

"Some Common Errors in Reciting Surah Al-Fatihah: A Descriptive-Analytical Study in Light of Tajweed Science"

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ABSTRACT

Surah Al-Fatihah is regarded as the greatest chapter of the Holy Qur'an and occupies a central position in Islamic worship, as it constitutes an essential pillar of prayer without which the prayer is considered invalid. Due to its profound importance, scholars of Tajweed and Qur'anic recitation have devoted significant attention to preserving the accuracy of its pronunciation and performance, while warning against major recitational errors (Lahn Jali) that may alter meanings and affect the validity of worship. The significance of this study arises from the widespread occurrence of mistakes in the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah among many Muslims, including some learners of Qur'anic recitation, which highlights the necessity of identifying these errors, clarifying their implications, and proposing effective corrective methods.

This study aims to identify the most common errors committed in the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah according to the narration of Hafs 'an 'Asim, and to analyze these mistakes from a Tajweed, phonetic, and semantic perspective. It further seeks to explain the impact of such errors on the meanings of the verses and the correctness of Qur'anic recitation, as well as to present practical educational methods for correcting them and reducing their prevalence among reciters. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of oral transmission and direct learning from qualified teachers in mastering proper Qur'anic pronunciation and Tajweed rules.

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology by collecting and examining the most common recitational errors related to Surah Al-Fatihah in light of authoritative Tajweed references and classical works on Qur'anic recitation. It also relies on the narration of Hafs 'an 'Asim as the primary framework for analysis, while incorporating the opinions of recognized scholars in the field of Tajweed. Relevant Hadiths concerning the virtue of Surah Al-Fatihah and the etiquette of Qur'anic recitation are documented and verified from authentic sources. Furthermore, the study provides practical examples of common mistakes and demonstrates appropriate methods for correcting them according to established Tajweed principles.

The findings of the study reveal that the most frequent mistakes involve incorrect articulation points (Makharij al-Huruf), especially with emphatic letters, confusion between similar Arabic letters such as ض (Dad) and ظ (Za'), improper application of nasalization (Ghunna), and incorrect elongation (Madd). Some errors were also found to alter grammatical structures and meanings. The study concludes that many of these mistakes result from insufficient direct instruction and lack of practical training. It further demonstrates that effective correction can be achieved through consistent oral practice with qualified reciters, repetitive phonetic training, and the use of modern educational tools and audio applications. The study recommends strengthening Tajweed education programs and giving special attention to teaching Surah Al-Fatihah accurately to all members of the Muslim community due to its direct connection to the validity of prayer and worship.

Keywords: Surah Al-Fatihah, Lahn Jali, Lahn Khafi, Tajweed, Correction of Recitation, Hafs Narration

INTRODUCTION

Allah the Exalted revealed the Qur'an in clear and eloquent Arabic, and the Muslim community is obligated to recite it precisely as it was revealed. Allah commands: *"And recite the Qur'an with measured recitation"* (Al-Muzzammil: 4), emphasizing both accuracy in pronunciation and balance in performance. Among all chapters of the Qur'an, Surah Al-Fatihah occupies a unique and central position. It is known as *Umm al-Qur'an* (the Mother of the Qur'an) because it encapsulates the core themes of Islamic guidance, including praise, supplication, and acknowledgment of divine sovereignty.

The recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah is an indispensable component of Salah (prayer), without which the prayer is considered incomplete. The Prophet ﷺ stated: *"There is no prayer for one who does not recite the Opening of the Book"* (Al-Bukhari, 2002; Muslim, 2004). This hadith highlights the foundational status of Al-Fatihah and the necessity of its accurate recitation for the validity of worship.

Due to the frequent repetition of Al-Fatihah in the five daily prayers, errors in pronunciation or Tajweed application may occur repeatedly without the reciter's awareness. These errors range from incorrect articulation of letters and vowels to improper application of elongation (Madd) and other Tajweed rules. In some cases, such mistakes may alter the intended meaning of the Qur'anic text, thereby affecting both the legal validity and spiritual quality of the prayer.

The science of Tajweed plays a crucial role in preserving the sound and meaning of the Qur'an. Proper recitation ensures faithful transmission of the divine message and correct fulfillment of ritual obligations. Accordingly, this study seeks to systematically identify and analyze the most common errors in reciting Surah Al-Fatihah, examine their phonetic and semantic effects, and propose practical methods for correction. By doing so, the research aims to enhance awareness among worshippers and learners and contribute to preserving the integrity of Qur'anic recitation in prayer.

Research Problem

There are noticeable errors in the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah among some worshippers. These errors are not limited to minor pronunciation slips but include significant deviations from correct articulation and Tajweed application, such as mispronunciation of letters, incorrect elongation (Madd), omission or alteration of vowel markings (Harakat), and neglect of proper letter characteristics (Sifat).

Such errors may alter the intended meaning of Qur'anic expressions, which is particularly serious given that Surah Al-Fatihah constitutes a fundamental pillar of prayer. In many cases, these mistakes persist due to insufficient guidance or lack of awareness, even when reciters possess the ability to correct them. This highlights the need for a systematic study to identify common errors, analyze their causes and consequences, and provide practical recommendations for correction.

Research Objectives:

The present study aims to address a critical aspect of Qur'anic recitation by focusing on Surah Al-Fatihah, which is fundamental to the validity of Salah (prayer). The specific objectives are as follows:

1. **Identify the most common errors in reciting Surah Al-Fatihah:** This involves systematically documenting the prevalent mistakes in pronunciation, articulation, elongation (Madd), and application of Tajweed rules among worshippers, particularly those errors classified as Lahn Jali (major errors) and Lahn Khafi (minor errors).
2. **Explain the impact of these errors on meaning:** The study seeks to analyze how deviations from correct recitation can alter the intended meaning of words and phrases, potentially affecting both the spiritual and legal validity of prayer.
3. **Emphasize the importance of direct learning and oral transmission (Taqī and Mushāfahah):** Highlighting the necessity of learning directly from skilled teachers, the study underscores how oral

guidance ensures the correct application of Tajweed rules, immediate correction of mistakes, and the preservation of the Qur'anic text's integrity in worship.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The errors and their implications. The methodology consisted of the following key steps:

1. **Tracking common errors in the phonetic performance of Surah Al-Fatihah:** Observations were made of reciters' performances to identify typical pronunciation mistakes, incorrect elongations, missed articulations, or deviations from established Tajweed rules. This step ensures that the study is grounded in actual recitation practices rather than theoretical assumptions.
2. **Analyzing these errors in light of Tajweed rules as recognized by scholars of recitation:** Each identified error was examined according to authoritative Tajweed texts and the narrations of the Qur'anic reciters, such as the recitation of Hafs 'an 'Asim. This analytical step clarifies the classification of errors (major or minor) and their effect on meaning, form, and prayer validity.
3. **Relying on primary sources in the science of Tajweed and Qur'anic recitations:** The study drew on classical and contemporary works, including Ibn al-Jazari's *Al-Nashr fi al-Qira'at al-'Ashr*, Al-Jamzuri's *Tuhfat al-Atfal wa al-Ghulam fi Tajweed al-Qur'an*, and the legal opinions of jurists such as Al-Nawawi and Ibn Qudamah. This ensured that the research maintains scholarly rigor and authenticity.

By combining descriptive observation with analytical evaluation, the methodology provides a **systematic framework** for understanding the types of errors in recitation, their effects on meaning, and the methods for correction, thereby contributing to both academic knowledge and practical guidance for worshippers.

Section One: The Concept of Lahn and Its Seriousness in Surah Al-Fatihah

Subsection One: Definition of Lahn

articulation, or performance. This deviation may occur in letters (*huruf*), vowels (*harakat*), or in the proper application of the characteristics of letters (*sifat al-huruf*). Any such error compromises the integrity of the recitation and may affect its accuracy, aesthetic quality, and, in certain cases, the validity of the prayer.

Scholars of Tajweed classify Lahn into two primary types:

Lahn Jali (Apparent or Major Error):

his is a clear and overt mistake that affects the meaning of the word or verse, such as substituting one letter for another, altering vowel marks in a way that changes the meaning, or omitting a necessary articulation. *Lahn Jali* is strictly prohibited (*haram*) according to scholars, as it results in altering the words of Allah. In certain cases, if it occurs in Surah Al-Fatihah and the reciter is capable of correcting it, it may invalidate the prayer.

Lahn Khafi (Hidden or Minor Error):

This type of error does not alter the meaning of the word or verse but affects the perfection and quality of recitation. Examples include failing to pronounce certain letter characteristics correctly, neglecting subtle rules of elongation or assimilation, or minor lapses in articulation points. Although less severe than *Lahn Jali*, it is still considered blameworthy, especially if the reciter has the ability to learn and apply the correct rules.

The occurrence of *Lahn*, whether major or minor, demonstrates the importance of rigorous study, careful supervision, and continuous practice in the art of Qur'anic recitation. Awareness of these errors is essential for preserving both the linguistic integrity of the Qur'an and the spiritual efficacy of worship. Proper understanding of *Lahn* allows reciters to identify, correct, and prevent mistakes, ensuring that recitation adheres to the established rules of Tajweed and maintains its intended meaning and beauty. (Ibn al-Jazari, 2006).

Subsection Two: The Seriousness of Lahn in Al-Fatihah

He seriousness of errors in Surah Al-Fatihah is heightened due to its unique status as the essential foundation of the Muslim prayer. Unlike other chapters of the Qur'an, the correct recitation of Al-Fatihah is a prerequisite for the validity of Salah (prayer), as it constitutes one of its fundamental pillars. Any deviation in its recitation can therefore directly impact the acceptance of the prayer (Al-Nawawi, 1996; Ibn Qudamah, 1997).

Islamic jurists and scholars of Tajweed have unanimously agreed that a major error (Lahn Jali) that alters the meaning of a word or verse in Al-Fatihah can invalidate the prayer, provided that the reciter has the ability to correct it. Such errors may involve substituting one letter for another, mispronouncing a vowel, or changing the elongation (Madd), all of which can distort the meaning of the words revealed by Allah (Ibn al-Jazari, 2006; Al-Jamzuri, 2018).

This consensus is grounded in the principle that the integrity of the Qur'anic text is divine and must be preserved in worship, particularly in the prayer, where accurate recitation is a condition for fulfilling the pillar correctly. Errors in letters (Huruf) or vowels (Harakat) hinder the proper performance of this pillar because the recitation is no longer in accordance with the revealed text (Al-Nawawi, 1996; Ibn Qudamah, 1997).

Furthermore, the consequences of such errors are not limited to altering meaning alone; they also affect the spiritual quality and eloquence of the recitation, reducing the reciter's mindfulness and focus during prayer (Al-Jamzuri, 2018). This highlights the necessity for rigorous study, continuous practice, and supervision under skilled teachers, ensuring that the recitation is both correct in form and faithful to the intended meaning of the Qur'an (Ibn al-Jazari, 2006).

In summary, the seriousness of Lahn Jali in Surah Al-Fatihah stems from its dual impact: it can invalidate the prayer if correctable errors are present, and it can compromise the spiritual and linguistic integrity of the recitation, emphasizing the importance of proper Tajweed application (Al-Nawawi, 1996; Ibn Qudamah, 1997; Ibn al-Jazari, 2006).

Section Two: Common Errors in Reciting Surah Al-Fatihah

Subsection One: Errors in Letters and Articulation Points

Errors in letters and articulation points are among the most serious types of Lahn in Al-Fatihah recitation, as they can alter the structure of the Qur'anic letter and sometimes change meaning, which is known as major error (Lahn Jali). These errors mostly result from failure to properly articulate letters and their characteristics or confusing letters with similar points of articulation or attributes, especially among those not learning through oral transmission (Ibn al-Jazari, 2006).

Prominent examples include:

- Confusing **Ṣād** with **Sīn** in (الصِّرَاطِ), where some reciters pronounce it with Sīn instead of Ṣād, although Hafs from 'Asim confirms the emphatic Ṣād. This is a Lahn Jali, as it alters the Qur'anic letter, which is fixed and cannot be changed (Ibn al-Jazari, 2006).
- Confusing **Ḍād** with **Dāl** or **Zā'** in (الضَّالِّينَ), although Ḍād is a unique letter with its own articulation and characteristics, and cannot be substituted by others. This alters the word's structure and is considered a visible error requiring correction (Al-Jamzuri, 2018).
- Failing to properly articulate **'Ayn** in (نَعْبُدُ), where some reciters weaken it, replace it with a glottal stop (hamzah), or omit it entirely (e.g., saying *n'bud*). This is a major error, as it changes the letter and the meaning of worship, necessitating careful attention to articulation (Ibn al-Jazari, 2006).

Subsection Two: Errors in Vowels and Prolongations (Harakat and Madd)

These include:

- Extending natural madd beyond two counts.
- Omitting vowels, especially at the end of words like (العالمين, الدين).
- Failing to complete the required six-count madd in (الضالين). Tajweed scholars confirm that exceeding or shortening the madd disrupts the prescribed recitation (Al-Jamzuri, 2018).

Subsection Three: Errors That Change Meaning

Errors that change meaning are among the most serious types of Lahn in Al-Fatihah, as they directly affect the intended Qur'anic and legal meaning. Examples include:

- Changing the vowel of **ta'** in (أَنْعَمْتَ) from fatha to dammah, implying the blessing is attributed to the reciter rather than to Allah, compromising correct recitation and meaning.
- Reciting (إِيَّاكَ) without proper emphasis (shaddah), affecting the precision of monotheism in worship, since "You alone" signifies exclusive devotion to Allah.

These constitute major (jaliy) errors, which are prohibited and may invalidate the prayer if the reciter can correct them (Al-Nawawi, 1996).

Section Three: Methods for Preventing and Correcting Errors

Correcting Qur'anic recitation and preventing Tajweed errors is essential to ensure valid prayer and proper recitation. Key practical methods include:

- critically allows the reciter to identify pronunciation errors, incorrect elongations, or omitted articulations. This approach promotes self-correction and strengthens awareness of recurring mistakes.
- **Peer review and group recitation sessions:** Practicing with peers under the guidance of a knowledgeable instructor enables learners to receive constructive feedback, compare their recitation with others, and internalize correct pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation.
- **Systematic study of Tajweed rules with applied exercises:** Studying Tajweed rules in a structured and progressive manner, accompanied by practical exercises on letters, vowels, and elongations, ensures that theoretical knowledge is effectively translated into accurate recitation.
- **Visualization and articulation exercises:** Employing visual guides for articulation points (*makharij*) and practicing the corresponding physical movements of the speech organs enhances precision in letter pronunciation, particularly for difficult or phonetically similar letters.
- **Incremental learning and focused repetition:** Dividing the Surah into smaller sections and repeating each segment multiple times with careful attention to Tajweed rules facilitates mastery before progressing to subsequent sections.
- **Integration of auditory models from proficient reciters:** Regularly listening to skilled reciters helps learners internalize correct pronunciations, intonation patterns, and elongation techniques, complementing both practical recitation and theoretical study.
- **Consistent supervision and corrective feedback:** Continuous guidance from a qualified teacher ensures that errors are promptly identified and corrected, reinforcing proper habits and preventing the reinforcement of incorrect patterns.

These measures are proven methods to minimize errors in letters, vowels, prolongations, or meaning, ensuring the validity of prayer and the correctness of recitation (Ibn al-Jazari, 2006; Al-Jamzuri, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings:

The study concluded that common errors in reciting Surah Al-Fatihah are numerous, primarily resulting from lack of attention to articulation points and characteristics, and improper execution of vowels and prolongations. The most serious errors are those that alter meaning, such as changing the vowel in (أَنْعَمْتَ) or failing to emphasize (إِيَّاكَ), which may invalidate prayer if the reciter is capable of correction.

Recommendations:

- Direct learning and oral transmission from a skilled teacher to master articulation points and prolongations, and to correct errors immediately.
- Practical attention to articulation points and characteristics with regular Mushaf practice.
- Listening to proficient reciters and reviewing Tajweed theory to ensure proper phonetic performance.
- Incorporating correction sessions for Al-Fatihah recitation in schools and mosques, and encouraging worshippers to regularly review their recitation.

Applying these recommendations ensures accurate recitation, valid prayer, and preserves the Qur'an's performance as intended by Allah.

Proposed Table for Classifying Qur'anic Recitation Errors

Type of Error	Incorrect Example	Correct Recitation	Tajweed Rule	Type of Lahn	Linguistic/Semantic Impact
Madd (elongation) error	Reciting <i>Malik</i> without proper elongation	<i>Māliki</i>	Natural Madd	Minor Lahn	Weakens the phonetic rhythm of the verse
Ghunnah error	Omitting nasalization in stressed noon	Applying proper ghunnah for two counts	Rules of stressed noon and meem	Minor Lahn	Affects the correctness of Tajweed performance
Letter substitution	Pronouncing "Al-Ḍāllīn" as "Al-Zāllīn"	"Al-Ḍāllīn"	Articulation points (Makharij)	Major Lahn	May alter the intended meaning
Incorrect Tafkhīm/Tarqīq	Pronouncing Ṣād with lightness	Proper emphatic pronunciation of Ṣād	Characteristics of letters	Minor Lahn	Changes the acoustic quality of the word

Proposed Academic Methodology Paragraph

This study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach to investigate and analyze errors in Qur'anic recitation from both Tajweed and phonetic perspectives. Data were collected through direct observation of recitations performed by a selected group of participants chosen purposively according to their recitation proficiency levels. The sample included students and learners of the Qur'an whose recitations were recorded and analyzed based on established Tajweed principles and Qur'anic phonetic rules.

The identified errors were categorized into major groups, including articulation errors, letter characteristic errors, Madd mistakes, Ghunnah inaccuracies, and errors related to the rules of Noon Sakinah and Tanween. Recurrent errors were documented and examined in relation to their linguistic and semantic implications with reference to classical Tajweed sources and contemporary phonetic studies. The researcher employed qualitative

analysis supported by basic statistical indicators to determine the most frequent recitation errors among participants.

Proposed Analytical Discussion Paragraph

The findings revealed that the most common recitation errors were related to the improper application of Madd and Ghunnah rules, in addition to confusion between letters with similar articulation points such as Dād and Zā'. These issues may be attributed to insufficient phonetic training and limited reliance on direct oral transmission, despite its central role in Qur'anic recitation pedagogy.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that some recitation mistakes extend beyond phonetic inaccuracies and may affect the semantic structure of Qur'anic expressions, particularly in cases of major lahn that can alter meaning. This finding is consistent with recent studies in Qur'anic phonetics, which emphasize the close relationship between accurate pronunciation and the preservation of correct Qur'anic meaning.

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