THE QUR'AN LITERACY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION STUDENTS AT FACULTY OF TARBIYAH AND TEACHER TRAINING, UIN MATARAM

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Abstract: This study investigated the concept of Al-Qur'an literacy and Al-Qur'an reading and writing (TBQ) coaching program for students of Islamic Religious Education department at UIN Mataram. The importance of the position of the Qur'an in every aspect of human life makes studying and understanding it is a must. This study uses a qualitative method; the data collection process was carried out through field research. Collecting data is done through observation, interviews, documentation and reference tracing. The data that has been collected is processed through three stages, data reduction, data display, and data verification. The result of this study indicates that Al-Qur'an literacy through the Al-Qur'an reading and writing program for Islamic religious education students at UIN Mataram is excellent; this can be seen from a series of coaching programs that are carried out intensively and directly supervised directly by the department.

Keywords: literacy, Al-Qur’an, Islamic education.
INTRODUCTION

The Quran is the word of Allah, revealed as a miracle to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through Jibril and recorded in a mushaf. Its transmission is mutawatir, which carries a worshipful significance for its readers.\(^1\) Allah sent down the Quran as comprehensive guidance for all aspects of life. Its position as a life guide necessitates constant study, examination, and application, making it an ongoing educational process that encompasses all human experiences.\(^2\) As widely recognised, the Quran is the primary and fundamental source of Islamic teachings. It encompasses the core principles of religion and guides personal and societal well-being. It establishes the relationship between humans and their Creator and the interaction between individuals.\(^3\)

Here are some key points of the Quran. First, taubid (the belief in monotheism) encompasses faith in Allah, angels, messengers, holy books, the afterlife, divine decree, and destiny. Second, ibadah (worship) emphasises devotion to Allah and appropriate conduct towards Allah and fellow beings. Third, the Quran outlines laws and regulations governing various human actions, encompassing matters of worship (ibadah) and daily interactions (muamalah). Fourth, it presents promises of hope (wa'ad) for believers who perform good deeds and warnings (wa'id) for those who disobey. Fifth, the Quran also contains historical accounts and stories of the struggles of prophets, messengers, and past civilisations. Sixth, it serves as a foundation of knowledge, encouraging Muslims to explore and inquire to advance and prosper as a society.\(^4\)

The significance of the Quran in every facet of human life necessitates its study, comprehension, and exploration. Recognising this, the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training at UIN Mataram initiated the Quran literacy program. This program was created due to two significant reasons. The first one is public grievances on graduates of UIN. The community expects graduates of UIN, particularly those from the Islamic Religious Education program (Pendidikan Agama Islam: PAI), to possess noble character and contribute to the development of Islamic religious education in society. This aligns with the mission of the PAI Department, which aims to enhance community service in Islamic religious education. The common perception concerning the graduates of UIN is that they excel in Quranic recitation and understanding. The second reason is that not all PAI students possess madrasas or pesantren backgrounds. Some of them graduated from public school; they do not excel in reciting Quran. Subsequently, a Quran literacy program was launched to enhance students' recitation (qira’ah), writing (kitabah), and tajweed skills.

\(^3\) M Quraish Shihab, *Sejarah dan Uloomul Al-Qur’an*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2008), hal 40.
\(^4\) Muhammad Yasir, *Studi Al-qur’an*, (Riau: Asa Riau, 2016), hal 20.
Islamic Religious Education focuses on imparting the values of Islamic teachings as stated in the Quran and Hadith. The Quran reading and writing program aims to enhance proficiency in reciting and writing the Quran. It encompasses accurate recitation, fluency, precise pronunciation (makhroj), and the knowledge of Tajweed. The program's significance lies in equipping students, particularly those in the Islamic religious education department, who are demanded to transmit the skills and knowledge to future generations. By emphasizing the importance of reading and writing the Qur'an, students are encouraged to practice and teach it effectively. Upon graduation from UIN Mataram, they are expected to demonstrate their competency in reading and writing the Quran, which serves as a foundation for their identity formation as prospective educators or educational personnel. Furthermore, it strengthens their expertise in education, including developing learning materials, pedagogical skills, and academic competence. These efforts align with the objectives of UIN Mataram to actively contribute to the community. Given the context mentioned above, the researcher decided to investigate the Quran literacy program for students of Islamic Religious Education at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Mataram.

**METHOD**

The authors conducted qualitative research to obtain descriptive data from written or spoken words and observed behaviours. This type of research emphasizes the quality and essential aspects of goods or services. The primary objective is understanding the meaning behind events or social phenomena, which can contribute to theoretical concept development. A qualitative approach is employed to explore and describe the reality of the studied events, facilitating the collection of objective data. Inductive data analysis is employed in qualitative research, where hypotheses are not tested before the study. Instead, the focus is on extracting abstract and specific findings derived from the field.

Data collection in this study involved field research, which included observations, interviews, documentation, and reference searches. During the observation process, the researcher directly recorded what was seen, heard, or felt in the research environment, focusing solely on factual descriptions without including personal opinions. The interviews were conducted openly and informally, allowing informants to express their answers as in regular conversations freely. Before the interviews, the researcher prepared a question outline. For the documentation technique, sources such as notes, transcripts, books,
newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, minutes, and agendas were utilised to gather written data about the investigated phenomena. The field research was conducted by directly observing the phenomena occurring. At UIN Mataram, specifically within the Islamic religious education department.

The collected data underwent three stages of data processing: reduction, display, and verification. Data reduction involved simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data obtained from written records in the field, and this process continued throughout the research period—data display involved compiling the information, enabling conclusions to be drawn and actions to be taken. Qualitative data can be presented in various formats, including narrative texts, matrices, graphs, networks, and charts. Data verification served as the stage for conclusions based on all the data obtained from the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Definition of Literacy

Etymologically, literacy originates from the Latin word "literatus," meaning an individual desiring to learn. Consequently, a literatus possesses the capacity to read and write, enabling them to pursue knowledge in their chosen field. In the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), literacy refers to an individual's competence in reading and writing. Jean E. Spencer, in *The Encyclopedia Americana*, defines literacy as the ability to read and write, serving as the gateway to an educated populace, communities, and nations.

As per the National Library Standard (SNP), literacy entails recognising information requirements to address issues, nurturing ideas, posing crucial questions using diverse information-gathering techniques, and discerning pertinent, suitable, and authentic information. Under this SNP definition, literacy is an endeavour to meet information needs and solve problems, making it an essential skill for all. Literacy contributes to the development of scientific civilisation within a nation, compelling every country worldwide to enhance its literacy rate and become a civilised society.

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The Definition of Quran Literacy

Learning the Qur’an is every Muslim’s obligation (fardhu ‘ain). Each individual must fulfil this obligation and will be held accountable for it in the afterlife. The study of the Quran differs from secular subjects as it encompasses a wide range of meanings. It is not merely about correctly reading or writing it but also about applying its teachings daily. Muslims are encouraged to understand and practice the teachings of Islam by reading and comprehending the diverse meanings within the Quran. This encouragement is explained in the Quran, Surah Al-ALaq 1-5: Read, O Prophet, in the Name of your Lord Who created – (1) created humans from a clinging clot (2) Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous (3) Who taught by the pen – (4) taught humanity what they knew not (5).15

Surah al-Ahq verses 1-5 encompass three main aspects: the directive to read (iqra’), the command to contemplate upon human creation, the concept of al-qalam (writing) and the dissemination of knowledge. This passage promotes cultivating a literary culture within Arab people (Muslim).16 The Qur’an, ultimately transcribed in the form of a mushaf, served as an inspiration for the emergence of a scientific civilisation among Muslims. Indeed, the codification of the Qur'an catalysed the Islamic world's developing culture and written traditions.17 Therefore, both the Qur'an and the efforts of Muhammad PBUH played a crucial role in nurturing a culture of literacy in the Arab nation. In this context, literacy is perceived as a tool for communicating ideas and knowledge, serving as a system for preserving Arabic wisdom and expertise. The literary movement within the Arab community, consequently, fosters the birth of intellectual traditions in the Islamic world.

The definition of Al-Qur'an literacy closely aligns with the general definition of literacy, encompassing the study of the Qur’an through reading, writing, conveying, studying, exploring, researching, and understanding its characteristics. In Al-Qur’an literacy, it is not merely about reading; one must also possess the ability to write and recite it following the rules of makhrijul huruf and the principles of tajwid.18 Such a concept of Qur’an literacy is the core of the Baca Tulis Qur’an: BTQ program (reading and writing Qur’an) organised by the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Mataram.

The BTQ program aims to equip students to read and write the Qur’an accurately and proficiently. The skill of writing the Qur’an in Arabic is an essential aspect that the students

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18 M Hasby As-Shidiqy, Sejarah dan Pengantar Ilmu Al-Qur’an dan Tafsir, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 2000), hal 1.
of the Islamic Religious Education department must master, as it follows distinct rules compared to writing using Latin letters. The rules for transcribing Qur’anic verses include writing huruf hijaiyah (Arabic letters), combining Arabic letters, and accurately representing vowels (harakat) in Arabic. Qur’an literacy acquaints students with the art of reading, studying, and teaching the Qur’an, moulding them into a generation that embodies exemplary values within themselves.

**Improving Quranic Literacy among PAI Students at FTK UIN Mataram through BTQ Coaching Program**

UIN Mataram is an Islamic university situated amidst the Muslim-majority community on the island of Lombok, known as the "island of a thousand mosques." This geographical context motivates UIN Mataram to produce graduates with specialised expertise in Islam, ranging from fundamental competencies like reading and writing the Qur’an to advanced Islamic scholarly abilities. In particular, the Islamic Religious Education program strives to enhance community service in Islamic religious education.

Students enrolled in the Islamic Religious Education program are future teachers of Islamic religious education entrusted with teaching in schools. Consequently, they are required to possess an ability to read and write the Qur’an, as it constitutes mandatory content they will impart to their students. This aligns with Zakiah Drajat's view that Islamic Religious Education represents a deliberate endeavour to nurture students, enabling them to comprehend Islamic teachings holistically and subsequently embody the objectives that ultimately transform Islam into a way of life.

The Quran reading and writing coaching (BTQ) program, held during the 2022/2023 academic year within the Islamic Religious Education program, was attended by first-semester students from seven classes, totalling 259 participants. To ensure the coaching program achieves its desired outcomes, the Islamic Religious Education program utilised the results of diagnostic tests assessing the students' Quranic reading and writing abilities, administered beforehand. The organisers identified each participating student's weaknesses and deficiencies by analysing the diagnostic test data. BTQ program placed significant emphasis on enhancing tartil (recitation), tajwid (rules of recitation), and makhraj (pronunciation). The study program will enhance and refine the BTQ coaching program for the upcoming academic year, aiming to produce students or graduates from the Islamic religious education department who can read and write the Quran. The evaluation results indicated that the curriculum for first-semester students in the 2022/2023 academic year

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emphasised the mastery of rules of recitation (tajwid) and pronunciation (makhraj). For instance, the instructional materials covered in class encompass makhrajul huruf, tajwid principles, mainly focusing on the regulations concerning the principle of nun sakinah (ن ْ), mim sakinah (م ْ), heavy ر (tafkheem), light ر (tarqeeq), and techniques for rectifying recitation errors.

BTQ coaching program at the Department of Islamic Religious Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Mataram was implemented through multiple stages;

1. Initial Selection

The BTQ coaching program held at the Department of Islamic Religious Education began at the beginning of the semester to cater to incoming students. The initial selection process, consisting of a pre-test and diagnostic test, was conducted by the department to determine each student's proficiency level and identify those who excel in Quranic reading and writing and require further improvement; however, the emphasis during this initial selection primarily laid on reading skills. Based on the pre-test results, students were grouped according to their abilities by the department. Subsequently, an official circular was issued, mandating the participation of new students in the BTQ coaching program.

Students who displayed below-average proficiency in Quranic reading were obliged to partake in intensive coaching activities. On the other hand, those who are fluent in reading and possess the ability to recite and memorise were directed to engage in coaching sessions organised by their respective Majors’ Student Association (Himpunan Mahasiswa Jurusan: HMJ), particularly the divisions dedicated to interest and talent development. Nevertheless, even students who demonstrated fluency in Quranic reading were still required to participate in the BTQ coaching program, as proficiency in writing the Quran accurately cannot be assumed solely based on reading skills. Therefore, the study program managers aimed to ensure that students acquire mastery in both aspects simultaneously, enabling them to read and write the Quran proficiently rather than focusing on just one skill.

In addition to the selection process conducted by the department, HMJ also performed their recruitment procedures. First-semester students were categorised into three groups: highly proficient (A), moderately proficient (B), and less proficient (C). Students who successfully passed the department's selection process received direct coaching activities through a compulsory course entitled Penguatan Baca Tulis Al-Quran. Despite coaching activities being incorporated as mandatory components of specific courses, additional coaching sessions were conducted outside regular class hours using a "peer coaching" approach. Category C students guided their peers in categories B and C. Moreover, the selection process carried out by HMJ occurred independently of the
academic semester, as they facilitated open recruitment for all students interested in learning Quranic reading and writing skills.

2. Peer Coaching

Peer tutoring is a program where students are assigned to assist their peers who are facing difficulties or are slower learners, aiming to help them achieve optimal learning outcomes.21 After the initial selection, students were grouped into three categories based on their proficiency: Group A, Group B, and Group C. Group A consisted of highly proficient students, Group B included moderately proficient students, and Group C comprised less proficient students. Students from Group A supported their peers in Groups B and C. Peer coaching activities were coordinated by the respective class leaders.

According to an interview with a class leader, peer coaching occurred during and outside class hours. Coaching during class hours took place in the *Penguatan Baca Tulis Quran* course, which supported the BTQ coaching program. The assigned tutors listened to *tajweed* recitation, *makhraj*, and related written exercises of their friends. Coaching activities outside class hours were flexible and adapted to individual schedules, fostering peer collaboration.

Peer coaching was facilitated by classmates and the student organisation or HMJ under the study program's coordination. They actively participated in the BTQ coaching program and conducted general recruitment without semester restrictions. Coaching by HMJ was not limited by time, unlike the study program coaching. Students can join HMJ coaching until they are confident with their abilities. HMJ organised peer coaching activities twice a week after the Asr prayer, considering most students' class schedules end around 15:30. HMJ tutors are students from the Islamic Religious Education program with excellent Quranic reading and writing abilities.

The peer coaching approach aimed to create an open, comfortable environment for student communication and learning. It encouraged active participation, as students felt more comfortable asking questions and expressing their opinions. This activity fostered enjoyable and compelling learning experiences. Peer coaching benefitted both tutors, providing valuable teaching experience and skill development and students receiving guidance, creating a more conducive learning atmosphere for active engagement and creativity.

3. Coaching by Faculty

Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FTK), UIN Mataram, consistently supports students in nurturing their interests, talents, and potential. An example of this

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commitment is the implementation of the BTQ coaching program. Alongside focusing on Quranic literacy, the program also offers coaching for Quranic memorisation competitions (musabaqoh hifzil) covering five, ten, fifteen, twenty, and thirty juz, Quranic recitation (tilawatil Qur’an), proper pronunciation (tasbih), and Islamic calligraphy. These initiatives showcase the dedication of FTK UIN Mataram to fostering students' capabilities and skills. Dr. Akhmad Asyari, M. Pd, The Vice Dean III, underscored that the core objective of higher education is to unlock students’ potential, enabling them to become individuals who are devout (beriman) and God-fearing (takwa), possess noble character, maintain good health, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, skilled, and culturally aware, all for the benefit of the nation. It also aims to produce graduates who meet national needs and contribute to the country's competitiveness. Consequently, providing students with the necessary training to refine and elevate their abilities and skills is essential.22

The first step taken by FTK in ensuring the success of the BTQ coaching program was the creation of assessment tools for evaluating students' Quranic reading and writing skills. These assessment instruments were developed directly by Dr. Jumarim, M. HI, the Dean of FTK, in collaboration with Syamsuddin Sirah, M.Pd. Subsequently, the tools were validated by experts in the Quran. The validation process took place during a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) attended by all lectures of Quranic courses, lecturers of other related courses, and the chairs and secretaries of all study programs within FTK UIN Mataram. The assessment tools comprise four categories for Quranic reading and writing skills: basic, intermediate, proficient, and instructor (mu'allim) levels. Students demonstrating instructor-level skills are identified as potential peer tutors in the BTQ coaching program. The collected data indicated a wide range of proficiency levels among students, from the basic to the mu'allim level. 23
BTQ coaching program implementation at the faculty level involves all first-semester students in all study programs at FTK UIN Mataram. The course *Penguatan Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an* (Strengthening Quranic Reading and Writing) is mandatory in the first semester for all study programs. The content taught in each study program is relatively uniform and adjusted by the respective lectures. The course is taught by different instructors in the Islamic Religious Education study program, but the content coverage and teaching methods used are nearly identical. The content covers articulation points of letters (*makhorijul huruf*), *tajweed* principles, with a specific focus on principles of *num sakinab* (َّ), *mim sakinab* (ُ), heavy ٍ (tafkheem), light ٌ (tarqeeq), and techniques for correcting recitation errors.

The BTQ coaching program in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) study program generally employs three methods:

a. The *Yanbu’* Method

The *Yanbu’* method is a guide for Quranic reading, writing, and memorisation, structured according to the levels of Quranic learning. It starts with introducing the Arabic alphabet and progresses to understanding the rules and principles of recitation (*tajweed*). In this method, the lecturers first read or demonstrate, and then the students imitate by correctly pronouncing the letters based on their points of articulation (*makbrij*).\(^{24}\)

b. The *Qiro’ati* Method

The *Qiro’ati* method involves teaching without the spelling process. The students directly read the letters in the Quran. The lecturers teach the letters directly without breaking them down in this method. They explain the main lessons, and the students need to be guided. The lecturers observe and correct the mistakes. They keep repeating the process until the students can read accurately.

c. The *Iqra’* Method

The *Iqra’* method is flexible, prioritises individual mastery, and doesn't follow a specific schedule. Students can complete this method quickly if they already understand reading well. Once students can read proficiently and fluently, they finish earlier.\(^{25}\)

4. Al-Qur’an Reading and Writing Tests.

The Al-Qur’an reading and writing test is the last stage of the BTQ coaching program organised by the Islamic Religious Education Department in collaboration

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with the faculty. The test consists of two stages. The first stage is a simultaneous examination administered by the study program for first-semester students taking *Penguatan Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an* course. The second stage is reserved for seventh-semester students or higher presenting a proposal seminar. Successfully passing the Al-Qur'an reading and writing test is a requirement for students intending to participate in a proposal seminar at FTK UIN Mataram. If, during the first stage, students demonstrate below-average Al-Qur'an literacy skills, the study program will issue a circular letter directing them to participate in additional coaching activities organised by HMJ. The coaching duration is flexible, allowing students to engage until they achieve their target proficiency.

On the other hand, students who fail to meet the graduation target in the second stage of the examination cannot proceed with their proposal seminar. This exemplifies the study program's commitment to enhancing community service in Islamic religious education. PAI study program aims to equip students with the necessary foundations to strengthen their competence in line with the study program's graduate profile. Here are the assessment criteria for the Al-Qur'an reading and writing tests.

a. **Reading Al-Qur'an Assessment Criteria**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Letter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Accuracy</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Makhorijul huruf</em> (Pronunciation accuracy)</td>
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<td><em>Tartil</em> (fluency)</td>
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b. **Writing Al-Qur'an Assessment Criteria**

<table>
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<th>Letter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter clarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detached and not detached letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syllables/sentence</td>
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c. **Grading:**

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<td>76-80</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>66-70</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>56-60</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<td>0-10</td>
<td>D (Failed)</td>
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CONCLUSION

The Al-Qur'an reading and writing coaching program (Pembinaan Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an, BTA coaching program) aims to enhance students' reading proficiency and writing the Al-Qur'an. This program holds particular significance for students in the Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam: PAI) department preparing to teach Islam, including the Quran, in society. Therefore, the ability to read and write the Quran is paramount for PAI students.

PAI students are expected to excel in community service provided by FTK UIN Mataram and contribute to the quality of Islamic education. The PAI department mandates that all students possess excellent Quranic reading and writing skills to fulfill this mission. The BTQ coaching program is compulsory within the PAI study program. Furthermore, passing the Quranic reading and writing test is a prerequisite for students participating in thesis proposal seminars.

The commitment of the PAI study program to produce competent graduates in the field of religion, particularly in Quranic reading and writing, is evident through the various stages of the BTQ coaching program. These stages encompass initial selection, coaching by faculty and study programs, peer coaching, and final assessments, all directly supervised by the study program. Additionally, the study program conducts regular evaluations to gauge the improvement of students' abilities. These efforts demonstrate the implementation of the BTQ coaching program by the PAI study program, aiming to cultivate competent graduates proficient in Quranic reading and writing. This program serves as a foundation for shaping students' identities as prospective educators or educational staff and strengthening their expertise in the field of study.

REFERENCES


