

Difficulty in Memorizing the Qur'an among Grade II Students at SDIT Salman Al Farisi: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study explores the difficulties encountered by second-grade students at SDIT Salman Al Farisi in memorizing Surah Al-'Asr (QS. 103:1-3), focusing on four major aspects: Qur'anic reading ability, memorization fluency, articulation accuracy, and mastery of tajweed rules. The research employed a qualitative case study approach to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Data were collected through direct classroom observation, in-depth interviews with three purposively selected students and their tahfidz teacher, as well as documentation analysis of academic records and progress notes. The findings revealed that limited Qur'anic reading skills significantly hindered the memorization process. Students who struggled with decoding words, connecting syllables, and applying vowel length (mad) rules could not fully concentrate on retention and comprehension. Low fluency was another challenge, reflected in frequent hesitation, stammering, and confusion between verses, largely due to insufficient repetition (muroja'ah) and lack of independent practice at home. Articulation difficulties were evident in the inaccurate pronunciation of several hijaiyah letters such as dza, shod, 'ain, and tsa, which reduced the clarity and meaning of recitation. Moreover, insufficient mastery of tajweed and makhraj rules, particularly in applying ghunnah, idgham, and correct vowel length, resulted in repeated errors across all three students. The study confirms that these four aspects are deeply interconnected, where weakness in one area exacerbates problems in the others. It underscores the need for integrated pedagogical interventions that combine talaqqi-based learning, structured articulation drills, comprehension-based methods, and systematic repetition schedules. Parental involvement was also found to be essential in reinforcing practice outside the classroom. Overall, the research highlights that successful Qur'an memorization in elementary schools cannot be achieved through isolated teaching strategies but requires a comprehensive, collaborative approach between teachers, students, and parents. Future research is recommended to expand the sample and evaluate specific intervention models to strengthen both the cognitive and spiritual outcomes of tahfidz learning.

Keywords: Qur'an Memorization, Reading Ability, Fluency, Articulation, Tajweed

Introduction

Elementary school is the first level of formal education a child undergoes. In elementary school, children will complete six years of education. Elementary schools have significant responsibilities and duties, as this level significantly determines how a child's character will develop. The emergence of Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT), a current trend, has become an alternative place for parents to send their children. Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) have a unique appeal that attracts parents to send their children to them. Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) provide general knowledge and character development based on the Qur'an and Sunnah (Hilmi et al, 2018).

In line with the importance of these activities, Integrated Islamic Schools (SDIT) exist as educational institutions that integrate the national curriculum with Islamic teachings, including the Quran memorization program (Ilhami et al, 2024). This program is both a distinctive feature and a major draw for parents who desire a strong religious education for their children (Annawawi & Haqi, 2024). At SDIT, memorization activities are generally integrated into the daily lesson schedule and even become part of the student's academic success indicators (Arini & Widawarsih, 2022). This program not only targets memorization of a few short surahs but also emphasizes the quality of recitation according to the rules of tajweed, fluency in memorization, and etiquette in reading the Quran. Thus, students are expected to be able to not only memorize but also understand and internalize the meaning of the holy verses they study.

Based on initial observations conducted by researchers in class II of SDIT Salman Al Farisi, it was found that although most students were able to memorize the Quran well, there were several students who experienced significant difficulties, even in memorizing relatively short surahs such as Surah Al-Ashr (Khasanatun & Syauqillah, 2024). This indicates that the success of the tahfidz program depends not only on the system and curriculum implemented, but also needs to consider the conditions and characteristics of each student (Agustian, 2024). The difficulties students face in memorizing the Quran can be caused by various factors. Some causes originate within the student, such as weak memory, lack of motivation, laziness, and boredom that often arise from the repetitive nature of the memorization process. Furthermore, there are also external influences, such as a lack of environmental support, a home environment that is not conducive to learning, teachers' lack of variety in teaching methods, and limited time to review memorization at home. Differences in learning styles and intelligence levels among students also pose challenges in the memorization process. Children who do not yet have a strong foundation in Quranic recitation will face a dual burden: learning to read and memorize simultaneously, which will certainly slow down the achievement of memorization goals.

Based on these conditions, it is crucial to conduct research that examines in more depth the difficulties experienced by students in memorizing Surah Al-Ashr, particularly three students in grade II of SDIT Salman Al Farisi. This research is urgent because it can provide a concrete picture of the challenges faced by students and help schools and teachers design more effective and adaptive learning approaches. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for similar schools in developing more inclusive memorization programs that support student success across both cognitive and spiritual aspects. Based on the background of the problem, the researcher is interested in knowing more deeply about the difficulties experienced by the three students in memorizing the Al-Ashr letter to achieve the school's target, the author is encouraged to submit a thesis research with the title: "Difficulties in Memorizing the Al-Quran in Class II Students of SDIT Salman Al Farisi: Case Study".

Method

This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to provide a holistic understanding of the difficulties faced by second-grade students in memorizing Surah Al-'Asr. A qualitative paradigm was deemed appropriate because it allows the researcher to capture the depth of personal experiences, perceptions, and challenges within a natural classroom setting, rather than reducing the phenomenon into numerical measures (Hamidah & Nazilia, 2022). The case study design enabled an in-depth exploration of a small group of participants, producing rich and detailed data that reflected both cognitive and social aspects of the memorization process. The study took place at SDIT Salman Al Farisi, located in Rawalumbu, Bekasi City, West

Java. This school integrates the national curriculum with Islamic education, including *tahfidz* as a central program. Three second-grade students were purposively selected as participants because they demonstrated significant difficulties in memorizing Surah Al-'Asr despite continuous exposure in class. One *tahfidz* teacher was also included as a supporting informant. Purposive sampling ensured that the participants met specific criteria, namely consistent difficulty in recitation fluency, articulation, and *tajweed* application. Data were collected using three complementary techniques (Ice, 2019). First, observations were conducted in the classroom to document students' performance during memorization activities. Observation sheets were used to record indicators such as accuracy in reading, fluency in recitation, and correctness of *tajweed*. Second, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with both the students and the *tahfidz* teacher. These interviews explored experiences, learning habits, parental support, motivational factors, and perceived obstacles. Third, documentation was reviewed in the form of progress books, teacher records, and photographs of learning activities, which provided supporting evidence and contextual information.

The instruments used in this study consisted of observation guides and interview protocols that had been validated through expert review by an experienced *tahfidz* instructor. Observation indicators included ability to pronounce *hijaiyah* letters correctly, continuity in recitation, and adherence to *tajweed* rules. Interview questions focused on daily routines, challenges in articulation, memorization strategies, and the role of parents at home. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman Interactive Model, which includes four iterative steps: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data were continuously organized and refined until saturation was reached, meaning no new insights emerged. Triangulation of sources and methods was applied by cross-checking information from students, teachers, and documents, which strengthened the credibility of findings. Member checking was also conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with the *tahfidz* teacher to ensure accuracy and minimize bias. Through this methodological design, the research was able to produce trustworthy insights into the specific challenges of Qur'an memorization among the selected students.

In addition to triangulation, data validity was maintained through prolonged engagement and persistent observation. The researcher interacted intensively with the students over several learning sessions to gain a deeper understanding of their context and learning habits. This approach helped distinguish between natural behaviors and those influenced by the researcher's presence (observer effect). Daily field notes were used to record nonverbal expressions, emotional classroom atmosphere, and social interactions between teachers and students. In this study, the researcher served as the primary instrument responsible for collecting, interpreting, and organizing data. The researcher actively observed, listened, and interacted with participants while maintaining a reflective and objective stance. To reduce personal bias, the researcher employed reflexive journaling, writing reflective notes after each observation or interview session. This strategy helped maintain critical awareness of personal assumptions and emotional influences throughout the data collection process.

Ethical considerations were also carefully observed. The researcher obtained formal permission from the school and verbal consent from the parents of the participating students. The students' identities were anonymized to protect privacy and confidentiality. All interviews were conducted respectfully and in accordance with Islamic educational values, emphasizing *adab* (proper manners) and respect for learners. By upholding these ethical principles, the research not only produced valid and reliable data but also embodied Islamic values within the framework of scientific inquiry .

Results

This section will discuss the research findings obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation conducted with three second-grade students at SDIT Salman Al Farisi and their tahfidz teacher. This study aims to describe in detail the difficulties experienced by students in memorizing QS. Al-Ashr/103: 1-3 and the factors that influence them. Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation with three students and tahfidz teachers, it was found that students' difficulties in memorizing QS. Al-Ashr/103: 1-3 were caused by several factors, including the following:

Poor Quran reading skills, such as stuttering when pronouncing letters, misplacing words, or making mistakes in the length of recitations, can hinder the memorization process. When students are not yet fluent in reading, they tend to focus more on how to read than on understanding and memorizing verses, resulting in slow memorization and easy forgetting. Furthermore, reading errors can also lead to repeated mispronunciations, which ultimately become ingrained as incorrect memorization. Based on observations of three students, differences in the level of difficulty in reading Surah Al-Ashr were found. Student 1 obtained a score of 7 out of a maximum of 15, resulting in a 46.6% achievement percentage. This indicates a more significant obstacle compared to the other two students. In verses 2 and 3, Student 1 was unable to read correctly, both in terms of letter pronunciation, tajweed, and overall reading fluency. This indicates that Student 1 still needs more intensive guidance in understanding and reciting these verses. (O.S1/070525)

Meanwhile, students 2 and 3 appeared to have better reading skills. Student 2 scored 11 out of a maximum of 15, giving them a score of 73.3%, while student 3 scored 12 out of a maximum of 15, giving them a score of 80%. Both students only experienced difficulties with verse 3, particularly in pronouncing some of the hijaiyah letters and mastering the rules of reading. However, they were still able to read the first and second verses quite well and fluently. (O.S2.S3/070525). Based on the interview results above, it can be concluded that the main difficulty experienced by students in memorizing QS. Al-Ashr/103: 1-3 is closely related to their limited ability to read the Qur'an. Two students, namely RNK and HA, directly stated that they were not yet fluent in reading the Qur'an and were still at the Iqra learning stage, so this became an obstacle in the memorization process. This is in line with the teacher's statement that RNK and HA experienced difficulty in pronouncing the hijaiyah letters and were less precise in applying tajweed and makhraj. Meanwhile, MAF students, despite having better reading abilities, still faced challenges in terms of memory, especially when memorizing long verses or verses with similar wording.

Memorization fluency reflects the extent to which students can memorize and recite verses sequentially without pauses, hesitation, or pronunciation errors. When students frequently stop mid-verse, mispronounce words, or require teacher assistance to continue memorizing, this indicates that the memorization process is not progressing optimally (Hasanah, 2016). Low fluency can be caused by poor comprehension of the reading, lack of repetition (*murojaah*), and minimal independent practice at home. Based on the observation score percentage above, it was found that student 1 obtained a score of 9 out of a maximum score of 15, so the achievement percentage was 60%. Student 1 experienced particular difficulty in memorizing Surah Al-Ashr, especially in the second and third verses. Student 1 often confused it with the second verse of Surah Al-Fajr, which indicates confusion in distinguishing between the two different surahs. In addition, in the third verse, student 1 was not yet able to read it completely and tended to stop in the middle of reading. (O.S1/070525)

Meanwhile, students 2 and 3 obtained scores of 9 and 10 out of a maximum score of 15, respectively, resulting in achievement percentages of 60% and 66.6%. Students 2 and 3 demonstrated better performance on the first and second verses, but both experienced difficulties with the third verse. These difficulties included an inability to complete the reading fluently and still stuttered pronunciation. (O.S2.S3/070525). Students' difficulty memorizing is not only caused by suboptimal reading skills, but also by study habits outside of school hours, particularly when it comes to reviewing or revising memorization at home. When students lack the discipline to regularly review, memorized material tends to be quickly forgotten and doesn't retain its meaning for long.

Based on the interview results above, it can be concluded that the low frequency of murojaah at home is one of the factors causing the lack of fluency in memorization. The three students tend to only repeat memorization when asked or under certain conditions. The first student only murojaah when asked, the second student admitted to being lazy and preferring to play, while the third student rarely murojaah even though he had done it with his parents (Buton, 2021). This is supported by documentation in the memorization progress book for students 1 and 3 which shows notes from the tahfidz teacher to re-murojaah their memorization of QS. Al-Ashr/103: 1-3. Students' ability to recite verses is still relatively weak, characterized by unclear pronunciation and difficulty for listeners to understand. Some students have not been able to pronounce the hijaiyah letters correctly, especially letters that have makhraj and special characteristics. Errors in pronunciation cause the meaning of the verse to change or not be understood, thus hampering understanding and the overall memorization process.

Based on the observation score percentage above, students' ability to recite verses is still relatively weak, characterized by unclear pronunciation and difficulty for listeners to understand. As observed, student 1 obtained a score of 10 out of a maximum score of 15, so the achievement percentage is 66.6%. This is clearly evident in student 1, where in the aspect of fluency, there are several letters that are not heard clearly and the pronunciation tends to be unclear, such as the letters dza and shod. These errors result in the meaning of the verse being inaccurate and difficult to understand. (O.S1/070525)

Meanwhile, students 2 and 3 obtained scores of 9 and 8 out of a maximum score of 15, so the achievement percentages were 60% and 53.3%. Student 2 and student 3 also experienced difficulties in pronunciation, especially the letters 'ain and shod, which sounded less fluent and did not come out of the proper makhraj (Bonita et al, 2022). Based on the interview results above, it can be concluded that the three students experienced difficulties in pronouncing several hijaiyah letters when memorizing the Qur'an. Student 1 mentioned difficulties with the letters dza and shod, student 2 experienced difficulties in pronouncing the letters 'ain and shod, while student 3 admitted to having difficulty pronouncing the letter tsa because it tended to be confused with the letter sin (Herdiansyah, 2021). These difficulties indicate that mastery of makhraj and the nature of letters is still a challenge for students in the memorization process, so more intensive pronunciation practice and special guidance in pronouncing the hijaiyah letters are needed. This is proven by the documentation in the book on the development of student 1's memorization of the Quran which shows that he often gets a C grade in the aspect of tajwid from the memorization teacher (Fanani, 2016).

Tajwid is a science that regulates the procedures for reading the Al-Qur'an correctly, including the rules of reading, the length and shortness of letters (mad), and sound emphasis (Al Muiz, 2022). Meanwhile makhraj is the place where the hijaiyah letters come out of the mouth and throat. When students have not mastered tajwid and makhraj well, they tend to

pronounce letters incorrectly, mix up the sounds of similar letters, or don't know the correct length and short of reading. As a result, the memorization that is formed is not in accordance with the rules of proper reading, and this can cause confusion and repeated mistakes when memorizing. Based on the observation score percentage above, student 1 obtained a score of 9 out of a maximum score of 15, so the achievement percentage is 60%. Student 2 obtained a score of 11 out of a maximum score of 15, so the achievement percentage is 73.3%, while student 3 obtained a score of 9 out of a maximum score of 15, so the achievement percentage is 60%.

This is supported by the results of observations conducted by the researcher with three students, namely that all three students experienced similar difficulties in applying ghunnah and idgham in the second verse of Surah Al-Ashr, and did not pay attention to the length of the recitation in the third verse of Surah Al-Ashr (Utami & Maharani, 2016). (O.S1.S2.S3/070525). Observations indicate that students have not yet fully mastered the science of tajweed and makhraj, as evidenced by teacher notes in the memorization progress book. These notes assess errors in the application of tajweed in reading the Quran, such as inaccurate pronunciation of letters and the application of reading rules. Therefore, more intensive guidance is needed to improve students' tajweed skills.

Discussion

The ability to read the Quran is the primary foundation that determines the success of the memorization process (tafhidz). Research shows that students who have not yet mastered reading skills tend to experience significant difficulties in memorization (Ariyani, 2022). This is clearly evident in Student 1, who only scored 7 out of 15 (46.6%). Mistakes include incorrect pronunciation of letters, inability to connect words correctly, and errors in the application of length and shortness of recitation. These errors result in a slow memorization process, even making students prone to misreading.

As emphasized by good reading skills are an important prerequisite before proceeding to the memorization stage because reading that is not fluent will affect the process of internalizing verses into memory (Hilmi et al., 2018). Students 2 and 3 have better reading skills, with scores of 11 (73.3%) and 12 (80%), respectively, although they still experience difficulties in the third verse, especially in pronouncing certain letters and applying the rules of tajweed. This indicates that reading difficulties are still a inhibiting factor that requires serious attention, although in a milder category compared to student 1. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that weak mastery of reading skills has direct implications for memorization delays. As emphasized that the effectiveness of the tafhidz learning method is significantly influenced by the ability to read and memorize the Qur'an, so that the lower the reading ability, the more difficult the memorization process is carried out optimally (Putri & Harfiani, 2022).

In addition to reading ability, memorization fluency is also an indicator of successful memorization. Based on observations, Student 1 scored 9 (60%), indicating significant difficulty in completing memorization fluently. These obstacles included frequent pauses in the middle of verses, confusion with verses from other chapters (such as Surah Al-Fajr), and dependence on teacher assistance to continue memorization. This demonstrates weak memorization differentiation due to a lack of repetition (murojaah) and a limited understanding of verse structure. Research by revealed that memorization fluency is greatly influenced by the intensity of repetition and consistency of practice (Masriah et al, 2021).

Meanwhile, students 2 and 3 scored 9 (60%) and 10 (66.6%), respectively, with similar difficulties in the third verse, although they were more fluent in the first and second verses (Azizah et al, 2024). This fact indicates that despite their improved reading skills, memorization fluency is still influenced by repetition habits and learning motivation. This low level of repetition is also supported by research findings, which show that students who do not perform regular muroja'ah tend to have difficulty remembering the sequence of verses (Nurnaningsih et al., 2021). Thus, the weak memorization fluency in these three students emphasizes the importance of a structured muroja'ah strategy and strengthening understanding of the verses before memorization begins. Furthermore, fluency (fasahah) in reciting verses is also a crucial aspect.

Based on observational findings, all students still have weaknesses in pronouncing letters that are unclear and do not match the makhraj. Student 1 obtained a score of 10 (66.6%), but still has problems pronouncing letters such as dza and shod, which sound unclear and do not come out of their makhraj. This error has the potential to change the meaning of the verse and reduce the quality of memorization. This is in accordance with the opinion of who emphasized that fluency in recitation not only affects understanding the meaning but also helps strengthen memory in the memorization process (Kania et al., 2024). Students 2 and 3 obtained lower scores, namely 60% and 53.3%, with dominant errors in the letters 'ain and shod. This low fluency can be caused by a lack of imitation practice, where the teacher demonstrates the correct reading and students imitate it, as well as minimal repetition of difficult letters (Hidayat, 2020). Based on these facts, it can be concluded that low student fluency is more due to limited habituation in correcting makhraj and letter characteristics through direct interaction with the teacher.

Tajweed is also crucial in learning to memorize the Quran. Based on the research, students 1 and 3 scored 9 (60%), while student 2 achieved a score of 11 (73.3%). These findings indicate that most students have not yet mastered the rules of recitation, such as mad, idgham, and qalqalah, and do not yet understand the correct length of the recitation. This aligns with the findings of a study by which stated that a weak understanding of Tajweed can result in memorization that does not conform to the rules, requiring repeated correction (Gafur et al., 2023). Furthermore, good mastery of Tajweed not only improves reading quality but also facilitates memorization because correct reading patterns facilitate the formation of long-term memory (Nasruddin, 2021).

This opinion is supported by Ausubel's theory of meaningful repetition, which asserts that information presented in a structured, rule-based manner is easier to learn and remember. Therefore, the low tajwid mastery found in this study is one of the contributing factors to students' slow memorization progress. Overall, the results of this study confirm that the four aspects of reading ability, memorization fluency, fluency, and tajwid mastery are interrelated and directly influence the successful memorization of QS. Al-Ashr/103: 1-3. Low achievement in one aspect has the potential to hinder the others. For example, weak reading ability impacts memorization fluency, and low tajwid mastery can worsen reading fluency. These findings align with view that memorization learning must be designed holistically, focusing on strengthening recitation, mastering tajwid, and cultivating consistent muroja'ah habits (Hidayat's, 2020). Therefore, recommended intervention strategies include the implementation of the talaqqi method, makhraj drills, understanding-based learning, and a structured muroja'ah schedule. The preliminary conclusion of this study is that improving students' memorization cannot be achieved in isolation but requires an integrated approach involving all supporting aspects.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the specific difficulties faced by three second-grade students at SDIT Salman Al Farisi in memorizing Surah Al-'Asr. By focusing on four key aspects—reading ability, fluency, articulation, and tajweed—the research confirmed its objective of providing an in-depth understanding of the challenges in Qur'an memorization at the elementary school level. The findings revealed that weak Qur'anic reading skills were the most fundamental barrier, forcing students to concentrate on decoding letters rather than retaining verses. This difficulty, combined with irregular muroja'ah practices at home, resulted in poor fluency, characterized by hesitation, stammering, and confusion with similar verses. Articulation challenges further complicated memorization, with students repeatedly mispronouncing letters such as dza, shod, and 'ain, which altered both clarity and meaning. Moreover, insufficient mastery of tajweed rules led to persistent errors in the application of ghunnah, idgham, and vowel length. These four factors were found to be closely interrelated, with deficiencies in one aspect consistently influencing the others. The implications of these findings are significant. For teachers, the results highlight the need to integrate reading proficiency, articulation training, and tajweed practice into a single coherent teaching strategy, supported by structured and consistent repetition schedules. Schools are encouraged to provide remedial programs and to design tahfidz curricula that allow for individual learning differences. Parents, meanwhile, are urged to play a more active role by supervising and motivating their children's practice at home, as learning continuity cannot be achieved in the classroom alone. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample across different grade levels and schools to provide a more generalizable understanding of Qur'an memorization challenges. Studies testing specific interventions—such as digital memorization tools, peer-assisted practice, or talaqqi-based correction—would provide valuable insights into effective strategies for improving both cognitive and spiritual development. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that successful Qur'an memorization requires a holistic and collaborative approach, ensuring that children not only memorize verses but also internalize them with accuracy and devotion.

Acknowledgment

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