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The Role of Teachers in Improving the Quality of Reading the Qur'an for Early Class Santri

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of teacher modeling in improving Qur'anic recitation, specifically tajweed, among students at Indonesian pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). Despite the widespread use of teacher modeling in religious education, its direct impact on tajweed mastery has been underexplored. Tajweed is a critical aspect of Qur'anic recitation that ensures the accurate pronunciation of Arabic letters and the correct application of pronunciation rules. This research examines how teachers' demonstrations of proper recitation techniques influence students' ability to apply tajweed rules effectively. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and direct classroom observations, focusing on their pedagogical practices and the students' responses. The findings reveal that teacher modeling is a key factor in enhancing students' tajweed skills, as it provides a clear, practical example for students to imitate. The study also identifies the benefits of a structured, step-by-step teaching approach, where students progress from basic letter recognition to more complex tajweed rules. These findings have significant implications for improving Qur'anic education in pesantren, emphasizing the importance of teacher-led demonstrations in fostering accurate Qur'anic recitation. This research contributes new insights into effective teaching strategies and offers practical recommendations for enhancing tajweed instruction in Islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of Qur'anic recitation, specifically tajweed, requires not only theoretical knowledge but also practical application, which is deeply influenced by the teacher's role (Alqadasi et al., 2023; Hanafi et al., 2021; Ismail, 2023). Tajweed refers to the proper pronunciation and articulation of the Qur'an's Arabic letters, a skill that is essential for accurate recitation (Alqadasi et al., 2023; Alrumiah & Al-

Shargabi, 2023; Tantawi et al., 2021). Islamic educational settings, such as pesantren in Indonesia, emphasize learning through observation, repetition, and teacher modeling. Teachers act as role models, demonstrating the correct ways to pronounce each letter, thereby reinforcing theoretical knowledge through embodied practice. Despite the importance of this method, there remains a lack of empirical studies that examine how teacher modeling directly influences student mastery of tajweed in these religious settings. This research seeks to fill that gap by analyzing how teacher modeling enhances Qur'anic learning, specifically in pesantren environments.

Previous research has explored various aspects of Qur'anic teaching, particularly teacher-student dynamics. Some studies explain the role of direct teacher involvement in language learning, noting that modeling pronunciation is crucial in mastering complex linguistic features (Al-thresher, 2023; Alrumiah & Al-Shargabi, 2023; Inceoglu, 2021). Similarly, studies about the impact of teacher demonstration on improving memorization and recitation of the Qur'an among young learners found a significant improvement when students observed their teachers' methods (Cedeño & Santos, 2021; Mustafa et al., 2021; Simenel, 2023). However, these studies primarily focus on memorization rather than the intricacies of tajweed. Furthermore, some studies examined the pedagogical approaches used in pesantren, highlighting teacher modeling as a foundational element but not analyzing its direct impact on tajweed proficiency (Ning et al., 2023; Panadero & Lipnevich, 2022; Wyse & Bradbury, 2022). This body of work collectively suggests the importance of teacher modeling but lacks an in-depth examination of its specific effects on tajweed mastery, particularly in the Indonesian context.

While existing literature acknowledges the significance of teacher modeling in religious education, there is a distinct gap in research focusing on how this method explicitly impacts the acquisition of tajweed in pesantren environments. Previous studies have predominantly addressed the broader aspects of Qur'anic recitation or memorization without delving into how teacher modeling, in particular, contributes to the mastery of tajweed rules. This gap is particularly notable in Indonesian pesantren, where traditional teaching methods are still predominant but largely undocumented in empirical research. The importance of tajweed cannot be overstated, as accurate recitation ensures the preservation of the Qur'anic text. Therefore, understanding the role of teacher modeling in this context is essential for improving educational strategies and enhancing the spiritual and linguistic accuracy of Qur'anic recitation among students. This research provides a novel contribution by focusing specifically on the role of teacher modeling in acquiring tajweed in pesantren settings. While teacher modeling has been studied in various educational contexts, its application in the unique environment of Islamic religious education, particularly in Indonesia, remains underexplored.

By examining the pedagogical approaches in these settings, this study aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering a deeper understanding of how teachers' demonstration of correct recitation techniques influences student learning. Furthermore, this research goes beyond general observations of pedagogical methods to investigate the specific impact on tajweed mastery, a critical aspect of Qur'anic education. The findings will contribute to the broader literature on religious education by offering new insights into effective teaching strategies for Qur'anic recitation and preserving its correct pronunciation.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of teacher modeling on the acquisition of tajweed in Indonesian pesantren. This research will focus on the role of teachers as both instructors and models, examining how their demonstrations of correct recitation influence students' understanding and application of tajweed rules. By conducting in-depth interviews with teachers and observing classroom practices, this study aims to uncover how teacher modeling enhances students' tajweed proficiency. The research will also explore how this method compares to traditional, theory-based approaches in religious education. Ultimately, this study seeks to provide actionable insights that can inform the development of more effective teaching strategies for Qur'anic recitation in pesantren, helping to ensure the accurate transmission of the Qur'anic text for future generations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is situated within a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in Indonesia, specifically the PP Lubbul Labib Maron, where the focus is on improving the quality of Qur'anic reading and tajweed among students (santri). This context was chosen because of its relevance to the study's goal of understanding how structured teaching methods, including teacher modeling, contribute to developing Qur'anic recitation skills. The pesantren setting provides a natural environment for this research, where traditional learning methods, such as oral transmission and face-to-face instruction, are integral to the educational process. This study utilizes a case study approach, allowing for an in-depth examination of a specific instance within its real-life context (Basar et al., 2021; Chaudhry et al., 2023; Gao et al., 2022). The research aims to explore the pedagogical methods applied at this pesantren and the impact these methods have on students' mastery of tajweed. The case study method is appropriate here, as it allows for a detailed understanding of the phenomenon in its natural context, offering rich insights into the processes involved.

Data for this study was collected using a combination of qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, particularly the head of the pesantren, Ustadz Imam Habibullah, and other key staff members, to understand their teaching methods and perceptions of the students' progress. Observations were carried out during Qur'anic reading sessions to capture the real-time application of teaching methods and how students respond to the modeling provided by their teachers.

Additionally, a document analysis of lesson plans and teaching materials was conducted to examine the structure and content of the curriculum. These methods were selected to gather a holistic view of the teaching and learning process (Alongi & Anese, 2021; Fromm et al., 2021; Mero et al., 2022). Combining interviews, observations, and document analysis ensures a well-rounded understanding of the topic, capturing teacher perspectives and student behaviors in a naturalistic setting.

Data analysis for this study was guided by the framework of Miles and Huberman (1994), which emphasizes the iterative process of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Flankegård et al., 2021; Mero et al., 2022; Neale, 2021). Initially, data were transcribed from interviews and field notes from observations, which were then coded to identify emerging themes related to the teaching practices and students' development of tajweed. This coding process was done manually, without using software like NVivo, to ensure the researcher's direct engagement with the data. Themes were categorized into broader concepts, such as teacher modeling, structured learning, and feedback mechanisms, and were compared across different data sources. This analysis identified patterns and relationships, highlighting the importance of teacher modeling and structured, step-by-step instruction in improving tajweed. The iterative nature of the analysis allowed for continuous refinement of the emerging themes, ensuring robust findings that align with the research objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result
Teacher's Example as a Key Element in Improving Qur'an Reading

The first findings of this study show that the example of teachers in teaching Qur'an recitation is a very important factor in improving the ability of students to read the Qur'an with correct tajweed. In the context of religious education, especially the teaching of the Qur'an, teachers not only act as informants or instructors but also as direct examples that students must follow. This example is particularly effective, especially in practice-oriented learning, such as tajweed, where theory alone is insufficient to achieve good mastery. Students tend to understand and imitate correct pronunciation more easily when they can observe firsthand how the teacher pronounces the letters and applies tajweed rules.

One of the prominent moments in this study was when Ustadz Imam Habibullah, the head of the Islamic boarding school, led a learning session. He patiently corrected the students' readings and showed them how to pronounce the letters correctly according to Tajweed rules.

> *Ustadz Imam said, "Look, this movement is important so that our reading is perfect." Then he continued, "Do not just follow the movement, but feel every letter and sound that comes out. That is the key to a correct reading." He also reminded the students, "Tajweed is not just a rule, but a way for us to respect every word in the Qur'an."*

The above findings indicate the importance of direct practice carried out by teachers as a very effective teaching method for teaching tajweed. Ustadz Imam explained the theory of tajweed to the students and directly demonstrated the correct pronunciation, showing the movements of the lips and throat necessary to pronounce Arabic letters correctly. Thus, teachers provide life examples that students can imitate directly. This example creates a more interesting and practical learning environment where students hear theories and see and imitate the correct way of reading. This process not only teaches theory on how to read, but it also provides much-needed practical experience in learning tajweed. Learning through examples also allows students to improve their reading in a more natural and guided way. The teacher's example directs students to correct mistakes and strive to achieve perfect reading, which is very important in learning the Qur'an.

In one of the learning sessions in the morning, after correcting some of the students' readings, Ustadz Imam showed how to read ص the letter(ṣād) correctly. Slowly, he pointed out the difference between correct and incorrect readings, noticing his lips and throat movements. The students who previously had difficulty pronouncing the letters seemed more confident after seeing direct examples from their teachers. They are also more eager to try and improve their reading, which shows how important the role of teachers as models is in improving the quality of their reading.

Structured and Staged the Learning Process for Master Tajweed

A structured and gradual learning process is crucial in increasing tajweed mastery among students. At PP Lubbul Labib Maron, teachers apply a systematic approach to ensure that students master the basics of tajweed before moving on to more complex levels. This learning stage begins with introducing hijaiyah letters, followed by proper pronunciation, and applying more in-depth tajweed rules. This gradual approach allows students to build a strong foundation in reading the Qur'an, which is important to ensure that their readings follow the correct tajweed rules. This systematically carried out learning not only introduces theory but also facilitates practical application in the recitation of the Qur'an, which is essential to improve the quality of their reading.

This is strengthened by statements submitted by several informants where,

Ustadz Imam Habibullah explained, "We started with introducing hijaiyah letters, then gradually taught the more complex rules of tajweed. Each level must be mastered before proceeding to a higher level." He continued, "Regular practice and following the schedule that has been prepared will make it easier for students to master the reading of the Qur'an with the correct tajweed." On the other hand, one student added, "We started from the most basic, so I felt more confident as I progressed to the more complicated rules of tajweed."

From the interview results above, it can be understood that this quote confirms that the gradual approach applied by the teacher is critical to ensure that students not only understand the basics of tajweed but also master the advanced rules well. By teaching tajweed in stages, the teacher ensures that each student understands the basics of tajweed before going any further. It also allows students to correct their mistakes gradually so that no mistakes are missed, and they can read the Qur'an more accurately.

In addition, in classroom learning activities, Ustadz Imam began the session by guiding students in recognizing the letter ح (ḥā') and pronouncing it correctly, ensuring that each student understood the position of their tongue and throat when pronouncing the letter. After a series of exercises, he introduced more complex rules of tajweed, such as mad and breadfruit, only after all the students could pronounce the letters correctly. This gradual approach has proven very effective, as students who previously had difficulty reading certain letters are now more confident and ready to step to a higher level in tajweed learning. From the findings described above, it can be visualized as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Structured and Staged the Learning Process for Master Tajweed

Theme	Quotes/Excerpts	Meaning/Interpretation
Structured Staged Learning	"We start with the introduction of hijaiyah letters ....."	Structured learning allows students to master the basics of tajweed before moving on to more complex rules.
Repetition and Routine Exercises for Tajweed Mastery	"Regular and .... training"	Repetition and regular practice help students build confidence and ensure they understand each step well.
Application of Stages in Learning Tajweed	"We start from the basics......"	Teaching tajweed gradually ensures students have a solid foundation, making learning the next stage easier.

Table 1 illustrates the structured and gradual approach to tajweed learning implemented at PP Lubbul Labib Maron. This table identifies three main themes: the gradual introduction of hijaiyah letters, the importance of repeated practice, and the application of stages in learning. The data show that an organized progression, starting with the basics of hijaiyah letters, seems to help students build a solid tajweed foundation before moving on to more complicated rules. In addition, regular practice and repetition, as emphasized by the teacher, are seen as very important to build students' confidence and ensure they understand each step well. This approach may be an effective strategy in learning tajweed, although the success rate can vary depending on each student's involvement.

These findings confirm the importance of a structured and gradual learning process in improving the quality of Qur'an recitation with correct tajweed. With an organized approach, teachers can ensure that students master each stage of tajweed before moving on to more complicated stages. This not only provides a better understanding of each step but also helps students to build their confidence. The learning that is carried out gradually ensures that they have a strong foundation in mastering tajweed so that they can read the Qur'an correctly and by the applicable rules. This approach has the potential to be an effective strategy in thoroughly developing good and correct Qur'an reading skills, with the hope of improving the quality of tajweed teaching in Islamic boarding schools.

The Role of Evaluation and Feedback in Improving Reading Quality

This research shows that regular evaluation and constructive feedback are important in improving the quality of students' Qur'an reading. At PP Lubbul Labib Maron, evaluations are carried out periodically to monitor the progress of students reading, both through formal exams and direct observation of daily learning. This evaluation objectively assesses the student's abilities, allowing teachers to provide direct feedback. The feedback helps students correct errors in their reading and provides clear direction for further improvement. This continuous evaluation process creates a supportive atmosphere for students to continue to improve their reading, both in terms of pronunciation and understanding of tajweed.

> Ustadzah Hilya says, "We conduct Qur'an reading exams twice a year to see the extent of the progress of the students' readings, whether it is by the desired target." In addition, he added, "Evaluations are not only done on exams but also in direct observation during daily learning sessions, where we provide hands-on feedback to help them improve their reading." One student also revealed, "This test helped me know where I needed to improve my reading, and the feedback from the teacher was very useful for my development."

From the interview results above, it is known that evaluation is not only limited to formal exams but also includes continuous observation in daily learning. By conducting continuous evaluations, teachers can provide constructive feedback, allowing students to correct errors in their readings more quickly. In addition, generally, students feel more motivated to continue improving their abilities when they get clear and specific feedback. This routine evaluation is critical because it provides clear direction for students to measure their development and know which areas need more attention.

In addition, during the Qur'an recitation exam held at the end of the semester, Ustadzah Hilya carefully examined the readings of several students. After the exam, he gave feedback to the students individually, informing them of mistakes that needed to be corrected, such as the wrong pronunciation of letters or negligence in applying specific tajweed rules. Where is the model to improve the Qur'an recitation, as shown in Figure 1.
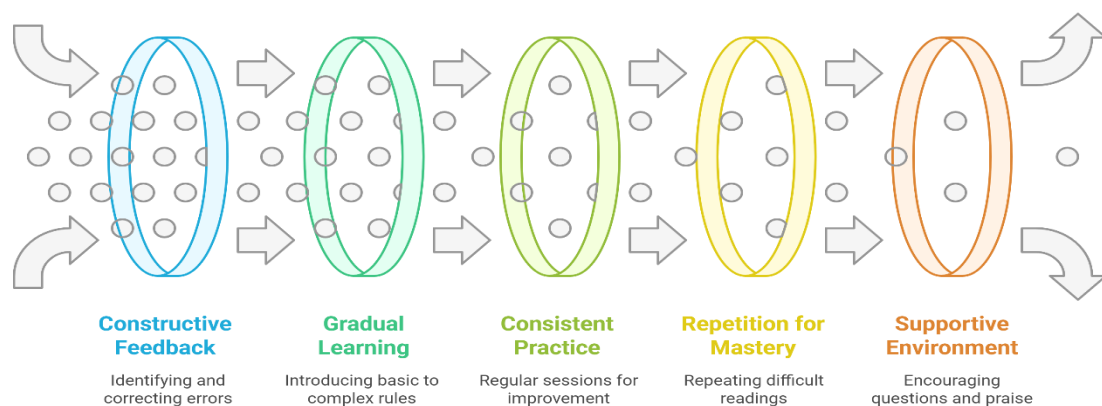

Constructive Feedback	Gradual Learning	Consistent Practice	Repetition for Mastery	Supportive Environment
Identifying and correcting errors	Introducing basic to complex rules	Regular sessions for improvement	Repeating difficult readings	Encouraging questions and praise

Figure 1. Model for Improving Qur'an Recitation

Figure 1 illustrates a model for improving Qur'an reading, emphasizing five essential elements: constructive feedback, gradual learning, consistent practice, repetition for mastery, and a supportive environment. This model shows a process that begins with feedback to correct mistakes, followed by increased complexity in the learning process and regular exercises to reinforce skills. Repetition plays an important role in mastering difficult reading, while a supportive environment encourages engagement and appreciation. Interestingly, a focus on gradual learning and consistent practice seems crucial, as these steps provide a basic understanding and an opportunity to improve skills. This diagram shows that these elements, when combined, can potentially increase confidence and performance, as seen in the students' experiences.

Discussion

This research reveals that the example of teachers teaching Qur'an recitation is a key element in improving students' mastery of tajweed. These findings are in line with Vygotsky's theory that learning is most effective through social interaction and observation of more experienced models (Giannakos & Cukurova, 2023; Hiltrimartin et al., 2023; Nithideechaiwarachok & Chano, 2023). In this case, teachers play a dual role as instructors and models that students can emulate. It also supports previous research that states that teacher modeling or emulation is essential in learning that requires precision and practical skills, such as in tajweed teaching (Arifin & Sanjani, 2023; Holili et al., 2023; Maftuh, 2023). However, in contrast to some studies that emphasize the importance of theory as the basis for learning (Misra, 2019), this study shows that understanding theory alone is not enough; Direct implementation by teachers has proven to be more effective in improving students' skills in tajweed.

The application of the theory of gradual learning in this study leads to a deeper understanding of tajweed. These findings reflect the application of the structured learning theory developed by Gagne (1985), which states that gradual organized learning is more likely to ensure deep and thorough mastery of the material (Choppin et al., 2022; Drigas et al., 2023; Shu & Gu, 2023). At PP Lubbul Labib Maron, teaching starts with introducing simple hijaiyah letters and then continues to the more complicated rules of tajweed. This gradual approach has been proven to provide a strong foundation for students to master tajweed systematically. These findings are consistent with previous research showing that structured learning facilitates a more effective learning process and helps students achieve higher levels of understanding (Alqadasi et al., 2023; Hanafi et al., 2021; Ismail, 2023). From a theoretical perspective, this gradual approach significantly contributed to the development of the tajweed learning theory. By emphasizing structured teaching that starts with the basics and progresses to the advanced level, this research expands our understanding of the importance of a solid foundation before stepping into more complex concepts.

This study also shows that regular repetition and practice are key factors that support the theory of repetitive learning (Alrumiah & Al-Shargabi, 2023) and strengthen the mastery of practical skills in tajweed. In this case, the feedback provided by the teacher during the learning process, which was also found in this study, strengthened the ability of students to self-correct and achieve a higher level of proficiency.

Implicitly, these findings lead to several recommendations for education policy and learning practices. First, for the managers of Islamic boarding schools and religious education institutions, it is important to provide intensive training for teachers to apply exemplary teaching methods. Second, for education practitioners, especially those who teach Qur'an recitation, a gradual approach that starts from the basics can be the primary strategy to improve students' reading quality and tajweed. Finally, further research can explore other variables that affect the effectiveness of example in tajweed teaching, such as the motivation factor of students or the influence of the social environment in learning the Qur'an.

This study provides an important contribution to the development of tajweed teaching strategies in Islamic boarding schools, especially in the context of learning in Indonesia. By focusing on the role of teaching models carried out by teachers in improving the ability to read the Qur'an with correct tajweed, this study reveals how significant the influence of direct demonstrations from teachers is on students' ability to apply tajweed rules. The results of this study also highlight the importance of a structured and gradual learning approach, starting with introducing hijaiyah letters and continuing with teaching more complex tajweed rules to ensure that students have a strong foundation in reading the Qur'an.

CONCLUSION

This research explored the influence of teacher modeling on the mastery of tajweed in Indonesian pesantren. By investigating how teachers' demonstrations affect students' recitation skills, the study highlighted the critical role of teacher-led modeling in enhancing tajweed proficiency. The findings revealed that students who observed their teachers' correct recitation techniques significantly improved their ability to apply tajweed rules. Moreover, structured, step-by-step teaching methods further reinforced these gains. The broader implications of these findings suggest that teacher modeling is an essential component of Qur'anic education, especially in pesantren settings. This approach supports the accurate transmission of Qur'anic knowledge and contributes to preserving its linguistic integrity. Future research could explore the impact of teacher modeling in different religious and educational contexts and consider integrating modern pedagogical tools to complement traditional methods. For educators, these findings emphasize the importance of clear, consistent demonstrations in fostering skillful and confident learners.

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