



Quranic Education for Deaf Students in Malaysia; Implementation and Challenges

Izuli Dzulkifli*

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted
17-02-2022

Accepted
07-04-2022

Published
12-04-2022

ABSTRACT

Deaf students have the right to enjoy formal Quranic Education in schools. Teachers are supposed to plan and execute teaching plans that suit deaf students' abilities. This research aimed to explore the Quran teaching syllabus adopted by teachers and the challenges teachers faces at primary school deaf students in Selangor. This research took a qualitative approach in the case study that employed interview techniques and document analysis to obtain data. Five teachers from the Special Education Integration Program and one from Special Education Primary School were selected as respondents in the research. The selection was made considering their experience in teaching al-Quran to deaf students for at least five years. The interview outcome was strengthened by feedback given by other prominent interviewees, two officers of the Ministry of Education, and an analysis of relevant documents on the Quranic Education of deaf students. This research revealed that teachers used the teaching syllabus mandated by the Ministry of Education and modified the syllabus to suit students' disabilities using *Bahasa Melayu* Hand Code as a teaching medium. Teachers face challenges in teaching al-Quran to deaf students, such as a lack of teaching training and suitable teaching aids. This research contributed to suggestions on teaching training and innovative teaching aids that could assist teachers in imparting knowledge on al-Quran to deaf students.

KEYWORDS

Quranic Education; deaf students; implementation and challenges



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*Corresponding author: Izuli Dzulkifli✉ (izuli@ukm.edu.my) Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Introduction

It is incumbent upon all Muslims to seek knowledge, particularly on navigating life as servants of the Almighty Allah on this humbled earth. The success of molding an individual to become a good quality Muslim requires integration of faith (*aqidah*), worship (*'ibadah*), and moral (*akhlaq*) aspects passed on through knowledge. Knowledge of those aspects can be embodied in the education system known as Islamic Education. The primary source of Islamic Education is the Quran and narratives (*hadith*) of Prophet Muhammad SAW. There are undoubtedly numerous verses in the al-Quran that guide Muslim to equip themselves to perform duties as *Khalifah* (leaders) in this world. Al-Quran always touches on matters relating to faith (*aqidah*), worship (*'ibadah*), and morals (*akhlaq*) that could help to bring out the best in Muslim individuals in all-inclusive aspects of physical, spiritual, and moral. However, all the execution and responsibilities in Islam depend on the ability and limitation of an individual, including one's intellectual level to absorb the knowledge. Indeed, the truncated ability of some individuals, including deaf students, affects the ability to perceive wisdom. Thus, Islamic Education, particularly on al-Quran, must be imparted to deaf students to carry out duties as Muslim individuals.

In Malaysia, Islamic Education has been made compulsory for all Muslim students. The Malaysian Government requires a learning institution with five or more students professing Islamic religion to provide religious teachings in Islam, taught by teachers approved by the State Authority (Ministry of Education, 2012). The learning of Islamic Education in schools involves several areas such as al-Quran, faith (*'aqidah*), worship (*'ibadah*) and moral (*adab*), history (*Sirah*), and *Jawi*. Therefore, deaf students have been allowed to formally learn Islamic Education in government schools through the Special Education Program. Special Education was incorporated in the National Education Policy (Federal Government Gazette, 2013) to cater special needs of identified students with disabilities such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and multiple disabilities at preschool, primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. Education for special needs students is provided in Special Education Schools, Special Education Integration Program (SEIP), and Inclusive Education Program. The policy statement embodied the Government's commitment to guaranteeing students the opportunity to access the appropriate and relevant Education and ensuring the educational programs for students with special needs are suitable and relevant for them to survive and lead a quality life. Opening access to quality and relevant education that addresses the needs of gifted students is one of the strategies employed in Special Education and providing equal opportunity to the special needs students to succeed in mainstream classes and pledging sufficient trained and skilled teaching staff in the special education field.

The teaching and learning process for students with hearing impairment can be conducted by combining traditional methods and the use of information technology (Yasin et al., 2017). Teachers teaching Al-Quran to deaf students need to improvise their teaching to enhance its effectiveness and subsequently attract the students to continue learning. Faith (*aqīdah*), worship (*‘ibādah*), and morals (*akhlaq*) are essential elements in Islamic Education. Faith (*aqīdah*) is the core foundation in Islam to shape a successful individual based on *tauhid* i.e., the oneness of Allah SWT. Appreciation of Islam based on Quranic teachings is important to shape personality and inculcate a sense of responsibility to develop oneself, society, the environment, and the nation towards achieving success in this world and peace in the hereafter (Elhoshi et al., 2017). Such coherence is vital to ensure that every Muslim individual understands that they have numerous responsibilities to perform in this life, which is in line with the philosophy of Islamic Education. Based on the philosophy and vision of Islamic Education as discussed earlier, it is certainly imperative for deaf students to learn the al-Quran for soft development such as having faith in Islam (*imān*), holding on to virtues (*akhlaq*), being responsible, etc. that are by the teachings of Islam. Having said that, educators teaching al-Quran must be sensitive to teaching strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques that are fitted with the abilities of deaf students.

In the past, the development of al-Quran Education among deaf students had not been as formally organized as it is today. Despite their hearing impairment, they had to compete with typical students for a spot in Education. Impaired hearing of deaf students has been one of the biggest hurdles for everyone, especially the government in designing a proper curriculum. There was no specific teaching and learning process approach that can be applied to such groups. Hence, everyone such as the curriculum drafters, psychologists, teachers, educators, and all parties concerned is supposed to cooperate in formulating an appropriate curriculum for deaf students at every education level i.e. children and adults. Moreover, teachers ought to have identified the strengths and weaknesses of deaf students during the learning session to enable teachers to upgrade teaching quality. Effective teaching is vital to deaf students to ensure that al-Quran Education has achieved its objective. Teachers and educators are expected to equip themselves with certain soft skills or *kemahiran insaniah* and such skills shall be upgraded to ensure the effectiveness of the teaching process, especially for deaf students in primary schools (Fariza Mohd Isa & Mohd Jasmy Abd Rahman, 2018). Teachers are not only qualified in al-Quran Education but also skilled to impart knowledge in the said area. Just imagine when a teacher wishes to communicate with an impaired hearing individual, but he possesses no sign language skills. Surely such a situation will affect the relay of information and disrupt the dissemination of knowledge.

Therefore, it is only appropriate for teachers or educators to possess certain skills to teach al-Quran to deaf students. Furthermore, the teachers' positive attitude will form a solid element to ensure effective al-Quran Education for the deaf students owing to the difference in circumstances and characteristics of deaf students, such as the development of mental faculty, as opposed to typical students. On that note, undoubtedly the love and commitment expected of a teacher will come in handy to enrich the teaching quality of deaf students. Therefore, this research aimed at identifying the learning syllabus adopted in al-Quran Education and the challenges faced by teachers of deaf students. It is imperative to understand the challenges encountered by those teaching al-Quran Education to deaf students to improve future teaching and learning processes.

Method

This study utilized the qualitative approach in the form of a case study by using semi-structured interviews and document analysis to obtain data. Tables 1 and 2 indicate eight respondents were selected based on purposive sampling, six of whom were teachers who taught Islamic Education to deaf students in Selangor. The selection of the respondents was based on specific criteria where teachers had at least five years of experience in teaching Islamic Education. The teachers who met the criteria were selected after receiving information through the Selangor State Education Department and the headmasters.

Meanwhile, Table.2 indicates two officers from Special Education, Ministry of Education Malaysia who was involved in the Special Islamic Education and Special Education Curriculum unit were selected to support the findings.

Table 1. Teacher's Demographic Background

| Teacher | Sex | Age | Experience | School Category |
|---------|--------|-----|------------|-----------------|
| T1 | Female | 40 | 19 Years | *PPKI |
| T2 | Female | 43 | 10 Years | *PPKI |
| T3 | Female | 36 | 10 Years | *PPKI |
| T4 | Female | 48 | 5 Years | *PPKI |
| T5 | Male | 32 | 6 Years | *SKPK |
| T6 | Male | 34 | 7 Years | *PPKI |

Note: PPKI-Program Pendidikan Khas Integrasi (Special Education Integrated Programme), SKPK-Sekolah Kebangsaan Pendidikan Khas (Special Primary Schools)

Table 2. Officer's Demographic Background

| Officer | Sex | Age | Position | Unit/Division |
|---------|--------|-----|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| O1 | Male | 50 | Head of Department | Islamic and Moral Education |
| O2 | Female | 52 | Section Head | Curriculum Development |

The document analysis was based on documents related to the teaching and learning of the deaf students such as circulars from the Ministry of Education Malaysia, syllabus, and teaching record books obtained from several of the respondents to further strengthen the interview data. The choice of the study area in Selangor was based on the most prevalent number of deaf students studying in the said state in Malaysia as shown in Table.3 below.

Table 3. Number of deaf students in primary schools by state

| No | State | Types of School | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|------|-----|
| | | PPKI | | SKPK | |
| | | M | F | M | F |
| i | Johor | 46 | 34 | 41 | 27 |
| ii | Kedah | 13 | 21 | 36 | 44 |
| iii | Kelantan | 30 | 28 | 14 | 11 |
| iv | Melaka | 16 | 9 | 12 | 11 |
| v | Negeri Sembilan | 11 | 5 | 13 | 14 |
| vi | Pahang | 16 | 21 | 15 | 16 |
| vii | Perak | 49 | 45 | 13 | 22 |
| viii | Perlis | - | - | 9 | 9 |
| ix | Pulau Pinang | 16 | 14 | 12 | 16 |
| x | Sabah | 23 | 16 | 38 | 40 |
| xi | Sarawak | 22 | 13 | 34 | 30 |
| xii | Selangor | 77 | 72 | 29 | 25 |
| xiii | Terengganu | 15 | 12 | 17 | 32 |
| xiv | WP Kuala Lumpur | 14 | 3 | 24 | 29 |
| xv | WP Labuan | 3 | 4 | - | - |
| xvi | WP Putrajaya | 13 | 13 | - | - |
| Total | | 364 | 310 | 307 | 326 |
| | | 674 | | 633 | |

Source: Special Education Data Year 2020, Ministry of Education Malaysia (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020)

Note: DE-Deaf, M-Male, F-Female, PPKI-Program Pendidikan Khas Integrasi (Special Education Integrated Programme), SKPK-Sekolah Kebangsaan Pendidikan Khas (Special Primary Schools)

The following questions were posed through a semi-structured interview to obtain information on the syllabus adopted and challenges faced in teaching al-Quran to deaf students: - 1. What was the syllabus adopted to teach al-Quran to deaf students in school? 2. What were the strategies employed in the course of teaching al-

Quran to those students? 3. What were the challenges faced while teaching them al-Quran?

Findings

This research revealed that the respondents had been using the syllabus specified by the Ministry of Education Malaysia i.e., the Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah Pendidikan Khas. Most of the teachers modified the syllabus to match the ability of deaf students. Most of the teachers were vulnerable to challenges like lack of teaching training, inadequate teaching aids, and limited learning time to teach al-Quran to deaf students in schools.

1. Quranic Learning Syllabus

All respondents taught al-Quran to deaf students based on the National Curriculum i.e. Special Education. Al-Quran learning syllabus for deaf students was through the Islamic Education subject based on the Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR) Pendidikan Khas Suaian Pendidikan Islam 2017. The KSSR Pendidikan Khas Pendidikan Islam Suaian 2017 was drafted by the Ministry of Education through its Curriculum Development Division guided by the 2017 National Curriculum.

Example of data obtained through an interview with a Teacher:

"I use the latest syllabus to teach al-Quran i.e. the KSSR Pendidikan Islam Suaian 2017," (Interview with Teacher No. 1).

"I plan my al-Quran teaching based on KSSR PK Pendidikan Islam syllabus," (Interview with Teacher No. 2).

"We taught al-Quran at school by adopting the KSSR Pendidikan Khas (Interview with Teacher No. 3)

"There is a special textbook to teach al-Quran to deaf students namely the KSSR PK Pendidikan Islam," (Interview with Teacher No. 4)

"I use the Special Education textbook to teach al-Quran to the hearing-impaired students," (Interview with Teacher No. 5).

"We should use the curriculum specified by the Ministry when teaching deaf students . I used the KSSR PK Hearing Disabilities Module," (Interview with Teacher No. 5).

This finding was supported with document analysis Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah Pendidikan Khas (Ketidakupayaan Pendengaran) Pendidikan Islam Suaian 2017 that stated that:

"The 2017 Revised Islamic Education subject was developed to enable the application of knowledge obtained through classroom learning into daily life. This curriculum also provided quality education to students thereby preparing them to become a balanced person, survivors, and self-sufficient to lead a meaningful life" (Curriculum Development Division, 2017).

The above statement found its support in document analysis i.e., the Director-General of Education Directives that provided for the following (Director-General of Education Malaysia, 2011):

"Schools must adopt Standard Curriculum Document for every curriculum under the KSSR issued by the Ministry of Education Malaysia."

Prior to the introduction of the KSSR PK Pendidikan Islam Suaian 2017, Education Curriculum was based on KSSR PK Pendidikan Islam 2011. KSSR PK Pendidikan Islam 2011 was introduced in stages in Special Education Schools and schools offering Special Education Integration Program since 2011. In short, both KSSR PK Pendidikan Islam Suaian 2017 Islam and KSSR PK Pendidikan Islam 2011 held the same objective i.e., to introduce *hijaiyyah* alphabets to deaf students thus enabling them to recite selected verses using sign language and inspiring them to recite and practice reciting it in their daily life. KSSR PK was introduced in 2011 vide a directive letter issued by the Director-General of Education, Ministry of Education that reads as follows:

"Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR) for Special Education will be implemented in stages with effect from 2011 starting with Year 1 in all Special Education Primary Schools and primary schools with Special Education Integrated Program. As for Special Education on Hearing Impairment, implementation of KSSR will begin with Intensive Year and Year 1 (Director-General of Education Malaysia, 2011)."

2. Al-Quran Teaching Strategy

There were several strategies employed by teachers, one of which was to lower the learning level based on the special module and use sign language.

a. Lowering learning level

Finishing al-Quran (*Khatam al-Quran*) is not the main target of deaf students as compared to the Mainstream. One of the Special Education focuses was to enable deaf students with the ability to speak to read al-Quran along with the mainstream students. This conclusion found its support in the following interview excerpts:

"In the al-Quran field, deaf students are not required to finish al-Quran (*khatam al-Quran*) like their counterparts in the Mainstream. They just learn about four to five chapters (*surah*) a year," (Interview with Teacher No. 1).

"Our deaf students, we must lower al-Quran learning level to commensurate with their needs and abilities," (Interview with Teacher No. 2).

"Skills level such as reading need to be lowered so students may achieve the learning aim. Tajwid's subject was truncated from the syllabus. I only added a bit of tajweed recitation to those who can speak," (Interview with Teacher No. 3)

"I also taught some hukum tajwid, but the learning has been focused on their recitation only," (Interview with Teacher No. 4).

"I taught recitation of al-Quran with tajweed. The theory is not taught; but only the practical side was taught," (Interview with Teacher No. 5).

"If a student can express his voice, I will correct his recitation with tajweed but I have not emphasized. For those with totally impaired hearing, we use a lower level i.e. to introduce alphabets only," (Interview with Teacher No. 6).

According to Officer 1 (O1), the curriculum and syllabus drafted for deaf students were based on the experience of the teachers, taking into account the opinions of experts in Special Education and Islamic Education. He explained that:

"Before the syllabus was formulated, we called in all teachers concerned whether at special education schools or Special Education Integrated Program or Special Education Inclusive Program. They were called to sit with us and we drafted a syllabus or formulated one curriculum that normally was based on the teachers' own teaching experience. So we will formulate a syllabus by combining a few elements including those teaching experience, the experience of the experts and research findings," (Interview with Officer No. 1).

b. Use of Special Module

Some of the respondents also planned their teaching using specific modules in addition to the National Curriculum and with modifications to the Curriculum. There are various al-Quran learning modules to assist typical students in mainstream schools to learn reciting al-Quran. Some of these respondents adopted Iqra' Module to teach al-Quran to deaf students.

"I also use Iqra' Module to teach the students to recite al-Quran," (Interview with Teacher No. 2).

"I utilized Iqra' Module to teach students who can read," (Interview with Teacher No. 4).

"I will adopt Iqra' Module if students wish to see quicker learning outcomes. So the students can learn faster," (Interview with Teacher No. 5).

"I separated (them) according to their abilities. We use Iqra' Module on clever students," (Interview with Teacher No. 6).

Based on the findings of the interviews, the researcher observed that some respondents had planned their teaching using Iqra' Module to teach recitation of al-Quran to deaf students with the ability to speak or express their voice. Speaking students must be taught to pronounce the alphabets, words, and Quranic verses so they can practice their pronunciation and speech.

All the teaching and learning strategies are allowed in the National Curriculum for deaf students. It found its rooting in Article 5 of the Special Education Code of Conduct issued by the Special Education Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia in 2014 stated as follows (Special Education Division, 2014):

"The National Curriculum modified by MoE based on special needs students. Special students following the modified National Curriculum will not be exempted from sitting the

public examination. The curriculum formulated is specially tailored to meet requirements of special needs students."

c. *The Use of Hand Signs*

For mute deaf students, they can learn al-Quran through Islamic Education using sign language known as Kod Tangan Bahasa Melayu (KTBM). This research found that all participating teachers used the KTBM or BMKT as a medium of communication in reaching al-Quran to deaf students. This fact was apparent from data obtained through interviews conducted with the teachers, the excerpts of which are as follows:

"Delivery method that I practiced has been Kod Tangan Bahasa Melayu (KTBM). The Ministry approves that one for use in schools," (Interview with Teacher No. 1).

"I chose KTBM i.e., Kod Tangan Bahasa Melayu to teach al-Quran to these students," (Interview with Teacher No. 2).

"We normally use Kod Tangan Bahasa Melayu KTBM to teach al-Quran in schools that have deaf students," (Interview with Teacher No. 3).

"We adopted the Kod Tangan Bahasa Melayu in the course of our teaching and learning process," (Interview with Teacher No. 4).

"We use to hand code to communicate with mute students in the classroom," (Interview with Teacher No. 5).

"I normally utilized Bahasa Melayu Kod Tangan in an al-Quran related field," (Interview with Teacher No. 6).

The use of KTBM in schools for deaf students to learn al-Quran was strengthened with data obtained through interviews with Officer 1 and Officer 2. Relevant parts of the interviews are reproduced as follows:

"We have the Kod Tangan Bahasa Melayu (KTBM) and Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM) for teaching of deaf students, both are approved by the Ministry. The Hand Code can replace the pronunciation of alphabets used by deaf students. However, its use is not compulsory because it depends on the disability level of the students. If a student can pronounce, we should avoid using code or sign language. Because some teachers got so confused that students who could produce sounds were not taught how to pronounce them. Therefore, if those students had speech skills, please opt for the mainstream method i.e., Iqra' Module," (Interview with Officer No. 1).

"Al-Quran is one of the elements in Islamic Education that provides an opportunity to deaf students to master Quranic recitation whether oral recitation or through hand code," (Interview with Officer No. 2).

KTBM is generally used as the main medium of communication in the teaching of deaf students in Special Education. Nonetheless, other types are also allowed by the Ministry of Education to assist teachers in conducting teaching and learning processes on students, especially in the al-Quran subject. This fact is supported by document analysis i.e., the Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah

Pendidikan Khas (Impaired Hearing) Pendidikan Islam Suaian 2017 that stated as follows:

The Concept and Element of Sign Language in Teaching and Learning

Sign language is a visual language that uses hand form, facial expressions, motion, and body language as a medium of communication. Signal production would require attention to elements of handshape, palm orientation, hand location, movement, and facial expression. The complete communication concept is embodied in TnL for the special needs students with hearing impairment. All mediums of communication namely hand signs, fingerspelling, lips reading, body language, facial expression, voice, and auditory balance will be used in the whole communication concept. While making gestures, teachers will pronounce each word signaled with facial expression and employ multiple ways simultaneously (Curriculum Development Division, 2017).

3. Teaching Challenges

a. Inadequate sign language training

Some of the respondents admitted that they were either less proficient or not conversant in sign language as they only learn it through the contents of textbooks. Indeed, they had never attended a proper course on sign language. Some of them had even learned the language on their initiatives and that fact was discovered through interviews conducted with the respondents-teachers:

"It's because I also learned the hand code through books reading only. There has been no proper course," (Interview with Teacher No. 1).

"I never attended any course on sign language, I learned it on my own through books," (Interview with Teacher No. 2).

"I taught based on the same textbooks because I never attended any other course," (Interview with Teacher No. 5).

"The only course I attended was very elementary. As of today, I have not attended any sign language course. I learned a lot from books, friends, and even *Youtube*. Because I have not been able to attend any proper course for al-Quran teaching," (Interview with Teacher No. 6).

b. Limited time

The period of teaching and learning al-Quran subjects was limited because teachers are mandated to teach other aspects such as faith (*'aqīdah*), worship (*'ibādah*), and morals (*akhlaq*), history (*Sīrah*), and *Jawi*. Limited period or teaching time had somehow affected teaching quality based on teaching aids. This fact was crystallized during an interview and some of the excerpts are reproduced below:

"As for deaf students, they are dependent on pictures and teachers' simulation to master skills, especially in the al-Quran area since they are unable to hear. Due to insufficient teaching time, it has been a bit difficult to fully use BBM as we need to teach them Sign Language at the same time to guide them on their speeches," (Interview with Teacher No. 3).

c. Deaf Students' Unfriendly Applications

Although Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have advanced in recent years, certain less friendly learning applications still allow deaf students to learn al-Quran. This fact was discovered through the interview conducted and excerpts of the same are reproduced as follows:

“It is hard to find al-Quran learning software suitable for deaf students. It would greatly assist teaching tasks if one suitable and interesting software is available. The students must be excited to learn,” (Interview with Teacher No. 3).

“It is hard to look for teaching aids in digital form. So I must diversify the planning and preparation of teaching aids that are more student-friendly and easier to understand,” (Interview with Teacher No. 6).

Based on findings discovered through the interviews and document analysis, it is observed that inadequate teaching training, use of suitable teaching aids, lack of resources, multiple characteristics of deaf students, and less friendly digital applications were some of the challenges faced by teachers teaching al-Quran to deaf students.

Discussions

This research aimed to explore the Quran teaching syllabus adopted by teachers and the challenges teachers faces at primary school deaf students in Selangor. Teachers adopted the Quranic learning syllabus based on the Special Education curriculum as approved by the Ministry of Education Malaysia to teach deaf students. Some of the teachers even made modifications based on their teaching experience and the hearing capability of the deaf students. The respondents implemented al-Quran teaching based on Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR) Pendidikan Khas Pendidikan Islam Suaian 2017. The Ministry of Education Malaysia formulated Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (Pendidikan Khas) KSSR PK. This curriculum paved the way and create opportunities for deaf students to acquire knowledge and master Islamic Education, especially the learning of al-Quran. Each teacher in school should implement teachings based on the curriculum formulated by the national education curriculum including the Special Education in Malaysia.

Some teachers used *Iqra'* Module as one of the al-Quran learning syllabi. Though *Iqra'* Module was employed as one of the al-Quran learning syllabi, the emphasis had not been given on al-Quran recitation with *tajweed* because of unclear pronunciation by deaf students. As such, most of the teachers had lowered the al-Quran learning levels to suit the learning ability and capability of deaf students. It was a better choice since the core objective is to educate and guide deaf students in the optimum way for them to learn al-Quran. Knowing and understanding the aim of teaching will surely help the teachers choose the best technique or approach to attain the aim (Goss Lucas & Bernstein, 2015). Teaching deaf students must be carried out to match individual

abilities and the contents of the proposed subject shall correspond with the student's mental development (Lederberg et al., 2014). Problems in academic achievements among hearing-impaired students are not caused by cognitive problems but rather attributed to inappropriate teaching and learning methods in the classroom. Thus, teachers have utilized their own teaching experience and observation of various abilities of deaf students to adjust their learning levels.

The Quranic Education of deaf students does not aim to complete al-Quran (*khatam*) like the mainstream students. On the other hand, it is targeted to introduce a few chapters (*sūrat*) based on deaf students' ability because some students only had a partial hearing disability but were able to produce sound while others had completely lost their hearing ability and muted. On that note, teaching al-Quran to deaf students can be done through two main methods, namely speech or pronunciation and the use of hand codes. About the recitation aspect, students who can speak will be taught to recite orally while those who cannot be taught using a hand code. In short, learning al-Quran for deaf students is aimed at introducing *hijaiyyah* alphabets to deaf students and reciting selected Quranic chapters using sign language, in addition to sparking interest in Quranic recitation and practicing the recitation in their daily life. Kod Tangan Bahasa Melayu (KTBM) is one of the hand sign languages recognized by the government of Malaysia as a medium of communication for deaf students in schools. KTBM is the translation of oral into visual introduced by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) in 1985. This hand code is also known as Bahasa Malaysia Kod Tangan (BMKT), a form found in Ethnologue with additional local signs, and grammatical signs to represent nouns and verbs in Bahasa Melayu.

However, teachers were troubled with a few challenges to teach al-Quran using sign language. Almost all respondents were concerned about their inability to master sign language skills and to impart knowledge on al-Quran using the same due to inadequate training and courses. Most of the teachers went the extra mile to learn sign language on their own, with assistance from their colleagues, and through Youtube channels. Soft skills among the teachers must be upgraded to assure the effectiveness of the al-Quran teaching and learning process. Hence the teachers should not only possess qualifications of al-Quran or Islamic Education but also the necessary skills to impart knowledge. Just imagine when a teacher needs to communicate with his hearing-impaired students but he knows nothing about sign language. Surely the process to disseminate any information will be stuck and the transmission of knowledge cannot be properly done.

Other than that, teachers have difficulties obtaining teaching aids for teaching al-Quran to deaf students. As such, teachers are expected to prepare suitable teaching aids based on their own teaching experience (Mohd Khairuddin Abdullah et al., 2014). The students' age and achievement level or ability shall be given attention to gauge the appropriateness of teaching aids (Gremmen et al., 2016). This is crucial since teaching

and learning al-Quran to deaf students are not symmetrical to teaching the subject to typical mainstream students. Teachers must pay attention to a few fundamental elements in deciding on the relevant teaching aids. The use of colors, motion, examples, clear pictures, short sentences, and appropriate images ought to have been employed as teaching aids in teaching al-Quran to deaf students. It is so suggested because the choice of suitable teaching aids is vital to ensure the intended contents can be related to the students (Caner & Tertemiz, 2015). If the teaching content is in a form of acquired skills such as listening and speaking skills in the Quranic field, teachers better opt for suitable teaching aids that could assist the students to practice those skills.

Deaf students are classified into a few levels based on their hearing impairment such as mild, severe, and profound (Cooper et al., 2013). In addition, deaf students may also experience learning disabilities such as having characteristics of hyperactivity and autism. This factor may affect their ability to grab the knowledge and information disseminated to them. Students who lose their hearing severely are often slow in understanding learning content like memorization of previous lessons. Consequently, teachers should understand the students' behavior and care about their problems and learning achievement. Teachers are expected to encourage and motivate deaf students so they would not lose hope in their studies despite all their disabilities. Teachers of deaf students should equip themselves with some basic knowledge on hearing impairment such as information on the use of hearing aids and students' psychology. It was observed that students suffering from severe and acute hearing problems have not been able to master a speaking skills without their hearing aids (Ntinda et al., 2019). As such, before the teaching and learning process begins, it is only wise if teachers inspect the students' hearing aids to confirm that those aids are functioning well. Suppose they are broken or not functioning well. In that case, teaching may just be an exercise futile because the students are unable to perceive information disseminated as they heavily rely on the aids to listen to the teachers.

On top of that, teachers are also expected to be good at managing students' behavior and ensure that class is under control before they can begin teaching sessions. Sometimes, teachers take longer to control the class before starting teaching because of the lack of skills to control deaf students' behavior. Such a situation wastes time, and it raises concerns that learning content had not been fully delivered and compromises the achievement of learning objectives. Teachers could work on strategies and plan appropriate Quranic teaching activities. This is coherent with the view that relates to classroom management with strategies to ensure physical and psychological safety in the classroom, techniques to change students' behavior and teach discipline, arrangement of daily activities, and teaching methods that bring out positive changes in students' behavior (Aliakbari & Heidarzadi, 2015).

Deaf students' inability to hear poses a great challenge to everyone, especially the government, in formulating a proper curriculum because there is no specific teaching and learning approach that can fit all special groups. Therefore, everyone like the curriculum drafter, psychologists, teachers, educators, and all parties concerned should work together to formulate a curriculum fitting the special needs of hearing-impaired students at every level starting from the early to the advanced stage of learning. On that note, teachers ought to have been given training and courses to equip them with various skills to enable them to conduct effective al-Quran teaching and learning content for deaf students. Teachers' attitude is a fundamental element in ensuring effective knowledge sharing of al-Quran with deaf students because their mental development is different from typical students. Patience, love, and commitment of the teachers will complete a quality standard for those teaching al-Quran to the deaf students.

Conclusion

Deaf students in Malaysia can seek formal Education in this country. The Quran is indeed the crux of Islamic Education taught to deaf students to enable them to understand and appreciate Islamic teachings. It is important to address the syllabus and level of study of the al-Quran subject. Teachers are surely confronted with trials and challenges to teach deaf students owing to the latter's impaired hearing capacity. Everyone responsible, especially parents, the government, teachers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should collaborate efforts to ensure that deaf students receive the best facilities to learn al-Quran. Moreover, teachers are expected to master al-Quran and possess various abilities such as modifying learning levels, communicating in sign languages, understanding students' psychology, and selecting suitable teaching aids for deaf students. All these may be achieved if the teachers are exposed to numerous training, courses, refreshers, and discussions to enhance al-Quran teaching standards to deaf students in schools. As such, everyone concerned should cooperate in planning and strategizing to improve al-Quran Education of deaf students to achieve the mission of Islamic Education on the Quran foundation for all groups of students.

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