

Investigating the Impact of Tajweed on Sudanese University English Language Students' Reading Skill

تقصي تأثير التجويد على مهارة القراءة لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات السودانية

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Abstract:

Reading in English is an essential skill that paves the way for another one; writing. The more English language learners are able to read, the more they acquire good techniques for writing and vice versa. Moreover, it is more inevitable for non-native learners to work hard in this regard in order to master these two skills. This study is an attempt to help in this field. It aimed at investigating the impact of *Tajweed* on Sudanese university English students' reading skill as a hypothesis claimed by the researcher. *Tajweed* is the study of the rules governing method of reading the Holy Qur'an. The targeted students studied the Holy Qur'an as a university required subject for four years. A questionnaire was designed as a tool filled by the sample of the study which was the fourth-year English language students at the School of Languages, University of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic Sciences, Omdurman, Sudan in the academic year 2022-2023. According to their study in these four years, the students filled the questionnaire and the researcher analyzed it using some computer programmes to verify the hypothesis. It was found

that practising reading the Holy Qur'an correctly had a positive impact on reading English because there were some common denominators between the contents of these two subjects. At the end of the paper, the researcher presented some recommendations as an attempt to make use of the rules taught in *Tajweed* since they have benefits in English language reading skill.

Key words: common denominators, articulators, sounds, reading, correctly

الملخص:

تعتبر القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية مهارة أساسية تمهد الطريق لمهارة أخرى؛ ألا وهي الكتابة. وكلما أصبح دارسو اللغة الإنجليزية قادرين على القراءة، كلما اكتسبوا أساليب جيدة للكتابة والعكس صحيح. علاوة على ذلك، يتحتم على دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العمل بجد في هذا الشأن بغرض إتقان هاتين المهارتين. وتمثل هذه الدراسة مساعدة في هذا المجال. فقد هدفت لتقصي أثر التجويد على مهارة القراءة لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات السودانية كفرضية افترضها الباحث. والتجويد هو دراسة القواعد التي تحكم طريقة قراءة القرآن الكريم. درس الطلاب المعنيون في هذه الورقة القرآن الكريم كإحدى مطلوبات الجامعة مدة أربع سنوات. وقد تم تصميم استبانة كوسيلة تم ملؤها بواسطة عينة الدراسة والتي مثلها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بالسنة الرابعة في مدرسة الألسن بجامعة القرآن الكريم والعلوم الإسلامية، أمدرمان، السودان في العام الدراسي 2022-2023. وحسب دراستهم في هذه السنوات الأربع، ملأ الطلاب هذه الاستبانة ثم قام الباحث بتحليلها مستخدماً بعض برامج الحاسوب لإثبات صحة الفرضية. ولقد وُجد أن ممارسة قراءة القرآن الكريم بصورة صحيحة كان لها أثر إيجابي على قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية بسبب أنه كانت هنالك بعض القواسم المشتركة بين محتويات هاتين المادتين. وفي نهاية الورقة، قدم الباحث بعض التوصيات كمحاولة للاستفادة من القواعد التي تُدرّس في التجويد بما أنها ذات فوائد بالنسبة لمهارة قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية.

كلمات مفتاحية: قواسم مشتركة، مخارج الحروف، أصوات، قراءة، بصورة صحيحة.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In English, it is normally known that a learner who wants to master writing skills must basically master reading skills. If he\she fails to read, he\she will never succeed in writing. That is simply because reading is the place where vocabulary flows from. This vocabulary is the main tool for writing. Therefore, mastering reading skills is a must. This paper intended to investigate an indirect way that may serve this

reading. Unfortunately, it can rarely be found. It is reciting the Holy Qur'an. Acquiring recitation of the Holy Qur'an needs to know some rules for correct reading, and this is called '*Tajweed*'. It is a required subject at University of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic Sciences, Omdurman, Sudan. Students at this university are taught and trained to have good recitation through coming across the rules mentioned above. The researcher noticed that some of these rules have something to do with English reading. So, he intended to search in this area.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The present paper is significant as it touches an important issue. It is an academic issue that is expected to help enabling students of English to master reading skill. It is also an attempt to shed light on some miracles of the Holy Qur'an in which Allah Almighty says in Surah Al-An'am (6: 38): '*We have neglected nothing in the Book*'(1). In this paper, the researcher hypothesized that studying *Tajweed* has a positive impact on English language students' reading skill. This leads to the Islamic idea that the Holy Qur'an is a comprehensive book. It is finally an effort that can be added to the Islamic English library.

1.3. Objectives of the study

This study is intended to:

1. Prove that the Book of Allah Almighty is a comprehensive book.
2. State that some Qur'anic reading rules can serve reading English.
3. Take part in presenting some Qur'anic values to English language learners.

1.4. Literature Review

It takes much time to acquire the correct way for reading the Holy Qur'an depending upon the learner's desire and practice. According to Cook, G. (2003: 41), "*Only that a sound knowledge of rules and an accurate, if slow, deployment of them is the basis for further development*" (2). The denotational meaning of *Tajweed* according to Nasr. A. Q. (2000: 39) is "*improvement and mastery*" (3).

(1)القرءان الكرم

(2) *Applied Linguistics*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. UK

(3)غاية المرید فی علم التجوید. الطبعة السابعة. مكتبة كنوز المعرفة. جدة. المملكة العربية السعودية

And the terminological meaning is pronouncing letters correctly. Learning *Tajweed* is compulsory for those who want to read or teach the Holy Qur'an. The study of *Tajweed* became a necessity when Muslim followers from different linguistic societies had begun to increase. So, the ultimate goal for mastering *Tajweed* is to read the Holy Qur'an accurately. This accuracy is obtained, according to Nasr. A. Q. (ibid), only by reserving the rules of *Tajweed* taken from the way that prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to read and this is the standard way. Many benefits can be gained from the science of *Tajweed*. But, for the purpose of this study, only pronunciation and articulation rules are targeted. On the other hand, “*Standard English*” according to Todd, L. (1987: 26) “*has no official pronunciation*” (4). Therefore, considerable variation throughout the world is found. No two Englishes are the same. According to Cook, G. (2003: 26) “*It raises considerable doubts about whose language English is, and how judgements about it can be made.*” (5)

This accuracy is also needed in English reading. Accurate reading is realized through training. The main goals for such training are, according to Lynn, E. M. (2018: 29) “*to increase students' fluency and rate, enhance student confidence, and promote learner self-awareness.*” (6) Some materials are required in such training such as: reading passage, progress sheet, a timing device. Students need to be motivated and praised in order to have good results. Fluent reading is highly needed.

Alphabet correct pronunciation is basically required for good reading. The study of *Tajweed* and English reading have some common denominators. Both of them are related to how to produce sounds correctly. Many examples will be mentioned in this regard. But it is worth mentioning that Arabic language has something that is not available in English. There are three “vowel points” in Arabic letters shaped as (◌َ) sounded ə as in (about), (◌ُ) sounded Ū as in (put) and (◌ِ) sounded ɪ as in (sit).

(4) *An Introduction to Linguistics*. Longman Group. York Press. England

(5) *Applied Linguistics*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. UK

(6) *Developing Reading Fluency by Combining Timed Reading and Repeated Reading*. English Language Forum. V. 56. No. 3. Department of State for Teachers of English. USA

These points are doubled to become (َ) as in (un-), (ُ) as in (lunar) and (ِ) as in (in) according to certain grammatical rules. In this case (i.e., doubling), they finish in a consonant ‘n’ sound. The sounds of these points in English appear as letters.

Table 1 below shows some Arabic examples:

Table 1: Some Arabic examples

Word	sound	Meaning
أَمْ	ɛm	Or
أُم	ʊm	Mother
إِنْ	In	If
أَبًا	əbən	Father
أَبٌ	əbʊn	Father
أَبٍ	ɛbɪn	Father

The Consonant ‘N’ Sound

In English, on the other hand, vowels, according to Roach, P. (2004: 10) “are sounds in which there is no construction to the flow of air as it passes through the larynx to the lips” (7). There are short vowels and long vowels the thing that may sometimes make learners uncertain. But, much training and exposure to authentic readings can facilitate such difficulties. A consonant, according to Todd, L. (1987: 14) “is formed when the air stream is restricted or stopped at some point between the vocal cords and the lips” (8). In Arabic, however, the difference between the vowel letters and the consonant letters is that a vowel letter has one of the previous three “vowel points” mentioned above. Therefore, such vowels and consonants play an essential role in reading. In the Qur’anic *Tajweed*, there are some rules that talk about some letters causing displaying, embodiment, inversion, and hiding the consonant ‘n’ sound.

The terminological meaning of *Ithhar* “Displaying” according to Nasr. A. Q. (2000: 54) “is articulating the displayed letter from its articulator without a twang.”

(7) *English Phonetics and Phonology*. Cambridge University Press. Low price Egyptian edition. The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop. Cairo. Egypt

(8) *An Introduction to Linguistics*. Longman Group. York Press. England

The displayed letter mentioned here is the consonant ‘n’ sound. This letter is displayed when it is followed by six letters (or sounds): two of these sounds are (ﺍ and ﺑ), the four remaining sounds do not exist in English. They are (ﻉ) usually written (A/a) as in Ali, (ﺡ) usually written (H/h) as in Ahmed, (ﻍ) usually written (G/gh) as in Ghana, (ﺥ) usually written (K/kh) as in Khartoum. A similar sound rule is found in English when the same ‘n’ sound is present when it is followed by a vowel sound such as: (an apple, an orange). Embodiment is the second rule when the ‘n’ sound is embodied in a second consonant sound to become a stressed letter in the second consonant. Six letters come after this ‘n’ sound; (ﻱﺎ ya, ﺭﺍ ra, ﻣﻴﻢ meem, ﻻﻡ lam, ﻭﺍﻭ waw and ﻧﻮﻥ noon). The benefit of this rule is to soften reading these letters. For example, the sound ‘n’ in ‘chicken’ can be embodied in the ‘m’ sound in ‘meat’ to become ‘chickemmeat’, both sounds are nasals. Inversion is the third rule when the ‘n’ sound is turned into a twanged ‘m’ sound when followed by ‘b’ sound because it is hard to pronounce them together since they come from two different articulators. Instead of saying: (ten bananas), we say (tem bananas). Fourthly, the ‘n’ sound is hidden; pronounced in a way between displaying and embodiment when followed by one of the fifteen remaining Arabic letters. A twang without a stress is applied in this rule. Words like ‘uncle, English and anxious’, the consonant ‘n’ is pronounced ‘ﻧ̣’ which is twanged also. Examples for such rules from the Holy Qur’an are difficult to be presented in English because the Holy Qur’an should only be read in Arabic.

Clear and Dark “L” Sounds:

Tatkheem (heaviness or darkness) and *Tarqeeq* (thinness or clearness) are two other rules in the Qur’anic *Tajweed*. *Tatkheem* according to Nasr. A. Q. (ibid) is thickness occurs when pronouncing a letter while *Tarqeeq* is the opposite. These two rules are applied in some letters. However, for the purpose of this study, the letter ‘L’ will be taken as a common one. The sound ‘l’ (i.e., la, lu, li) is always clear except in the word ‘Allah’ which is darkened in two cases: 1. If it is followed by the vowel point (ﻻ) ﺍ. 2. If it is followed by the vowel point (ﻮ) ﺍ. These two points appear over the Arabic letters preceding the word ‘Allah’. These clear ‘l’ and dark ‘l’ sounds are also found in English. According to Roach, P. (ibid) the ‘dark l’ is

found when it precedes a consonant as in ‘eels’ i:lz. ‘Clear l’ never occurs before consonants or before a pause, but only before vowels as in ‘leg and Liza’.

Connected Speech

In English, two words are connected when the former one ends in a consonant sound and the latter begins with a vowel one. For example, the five words in the sentence (*Get up at eight o'clock.*) are connected and they read in one breath. The same thing is found in the Qur’anic *Tajweed* when two consonant sounds come together. In order to homogenize these two sounds to be connected, the former consonant is changed into a vowel with the function of the vowel point (◌ِ) in the end.

2. Methodology

In this paper, the researcher adopted the descriptive and analytical methods to achieve the hypothesis claimed in it. The researcher compared and contrasted between some phonological systems in *Tajweed* and English. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect the required data. It was carried out in 2023 at University of the Holy Qur’an and Islamic Sciences, Omdurman, Sudan. 81 students participated filling in this questionnaire. Likert – 5–point scale: (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) and Excell software programme were adopted in it. The study sample of the paper was the fourth–year English language students.

3. Results and Discussions

This part of the paper presents the analysis of the data collected by the tool discussed above. The researcher intended to display and discuss the results of such data to verify whether the study hypothesis is true or not. Microsoft Word and Excel programmes were used for this purpose. The questionnaire contained five statements. They were about some Qur’anic topics studied by the participants. The researcher tried to touch some similarities between the Qur’anic *Tajweed* and English reading skills. The following tables and figures show the results of these five statements.

Table 2: A number of Qur'anic Tajweed rules have similar ones in English reading skills.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	56	69.14%
Agree	23	28.4%
Neutral	1	1.23%
Disagree	1	1.23%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	81	100%

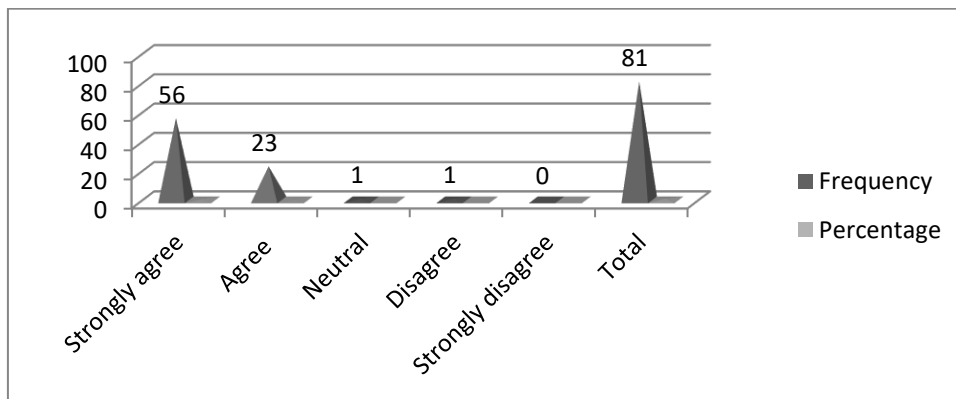


Fig. 1: A number of Qur'anic Tajweed rules have similar ones in English reading skills.

Results in table 2 and figure 1 above show the participants' points of view. They indicate high percentages in "strongly agree and agree" options representing "(69.14%) and (28.4%)" respectively. So, these high percentages reflect a positive trend for the statement and all answers are agreeable. Therefore, this statement was successfully achieved.

Table 3: Fluency obtained by the Qur'anic Tajweed through training helps to get rid of stammering when reading English.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	37	45.68%
Agree	36	44.4%
Neutral	6	7.41%
Disagree	1	1.23%
Strongly disagree	1	1.23%
Total	81	100%

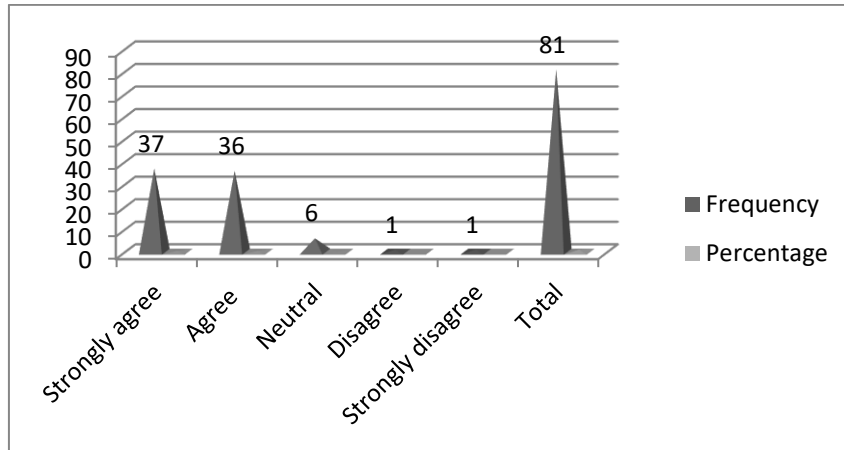


Fig. 2: Fluency obtained by the Qur’anic Tajweed through training helps to get rid of stammering when reading English.

Results in table 3 and figure 2 above show the participants’ points of view. They indicate high percentages in "strongly agree and agree" options representing “(45.68%) and (44.4%)” respectively. So, these high percentages reflect a positive trend for the statement and all answers are agreeable. Therefore, this statement was successfully achieved.

Table 4: Much training of the Qur’anic Tajweed influences students to try the same thing in English reading for mastering this skill.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	28	35.44%
Agree	41	51.9%
Neutral	5	6.33%
Disagree	3	3.8%
Strongly disagree	2	2.35%
Total	79	100%

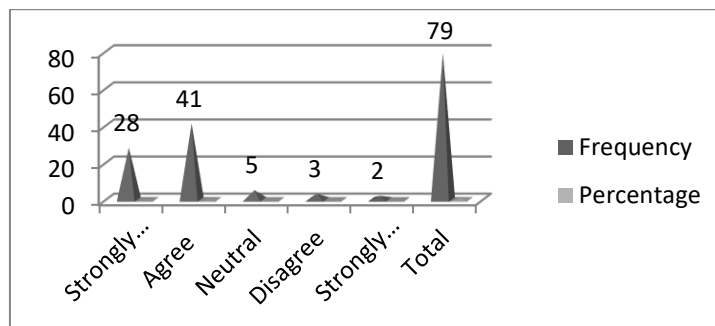


Fig. 3: Much training of the Qur’anic Tajweed influences students to try the same thing in English reading for mastering this skill.

Results in table 4 and figure 3 above show the participants' points of view. They indicate high percentages in "strongly agree and agree" options representing "(35.44%) and (51.9%)" respectively. So, these high percentages reflect a positive trend for the statement and all answers are agreeable although some participants did not choose any option. Therefore, this statement was successfully achieved.

Table 5: Some Qur'anic Tajweed rules (e.g., velarization (heaviness) and tarqeeq (thinness) help pronouncing some English letters (e.g., L)

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	36	46.15%
Agree	26	33.33%
Neutral	8	10.26%
Disagree	8	10.26%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	78	100%

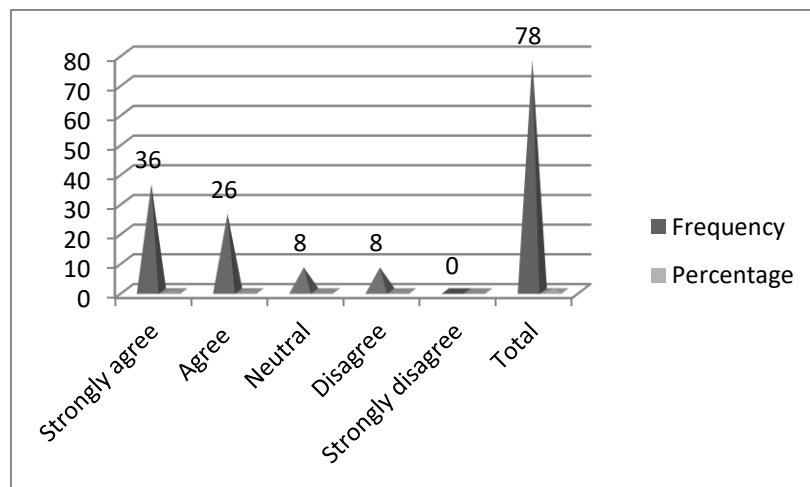


Fig. 4: Some Qur'anic Tajweed rules (e.g., velarization (heaviness) and tarqeeq (thinness) help pronouncing some English letters.

Results in table 5 and figure 4 above show the participants' points of view. They indicate high percentages in "strongly agree and agree" options representing "(46.15%) and (33.33%)" respectively. So, these high percentages reflect a positive trend for the statement and all answers are agreeable although some participants did not choose any option options. Therefore, this statement was successfully achieved.

Table 6: Wider inclusion of Arabic phonemic system (34 phonemes) than that of the English one (44 phonemes) facilitates reading in English.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	14	17.28%
Agree	34	33.33%
Neutral	27	41.98%
Disagree	5	6.17%
Strongly disagree	1	1.23%
Total	81	100%

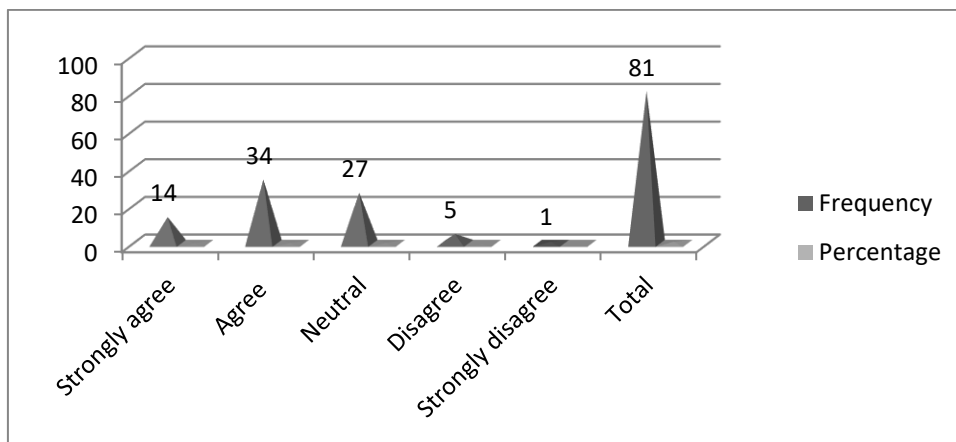


Fig. 5: Wider inclusion of Arabic phonemic system (34 phonemes) than that of the English one (44 phonemes) facilitates reading in English.

Results in table 6 and figure 5 above show the participants' points of view. The total of the first and second options representing "(17.28%) and (41.98%)" respectively indicates the highest percentage. So, this percentage reflects a positive trend for the statement and all answers are agreeable although a few participants might not understand the statement very well or they did not come across the number of the Arabic phonemes or the English one or both of them. However, this statement was successfully achieved.

4. Findings

The present study found out that:

1. Qur'anic *Tajweed* has a positive impact on English language reading skill.
2. More practising for sound production helps mastering reading skill.

5. Recommendations

This study recommends to:

1. Make use of the rules taught in *Tajweed* since they have benefits in English reading skill.
2. Review how to articulate letters because this thing has a great effect on English reading skill.

6. Bibliography

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