The Level of Mastery in Reciting the Quran in Lahjah Arabiah Among Qari and Qariah at the National Level Al-Quran Recitation Competition in Malaysia

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Abstract

The mastery of reciting the Quran with lahjah arabiah is a form of skill that every Quran reciter must have. The decline in mastery of reciting with lahjah arabiah will inhibit the entire reciting of the Quran with songs that includes the components of tajwid, fasohah, sawt and tarannum. This study will analyse the level of mastery of reciting the Quran with melody among the gari and gariah champions at the National Quran Recitation Competition (MTQA) of Malaysia. The methodology of this study is a quantitative design that collects data from questionnaires and interviews with field experts. A total of seventeen samples of reciting videos by the champions of qari and qariah at the National level of Malaysia were obtained involving a total of 17 people. Overall, the results of the study found that the level of mastery of al-Quran recitation by gari and gariah in the National Level Quran Recitation Competition in Malaysia is at a min value of 3.05 is medium high. In the taiwid and fasohah section, the min value is 3.41 which is medium high. The tarannum section, the min value of 2.89 is medium low, while the sawt section, the min value of 2.86 is at a medium low level. The implication of the study explained that the weakness of mastery of *lahjah arabiah* reciting needs to be improved in a more focused and planned manner so that the participants of *qari* and *qariah* can better master the recitation of *lahjah arabiah*.

Keywords: Tarannum, Qari and Qariah, Lahjah Arabiah, Quran

1. INTRODUCTION

Religion allows entertainment that is regretful, a sad heart, submissive and obedient to the creator of this world. Among the entertainment allowed in religion is the art of reciting the Quran. The beauty of reciting the Quran can be seen in the rhythm and melody that has the tone of Arabic or *lahjah arabiah*. For the *qari* and *qariah* who can recite the Quran with the sound and tarannum of the Arabic leads to the beauty and attraction of the art of reciting the Quran. This was recommended by the Prophet SAW in a hadith; (Ibn Hajar Uskolani, 1959).

"Allah s.w.t does not give permission for something to the Prophet who has a beautiful voice with the tarannum of the Quran."

Hudhayfah al-Yamani RA explained; (al-Khalidi, 1997, Wan Hilmi, et al, 2014).

"Read the Quran with tarannum and the voice of the Arabs, and never recite the Quran with the melody and voice of the Yahudi or Christians. Indeed, after my omission, there will be a group who recite the Quran with *tarji'* such as singing, pastors and moaning. They recite the Quran by removing letters through the throat for the purpose of charm and awe of the people."

In Malaysia, the rules of the recitation of the Quran at the national level of Malaysia have placed the criteria of reciting in *lahjah arabiah* as an important item in evaluating the recitation of the participants. This item acts as a bonus or advantage for those who recite based to the methods and techniques of *arabiah* style, so that some states in Peninsular Malaysia have chosen *qari* and *qariah* who recite the Quran in *arabiah* style to be winners or champions in any competition (JAKIM, tt).

Although the participants have been required to read with the *lahjah arabiah*, but often the mastery of reciting the Quran in that aspect is not satisfactory. This is as reported by the head of the national level judges YBhg. Dato' Haji Othman bin Mustapha at the 56th National Level al-Quran Recitation Conference (MTQA) Year 1434H/2012M on 8 June 2012 said;

"...in the field of song or tarannum, the judges found that there were contestants who were less skilled in the art of tarannum their songs, it made the melody less perfect. In addition, there are also participants who are unable to control and adjust the tone of voice to the song that is

being performed, causing their reciting to not find the melody of tarannum".

"...in the field of fasohah, the panel of judges found that some of the participants' weaknesses were related to waqf and ibtida', causing significant mistakes when stopping or starting recitations that changed the mining of the verse.

"...in terms of sawt (voice), there are some participants who cannot control the voice level according to the appropriate tabaqat (level). Participants were also found not to produce voice from the correct makhraj place. What's more, the panicky attitude and rumbling of some participants has also affected the quality of the voice and performance".

This weakness also happened to the participants of the International Al-Quran Recitation Council for 2012. In the report of the head of the jury panel, he raised the issue of mastery of the *lahjah arabiah for* the overall achievement of Malaysian International *qari* and *qariah*, which is at a satisfactory level.

According to observations by Shaykh Fathi Hassan (2007) in an intensive al-Quran *tahsin* workshop held in 2007 at ILIM, Bangi for three weeks, he found that the level of mastery of *lahjah arabiah* reciting among *qari* and *qariah* in Malaysia for three weeks was at a moderate level and needs to be improved especially in the aspect of pronunciation of letters *with lahjah arabiah*, tarannum and *sawt* (voice). In addition to the al-Quran having a specific rhythm and style, it also cannot be recited at will because it can remove the authenticity and artistry of the al-Quran, while it is bound by the laws of tajwid, *waqf* and *ibtida'* and the mining of verses. Therefore, understanding the context of reciting the Quran in the Arabic dialect is very important (Mohd Radzi, 2007, Wan Hilmi, et al, 2019).

A study by Wan Fakhrul Razi (2008: 21) explains that many reciters of the Quran cannot fully master the Arabic dialect. It is acknowledged and supported by the statement of Tan Sri Hasan Azhari who explains that the Arabic tarannum recited by today's *qari* and *qariah* does not reach the desired level compared to previous Quran reciters.

As a result of JAKIM's annual report in 2009, it found that the quality of recitation of the *qari* and *qariah* of the National Level Quran Tilawah Council of Malaysia has deteriorated especially with regard to the mastery of tarannum *lahjah arabiah* compared to the recitation of *qari* and *qariah* during the era of Haji Matsom Pergau, Dato' Ismail Hashim, Haji Abdul Ghani Abdullah, Hajah Rogayah Sulong and Hajah Faridah Mat Saman. However, there are still some veterans qari and qariah who can still maintain Arabic style Quran reading, but only in small groups (JAKIM, 2009).

The decline in the quality of reciting the Quran in Arabic dialect was first detected in 1996 when it was linked to the assessment and evaluation of recitation competitions. The recitation assessment method implemented is more of a cut off mark system (JAKIM: 2009: 140) than a scoring method such as using a (*Likert*) scale, especially involving the components of recitation, voice, understanding the mining of sentences, delivery and emphasis on letters and words.

The results of a survey through the Quran recitation council's marking form from 2010 to 2013, found that only 25% of the 8 *qari* and *qariah* participants who won the championship at the national level obtained the characteristics of reciting with an Arabic dialect, while 75% of the participants *did* not reach the level of Arabic dialect.

The importance of reciting the Quran with an Arabic dialect is explained in a study by Wan Hilmi (2018), the characteristics of tarannum with a Arabic dialect include several main aspects taken from the Arab tribes who are skilled, among them recitation or *qira'at* in a *mutawatir* and popular manner (*lahjah arabiah*), the use and management of Arabic voice, tone and rhythm (*sawt al-arab*), Arabic pronunciation and rhythm (*lahn al-arab*), pronunciation of letters according to Arabic style (*luknah al-arab*), processing the pronunciation of verses of the Quran according to the method Arabic (*ta'bir al-arab*) and Arabic style and way (*uslub al-arab*).

This is acknowledged by the study of Wan Fakhrul Razi (2008: 21) who states that the weak factor in reciting the Quran with the Arabic dialect is the result of the attitude of the Quran reciters who only care about winning in competitions without regard to the context of appreciating the mining and *tadabur* of the content.

The previous reciters attach great importance to *lahjah arabiah* in the recitation of the Quran. According to Ahmad Syafiq (2015), Haji Ahmad Mat Som is a very skilled reciter in reciting the Quran according to the perfect *lahjah arabiah*, as well as Haji Hasan Musa, he is very good at the art of reciting tarannum al-Quran especially in the aspect of reciting Arabiah dialect (Wan Hilmi, et al, 2019).

Therefore, this study will analyse the level of mastery of *lahjah arabiah* among qari and qariah who participated in the Al-Quran Recitation competition at the National Level in Malaysia.

2. Methodology

This study is a quantitative design. Data was collected through questionnaire instruments and unstructured interviews with experts in *qari* and *qariah* in Malaysia namely Haji Hasan Musa, Haji Yahya Daud, Dato' Paduka Haji Nik Jaafar, Haji Abdul Rahim Ahmad, Hajah Faridah Mat Saman and Haji Nordin Idris. This sample selection is purposive

sampling. This is based on the following characteristics 1] having won a recitation competition, 2] international jury and 3] field experts.

In this study will analyse the level of mastery of the characteristics of reciting the Quran with *lahjah arabiah* by the participants in the Malaysian National Level Quranic Recitation competition. A panel of experts will examine the video recordings found in the JAKIM archive. The evaluation will use a questionnaire instrument that has been designed by the researcher and has been validated by qualitative and quantitative experts. Data will then be analysed using SPSS software version 20.1.

3. Analysis Results

This study analyses video recordings obtained in the archives of the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM). The videos are evaluated by a panel of experts in the field of tarannum in Malaysia based on their respective fields of tajwid, fasohah, tarannum and voice of the 30 participants who participated in the competition, there were only 17 recordings that could be accessed, while another 13 recordings were disposed of by JAKIM.

The scoring rubric using a Likert Scale contains five rating scales. The assessment covers four main areas, but is combined into only three, namely tajwid along with *fasohah*, tarannum and *sawt*. The main focus of the study is to analyse the level of mastery of reading in *lahjah arabiah* among *qari* and *qariah* in Malaysia.

3.1 Components of Tajwid and Fasohah

Table 1 explains the analysis of the marking of the *tajwid* and *fasohah* sections. The scoring items contain 12 items according to the National Level al-Quran Recitation system scoring syllabus with several improvements.

Table 1: Analysis of Marking Section Tajwid and Fasohah

No.	Item		SL	L	S	В	SB	Min	Interpretation
1.	Ahkam sakinah and tanwin.	nun	0.00	1 5.90	11 64.7	3 17.6	2 11.8	3.35	Simple High
2.	Ahkam sakinah and tanwin.	mim	0.00	1 5.9	10 58.8	4 23.5	2 11.8	3.41	Simple High
3.	Ahkam mad.		0.00	0.00	8 47.1	9 52.9	0.00	3.53	Simple High
4.	Ahkam ra' and lam.		0.00	0.00	10 58.8	6 35.3	1 5.9	3.47	Simple High

Journal of Namibian Studies, 34 S2(2023): 643–655 ISSN: 2197-5523 (online)

5.	Perfecting the	0	1	0	12	0	3.35	Simple High
	pronunciation of fathah, dhammah and kasrah.		5.9	0.00	70.6	0.00		
6.	Reading according to the	0	0	5	12	0	3.71	Simple High
	history of hafs an 'Asim.	0.00	0.00	29.4	70.6	0.00		
7.	Pronunciation of letters	0	1	12	4	0	3.18	Simple High
	that are not extreme and forceful.	0.00	5.9	70.6	23.5	0.00		
8.	Pronunciation of letters							Simple High
	through the oral cavity (jauf) not the nasal cavity	0	1	8	7	1	3.47	
	(khaysyum).	0.00	5.9	47.1	41.2	5.9		
9.	Speech that is smooth and							
	not constrained and slow (al-tamti').	0	2	4	11	0	3.53	Simple High
		0.00	11.8	23.5	64.7	0.00		
10.	Adjusting the emphasis of							
	the letters and words of the Quran with the mining	0	3	9	5	0	3.12	Simple High
	of the verse (al-nabarah).	0.00	17.6	52.9	29.4	0.00		
11.	Completing the waqf and	0	0	10	6	1	3.47	Simple High
	ibtida' laws accurately and correctly	0.00	0.00	58.8	35.3	5.9		
12.	Recitation that has a good	0	0	10	7	0	3.42	Simple High
	style and presentation (husn al-ada')	0.00	0.00	58.8	41.2	0.00		
Overal	 I Min	3.41	Simple High					

Source: Ahmad Syafiq (2021)

Table 1 shows the results of the study conducted by the first panel of experts with the overall value being at a moderately high level with a min of 3.41. The second item that shows the highest value is the item 'reading according to the *riwayat* of *Hafs an 'Asim'* (min=3.71). Next, the item 'ahkam mad' and the item 'pronunciation that is smooth and not stuck and slow (al-tamtit)' show the same min value of 3.53.

For the items that show a min reading of 3.47 are the items 'ahkam ra' and lam, 'perfecting the ahkam waqf and ibtida' accurately and correctly' and 'pronunciation of letters through the oral cavity (jauf) not the nasal cavity (khaysyum)'. It is followed by the item 'reading that

has a good style and presentation (husn al-ada')' (min=3.42), while the item 'ahkam mim sakinah and tanwin' shows a min reading of 3.41.

For the item 'perfecting the pronunciation of fathah, dhammah and kasrah' and the item 'ahkam nun sakinah and tanwin' the min value is the same which is 3.35 followed by the item 'pronunciation of letters that is not extreme and forceful' with a min reading of 3.18. For the item that shows the lowest reading is 'adjusting the emphasis of the letters and words of the Quran with the mining of the verse (al-nabarah)' with a min value of 3.12.

3.2 Tarannum components

Table 2 shows the findings of the evaluation analysis carried out by the second panel of assessors showing that the item 'the sound of the tarannum rhythm that comes out of the mouth cavity (*jauf*) and not from the nasal cavity (*khaysyum*)' is at the highest medium-high level with a min value of 3.30. For the item 'tarannum that has elements of popular rhythm in the Arab region' and the item 'path (*uslub*) of famous tarannum reading' the min value is the same which is 3.11, followed by the item 'the emphasis of the song that matches the mining of the verse' with a min value 3.06.

While for the items that are at a medium-low level with a min value of 2.94, the items are 'tarannum rhythm characterized by a specific tune', 'tarannum with fluency in pronunciation (*luknah Arab*)', 'an attractive and confident way of performing songs (*itqan*)'. The item 'tarannum tune that meets the characteristics of softness, sweetness, neatness, agility, firmness, softness, stability, uniqueness and artistry' shows a min value of 2.82. For other items such as 'reading tarannum that has *the spirit of the Quran* and appreciation', and the item 'processing (*ta'bir Arab*) songs according to the order of the words and the pronunciation of the verses', the data shows that the min value is 2.76.

Likewise, the item 'spontaneous (irtijal) and safe song movement' and the item 'attractive and artistic tarannum', it shows the same min value of 2.65. Nevertheless, the item that is at a moderately low level and shows the lowest value is the item 'accurate and well-organized song flower' with a min of 2.53. Overall, the analysis proves that the level of mastery of tarannum with Arabic dialect is at a medium low level which is 2.89.

Table 2: Tarannum Division Scoring Analysis

No.	Item		SL	L	S	В	SB	Min	Interpretation
1.	Proper s flowers neatly arranged.	song and	1 5.90	8 47.1	6 35.3	2 11.8	0.00	2.53	Simple Low

2.	Spontaneous (irtijal) and safe song movement steps.	0.00	6 35.3	11 64.7	0 0.00	0 0.00	2.65	Simple Low
3.	A specific tarannum rhythm.	0.00	2 11.8	14 82.4	1 5.90	0.00	2.94	Simple Low
4.	An interesting and confident (itqan) way of performing songs.	0.00	4 23.5	10 58.8	3 17.6	0.00	2.94	Simple Low
5.	Reading tarannum that has the spirit of the Quran and is full of appreciation.	0 0.00	5 29.4	11 64.7	1 5.9	0 0.00	2.76	Simple Low
6.	Emphasis of the song that matches the meaning of the verse.	0.00	2 11.8	12 70.6	3 17.6	0.00	3.06	Simple High
7.	Tarannum is full of charm and art.	0.00	7 41.2	9 52.9	1 5.90	0.00	2.65	Simple Low
8.	The processing (ta'bir) of the song according to the order of the words and pronunciation of the verse.	0 0.00	5 29.4	11 64.7	1 5.90	0 0.00	2.76	Simple Low
9.	The way (uslub) of the famous tarannum reciting.	0.00	2 11.8	11 64.7	4 23.5	0.00	3.11	Simple High
10.	The tune of tarannum that fulfils the	0.00	4 23.5	12 70.6	1 5.90	0.00	2.82	Simple Low

	characteristics of softness, sweetness, neatness, agility, firmness, softness, solidity, uniqueness and artistry.							
11.	Tarannum which has elements of popular rhythms in the Arab region.	0.00	3 17.6	10 58.8	3 17.6	1 5.90	3.11	Simple High
12.	The sound of the tarannum rhythm that comes out of the mouth cavity (jauf) and not from the nasal cavity (khaysyum).	0 0.00	1 5.90	11 64.7	4 23.5	1 5.90	3.30	Simple High
13.	Tarannum with pronunciation fluency (luknah Arab)	0.00	2 11.8	14 82.4	1 5.90	0.00	2.94	Simple Low
Overa	Overall Min							Simple Low

Source: Ahmad Syafiq (2021)

3.3 Sound Components

Table 3 shows that the level of mastery of *lahjah arabiah voice* is moderately weak with a min value of 2.86. The item that shows the highest value is the item 'The echo of the voice is thin and subtle.' (min=3.18) then followed by the item 'the voice that comes out of the mouth cavity (*jauf*), not the nasal cavity (*khaysyum*)' (min=3.11).

While for the item 'voice element characterized by softness, sweetness, neatness, agility, firmness, smoothness, stability, uniqueness, and artistry' with a min value of 3.06. For the item 'voice elements from the Arab region (*jazirah al-Arab*)' and the item 'voice composition with the

theme of al-Quran rhythm' it shows the same min value which is 3.00. In addition, the items that show a moderately low level are the item 'spontaneous and direct voice bounce' (min=2.94), the item 'easy and non-forced voice movement steps' (min=2.76), followed by the item 'flowers of the voice ('urab) that are vigorous and alive' (min=2.65) and the item 'how to manage (ta'bir) the voice according to the correct and accurate method' (min=2.59). For the item that has the lowest value at a medium-low level, it is the item 'selection of voice that fits the meaning of the sentence' with a mean value of 2.35.

Table 3: Analysis of Voice Part Scoring

No.	Item	SL	L	S	В	SB	Min	Interpretation
_								
1.	The echo of the voice is thin and subtle.	0	0	15	1	1	3.18	Simple High
	is tilli and subtle.	0.00	0.00	88.2	5.9	5.9		
2.	The voice elements	0	2	14	0	1	3.00	Simple High
	from the Arab region (jazirah al-Arab)	0.00	11.8	82.4	0.00	5.9		
3.	The voice element is	0	1	15	0	1	3.06	Simple High
	characterized by softness, sweetness, neatness, agility, firmness, smoothness, stability, uniqueness, and artistry.	0.00	5.9	88.2	0.00	5.9		
4.	The sound that							
	comes out of the mouth cavity (jauf),	0	1	14	1	1	3.11	Simple High
	not the nasal cavity (khaysyum).	0.00	5.9	82.4	5.9	5.9		
5.	Voice composition	0	3	11	3	0		Simple High
	with the theme of al- Quran rhythm.	0.00	17.6	64.7	17.6	0.00	3.00	
6.	How to manage	1	7	7	2	0		Simple Low
	(ta'bir) voice according to the correct and accurate method.	5.9	41.2	41.2	11.8	0.00	2.59	
7.	The flowers of the voice ('urab) that are	1	6	9	0	1		Simple Low

	vigorous and alive.	5.9	35.3	52.9	0.00	5.9	2.65	
8.	Spontaneous and direct voice bounce	0.00	4 23.5	11 64.7	1 5.9	1 5.9	2.94	Simple Low
9.	Easy and non-forced voice movement steps.	0.00	5 29.4	11 64.7	1 5.9	0.00	2.76	Simple Low
10.	The choice of sound that matches the mining of the sentence.	0.00	1 5.9	11 64.7	1 5.9	0.00	2.35	Simple Low
Overall Min								Simple Low

Source: Ahmad Syafiq (2021)

4. Discussion

The results of the study found that the level of mastery of reciting the Quran in *lahjah arabiah* by reciters and reciters in the National Quran recitation competition in Malaysia was medium high with an overall min of 3.05. In the tajwid and fasohah section, 3.41 is medium high, the tarannum section is 2.89 is medium low, while the voice value is 2.86 medium low.

This study analyses the level of mastery of *lahjah arabiah* reciting among qari and qariah who entered the National Level Musabaqah Competition in Malaysia. In the competition, participants have to read according to the scheme and rules that have been set by the Musabaqah Al-Quran Competition Committee under the management of the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM).

In the rules of *musabaqah*, several conditions have been placed in the scoring form covering four main areas, namely tajwid, fasohah, tarannum and *sawt* (voice). In the field of tarannum contains the following criteria, namely the *ahkam* of *nun sakinah* and *tanwin*, the *ahkam* of *mim sakinah* and the *ahkam* of mad. In the field of *fasohah*, it contains the legal criteria of *waqf* and *ibtida'*, the nature of letters and the *makharaj* of letters. In the field of tarannum, it contains recitations with in *lahjah arabiah*, perfecting 4 complete 'harakat', ikhtilal lahn, wuslah mumathalah and four main tarannums and one closing bayyati song, while in the field of voice it contains at least three *tabaqah* (level) of voice, sweetness and melodious voice, Arabic rhythm voice and 'mahattah' a good voice.

At the end of the reading, the participants must perfect the reading of the *lahjah arabiah* emphasizing the pronunciation of the letters and the tone of voice that coincides with the authentic Arabic dialect method according to the guide and *qira'at mutawatir*. A good performance is also highly demanded to ensure that the reading is truly an Arabic rhythmic reading, and does not at all mix elements of *Ajam* and Malay tones. This has been explained in a hadith that strongly emphasizes the aspect of reading with an Arabic accent.

However, in this study, it was found that the participants of *Qari al-Quran* paid less attention to the criteria of reciting with in *lahjah arabiah*, which at the same time led to defects and deficiencies in the presentation of Arabic rhythm. It has caused the purpose of reciting the Quran and *tadabur* its content not to achieve the desired objective.

On the other hand, the participants were seen to focus more on the song alone, so that the Malay rhythm and *burdah* entered which ultimately had a bad effect on the rhythms of the original Arabic songs as a result of incorrect application and practice. Finally, the Malay songs influenced the recitation of tarannum by some reciters in Malaysia.

Thus, the results of this analysis explain the actual position and level of mastery of Arabic dialect reading among reciters in Malaysia is at a medium-high level.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of the study found that the level of mastery of reciting the Quran in *lahjah arabiah* by *qari* and *qariah* in the National Quran Recitation Competition in Malaysia was medium high with an overall min of 3.05. In the *tajwid* and *fasohah* section, 3.41 is medium high, the tarannum section is 2.89 is medium low, while the voice value is 2.86 medium low.

Among the main criteria for a significant decline in the aspect of the *lahjah arabiah* in the tarannum section are the items 'correct and well-organized song flow', 'spontaneous (*irtijal*) and safe movement of the song', 'tarannum rhythm characterized by a specific tune', 'how to perform an attractive and confident song (*itqan*), 'a tarannum recitation that has *the spirit of the Quran* and appreciates it', 'a tarannum with elements of charm and art', 'a tarannum melody that fulfills the characteristics of softness, sweetness, neatness, agility, firmness, softness, solidity, uniqueness and artistry', 'tarannum who has pronunciation fluency (*luknah Arab*)'.

In the voice part, it is on the items 'how to manage (ta'bir) the voice according to the correct and precise method, 'the flowers of the voice ('urab) which are vigorous and alive', 'spontaneous and direct voice reverberation', 'steps of movement' a voice that is easy and not forced'

and 'selection of a voice that fits the mining of the sentence' has a min of less than 3.00.

Therefore, the results of the study can be used as a strong and well-founded support for reciters in order to master *lahjah arabiah* reciting, especially to understand and identify the authoritative method of Arabic recitation.

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