




## Pronunciation of Hijaiyyah's Letter for New Quranic Learners: A Contrastive Analysis Study

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### Abstract

The correct pronunciation of Arabic letters, also known as Makhraj, is crucial to Quranic reading rules. For many years, researchers have debated the impact of native languages on the articulation of the Arabic alphabet's phonetic aspects. Since the Quran is written in Arabic, mastering the Makhraj of Hijaiyyah consonants is essential to produce clear sound and precise meaning when reading the Quran. This study aims to establish a Hijaiyyah consonant designation pattern based on the characteristics of articulation fluency, consonants, and phonetic nature of the Malay tongue for Quranic teaching and learning. Content analysis was used to develop a thematic approach to the pronunciation fluency of letters, categorized into three levels: easy, intermediate, and advanced. The letter classification system serves as a guide for teachers and researchers in Arabic language teaching and Quranic education.

**Keywords:** Hijaiyyah, Pronunciation, Learning, al-Quran

### 1.0 Introduction

Learning Quran is compulsory for every Muslim as it guides towards "Sirat al-mustaqim" (Mohamed et al., 2013) and is rewarded by Allah. However, the Quran was revealed in Arabic, making it challenging for non-Arabs to master the correct pronunciation of the alphabet. This is crucial as the mispronunciation can affect the understanding and meaning of the Quranic vocabulary. Therefore, mastering the pronunciation skills has been identified as one of the challenges in Quranic learning. To correctly pronounce the Quranic verses, one needs to master the law of Makhraj. According to Rahimi et al. (2010) and Wati (2019), mastering the skill of pronunciation can be traced through one's ability to pronounce the Arabic consonants according to their Makhraj.

Makhraj is an Arabic term that refers to the place where air is released from the lungs to the mouth. In the Arabic language, each consonant is pronounced differently depending on its Makhraj. It is important to accurately pronounce each letter according to its Makhraj to develop communication skills that are consistent

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and fluent. This is especially important when reading the Quran, where fluency in communication is crucial. Accurate pronunciation of each letter according to its Makhraj while reading the Quran helps to improve reading skills.

It is important to learn the sound elements of each Arabic letter to speak the language correctly. The mastery of the sound elements of the Arabic alphabet is not only limited to pronunciation but also required to mastering its intonation (Subali et. Al. 2014). In Malaysia, Arabic letters are taught at a young age while learning Jawi. Therefore, many Quran-based learning books have been published in Malaysia to preserve the authentic value of the language. It is crucial to encourage children to learn the Arabic alphabet at a young age to ensure its preservation.

In the process of Quranic education, there are several important aspects that need to be considered, such as the nature of the letter, the manner of pronunciation (also known as Makhraj), and the rules of the Quran (also known as Tajweed). These aspects play a crucial role in the preparation and development of Quran-based learning materials, allowing for a more practical and effective approach to learning and teaching the Quran. To aid learners who struggle with pronunciation and producing the sound of Arabic alphabets, there are several Hijaiyyah pronunciation methods available, such as the Mahjub Theory (Ramli & Rahman, 2017) and al-Khalil (Zakaria & Rahimi, 2015). The aim of this study is to identify the Hijaiyyah patterns from various existing modifications of basic learning methods.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### Pattern of al Hijaiyyah's letter for Quranic-based Learning

The Hijaiyyah letters are used in the Arabic language to form words. According to Jamil (2015), there are varying opinions among experts on the total number of letters. Some believe that there are 28 letters excluding the Lam-Alif and Hamzah, while others think there are 29 letters excluding the Lam-Alif. Several experts also suggest that there are 30 letters, including the letters of Lam-Alif and Hamzah. However, Jamil (2015) points out that most experts agree that the Hijaiyyah letters originated from the north-western part of the Arabian Peninsula of the Phoenicians (Kanaan) and consist of 22 letters:

ا ب ج د ه و ز ح ط ي ك ل م ن س ع ف ص ق ر ش ت

With the addition of six more letters, the Arabian was able to create a total of 28 letters which are now listed as:

ا ب ت ث ج ح خ س ش ص ض ط ظ س ش ص ض ط ظ ع غ ف ق ك ل م ن  
ه و ي

Scholars have different opinions on the number of Arabic consonants, but they are organized into well-known systems such as Hijaiyyah, Abjadiyyah, and al-Makhraj. The Arabic alphabet is also known as Al-Abjadiyah Al-'Arabiyyah or Arabic alphabets (Wati, 2019).

Currently, there are many resources available for students to improve their pronunciation of the Quranic or Arabic language through phonetic-based learning materials. However, accurately reading the Quran is still a challenge for many students. Research conducted by Wati (2019) and Zechariah & Rahimi (2015) found that one of the reasons for this difficulty is the influence of the mother tongue on the accurate pronunciation of Arabic letters. Furthermore, Zakaria & Rahimi (2015) stressed the importance of taking into account individual differences in children's development. They emphasized that spelling activities should focus on meeting the psychological needs of the students and should involve several complex processes.

It is not surprising that studies such as Ramli & Rahman (2017) and Badaruddin et al. (2017) have been conducted to identify the problem in students' pronunciation and determine the level of pronunciation proficiency among pre-schoolers. Rahimi et al. (2010) and Wati (2019) explored the use of Hijaiyyah association in English learning, while Subali (2014) identified the pronunciation pattern of each Hijaiyyah.

### Pronunciation-Makhraj of al Hijaiyyah letters

Have you ever wondered about the correct pronunciation of the letters in the Arabic alphabet? Specifically, have you heard about the "Makhraj" of the Al-Hijaiyyah letters? It's a fascinating topic that can greatly improve your Arabic language skills. Let's dive into it together!

The Makhraj is a term used in Arabic to describe the sound that is produced by the five main elements of human speech, which are the throat, tongue, lips, oral cavity and nasal cavity (Subali et al., 2014). According to Bisry (1991), the Makhraj is a specific point in the airway where two speech organs work together to produce a sound. Ramli & Rahman (2017) have identified 11 points of articulation which are created when two organs work together to produce a specific sound. These points are summarized in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Points of Articulation**

Phonetics	Alphabets
Consonant (two lips)	م و ب
Consonant (bottom lip + teeth)	ف
Consonant (tip of the tongue + tip of the teeth)	ذ ث ظ
Consonant (tip of the tongue + back of the teeth)	ن ل ض د ط ت
Consonant (tip of the tongue + gum)	ز ص س ر
Consonant (tip of the tongue + hard palate)	ج ش
Consonant (centre of the tongue + hard palate)	ي
Consonant (back of the tongue + soft palate)	خ غ ك
Consonant (back of the tongue + uvula)	ق
Consonant (back of the tongue + throat)	ع ح
Consonant (two vocal cords)	م ء

Regarding the relationship between Phonics and Makhraj, as described by Ahmad et al. (2018), Phonics is similar to Makhraj in the sense that it involves a specific letter and its corresponding sound. Phonics uses the sound-symbol relationship to recognize words, whereas Makhraj focuses on the sound pressure of the speech pronunciation point, which occurs in some Arabic characters, as stated by Rahimi et al. (2010).

Children have been introduced to Quranic Education from as early as three years old. In Malaysia, the IQRA method has been utilized for centuries to facilitate the teaching and learning process of reading the Quran in pre-schools and primary schools. Rahimi et al. (2010) conducted a study on Hijaiyyah pronunciation among pre-schoolers and emphasized the importance of mastering Arabic consonants in the early stages of Arabic language learning. The study found that students are often influenced by their native language pronunciation, which causes them to face difficulties in learning the correct Arabic pronunciation. To address this, the method of al-Khalil classified consonant pronunciations into three categories: 15 consonants in the fluent level, 12 consonants in the medium fluent level, and one consonant in the non-fluent level. Grammarly Really helpful.

In the context of the fundamental learning of reading the Quran, Arabic consonants are related to Makhraj as according to Rahman & Mezah (2010), there is a set of consonants followed the order of the Makhraj by a few Arabic Linguistic experts such as Sibawayh, al-Khalil, and Bisyr. In addition, the alphabetical order through Ibn jinni method is still used today, and even used exclusively in most Quranic or phonetic modules namely Iqra, Muqaddam, Hattawiyah, Qiraati, al-Baghdadiyyah and al-Matein method (Ramli & Rahman, 2017).

To conclude, arabic consonants relate to Makhraj in Quranic reading. Experts like Sibawayh, al-Khalil, and Bisyr set the consonants in Makhraj order. Ibn jinni's alphabetical order is still used in Quranic or phonetic modules like Iqra, Muqaddam, Hattawiyah, Qiraati, al-Baghdadiyyah, and al-Matein method.

### **Learning the Quranic alphabets through cognitive means.**

The principle of 'Ansur Maju' is a part of cognitive learning theory. It suggests that students should start learning with simple concepts before moving on to difficult ones (Baharudin et al. 2010). When it comes to learning Hijaiyyah pronunciation, some Arabic consonants are similar to Malay consonants and are easy to pronounce. However, some Arabic consonants, such as (ث), are difficult for most students to pronounce because they sound similar to the consonant (س) and almost like the Malay consonant (S). Since this consonant is not present in Malay, it is often pronounced almost inaudibly.

Numerous modules have been developed to support education related to phonetics, including one of the well-known theories in the field of Arabic language phonetics - the Mahjub Theory. According to Ramli & Abd. Rahman (2017), Mahjub or Abd Fatah Mahjub is an academician with extensive experience in teaching Arabic language to non-native speakers, with a specialization in Arabic phonetics. The Mahjub Theory is an effective module that can improve the problem of Arabic language pronunciation. It is usually applied as a tool to enhance the Arabic language pronunciation among non-native Arabic speakers.

A method called the al-Khalil method, mentioned by Rahimi et al. (2010), has been discovered. This method is used to form consonant letters starting with the curved cavity organ and ending with the lip organs. The test comprises of 28 consecutive consonant letters that are turned off (sukun) by using the letter Alif (hamzah) to pronounce them. Participants' pronunciation will usually be evaluated by marking their level of fluency.

### **Hijaiyyah Reading Tools**

Reciting the Quran with proper pronunciation is mandatory for Muslims. Learning the Quran is a constant practice to achieve accurate recitation. To master Quranic verses, it is necessary to learn the rules of Tajweed. However, learning the Arabic language is a challenge for Muslims. Fortunately, there are many books available that facilitate Quran-based learning for beginners, including non-native speakers, children, and adults.

According to Ahmad et al. (2018), learning Hijaiyyah has the same benefits as Jawi literacy skills. To help children learn Arabic alphabets, they designed an application that integrates the phonics reading technique for Jawi with an attractive approach. The application is specifically designed to visualize phonics Makhraj, Jawi alphabets, sentences, numbers, and syllables.

Many Muslim engineers have developed applications to encourage younger generations to learn Arabic alphabets or Hijaiyyah. These applications serve as learning aids to help with the correct pronunciation of Quranic alphabets. Some of these applications have been described by S. Ahmad et al. (2019), Subali et al. (2015), T. Altalmas et al. (2018), and La Hompu et al. (2016).

In fact, the phonology rules of the Quran are essential when reading the Quran. Daradjat (2014) observed at least six points could be used as a basis for the learning of the Quran, which are (1) the inclusion of the Arabic alphabets in the Quran from alif to ya; (2) makhārij al-āurūf, which is a guide to the sound of the alphabets and the properties of the alphabets; (3) the shape, purpose, and punctuation of the alphabets, such as āarakah, shadda, sukūn, and the extension of the alphabets; (4) Waqf form and function (the stop sign in Arabic when reading the Quran); (5) the Quran method of reading and reciting qira'at and naghām; and (6) adabuttilawa, which is courteous while reciting the Quran. Although there are several levels of reading the Quran namely Tartil, Tahqiq, Tadwir and Hadr, the recommended reading levels for beginners are the first and second levels (Supriyadi & Julia, 2019).

Various studies have been conducted to address the issue of reading the Quran. Some of these studies, such as Supriyadi & Julia (2019) and Yusof et al. (2011), have explored different methods to develop Quran reading skills, with a focus on the correct Hijaiyyah pronunciation. According to Hassan & Zailani (2013), fluency in recitation, knowledge of Tajweed laws, and comprehension of Arabic vocabulary in the Quran can be improved by speaking the Arabic language. These studies suggest that to minimize the difficulties faced by Quran reciters, it is important to improve the general learning process by putting in more effort to study the Quran.

Supriyadi and Julia (2019) have developed a new method to help Muslim adults who are unable to read

## Pronunciation of Hijaiyyah's letter for new Quranic Learners a Contrastive Analysis Study

the Quran. The method emphasizes direct reflective-critical action and aims to address specific conditions and situations that can hinder Quranic reading. These include reading cursive letters fluently and correctly, reciting the Makhraj fluently, and applying the Tajweed correctly. Students who have implemented this approach have shown improvement in their rating skill, progressing from a non-fluent level to a fluent level. This finding has been proposed as an alternative to eliminate Quranic illiteracy or analphabetism at the university level. It is crucial to note that reading the Quran must be done with the utmost caution and precision to avoid errors (Muhammad et al., 2012).

### 3.0 Methodology

Table 2 depicts some of the studies related to the mistake of the pronunciation of Hijaiyyah among primary school students. Six columns were created in the table to facilitate the overview analysis. The study's objective, problem, and method used are the main focus in the selection of articles. A case study is preferred in this study to discover the problem of pronunciation in a closer method after theory. At the end of the study, the pattern of consonants of Hijaiyyah will be justified based on the comparative analysis.

Seven case studies have been discussed in this present paper. To determine the fluency of pronunciation of Arabic consonants after taking into consideration of Arabic as a second language and the effect of Malay phonetics, a specific method was adopted and samples were taken among students (Zakaria and Rahimi, 2015; Ramli and Rahman, 2017; Rahimi et al., 2010). Zakaria and Rahimi (2015) and Rahimi et al. (2010) respectively involved primary school students of Year 1 and Year 6. However, both utilized the same method of measurement which was through the al-Khalil method. On the contrary, Ramli and Rahman (2017) involved secondary school students in their study. As technology advances, several tools have been applied to support the process of phonetics analysis of Hijaiyyah pronunciation such as Speech Analysis Software (PRAAT), which was used in a few studies, for instance, Badaruddin, et al. (2017) and Subali et al. (2014), Linear Discrimination Analysis (LDA) was utilized in (Badaruddin, et al., 2017). In contrast, Wati (2019) employed the PAR conceptualization by involving a group of people to collaborate actively in the research.

**Table 2: Background of Study**

Author	Introduction	Problem	Participants	Method
(Zakaria & Rahimi, 2015)	Arabic consonants from easy to difficult level designation according to the concept of progression.	Most of children in Malaysia start learning Arabic consonants in accordance with the <i>Alifbaiy</i> alphabet consonant without examining its ease in pronunciation.	400 year One pupils.	al-Khalil method
(Wati, 2019)	Explore the use of sounds association of Hijaiyyah (Arabic Alphabets) and English phonetics (HIJANETICS) in teaching pronunciation to students.	Overcoming the learners' difficulties in producing English sounds, enhancing their communicative competency, and also promoting an alternative approach to teach pronunciation for teachers.	Observations and in-depth interviews involving a school principal, teachers, and students.	Participatory Action Research (PAR)

(Subali et al., 2014)	To analyse the pattern of frequencies called formant for each Hijaiyyah pronunciation which expresses proper pronunciation	Mistake in pronunciation of a letter or Makhraj.	Recording of <i>Qori</i> and <i>Qoriah</i> .	Graphical User Interface (GUI) by using MATLAB
(Ramli & Rahman, Application of Mahjub Theory in Arabic Pronunciation among Sabahan Students, 2017)	To identify the real problem of the students' pronunciation sound and apply Mahjub Theory to rectify the problem of pronunciation.	Very few methods can rectify the pronunciation problem of non-Arab students.	Secondary school pupils.	Mahjub Theory
(Badaruddin, et al., 2017)	The identification of the pronunciation of both experts is needed to represent the actual and correct pronunciation	Both adults and children possess different vocal tract, thus the outcomes of the pronunciation between both experts will be different.	Adults, children, and expert reciters.	Speech analysis software-Pre-processing of the data using Spectral Subtraction technique (PRAAT)
(Rahimi et al., 2010)	To evaluate the consonant pronounced among preschool students.	The fluency level of Hijaiyyah pronunciation among pre-school students.	Sample of 108 six-year-old pupils.	al-Khalil method
(Hassan & Zailani, 2013)	Poor Quran recitation skills are often discussed by educators and researchers in the field of Islamic education.	Various errors and mistakes made by students in the Quran reading.	20 university students	Conceptual framework

#### 4.0 Discussion of Result / Findings

After meticulously reviewed seven previous studies, a thematic is successfully developed. According to the comparable research problem, the fluency of the pronunciation has been the main focus of the following study. The fluency of Hijaiyyah pronunciation by letter is categorized into three namely the easiest, the hardest, and the neutral, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The fluency of Hijaiyyah Pronunciation

Author	Letter		
	Easy	Hard	Moderate
(Zakaria & Rahimi, 2015)	17 consonants ب م ن ل ف س ش ء و ز ج ي ك ه ر د ت	None	11 consonants ص ق غ ع ح ث ط ذ ض خ ظ
(Wati, 2019)	Not stated	ك ز ث ظ ش ت ج	Not stated
(Subali et al., 2014)	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
(Ramli & Rahman, 2017)	ص	ط	ق خ ض ظ ع غ ح
(Badaruddin, et al., 2017)	أ ت أث أخ أد أذ أر أز أش أه	أء أب أص أض أظ أظ أظ أم أن أو أي	أج أح أس أع أغ أف أك
(Rahimi et al., 2010)	15 consonants ج س ه ء ك ش دي بن ظل م و ت	1 consonant غ	10 consonants ق ح ص ز ع ر ذ خ ض ث
(Hassan & Zailani, 2013)	ص ز س ل ر ن	ت د ط غ خ ع ح ه ء	ج ش ي ض ث ذ ظ

Several studies have utilized data-processing tools like PRAAT to extract features from frequency data. This analysis enabled the phonetics sound to be accomplished. For instance, Badaruddin et al. (2017) revealed the accuracy of the pronunciation of Quranic alphabets through the identification of features. Their study showed the correctness of all Sukun combinations of 28 Quranic alphabets among adults and children who are experts in this field.

Based on the results of their study, 8 out of 28 letters have equal or more than 80% of the overall percentage of correct classification namely, أ ت أث أخ أد أذ أر أز أش أه, an average of 50% to 70% as follows, أء أب أص أض أظ أظ أظ and less than 50% are أم أن أو أي. Pronunciation of children who are experts in this field have equal or more than 80% of correct classification letters namely, أ ت أث أخ أد أذ أر أز أش أه, an average percentage 50% to 70% as follow أج أح أس أع أغ أف أك, and less than 50% are أء أب أص أض أظ أظ أظ أم أن أو أي. The Quranic children's reciters representative in the study has successfully identified the correct pronunciation of the Quranic alphabets in reciting the Quran by using classifier tools without analysing the pronunciation of the letter in detail. Referring to the result, equal to or greater than 80% can be considered as easy, an average is classified as moderate letters, and less than 50% is categorised as hard. The method of data analysis is similar to Subali et al. (2014), but the analysis of the Quranic reciters for each pronunciation of Hijaiyyah has expressed the pattern of articulation tools.

The use of association between Hijaiyyah sounds and English phonetics has been found to be a helpful method for teaching pronunciation and engaging learners in foreign language learning (Wati, 2019). A study conducted on this method has revealed that students encounter difficulties with 10 sounds, out of

which 7 Hijaiyyah letters - ز, ج, ت, ث, ظ, ش, and ك - were found to be particularly challenging. However, assimilating Hijaiyyah pronunciation into English phonetics with similar sounds proved to be an effective approach.

A set of tests for pre-schoolers to assess the pronunciation of Arabic language consonants by Rahimi et al. (2010) and Zakaria & Rahimi (2015) brought forth a total of Arabic consonants that can be ranked into three levels, which are fluent, moderate fluent and not fluent. Zakaria et al. (2010) advised that the consonants on the two lips of the consonant cavity (gullet) are placed to pronounce the letter of the Makhraj level, which can be seen and felt as well as easier to pronounce. In contrast to Ramli & Rahman (2017), who emphasized the phonetics method of Mahjub as the instrument of their study, they only use difficult letters made by Mahjub to improve the Arabic pronunciation of non-native Arabic speaking students. Their study indicated that from the nine letters tested, [ع] and [ص] were the most proper consonants to pronounce, while [ض] and [ط] were most difficult consonants to pronounce. However, this study only involved Form Four secondary school students as respondents in their qualitative study.

### The Pattern of Hijaiyyah Alphabet

It is an absolute fact that each group of the fluency of the Hijaiyyah's pronunciation is presented by several similar organ systems of speech. This is made clear through the descriptions of similarities in the place and manner of articulation (Wati, 2019), also known as Makhraj. It should be noted that Makhraj is simply the place where the wind is held out from inside the lungs to the outside of the mouth.

For instance, the consonant of the consonant [و], where the air is held in the pronunciation organ is the lip of the mouth. Makhraj for [و] is the lip organ. This showed that the Makhraj works while this consonant is sounded (Rahimi et al., 2010) unless other consonants will be pronounced and will cause misunderstanding to the listener if Makhraj is not presented well.

Therefore, the letters in each level of the Hijaiyyah's pronunciation (Table 3) have been classified into the group of the speech organ of the point of articulation (Makhraj) (Badaruddin, et al., 2017) to form a pattern of Hijaiyyah letters as in Figure 1:



Figure 1: The pattern of the fluency of Hijaiyyah Pronunciation

### 5.0 Conclusion

The Arabic language presents a challenge for many individuals learning to read the Quran, particularly when it comes to the pronunciation of the language's consonants. To address this issue, various studies have been conducted using classical, modern, and comprehension-based methods to assess students' proficiency and fluency in the pronunciation of Arabic consonants. Many of these studies have identified different levels of difficulty in mastering the correct pronunciation, ranging from easy to moderate to difficult. By analyzing the results of these studies, researchers have developed instructional modules to help learners improve their pronunciation skills and ultimately enhance their reading proficiency. The insights gained from these studies can be a valuable resource for teachers and researchers seeking to improve Arabic language instruction and promote greater fluency and accuracy among Quran learners.

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## Pronunciation of Hijaiyyah's letter for new Quranic Learners a Contrastive Analysis Study

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