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Qur'anic Learning Strategies for Improving Students' Qur'anic Reading Ability at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Husna Langgapayung Labuhan Batu Selatan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe Qur'anic learning strategies, portray the quality of students' Qur'anic reading ability, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors in Qur'anic instruction at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Husna Langgapayung. A qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted iteratively through data organization, selection, presentation of findings, and conclusion drawing, while data trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation of techniques and sources. The findings indicate that Qur'anic instruction is implemented through a combination of strategies, namely cooperative learning (small groups of four to five students), the application of the Qira'ati method with immediate correction, habituation of Qur'anic reading before the start of lessons, and ability-based grouping (fluent and moderate). Based on Qur'anic reading assessments using indicators of fluency, smoothness, accuracy of makhraj, and tajwīd, out of 51 eighth-grade students, 31 students (60.8%) were classified as fluent and 20 students (39.2%) as moderate. Difficulties among the moderate group primarily involved the articulation of certain letters and the consistent application of tajwīd rules, particularly madd and ikhfā'. Supporting factors include students' intrinsic motivation and sincere intention, teachers' instructional innovation, and institutional facilities, while inhibiting factors encompass boredom, lack of motivation, and limited learning time. These findings underscore the importance of integrating technical instruction, habituation, cooperation, and differentiated learning services to achieve more equitable improvements in the quality of Qur'anic reading.

Introduction

The Qur'an is the kalām of Allah (SWT) revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and serves as the ultimate guide for the lives of Muslims; reciting it is considered an act of worship while also functioning as a means of internalizing scholarly and moral values. The obligation to "read" as a gateway to knowledge is implicitly conveyed in the first revelation, indicating that the ability to read the Qur'an is not merely a technical skill but an integral component of the Islamic educational process (Hakami & Diprata, 2023). Since the Qur'an functions as the primary source of Islamic law and jurisprudence, the correctness of its recitation (tartīl) becomes a prerequisite to ensure proper

interaction between Muslims and the Qur'an, both in acts of worship and in learning contexts (Kholid & Mafariech, 2021).

The quality of Qur'anic recitation is closely related to mastery of makhārij al-ḥurūf and the rules of tajwīd, including accuracy in vowel length (madd) and consistency in applying recitation rules. Pedagogically, proficient Qur'anic reading is understood as the ability to recite in a tartīl manner with precise articulation points and correct tajwīd (Siswanto & Wahida, 2022). Therefore, Qur'anic instruction requires strategies that go beyond merely increasing reading time; it must also strengthen pronunciation quality and tajwīd accuracy through guidance, practice, and continuous feedback.

In practice, students' abilities to read the Qur'an are often uneven. Differences in religious educational background, reading habits, and prior learning experiences result in some students being relatively fluent, while others still require fundamental reinforcement. This heterogeneity is commonly found in Islamic educational institutions, including pesantren, as these institutions accommodate students from diverse backgrounds and aim to foster moral character and Islamic knowledge through a distinctive educational system (Alfi & Idawati, 2022). Such conditions necessitate adaptive instructional strategies so that improvement occurs not only among advanced students but also among those at basic and intermediate levels.

Theoretically, instructional strategy is understood as a "tactic" or planned design of approaches, techniques, and steps employed by educators to achieve learning objectives effectively (Hasriadi, 2022; Nasution, 2017). In the learning context, strategy becomes a key element because learning is essentially an interaction process between educators, learners, and learning resources, designed to help learners acquire knowledge and skills progressively (Djamaluddin, 2019). Accordingly, Qur'anic learning strategies need to be designed based on learners' needs (ability levels), the characteristics of the material (articulation points, tajwīd, melody), and the learning situation (time, environment, and institutional support).

Previous studies indicate that strategies such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and structured instructional methods can enhance Qur'anic reading skills by providing opportunities for practice, mutual correction, and peer learning support (Alfi & Idawati, 2022; Nilawati et al., 2021). In addition, approaches that emphasize the careful selection of techniques and instructional patterns are considered essential for achieving educational objectives optimally (Hendra, 2022). On the other hand, psychological factors such as learners' interest and motivation also influence the learning process and outcomes; therefore, instructional strategies must consider affective aspects to prevent boredom during reading practice (Ahmadi & Prasetya, 2005).

Nevertheless, studies on Qur'anic reading instruction often focus on a single approach in isolation, whereas practices in modern pesantren frequently integrate multiple strategies simultaneously such as ability-based grouping, habitual reading practices, cooperative learning, and the use of specific recitation methods. Consequently, empirical evidence explaining how these combined strategies are implemented within a modern pesantren ecosystem

(characterized by heterogeneous student backgrounds), along with the contextual supporting and inhibiting factors, remains limited and requires further strengthening.

Based on this need, the present article examines Qur'anic learning strategies at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Husna Langgapayung, South Labuhan Batu. This study aims to: (1) describe the implementation of Qur'anic learning strategies encompassing instruction in makhārij al-ḥurūf, tajwīd, and recitation melody; (2) portray the quality of students' Qur'anic reading abilities; and (3) identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of these instructional strategies. Through this focus, the study is expected to make a practical contribution to the development of Qur'anic instructional design in modern pesantren, particularly in addressing heterogeneous classes or learning groups, while also enriching academic discourse on effective and contextually realistic Qur'anic learning strategies.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach to understand and describe the investigated phenomena in depth within their natural settings, without manipulating field conditions. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to capture meanings, processes, and social contexts underlying practices occurring at the research site through direct interaction with research participants (Hayati, 2022). In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument who not only collects data but also interprets the findings based on conceptual understanding and empirical evidence from the field. Consequently, qualitative inquiry requires sensitivity, breadth of knowledge, and active researcher engagement throughout the processes of interviewing and observation (Sahir, 2022).

Data collection was conducted using three main techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were employed to elicit in-depth information regarding participants' experiences, perspectives, and practices related to the research focus. Observations were carried out to capture situational contexts, behavioral patterns, and ongoing processes directly, enabling the researcher to gain contextual understanding rather than relying solely on participants' narratives. Documentation was used to complement and strengthen field data through notes, archives, photographs, and other relevant documents, thereby enriching the data corpus and enhancing traceability (Rangkuti, 2022).

The collected data were analyzed iteratively and continuously from the early stages of the research, rather than only after all data had been gathered. Initially, the researcher examined the completeness of data from each instrument, then organized and categorized the data according to the research focus to facilitate the identification of interrelationships. The analytical process was reinforced through an interactive analysis model comprising data condensation (reduction and selection), data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, conducted repeatedly until the most robust and consistent findings were obtained (Miles et al., 2014). Through this process, incomplete or

unclear data could be promptly traced and clarified through additional data collection, ensuring that the resulting conclusions were not evidentially weak.

To ensure data trustworthiness, this study employed triangulation techniques by examining the consistency of information across multiple data collection methods and/or sources. Triangulation was carried out by comparing interview, observation, and documentation data to determine whether the information mutually reinforced one another or revealed discrepancies requiring further investigation. When inconsistencies were identified, the researcher conducted clarification through follow-up interviews, additional observations, or further inquiry until credible data were obtained. This strategy was used to enhance the credibility of the findings and to ensure that conclusions were drawn from evidence verified through more than one data collection pathway (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999).

Results

Qur'anic Learning Strategies at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Husna Langgapayung

The findings indicate that Qur'anic learning at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Husna Langgapayung is implemented through several complementary strategies, namely cooperative learning, the application of the Qira'ati method, habituation of Qur'anic reading before formal lessons begin, and the grouping of students based on their levels of reading ability.

First, cooperative learning emerges as a dominant strategy in the instructional process. Teachers consistently divide students into small groups of four to five members to enhance engagement and learning interaction. In practice, group-based learning not only encourages participation but also fosters the role of peers as learning resources. Students perceive group learning as more enjoyable because it allows them to ask questions, engage in discussions, and support one another when encountering difficulties. These findings suggest that cooperative learning does not merely change classroom structure into group work, but also establishes a mechanism of mutual reinforcement in understanding instructional material and developing reading skills.

Second, Qur'anic instruction also applies the Qira'ati method. Its implementation follows a direct practice model: students are called forward individually to read, the teacher listens attentively, and errors are corrected immediately. Students reported that this method initially felt challenging because they were not accustomed to spelling out words, but were instead required to read verse segments directly. However, after becoming familiar with the method, they perceived it as accelerating their reading progress. Moreover, immediate teacher feedback helps students identify specific errors, particularly in the application of tajwīd, as tajwīd instruction occurs simultaneously with reading practice rather than being limited to theoretical explanation.

Third, another strategy employed is the habituation of Qur'anic reading prior to the start of lessons. Observations show that learning activities consistently begin with approximately 20 minutes of Qur'anic reading. This activity is conducted in turns, with one student reading aloud while others listen attentively. This habituation functions both as routine practice and as a means of monitoring students' reading development. The findings indicate that this

practice is not merely an opening activity, but also serves as an instrument for cultivating reading discipline and reinforcing consistency in practice.

Fourth, the institution implements student grouping based on levels of Qur'anic reading ability. Students are divided into at least two categories: "fluent" and "moderate." The fluent group demonstrates reading ability consistent with correct makhārij al-ḥurūf and tajwīd, whereas the moderate group still exhibits weaknesses in articulating certain letters, understanding tajwīd, or consistently applying tajwīd rules during recitation. This grouping enables teachers to adjust instructional approaches according to each group's needs, resulting in more targeted instruction rather than imposing a uniform standard on all students.

Overall, these four strategies demonstrate that Qur'anic learning at this pesantren operates through a combined approach: peer interaction (cooperative learning), rigorous technical guidance (Qira'ati), habit formation (regular reading practice), and differentiated learning services (ability-based grouping).

Quality of Students' Qur'anic Reading Ability

Based on Qur'anic reading assessments using indicators of fluency, smoothness, accuracy of makhārij al-ḥurūf, and correctness of tajwīd, the Qur'anic reading ability of eighth-grade students at this pesantren falls into two main categories: fluent and moderate. Simple quantitative findings indicate that in Class VIII A, 15 students were classified as fluent and 12 as moderate (27 students in total), while in Class VIII B, 16 students were classified as fluent and 8 as moderate (24 students in total). Thus, the majority of students are in the fluent category, although the proportion of students in the moderate category remains significant and requires further instructional reinforcement.

Analysis of the moderate category reveals relatively specific patterns of difficulty. Students' challenges generally appear in: (1) the articulation of certain letters such as ح ,ط ,ش ,ذ ,ث ,خ ,ظ ,غ ,ق ,ع, and ز; (2) the application of specific tajwīd rules, particularly madd and ikhfā'; and (3) inconsistent application of tajwīd knowledge in actual reading practice. This indicates that the primary issue lies not in students' willingness to read, but in technical precision of articulation and consistency in applying tajwīd rules. These findings also reinforce teachers' assessments that students' reading abilities are generally good, although some have not yet achieved stable and accurate recitation standards.

Overall, the quality of Qur'anic reading ability among eighth-grade students can be categorized as adequate, as most students have reached the fluent level, and the remaining weaknesses in the moderate group are clearly identifiable, allowing for more focused and targeted instructional intervention.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Qur'anic Learning Strategies

The findings reveal that the effectiveness of Qur'anic learning strategies is influenced by both supporting and inhibiting factors originating from students' internal conditions and the external learning environment. Among internal supporting factors, students' self-motivation emerges as a primary driver. Students who possess strong intrinsic motivation demonstrate higher enthusiasm, better focus during learning, and greater willingness to engage in practice. In addition, sincere intention (niyyah) appears as an inner orientation that renders the learning process more meaningful, patient, and consistent, particularly when students face technical reading difficulties.

Regarding external supporting factors, two aspects stand out. First, innovative teaching practices contribute to making learning more engaging and less monotonous. Teachers do not merely require students to read, but also utilize media such as videos and educational games to support understanding of makhārij al-ḥurūf and tajwīd. These findings indicate that methodological variation helps sustain students' attention and minimize boredom. Second, support from school leadership is evident through the provision of learning facilities and infrastructure, including Qur'ans, supplementary books, multimedia equipment (projectors and speakers), and facilities such as computer laboratories. This support strengthens the learning ecosystem and enables teachers to develop more varied instructional strategies.

Conversely, internal inhibiting factors include boredom and laziness. Boredom tends to arise when students perceive the material as repetitive or already mastered, which reduces learning interest. Laziness also emerges as a personal barrier that disrupts consistency in practice and engagement in the learning process. Among external inhibiting factors, limited learning time constitutes a significant challenge. Dense school schedules and academic tasks make it difficult for students to allocate dedicated time for intensive Qur'anic reading practice. Consequently, practice becomes irregular, students experience fatigue, and instructional reinforcement is less optimal due to insufficient repetition. In summary, these findings demonstrate that Qur'anic learning strategies at the pesantren function effectively when supported by students' internal motivation, teacher innovation, and institutional support, yet they continue to face challenges in the form of boredom, lack of motivation, and limited time, all of which may reduce consistency in practice.

Discussion

Qur'anic learning at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Husna Langgapayung demonstrates a strong instructional pattern due to the combinative nature of the strategies employed, namely cooperative learning (small-group instruction), the Qira'ati method (direct reading with immediate correction), habituation of pre-lesson Qur'anic reading, and ability-based grouping. From a theoretical perspective, this combination is well-suited to heterogeneous classrooms, as cooperative learning enhances student engagement and expands opportunities for peer support. Recent meta-analytic evidence confirms that cooperative learning has a positive impact on learning outcomes (Talkhan et al., 2025). The present finding that students feel more comfortable asking questions and learning from peers within small groups also aligns with peer tutoring research in Qur'anic reading instruction, which emphasizes the role of peer interaction in improving reading fluency and comprehension (Alfi & Idawati, 2022).

At the same time, the implementation of the Qira'ati method at the research site characterized by direct reading, teacher monitoring, and immediate error correction supports the development of accurate recitation, as students receive rapid and specific feedback at the moment errors occur. Research on feedback timing indicates that immediate feedback can significantly enhance learning outcomes and is closely linked to motivational aspects of the learning process (Taxipulati & Lu, 2021). Within the context of Qira'ati, studies conducted over the past decade consistently emphasize that this method prioritizes tartīl

practice and direct correction of recitation errors, thereby contributing to improvements in Qur'anic reading proficiency (Rofikoh, 2023; Anita, 2022). This helps explain why the majority of students in the present study fall into the "fluent" category, while those in the "moderate" category tend to exhibit specific errors (particular letters and tajwīd rules such as madd and ikhfā'). Immediate correction appears especially effective for technical issues that require precision and repeated accuracy.

The habituation of Qur'anic reading before formal lessons can be understood as a "consistency mechanism" that sustains practice frequency. Recent literature on habit formation suggests that habit strength increases through consistent repetition within stable contexts, although the time required for habit formation may vary across individuals (Singh et al., 2024). Accordingly, the routine of 20 minutes of Qur'anic reading prior to lessons has the potential to reinforce reading automatization, particularly for students in the moderate category who require more targeted repetition. Furthermore, the policy of grouping students into "fluent" and "moderate" categories reflects the application of differentiated instructional practices, enabling teachers to align training and reinforcement with the specific needs of each group. Contemporary research on differentiated instruction highlights that adapting teaching to students' initial readiness and ability levels is essential for maximizing learning outcomes in diverse classrooms (Langelaan et al., 2024).

About inhibiting factors, boredom, laziness, and limited time, the findings help explain why the proportion of students in the moderate category remains relatively substantial. Research on academic boredom indicates that boredom is associated with decreased engagement and diminished learning quality; this aligns with field observations where students who perceive themselves as "already capable" tend to experience fatigue with repetitive basic material (Tempelaar et al., 2023). When combined with time constraints arising from dense schedules and physical fatigue, out-of-class practice becomes inconsistent, thereby slowing improvement in tajwīd and makhraj, both of which require sustained and repetitive practice.

Taken together, the findings reinforce the conclusion that the effectiveness of Qur'anic reading instruction in modern pesantren is largely determined by: (1) the design of complementary instructional strategies (peer support, technical correction, routine practice, and differentiated instruction), and (2) the management of learning experiences so that repetition remains meaningful and does not trigger boredom, particularly among students positioned at differing levels of reading proficiency (fluent versus moderate).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Qur'anic instruction at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Husna Langgapayung operates effectively due to the implementation of complementary learning strategies: cooperative learning to strengthen interaction and peer support, the Qira'ati method to develop reading accuracy through immediate correction, habituation of Qur'anic reading before lessons to maintain practice consistency, and ability-based grouping to align instructional support with students' learning needs. In terms of outcomes, the majority of eighth-grade students fall into the fluent

category (31 out of 51 students); however, a substantial proportion remains in the moderate category (20 students), exhibiting specific weaknesses in the articulation of certain ḥijā'iyyah letters and in the consistent application of tajwīd rules, particularly madd and ikhfā'. These students, therefore, require more intensive and targeted practice. The effectiveness of these strategies is supported by students' intrinsic motivation, teachers' instructional innovation, and institutional facilities, yet remains constrained by boredom, lack of motivation, and limited practice time. Accordingly, future instructional development should emphasize diagnostic-based remediation focused on key error patterns, while also designing more varied learning activities and more realistic practice schedules to ensure more equitable improvements in Qur'anic reading quality, particularly among students in the moderate proficiency group.

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