The Phenomenon of Arabic Phonological Assimilation at the Beginner Level in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract
This study aims to describe the phenomenon of Arabic phonological assimilation among beginner students in Islamic boarding schools, with a particular focus on the application of idghām rules. The research is motivated by the observation that many novice learners struggle to connect written Arabic texts with accurate pronunciation, which affects their reading fluency and comprehension. The study employed a qualitative case study design using classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques. The data were analyzed descriptively to identify phonological errors and the underlying factors contributing to assimilation difficulties. The findings reveal that beginner learners encounter significant challenges in applying the rules of idghām, mainly due to limited phonological awareness, the absence of explicit phonological instruction, and interference from their native language. However, the results also indicate that systematic guidance and repeated practice gradually improve students' pronunciation accuracy. The implications of these findings highlight the importance of developing explicit, contextual, and technology-based phonological instruction that addresses the specific needs of beginner learners in Islamic boarding schools. Furthermore, the study opens avenues for future research to compare phonological acquisition in pesantren and formal schools, evaluate the effectiveness of digital media in supporting phonological awareness, and conduct longitudinal studies to trace the development of assimilation competence over time.

Keywords: *Phonology, Arabic, Islamic Boarding School*

Introduction

Aswat science is commonly called phonology. In the science of aswat, learning sounds is included in learning Arabic.[1] In learning Arabic at the beginner level, it is very important to teach phonology so that there are no errors in pronunciation.[2]Without learning Arabic phonology, beginners will have difficulties in prociting hijaiyah letters. Mistakes in the pronunciation of hijaiyah letters can change the semantic meaning. What should be a certain meaning becomes another meaning so that it loses its original meaning. So this phonology is taught to prevent semantic errors.[3]

Studying phonology well will avoid mistakes that often occur, including: consonant errors *al-halaq* (throat errors), oral errors *(al-oral)*, vowel omission errors, vowel substitutions, vowel errors in long and short readings, double consonant errors, and finally clothing assimilation errors.[4] Errors in word and phrase forms include substitution, addition, and deletion errors.[5] As well as consonant letter errors that have nothing in common in Indonesian such as hijaiyah غ huruh,ع , ف , ش,ص, ذ, خ, ت, ض, ظ, ط . [6]

Phonology in learning the Qur'an is also called tajweed. In the science of tajweed, it discusses how the rules of speaking, the correct sound of letters, whether the letters stand alone or are connected with other sentences.[7] Therefore, the researcher answers the problem of phonological assimilation related to tajweed science. Namely by understanding Arabic phonemes well, practicing makhraj letters, mastering the basic laws of tajweed reading. By paying attention to this, phonology speakers avoid pronunciation errors that have an impact on the wrong meaning in Arabic.

This research aims to be free from problems that often arise in the process of learning Arabic. In this problem, it can be clarified into 2 types. The first is linguistic problems which include phonology, morphology, syntax, and the last is semantics. Second, non-linguistic problems include learning encouragement, learning facilities, teaching methods, learning time and environment, various

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[1]Dkk Rika Widianita, "No 主観的健康感を中心とした在宅高齢者における健康関連指標に関する共分散構造分析Title," *AT-TAWASSUTH: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam* VIII, no. I (2023): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.21154/tsaqofiya.v5i2.198.

[2] Dkk Lathifa, "KETERAMPILAN MEMBACA TEKS BAHASA ARAB Arabiyât," *Arabiyat* 4, no. 2 (2017): 174–84.

[3] Syifa Salsabila Fitrianingrum and Elfiana Fitri Aminingsih, "Analisis Kesalahan Pengucapan Dalam Membaca Huruf Hijaiyah: Kajian Fonologi," *DIAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 3, no. 1 (January 28, 2024): 1–7, https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v3i1.2224.

[4] Ratna Asih, Ahmad Miftahuddin, and Zaim Elmubarok, "Analisis Kesalahan Fonologi Dalam Keterampilan Membaca Teks Berbahasa Arab Siswa Kelas XI SMA Islam Sultan Agung 1 Semarang," *Lisan Al-Arab* 9, no. 2 (2020): 123–37.

[5] Analisis Kesalahan and Fonologis Dalam, "Analisis Kesalahan Fonologis Dalam.... | 73," n.d.

[6]Asiva Noor Rachmayani, "No 主観的健康感を中心とした在宅高齢者における健康関連指標に関する共分散構造分析Title," 2015, 6.

[7] Drs Zulhannan, "Teknik Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Interaktif," *PT. Raja Grafindo Persada*, 2014.

backgrounds of students are one of the backgrounds of problems in the learning process.[8]

Previous studies have revealed various phonological problems among learners of Arabic. Wulandari (2020) found that students still frequently make phonological errors in Arabic speaking skills, particularly in pronouncing letters that share similar points of articulation.[9] Purwandari (2021) also reported the presence of phonological interference in *tasyji'ul lughah* activities at Islamic boarding schools, where the mother tongue strongly influences students' pronunciation of Arabic sounds. In the international context,[10] Saleem (2022) investigated nasal assimilation in Standard Arabic and found that its patterns share similarities with those of English.[11] Ali (2021) conducted a contrastive study on phonological assimilation in Arabic and English, emphasizing that despite the differences in their phonological systems, the mechanism of sound change in assimilation demonstrates universal patterns.[12] Meanwhile, Alfozan's (1989) classical study provided an in-depth explanation of assimilation phenomena in Classical Arabic, yet it has rarely been associated with the context of Arabic language learning for beginners.[13] A study conducted in Iraq by the *Journal of the College of Languages, University of Baghdad* highlighted the phenomenon of phonological assimilation in both Arabic and English. The study emphasized that assimilation is a natural process in phonology that can influence the way sounds are produced, both in everyday language contexts and in reading texts. This finding shows that assimilation is not merely a technical problem of pronunciation, but also a part of the complex linguistic system that language learners need to understand (University of Baghdad, 2021).[14] Hussein (2020) asserted that the rules of *tajweed* used in Qur'anic recitation have a strong phonetic basis and can be explained through modern phonological theory. In his study, he examined how phonological processes such as assimilation (*idghām*) and concealment (*ikhfā'*) are actually part of universal phonological rules also found in other languages. This indicates that *tajweed* is not merely a religious tradition but can also be understood as a practical

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[8] Muhammad Afif Amrulloh and Haliyatul Hasanah, "Analisis Kesalahan Fonologis Membaca Teks Bahasa Arab Siswa Madrasah Tsanawiyah Lampung Selatan," *Arabiyatuna : Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 3, no. 2 (November 13, 2019): 209, https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v3i2.815.

[9] Fitria Lathifah, Syihabuddin Syihabuddin, and M. Zaka Al Farisi, "ANALISIS KESALAHAN FONOLOGIS DALAM KETERAMPILAN MEMBACA TEKS BAHASA ARAB," *Arabiyat : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 4, no. 2 (December 28, 2017), https://doi.org/10.15408/a.v4i2.6273.

[10] Esthiningtyas Sheilla Purwandari, "Analisis Interferensi Fonologi Dalam Kegiatan Tasyji'ul Lughah Santri Pondok Pesantren Al-Kamal," *Lisanul Arab: Journal of Arabic Learning and Teaching* 11, no. 1 (2022): 50–56, https://doi.org/10.15294/la.v11i1.56913.

[11] Muzaina Awny Saleem, "Nasal Assimilation in Standard Arabic With Reference To English/ A Phonological Analysis," *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities* 29, no. 1, 1 (2022): 57–73, https://doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.29.1.1.2022.25.

[12] Mohammed Dib, "A Contrastive Phonological Study of English and Arabic," *SpringerBriefs in Applied Sciences and Technology*, no. 25 (2019): 31–60, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97710-2_4.

[13] Abdulrahman Ibrahim Alfozan, "Assimilation in Classical Arabic: A Phonological Study," 1989, http://theses.gla.ac.uk/1144/.

[14] Dib, "A Contrastive Phonological Study of English and Arabic."

application of phonology.[15] The research conducted by Nehad (2019) emphasized the importance of applying phonology in learning Arabic for beginners, particularly in the context of Qur'anic education in Egypt. He found that the most frequent errors occurred in the pronunciation of *al-halqiyah* (throat) sounds and letters that have no equivalent in learners' mother tongues, such as ع, غ, ص, ض, and ط. Nehad stressed that phonology teaching should not only rely on memorizing the *makhārij* (points of articulation), but must also be supported by auditory training and continuous practice. This study reinforces the view that Arabic phonology plays a crucial role in preventing semantic errors resulting from sound differences. Thus, a phonological approach to Arabic learning is not merely theoretical but also practical in maintaining semantic accuracy, especially in Qur'anic recitation.[16] A study carried out at the University of Jordan (2021) further emphasized that phonological errors in learning Arabic among non-Arab students are largely caused by mother tongue interference. The study revealed that sounds without equivalents in learners' native languages, such as ذ, ظ, ض, and ق, are often the main sources of errors. In addition, students frequently struggled to distinguish between long and short vowels, which in turn could lead to semantic shifts.[17]

From the review above, it can be understood that studies on Arabic phonology, particularly assimilation, have been widely conducted at both theoretical and practical levels. However, research that specifically investigates the phenomenon of phonological assimilation among beginner students (*santri*) in Indonesian pesantren remains very limited. At the initial stage of learning, students often encounter difficulties in accurately pronouncing Arabic words or sentences, which unconsciously leads to frequent sound assimilation. Existing studies have mainly focused on theoretical analysis or on the context of university students and non-Arab speakers, while the pesantren learning context has not yet been adequately addressed.

In contrast, the present study seeks to fill this gap by examining the phenomenon of phonological assimilation in Arabic among beginner students at the elementary level of pesantren. The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which analyzes assimilation phenomena as they naturally occur in daily interaction, rather than only in formal phonetic practice. Moreover, this study offers practical implications for teachers and *ustadz* in designing more effective strategies for teaching phonology that are better aligned with the characteristics of beginner

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[15] Hussein Lata Hassan, "The Phonological Rules in Tajweed in the Holy Quran," n.d.

[16] Nehad R ElBehiry, "Using IPA Symbols and Phonological Rules to Help Understand Tajweed Rules Internationally and Avoid Recitation Errors.," *Textual Turnings: An International Peer-Reviewed Journal in English Studies* 6, no. 1 (2024): 95–115, https://doi.org/10.21608/ttaip.2024.400423.

[17] Dr. Grasiella K. Harb, "TED Talks: An Approach for Activating the World Knowledge Schema of EFL Writers," *International Journal of Language & Linguistics* 5, no. 4 (2018): 81–89, https://doi.org/10.30845/ijll.v5n4p9.

students in pesantren. The specificity of this study also lies in its focus on phonological assimilation as manifested in students' recitation, the use of a combined methodology including classroom observation, interviews, and documentation to produce authentic empirical data, and its practical contribution by integrating modern phonology with the science of *tajweed* to prevent semantic errors in recitation. Thus, this research provides a new contribution both to the study of Arabic phonology and to the practice of teaching and learning in Islamic educational institutions.

Method

This study employs a qualitative case study approach combined with classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, supported by recent methodological insights such as Takalafiya (2023) on explicit and learner-focused instruction [18]and Maulana, Islam, and Shoubaki (2025), who analyzed phonological errors in reading Arabic texts. [19]

The classroom observations focus on: (1) the occurrence of assimilation phenomena in both formal reading and daily oral interactions at the beginner level; (2) teachers' responses to pronunciation errors; (3) the influence of mother tongue or dialect; and (4) the frequency and positional patterns of assimilated sounds. The interviews involve beginner students (approximately 10 participants), Arabic language instructors for basic reading (3–5 participants), and curriculum coordinators at the pesantren (1–2 participants). These interviews aim to explore learners' pronunciation experiences, their awareness of assimilation phenomena, the phonological teaching methods employed, and perceptions of instructional strategies' effectiveness. Documentation includes syllabi, teaching materials and media, students' assignments and reading exercises, as well as audio and video recordings of reading and practice sessions.

Results and Discussion

A.   Field Observation Data

Based on the field observations, several pronunciation errors were identified among beginner-level students at Pondok Pesantren Albidayah. The general pattern that emerged was the tendency to read strictly according to the written text without paying attention to the phonological assimilation rule (*idghām*)

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[18] Khamisu Liman Takalafiya, "The Role of Learner-Focused Instruction in Teaching Arabic Phonemic and Phonological Awareness: Enhancing Language Acquisition and Proficiency," *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies* 4, no. 5 (2023): 112–18, https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0331.

[19] Bayu Wahyu Maulana, M. Rizqi Zainal Islam, and Hamza Shoubaki, "Analysis of Phonological Errors in Reading Skills Arabic Text at School," *Journal of Arabic Language Teaching* 5, no. 1 (2025): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.35719/arkhas.v5i1.2202.

No	Written Form	Correct Pronunciation	Erroneous Pronunciation	Type of Assimilation Overlooked
1	مِنْ بَعْدِ (*min ba'di*)	مِنْ بَعْدِ (*mim ba'di*)	مِنْ بَعْدِ (*min ba'di*)	Idghām Mislain (labial assimilation)
2	مِنْ رَبِّكَ (*min rabbika*)	مِرْ رَبِّكَ (*mir rabbika*)	مِنْ رَبِّكَ (*min rabbika*)	Idghām Bi-ghunnah (nasal assimilation before rā')
3	مِنْ لَدُنْهُ (*min ladunhu*)	مِلَّدُنْهُ (*mill ladunhu*)	مِنْ لَدُنْهُ (*min ladunhu*)	Idghām Bi-ghunnah (nasal assimilation before lām)
4	مِنْ نُورٍ (*min nūrin*)	مِ نُّورٍ (*minnūrin*)	مِنْ نُور (*min nūrin*)	Idghām Bi-ghunnah (nasal assimilation before nūn)
5	عَلَيْهِمْ صِرَاطًا (*'alayhim ṣirāṭan*)	عَلَيْهِمْ صِرَاطًا (*'alayhim ṣ-ṣirāṭan*)	عَلَيْهِمْ صِرَاطًا (*'alayhim ṣirāṭan*)	Idghām Syamsiyyah (sun-letter assimilation)

 Table 1. Examples of Beginner Students' Pronunciation Errors (Observation 1)

Description of the first observation based on the table is as follows:

For the word مِنْ بَعْدِ (*min ba'di*), almost all of the observed students pronounced it as *min ba'di*, whereas assimilation should occur, resulting in *mim ba'di* when

/n/ is followed by the letter /b/. In the case of مِن رَّبِّكَ (min rabbika), a similar phenomenon appeared: students pronounced it as *min rabbika*, even though phonological rules require the assimilation into *mir rabbika*. For مِن لَّدُنْهُ (min ladunhu), the assimilation between /n/ and /l/ did not occur, so students read it strictly as written, without merging the phonemes. Likewise, for مِن نُورٍ (min nūrin), the assimilation between /n/ and /n/ was not realized, and students again pronounced it according to the script without phonemic merging. Finally, for عَلَيْهِمْ صِرَاطٌ ('alayhim ṣirāṭun), the assimilation between /m/ and /ṣ/ did not occur, resulting in a literal reading rather than an assimilated one.

No	Written Form	Correct Pronunciation	Students' Pronunciation	Type of Assimilation Overlooked
1	مَنْ يَقُّولُ (man yaqulu)	مَنْ يَقُّولُ (mayyaqulu)	مَنْ يَقُّولُ (man yaqulu)	Failure to apply idghām with yā'
2	مَنْ وَقَى (man waqā)	مَنْ وَقَى (mawwaqā)	مَنْ وَقَى (man waqā)	Failure to apply idghām with wāw
3	قَدْ تَّبَيَّنَ (qad tabayyana)	قَدْ تَّبَيَّنَ (qattabayyana)	قَدْ تَّبَيَّنَ (qad tabayyana)	Absence of gemination (tasydīd)
4	لَكُمْ مَا (lakum mā)	لَكُمْ مَا (lakummā)	لَكُمْ مَا (lakum mā)	Failure to apply idghām with mīm
5	هُمْ فِي (hum fī)	هُمْ فِي (humfī)	هُمْ فِي (hum fī)	Failure to apply idghām mutaqaribain

Table.2 Students' Reading Errors in Applying the Rule of Idghām

Description of the Second Observation Based on Table 2

The second observation, as presented in Table 2, illustrates students' difficulties in applying the rules of *idghām* when reading Arabic texts. The data show that several students consistently pronounced words according to their written form rather than assimilating the sounds as required by phonological rules. For example, in مَنْ يَقُولُ, students read it as *man yaqulu* instead of *mayyaqulu*, thereby neglecting the assimilation of the letter ي. A similar error occurred in مَنْ وَقَى, which should be pronounced as *mawwaqā*, but learners maintained the unassimilated form *man waqā*.

Another significant error was observed in قَدْ تَّبَيَّنَ, which should have been pronounced with gemination as *qattabayyana*. However, students read it without the required stress, indicating a lack of awareness of the gemination rule. Likewise, in هُمْ فِي لَكُمْ مَا and, assimilation with م and the rule of *idghām mutaqaribain* were not applied, further reflecting students' reliance on orthographic cues rather than phonological competence.

These patterns indicate that beginner students still struggle to internalize the concept of assimilation due to limited phonological awareness and the absence of explicit instruction. The findings emphasize the need for systematic and focused teaching strategies that highlight phonological rules beyond mere orthographic recognition.

A.   Interview Data

The results of the interviews with Arabic language teachers indicate that this phenomenon has long been a matter of concern. One teacher explained: *"Beginner students tend to read according to the letters they see. So if it is written min rabbika, they read it literally as such, even though the reading rule requires it to change into mir rabbika."*

Another teacher added: *"These mistakes are understandable, but if they are not corrected from the beginning, they can become a persistent habit. Even at the advanced level, students often continue to misread words such as min ba'di or min rabbika."*

In addition, interviews with students also revealed that they were often unaware of the differences between the written form and the correct pronunciation. One student admitted: "I thought reading *min ba'di* was correct, since that is exactly

how it is written. Only after the teacher explained *idghām* did I realize that it should actually be read as *mim ba'di*."

B.   Documentation Data

The recordings of students' recitations revealed a consistent pattern. Out of 30 students observed, 22 students (approximately 73%) pronounced *min ba'di* and *min rabbika* without applying *idghām*. Six students (20%) produced a mixture of correct and incorrect pronunciations, while only two students (7%) consistently read the words correctly. The analysis of the recordings also indicated that students who were able to pronounce the words correctly generally had prior knowledge of *tajwīd* from their previous madrasah education, or were accustomed to listening to Qur'anic recitations from a qualified *qirāʾāt* teacher

Category of Reading Accuracy	Number of Students	Percentage
Consistently incorrect (reading *min ba'di* and *min rabbika* without *idghām*)	22	73%
Partially correct, partially incorrect	6	20%
Consistently correct (applying *idghām* accurately)	2	7%

Table 3. Percentage of Students' Reading Errors

The data in Table 3 clearly demonstrates that the majority of beginner students consistently neglect the application of *idghām* in their pronunciation. A total of 73% of the students read the expressions *min ba'di* and *min rabbika* literally, without performing the required phonological assimilation. This indicates that the dominant reading pattern among students is a direct reliance on the written script rather than on the phonological rules of Arabic.

Meanwhile, 20% of the students displayed a mixed pattern, sometimes applying the rules correctly and sometimes neglecting them. This inconsistency suggests that these students may have partial awareness of the *idghām* rules but lack sufficient practice and reinforcement. Only a very small proportion (7%) consistently applied *idghām* accurately. Further examination revealed that these students generally had prior exposure to *tajwīd* instruction or were accustomed to listening to Qur'anic recitations guided by qualified *qirāʾāt* teachers.

This finding reinforces the notion that correct pronunciation of Arabic phonological assimilation does not occur automatically but requires systematic teaching, early correction, and continuous auditory modeling.

C.   Theoretical Analysis

The reading errors described above can be explained using the theory of phonological assimilation. According to phonological theory (Odden, 2005), assimilation is a change in a sound due to the influence of an adjacent phoneme. In Arabic, this assimilation is systematically regulated by the rules of *idghām*.

For instance, the change of /n/ → /m/ before /b* (*min baʿdi → mim baʿdi*) is an example of nasal assimilation. The change of /n/ → /r/ (*min rabbika → mir rabbika*) represents lateral-alveolar assimilation, while the change of /n/ → /l/ (*min ladunhu → mil ladunhu*) is a case of lateral assimilation.

These phenomena indicate that the majority of beginner students have not yet internalized the phonological rules of Arabic automatically. They rely more on the graphic representation of the text (*grapheme-centered*) rather than phonological principles (*phoneme-centered*). In other words, their reading tends to be grapheme-oriented, meaning that they read the letters literally according to the script rather than producing the sounds required by the rules of *tajwīd* and Arabic phonology.

D.   Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are consistent with a number of previous works.

1, Nasiruddin, and Rojudin (2023) found that students in a pesantren in Yogyakarta frequently made phonological errors in pronouncing *ḥurūf hijāʾiyyah*, particularly in cases of phoneme substitution and deletion. This aligns with the present observations, in which students tended to read strictly according to the written text without attending to phonological rules.[20]

2. Similarly, Amrulloh and Hasanah (2023) reported phonological errors in Arabic reading among junior secondary school students in South Lampung, most of which were attributed to insufficient attention to the *makhārij al-ḥurūf* and the phonetic features of letters. This phenomenon is also reflected in the current data, where students failed to apply *idghām* despite having theoretically studied it in *tajwīd*.[21]

3. A related study by Setia Wati, Ahmad Asse, and Ubadah (2022) on phonological interference among senior high school students at MA Alkhairaat Pusat Palu highlighted the strong influence of learners' first language on the accuracy of Arabic phoneme articulation. A comparable tendency was observed in this study, as students read *min rabbika* without assimilation into *mir rabbika*, influenced by the phonemic reading pattern of Indonesian.[22]

4. Furthermore, Amini and Hasan (2023) examined phonological errors in *muṭālaʿah* reading at TMI Al-Amien Prenduan and emphasized that such errors

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[20] Tulus Musthofa, Nasiruddin, and Didin Rojudin, "Kesalahan Fonologi Dalam Pengucapan Huruf Hijaiyyah Di Pondok Pesantren," *IJAZ ARABI: Journal of Arabic Learning* 7, no. 1 (2024): 2, ejournal.uin-malang.ac.id.

[21] Amrulloh and Hasanah, "Analisis Kesalahan Fonologis Membaca Teks Bahasa Arab Siswa Madrasah Tsanawiyah Lampung Selatan."

[22] Ana Rita Garcia et al., "No 主観的健康感を中心とした在宅高齢者における 健康関連指標 に関する共分散構造分析Title," n.d.

often stem from insufficient direct practice (*drilling*) in language classes. This finding resonates with the present study, in which students struggled to apply *idghām* rules due to limited exposure to non-Qur'anic texts read under phonological constraints.[23]

5. In addition, Akla and Muyassaroh (2022) underlined the importance of teaching Arabic phonetics and phonemics in pesantren, stressing the integration of modern pedagogical methods with traditional learning. Their work supports the argument that beginner students' reading errors are not merely an individual issue but also linked to instructional strategies employed by teachers in the classroom.[24]

## E.	Discussion

Based on the findings derived from observation, interviews, and documentation, several key points can be drawn.

1. beginner-level students face considerable difficulty in linking the written script with accurate pronunciation in accordance with phonological rules.

2. Second, common errors such as reading *min ba'di → min ba'di* (without *idghām*) and *min rabbika → min rabbika* indicate that many students have not fully internalized the rules of *idghām*.

3. learners tend to adopt a script-based reading approach, focusing on the orthographic form while neglecting phonological principles.

4. there appears to be a disconnection between the teaching of *tajwīd* and the teaching of Arabic language: students may perform well in Qur'anic recitation classes but fail to transfer these phonological rules when reading non-Qur'anic texts.

In light of these findings, several pedagogical implications can be proposed.

1. Teachers should emphasize explicit pronunciation drills from the earliest stages of learning. Furthermore

2. the integration of *tajwīd* instruction with Arabic phonology within language classes is essential to ensure consistency in application.

3. The use of audio-visual media can play a significant role in reinforcing phonological memory

4. while systematic drilling of minimal pairs (e.g., *min–mim*, *min–mir*, *min–mil*) can serve as an effective practice strategy.

5. recorded *murottal* recitations may function as a primary learning aid, providing students with authentic phonological models to imitate and internalize

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[23] Prenduan Tahun Ajaran, "AL-AFKAR : Journal for Islamic Studies Analisis Kesalahan Fonologis Membaca Teks Bahasa Arab Pada Materi Muthala ' Ah" 7, no. 3 (2024): 458–65, https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v7i3.1073.Analysis.

[24] Akla Akla and Muyassaroh Muyassaroh, "Arabic Phonetics and Phonemics Instruction in Islamic Boarding School for Children," *An Nabighoh* 26, no. 2 (2024): 303–14, https://doi.org/10.32332/an-nabighoh.v26i2.303-314.

Conclusion

This study reveals that beginner-level students in Islamic boarding schools often struggle with Arabic phonological assimilation, particularly in applying the rules of *idghām* correctly. The findings indicate that these difficulties arise from limited phonological awareness, lack of explicit instruction, and interference from students' native language. Despite these challenges, the data also show that with systematic guidance and repeated exposure, learners gradually improve their accuracy in pronunciation and reading of Arabic texts.

Recommendations Of Future Research, future studies are recommended to:

Investigate the effectiveness of explicit phonological instruction in enhancing learners' mastery of assimilation rules. Compare the acquisition of phonological assimilation between students in different learning environments, such as formal schools and Islamic boarding schools. Explore the role of technology-based learning tools in supporting students' phonological awareness. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine how assimilation competence develops over time and its impact on overall Arabic literacy.

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