism, which has been applied to the sacred books of other faith. Amongst the Western representative scholars of this movement are: James Bellamy, John Wansbrough, Michael Cook, Patricia Crone Günter Lüling, Christoph Luxenberg, Tehuda Nevo, Andrew Rippin, Kenneth Cragg, Toby Lester and James Bellamy among others.

2. Post-Colonial Lagos and the Qur’anic Scholarship

Lagos is part of Southwest of the geo-political part of Nigeria, dominated by Yoruba speaking people that consist towns like Oyo, Osogbo, Akiti, Akure, Osun, Lagos and most part of Kwara state. According to Lawal (2002), Lagos is popularly called “Eko” before the independence. It was later changed to Lagos, which was derived from the Portuguese “lagoons”. Lagos was happened to be the capital of Republic of Nigeria during the Colony and Protectorate until 1991, when the capital was relocated to Abuja. The city experienced rapid growth throughout the 1960s and 1970s because of Nigeria’s economic boom prior to the Biafra war. It always maintains large diverse and fast-growing population, due to the heavy and on-going migration to the city from all parts of the country and as well neighboring countries. Lagos is now under five divisions; Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos and Epe. The divisions had further been divided into 20 Local Government and later 53 Local Development Council Areas in order to enhance easy administration.

Qur’anic scholarship in Yorubaland in general and in Lagos in particular is an age-long tradition as the history of Islam. Wherever Islam goes, Islamic and Qur’anic education find their way there. Adetona (2017) notes that before the advent of British colony in Lagos in 1861, some of its habitants had taken Islam as a way of life, using it as the standard of life and thus, they did not hide even under the colonial rule, their flair for Islamic tenets. On this note, Islamic teaching spread in all over the places through Alufas. While the learning started from local setting called Ile-Kewu (Arabic School) and spread all over the place. At this period, there was no standard structure for the learning, but the only available place was the front of the house (veranda) or mosque, either private or public mosque. It was latter transformed into standard school under leadership of great scholars, which spread at all nooks and crannies of Lagos State today. There was no syllabus that detailed what and how to teach, rather the pupils were mandated to identify Arabic alphabets that were always written on slate called “wala” that is “lawhu” in Arabic. After the proper identification of letters, students progressed to the next level, which is reading of those letters with various signs (Harakat)-such as (Fatihah, Kasrah Damnah Fathatan, Kasratan, Dammatani, Alif al-Madi, Wa’ al-Madi, Ya’ al-Madi, Sukun and Shadah). These signs placed on top or below letters. After mastering the signs, students started reading the Qur’an starting from Surah al-fātiḥah, as starting point, then moved back to surah al-Nūs- which is the smallest surah till the completion of the whole Qur’an at surah al-Baqarah. According to Jimoh (2014), at different stages of recitation, pupils were encouraged to bringing food or anything eatable to the madrasah to mark their achievement. For instance, at completion of the surah al-fil, cooked beans would be brought to the madrasah as a feast, at Sūrah al-‘A’lā slaughter hen with rice would be brought to the madrasah, at Surah Yasin slaughter goat. Finally, on the compilation of the whole Qur’an, ram would be slaughtered as wālimatul-Qur’an (feast). These are motivation and encouragement for celebrants and others pupils in the madrasah. Adetona (2017: 11) “The majority of the Muslims in Lagos educated or not, had a taste of Qur’anic education right from their childhood. And most of the Muslim in Lagos recognized the need for Islamic education through the Qur’anic school as a prerequisite to ensure their spiritual wellbeing”.

The research has shown that there are number of outstanding scholars in every part of Lagos, promoting Da’wah activities and Qur’anic scholarship, amongst those scholars are, Shaykh Ahamad Tijani Awelenje, Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory, Shaykh Mustapha Zughul al-Sanusi, shaykh Musa Agboola, Shaykh Mashood Jubril Ramdan, shaykh Abdul-Wahab Zubayr al-Ghamawi and others.

Jimoh (2014), notices that recently, Qur’anic education has taken new dimension in Lagos state, when many Qur’anic centers have scattered all over the places focusing on the recitation and memorization of the Qur’an with the art of Tajwīd. Among such school are “Abdul-Lateef Center for Qur’anic Memorization” and Madrasah Junud Dimnil Islamiyah in area of Mushin in Lagos. All these schools had promoted Qur’anic competitions, at different level, local and national.
3. A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF SHAYKH ADAM ABDULLAH AL-ILORY

Shaykh Adam was an international acclaimed scholar. He was a Yoruba by origin hailed from Ilorin Kwara State. He was born in 1917 by Abdul-Baqi bn Ḥabībullah bn ʿAbdullah, in a town called Waza in the Dendi Local Government of the Republic of Benin, the hometown of his mother ʿA’ishah who was a princess of the reigning King of the town. His father hailed from Ilorin, the capital city of kwara State, Nigeria. Ilorin is a city that is well known in the history of Islam for its scholarship grandeur, academic achievement, religious devotion and other glorious peculiarities.

Abdusallam (2012), states that Shaykh Adam started Arabic-Islamic education at early from his father. Because, nearly every home of Muslim scholars is regarded as preparatory stage of learning, where their children start to acquire elementary knowledge of Islam. After this stage, Shaykh Adam proceeded to Ibadan in 1934 for the intermediate level with Shaykh Salihu (Esin-ni-yoo-biwa) (d.1984). Later, he moved to Shaykh ʿUmar Agbaji (1909–1974) in 1939 while he was in Lagos, under whom he read a number of various books on different fields of knowledge. Thereafter, he met Shaykh Adam Namaji of Kano (d.1944). He acquired from him branches of Arabic language, which included; Rhetoric, Literature, Composition, Poetry and Logic. He also learnt from Sayed Musaal-Amin who was a trader from Syria that settled down in Lagos.

According to Abdulkadir (2010), in 1946, Shaykh Adam visited al-Azhar University in Cairo, where he submitted himself for examinations in different subjects like, Tafsīr, Fiqh, ʿUsul, Tajwīd, Akhlāq, Nahw, Sarf, Balāghah and al-ʿArūd and-Qāafiyah. He passed well in all these subjects. He was thereafter awarded a certificate of teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies that equivalent to al-Azhar Old Secondary School Level. While he was in Cairo, he developed interest in teaching methodologies and school administration. He later proceeded to Makkah to perform that year’s Hajj. At Makkah, he interacted with some great scholars. Apart from Egypt and Saudi Arabia, he also visited Sudan, Senegal and Somalia where he attended many conferences and searched for Islamic materials and exposure.

He returned to Nigeria-1947. He then worked briefly with Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria as Arabic and Islamic teacher in its school at Abeokuta. However, not quite long, he left the job, for the establishment of his own private Arabic and Islamic school, which offered him a great opportunity to display his talent. He founded his school on 16th April 1952 at Abeokuta, Ogun State with the name “Markaz al-Taʿālīm al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī” (Arabic Training Centre). He later moved the school to Lagos after three years of its establishment for the easy contact of the well-to-do people in the capital and the Arab-world embassies. The school was the first organized Arabic School in Yorubaland of South West of Nigeria in all ramifications with distinct physical structures of classrooms, hostels, mosques, clinic and building for teachers and other administrative staff. On this note, Opeloye and Makinde (2012) report:

Prior to 1952, Yoruba land including the area today known as southwester Nigeria never had modern standard Arabic school. What was common were the traditional Qur’anic school that operated in mosques or known as ʿIle-kewu. The first modern standard Arabic school surfaced in 1952. This was Markaz- institute of Arabic and Islamic Training Center established by our illustrious scholar, shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory in April of that year. (p.73)

The emergence of Markaz in Yorubaland had changed the history of Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria and some neighboring countries by bringing in different innovations, such as introducing syllabus, duration of the study, classroom arrangement, uniform, instructional materials and others. The school as at today had produced numbers of scholars occupying different positions in human endeavors; workers in the field of Arabic and Islamic at various establishments in Nigeria and abroad. Some are University lectures, administrative officers at different levels as well as in the Judiciary. Shaykh Adam had to his credit publications over 100 books, which include books, monographs and instructional materials. He participated in several national and international conferences at home and abroad. In recognition and appreciation of his efforts and achievements, the President Muhsin Mubarak of Egypt, awarded him the Highest Egyptian Literary Award on Monday, 9th October 1989. He died in London on Sunday 3rd of May 1992.

4. HIS QUR’ANIC SCHOLARSHIP

Since the volume of works of Shaykh Adam had established his encyclopedic scholarship in all Arabic and Islamic Sciences, his effort in the Qur’anic scholarship was worthy of notice among other areas being the primary source of Islam. He started and ended his journey on Arabic and Islamic knowledge with the Qur’anic studies. His last Da’wah activity was Tafsīr, which he delivered in Ramadaan 1412/February 1992, before he his death some month after.
Abdukadir (2010) asserts that Shaykh Adam started reading the *Qur’ān* at the early age under his father and completed it at the age of seven. He also committed part of its chapter into memory. He also learnt from his father, Arabic grammar (*Nahu*) and Islamic Theology (*al-Kālam*), which served as basis and foundation for understanding of the *Qur’ān*. He thereafter, moved to other great Islamic scholars of his time for the advanced level in Arabic and Islamic studies that offered him proper understanding of the *Qur’ān*. After he became an acclaimed scholar, he established his school and taught various aspect of Quranic studies. Based on the account of the Hadith of the Prophet that says; “The best among you is he who learnt the art of the *Qur’ān* and also teaches it”. The following are areas of his contributions:

(a) Teaching the Art of Quranic Recitation

*Qur’ān*, being a foundation and source of Islam, its knowledge is compulsory for every Muslims, both male and female. Therefore, in the curriculum of every Arabic school, there is greater portion for Quranic studies. It is on this note that Shaykh Adam placed Quranic recitation at the preparatory stage called (*Tahadīr*) to serve as a starting point, which other studies would be built upon. At this stage, students started with learning of Arabic alphabets from its place and point of articulations. Then reading letters with various signs at always place above or bello letters, like; (*Fatḥah*, *Kasrah*, *Dammah*, *Faḥatān*, *Kasratān*, *Dammatān*, *Alif al-Mad*, *Wā’ al-Mad*, *Yā’ al-Mad*, *Suḵun*, *al-Shaddah*). These efforts enable students to read and write simple Arabic. Then, the art of Quranic reading was introduced as a subject, which was always handled by well-trained teachers. The recitation started from the last volume of the *Qur’ān*, which popularly called *Juz’ Amma*. The volume contains 37 chapters (78-114). However, students read the *Sūrah al-Fāṭihah* first, which is chapter one of the *Qur’ān*, then recitation continues with the last chapter, which is *Sūrah al-Nās*-chapter 114 till the end of the volume. Because the volume contains short chapters, which would be easier for the beginner to read. The teacher recited it with the application of *Tajwīd*, while the pupils repeated it after him as many time as possible till it reached the apex of perfection before moving to other *Sūrah*. After the preparatory level, the recitation continued at *al-ʾIdādī* (primary) level by the student with less supervision of teachers, because of the acquired skill at the previous level. Then meaning of *Qur’ān* was introduced to student, started from last volume, known as *Juz’ Amma*. The translation covers the introduction to revelation of the *sūrah*, its content and moral teachings.

(b) Teaching of *ʿIlm al-Tajwīd*

*ʿIlm al-Tajwīd* is subject that teacher the rules that guide proper recitation of the *Qur’ān* and prevents the reader from committing *laḥn* (solecism). The Quranic recitation and *Tajwīd* are inseparable, and since in such way it was transmitted from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to his Companions. Therefore, in order to perfect the recitation of the *Qur’ān*, Shaykh Adam introduced *ʿIlm al-Tajwīd* as a compulsory subject at *Tahadīr* (preparatory level), which was handled by an experienced teacher. An instructional material used for this subject was a small leaflet written by himself titled “Daʿīl ʿQirāt al-Maṣḥaf” (Guide to the Quranic Recitation). The pamphlet introduces students to the ways and manners of articulate Quranic letters (Arabic alphabet) correctly. The pamphlet starts with the identification of Arabic alphabets, then reading the letters with different signs called *al-Harakāt*. It later describes the letters from manners and points of articulation by grouping the alphabets into five groups of which each group has various point of articulation. They are *Hurūf al-Jawf* (Cavity Letters), *Hurūf al-Khaq* (Pharynx Letters) *Hurūf al- Lisān* (Tongue Letters) *Hurūf al-Shafātān* (Two Lips Letters) and *Hurūf al-Khayshām* (Nostril Letters). It also details letters that appeared in usual forms but reads in different forms, such as *wāʾ* that reads as *alif*. *Yāʾ* that sounds as *alif*. Also, *wāʾ* that is always silent (not pronounced). It further explains some marks that serve as punctuation marks whenever they appeared in the *Qur’ān*. Examples are;

- *Mīm* Compulsory stopping
- *Lām* No stopping
- *Jīm* Two options either to Stop or not
- *Ṣālā* Continuation more is preferable
  (One can stop)
- *Qālā* Stopping is however preferable.
  (One can continue)
- *Qīf* Stopping is optional. (al-Ilory n.d)

Additional book that furthers the knowledge of *Tajwīd* is titled “Iḍāyatul al-Mufīd fi ʿAkhām al-Tajwīd” by al-Shaykh Muhammad Mahmūd). The book contains introduction and sixteen lessons. Each lesson teaches different aspects of *ʿIlm al-Tajwīd*, such as rules of reciting of new *Sūrah* with *bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmān r-raḥim* and *Aʿūd billah minash-shaytān ṫajūm, ʿArūn al-Sakina, ṫanwīn, Mīm al-Sakina, Nīm al-Mushadadah, al-Idghām, al-Mamduḥ, Makharaj al-Hurūf* e.t.c. (Mahmud n.d) After all these rudimentary works, students are able to read *Qur’ān* perfectly with rules of *Tajwīd*.

(c) Teaching of *ʿUlūm al-Tafsīr*
At the secondary level (al-Thanawī), Qur’anic studies continued with additional subject called ‘Ulām al-Tafsīr (Exegetical studies/science). The subject teaches all aspects of the Qur‘ān, which includes its revelation, collection, compilation, arrangement in orderly manner, documentation, information reasons and occasions of the revelation, Makkah and Madīna Sūrah, and the reciters, seven dialects used in the Qur‘ān, the first and the last revelation. The material used for this subject was called “Mubādi‘ al-Tafsīr” written by Ustadh Mashūd Abubakr, who was one of his students that graduated from the University of Qarawiyyin in Morocco with first degree in Sharī‘ah.

The material is just an introduction to ‘Ulām al-Qur‘ān, but not in details. (Abubakr 1984)

(d) Teaching other Subjects that Aid Proper Understanding of the Qur‘ān

Qur‘ān, being a book of Allah revealed in Arabic language for all humankind, its proper misunderstanding depends on various branches of knowledge, such as al-Nahw (Arabic syntax), al-Sarfū (Arabic Morphology), al-Balāghah (Arabic Rhetoric) al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī (Islamic History) al-Rasm (Calligraphy). (www.adjmaoui.over-blog.com.article-60997). In this regard, Shaykh Adam included some of these subjects into school curriculum at both primary and secondary level (al-‘Idādī and al-Tawjī). They included; Nahw (Arabic syntax), Šarīfu (Arabic Morphology), Balāghah (Arabic Rhetoric) al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī (Islamic History). Al-Adab, (Arabic Literature; poetry and prose), Geography, logic. These subjects, by one way or the others, had been a great advantage for students to get the proper understanding of the Qur‘ān and to further research in the field of the Qur‘ānic studies.

(e) Practical Tafsīr (Exegesis) of Qur‘ān Session

According to the assertion of Gafoordeen (2007), that tafsīr of the Qur‘ān is one of the great significant aspects of Qur’anic studies, which many scholars involved in order to provide deep understanding of the word of Allah. Therefore, Shaykh Adam, as other ‘Ulamā’ in Yorubaland involved in oral Tafsīr of the Qur‘ān most especially during the month of Ramadān. It is important to emphasize according to Ariyibi (2012), in the sixties, Shaykh Adam created time out of his tight schedule for Tafsīr in the month of Ramadān at his school premises (Markaz) purposely as an extra-curricular for students, just to demonstrate the practical aspect of Tafsīr. His Tafsīr was unequalled, unparalleled and unrivalled amongst others. However, prior to creating time for Tafsīr, he has been involved in series of lectures of different themes, by which portions of the Qur‘ān and Hadith are onus of those lectures. His Tafsīr was scheduled for every day in the month of Ramadān, by 10.00 clock to 2.00 pm except on Fridays due to other commitments. At the initial stage, Shaykh Adam committed himself to interpretation of the whole Qur‘ān in every month Ramadān. He started from Sūrah al-Māidah- to Sūrah al-Nās. He made used one of the most popular books of Tafsīr called Jalālayn of both great scholars- Jalālud-Dīn al Mahalli and Jalālud-Dīn as-Sayūṭī.

Despite the fact that Tafsīr of Shaykh Adam was unique in nature, yet he upheld the widespread tradition style among the ‘Ulamā’ in Yorubaland, by the use of Ajanasi (one who repeats the recitation of the Qur‘ān) and Arowasi (one who acts as a megaphone to amplify the speech). Some of his students had acted in those positions, like Late al-Shakh Yahaya Murtada Agodi, the Proprietor of Markaz al-Talim al-Arabi Ilorin, Agodi and Late Isa Bello. Until his death, Shaykh Mashid Ramdān Jibril, who was the head of teachers, remained as his Chief Ajanasi. He was always at right hand side of Shaykh and next to him were other two Ajanasi; Ustadh Sulayman Abdul-Wahāb Al-Ghuniyawī and late Ustadh Murtadah Mustapha (popularly called Muqr‘i al-Markaz (Markaz’s reciter). Ustadh Daud Abdul-Majeed Alufa-nla was Arowasi. They were all teachers in Markaz. Immediately after recitation of a portion of the Qur‘ān by Shaykh Adam, the Chief Ajanasi and other two Ajanasi repeated it one after the others with their musical tone called al-Sawtu al-Markaz (Markaz tone). This tone is very unique among others in Yorubaland, which is very peculiar to all Markaz students alone. It is out of desires of Shaykh Adam to complete the whole Qur‘ān in the month of Ramadān, he confined himself to a surface meaning, without much digression. The method adopted by Shaykh Adam was an ample opportunity to his students to have the full meaning of Qur‘ān more than once before their graduation in Markaz. But, due to circumstances, the Tafsīr developed into public lecture, where topical issues on religion, politics and social were been discussed. Consequently, the Tafsīr, took several years to be completed.

This new development led to the increase in number of peoples that attended the Tafsīr from different phases of life; lecturers, student politicians, government officials, artisans and businessmen, both males and females, particularly on weekends-
Saturdays and Sundays. Despite the Tafsīr has metamorphosed into public lectures, it remained a religious activity where issues relating to Islam and Muslims in Nigeria and world at large were given priority over others. For instance, the issue of unity and peaceful co-existence among the people of scriptures was extensively discussed. For instance, he quoted as followed: “O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him). Q. 3:64

Likewise, in 1985, during the Military reign of General Muhammad Buhari and Tunde Idi-Agbon, “War Against Indiscipline” (WAI) was introduced as a mechanism to checkmate the indiscipline in the society. Shaykh Adam supported the administration and its ideology. He devoted his Tafsīr session for public enlightenment and awareness on the rationale behind the concept WAI from Islamic perspective. As a social critic, he prayed, encouraged and advised the government, at all levels local; local, state and federal, whenever he noticed anything right or wrong. He referred to the following Qur’ān verse;

“Surely Allah enjoins justice, kindness and the doing of good to kith and kin, and forbids all that is shameful, evil and oppressive. He exhorts you so that you may be mindful” Q.16:90

Sanni (2017), quotes John Hunwick (1936-2015), referred to Shaykh Adam as one of the legends and authorities on the intellectual heritage of Sudanic Africa and indeed of Nigeria.” So, an ample testimony to this assertion was his Tafsīr. Due to the quality and educative nature of his Tafsīr, it became public appeared in electronic media, like Radio and Television for public consumption. At the early stage, Shaykh Adam frowned at all mass media to record his Tafsīr, but, later in the eighties, permission was granted to Alhaji Yahya Salam-who was a Radio Lagos staff-to record the Tafsīr. It is from Yahya Salam, the Tafsīr became public hearing by using it during the Islamic programmes, particularly on Friday, Mawlid Nabiyyi and festivals like ‘Id al-Fitr and Adhā. After a while, the programme stopped and needed sponsorship. In this vain, Alhaji Abdul Ghanīyy Mogaji (d.2006) took the responsibility for a while. Later, Alhaji Abdul Wahab Iyanda Folawuyo (d.2008) continued with the sponsorship when he was alive and sustain till today by his families. The Tafsīr comes-up on air every Friday by 8.30.pm-9.00pm. All the recorded Tafsīr are still available in Alhaji Yahya Salam’s archive. (Yayah Salam, Personal Communication, 3rd May 2019).

In addition, Chief Moshhood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola (MKO) (d. 1998), who was a Muslim philanthropist in Yorubaland started sponsorship of the Tafsīr on Television particularly in Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) during the Ramadan till his death. Later, his son, Lateef Abiola took up the sponsorship for a while. The Markaz, under the current Rector, Muhammad Habeebullah Adam Abdullah al-Ilory took the challenge, with assistance from well-meaning Muslim of Nigeria. The Tafsīr got back to the television particularly Muri International Television (MITV). (Abubakr Abdul-Ghaniyy Apatira, Personal Communication, 2nd Feb. 2019)

There are many students of school of Tafsīr of Shaykh Adam scattered all over the places, holding sway in virtually all fields of human endeavors in Nigeria and outside Nigeria. Among them are University lecturers, Imams of various mosques, Islamic associations, proprietors of Arabic and Islamic schools. Some of these peoples have established their own Tafsīr sessions very similar in nature and style to that of their teacher and mentor. Typical example of them in Lagos include, Shaykh Mutapha Zughul as-Sanusi, Shaykh Yahya Agboola, Shaykh Mashood Jubril Ramadān, Shaykh Abdul-Wahab Zubair al-Ghamawi, Shaykh Saeed Olawunni, Shaykh Misbahudeen Zubayr al-Saytunni, Shaykh Sulaimān Farūq Onikijipa, and host of others. Aside from students of Markaz, other students and Imams of various mosques or societies attended the Tafsīr session. Likewise, other ‘Ulāma’ of reputable mosques and associations who preferred shifting their own Tafsīr to other time, in order to attend Shaykh Adam’s Tafsīr in the morning.

After the death of Shaykh Adam, the Tafsīr continued in Markaz, but on rotational system between his two children; Muhammad Habībullah Adam Abdullah and Muhammed Thawbān Adam ‘Abdullah and one of Shaykh Adam disciples, Shaykh Masihhdūd Jubbrīl Ramadān-who was the head of teachers by then. However, after the crises among the Shaykh Adam’s children and some staffs, which led to the exit of the two among the three that are in charge of Tafsīr; they are Shaykh Masihhdūd Jubbrīl, and Shaykh Muhammad Thowbān Adam Abdullah. Therefore, the only person that keeping the flag fly is Shaykh Muhammad Ḥabībullah Adam Abdullah
since he mounted the leadership of the Markaz in 1998.

It is instructive to note that Shaykh Habibulah Adam Abdullah retains Shaykh Adam’s style of Tafsir. He started his Tafsir without much digression, but later diverted to the public enlightenment on some misconception and misunderstanding issues in Islam such as, Hijab and fabricated Hadith in Fath al-Bukhari.

(f) Translation of the Meaning of the Qur’an.

The emergence of the translation of the Qur’an into another language is not a new phenomenon in any given society, it started right from the time immemorial. Several efforts had been made by scholars to translate the Qur’an into various languages of the world for people to understand the message of Allah, and Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria was no exception. According to Ogunbiyi (1988), the first noticeable attempt in this regard was credited to a Christian missionary, Reverend M.S Cole. The work was published by the Church Missionary Society in Lagos in 1924. Another attempt was from Reverend A.K. Akinlade under the titled of: “Itumo al-Kuran Li Ede Yoruba” (Meaning of the Qur’an in Yoruba Language). It was printed by Caxton Press West Africa Ltd in Ibadan in 1965. However, the two Reverends had no knowledge of Arabic language, which is the original language of Qur’an, but solidly depended on English translated version of Qur’an. Ogunbiyi (1988) further observes during oral interview with Reverend Akinlade;

“His translation of the Qur’an was motivated by what he described as a desire to fill the vacuum created by the absence of a complete Yoruba translation. He claimed that his translation was meant for every Yoruba reader interested in a knowledge of the content of the Qur’an. He admitted that he knew no Arabic at all and that he relied mainly on English translation of the Qur’an, especially the translation by Marmaduku Pickthall titled “The Meaning of the Glorious Koran” and translation of N.J. Dawood titled “The Koran” (p.95)

The next version was an effort of an individual Muslims, such as translation of Alhaji Usama Kuta titled “Odidi Kurani ni Ede Yoruba” (A Complete Qur’an in Yoruba language). It was printed in Iwo town, Osun state. Also, the translation of Ahamadiyyah Muslim Mission started with only one Juz’ (volume) by Basheer al-Din Mahmud Khalifah Ghulam Ahmad. Later, ten men committee under the leadership of Alhaji B.B Balogun was commissioned to complete the remaining translation in 1967. The work was titled “Al-Kuran Mimo Ni Ede Yoruba Ati Larubawa” (Holy Qur’an in Yoruba and Arabic Languages. (Abdul-Azeez 2015)

Later, the Muslim Council of Nigeria spearheaded another translation at the instance of his eminence Sir Ahmadu Bello, with support from the World Muslim Leagues (WML) and the King Khalid bn Abdul-Azeez of Saudi-Arabia. The translation passed through three various stages.

I. The first stage was a committee that started the work 1962, which included Imam Jamii, Muhammad- Awwal Augusto, Ahmad Tijani. Akani, Hasani Yusau Dindey among others. The work completed with the supervision of Sir Ahmadu Bello and Ustaz Kamilti Sharif.

II. The second stage was the committee that proof-read the work in 1972. It was a committee of four undergraduate Nigeria students of Arabic and Islamic studies at the Islamic University of Madina and Al-Azhar University, they were; Abdul Latif Ahmad from Al-Azhar University, while Abdul Wahab Sanusi, Khidr Mustapha and ‘Isa Ade Bello were from Islamic University of Madina.

III. In 1973, the work passed through the third committee of erudite Yoruba Muslim scholars, for final editing, correction and assessment. They included; Shaykh Kamaludin al-Adabi, Shakh Burhanudin Sanusi Alaka, Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory, Alhaji Abdul Rahman Salahudin al-Adabi, Alhaji Muhammad Raji Sulaiman El-Imam and Alhaji Musa Ali Ajetunmobi al-Adabi. The work was titled “Al-Quran Ti A Tumo si Ede Yoruba”. (Ogunbiyi, 1988, Olawale 2015, Bakah 2018)

The final edited copy was published by Dar al-Arabia, Beirut with financial assistance of King Faysal bn Abdul-‘Aziz of Saudi Arabia. The work was published in two volumes; volume one starts from chapter one to seventeen which contains 379 pages, while the second volume starts from chapter eighteen to one hundred and fourteen with 380 pages. The work has been printed more than three times. It was distributed during the reign of King Faysal bn ‘Abdul-‘Aziz of Saudi Arabia freely for pilgrims.

A fact worth of admitting is that, under this committee, Shaykh Adam al-Ilory played remarkable roles. He was the secretary throughout the period,
between 1962-1973. He was also the custodian of all information regarding the task before the committee.

In 2004, the translation went through another review by the two Nigeria Students at the Islamic University in Madinah-Late Ibrahim Abdul-Baqi and Abdur-Razaq Abdul Majid Alaro. When there is need to reproduce the work, by Saudi Arabia Kingdom. The title was amended as “Al-Qur’ān Alaponle Pelu itumo Re ni Ede Yoruba”

Another translations that is worth of mentioning in this category was translation of Professor Y.A Quadir called “ Al-Kur’an Alaponle Itumo si Ede Yoruba”. Also the translation of an Indian Scholar, Basheer Ahmad Muhyidin in 2003 called “Al-Kur’an Oro Abemi Tooto Ododo Oro Ayeraye”. Other individual efforts that translated portion of the Qur’ān into Yoruba, include, “Al-Qur’ān Totobi Esu Meta Pelu Itumo” by Abdul-‘Azīz Lahol. “ Al-Kurani Alaponle Esu Kan Ti Atu Si Ede Yoruba” by Solihu Bamidele Alukuran Esu Marun ati Itumo by K. Ade Bello. (Ali-Again 2017, Bakah 2018)

5. ANALYSIS OF THE APPROACH OF SHAYKH ADAM TO THE TEACHING OF THE Qur’ān

It is important to emphasize here that the methodology adopted by Shaykh Adam in teaching Qur’ānic for beginners was quite different from others, particularly in Northern part of Nigeria. The method is very similar to the Andalusia (Spain) method. The Qur’ānic recitation at the initial stage was combine with other subjects, such as Arabic grammar, morphology, Arabic reading, Arabic literature, Arabic Poetry, Islamic history, Fiqh e.t.c. Hoping that the style would assist students to have basic knowledge that enable them to understand the meaning of what they are reading to a certain extent. Al-Ilory (2013) made his position known while quoted Ibn Khalidūn;

“There are different methods of learning of the Qur’ān in Islamic world. Some of these methods were replicated in Africa at large and in Nigeria in particular. In Morocco and some part of West Africa, like Bornu, Senegal and Hausa, much concentration is on the recitation and memorization alone, without study any other subjects at the initial stage. However, the reverse is the case in Africa, West Africa and Andalusia, where focus is given to other subjects related to Arabic language and Islamic studies such Hadith, Fiqh, Arabic poetry when student are learning Qur’ānic. (p.36-38)

al-Ilory elucidated the reason behind choosing his position.

“If Ibn al-‘Arabī could criticized this method among the Arab children who were assisted in comprehending the meaning of Qur’ān due to their native speaker’s knowledge of Arabic by demonstrating their inability to grasp the meaning of what they read. Dear reader, what do you thing who has not been brought up with Arabic (breast) milk. Why should we impose on them the reading of the Qur’ān in parotica-like manner without understanding a single word there” (p. 38)

6. CONCLUSION

In foregoing study, we have discussed the contributions of Shaykh Adam al-Ilory at different perspective to the Qur’ānic scholarship in post-colonial era of Lagos of Southwest of Nigeria. The study shows that he was well versed in all aspects of the Qur’ānic studies; Tafsīr of the Qur’ān, Arabic language, condition of revelation of the Qur’ān, rhetoric, alongside, he was a historian, couple with history of Islam in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. He was also an orator with a great power of presentation. Through his Tafsīr he could be called a poet, a preacher, a social commentator and jurist of note. His work on Qur’ānic Tafsīr at Markaz and pubic still enjoys continuous relevance and referrals to date. The study reveals that the instructional materials recommended and used to teach students gave solid foundation for the student of which they can independently continue on Qur’ānic education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is pertinent now, based on our findings, to make some suggestions and recommendations for improvement of the Quranic scholarship;

I. Qur’ān recitation at early state must be handled by an expert Ustadh who had special training on the Qur’ān.

II. Using modern instructional materials like audio-visual to teach beginners on place and manner of articulation of the Arabic alphabet.

III. Regular training or refreshing courses for teachers within and outside the country.

IV. Reviewing all subjects relating to the Qur’ānic studies at all levels.

V. Focus must be given to practical aspect of Tafsīr in the class, since Tafsīr in the Ramaḍān has turned to the public lecture.

VI. Different aspects of Tafsīr must be taught in the class, such as moral social and political
themes in order to guide the student at the larger life after their school life.

VII. Contribution of non-Muslims to the field of Qur’anic studies must be given consideration in the school curriculum to appreciate the non-Muslim scholars of Qur’an.

VIII. Proper documentation and preservation of Tafsīr for future purpose must be encouraged.

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