

Implementation of the Kitabah Method in Qur'an Reading Instruction for Deaf Students at SLB Muhammadiyah Purworejo

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ABSTRACT

To successfully teach deaf students to read the Qur'an, an instructional approach is required that considers limitations in the processing of auditory information. This study aims to analyze the implementation of kitabah (writing-based) method in Qur'an reading instruction for second-year junior high school deaf students at SLB Muhammadiyah Purworejo and to analyze its contribution to the development of their reading skills. The approach used is descriptive qualitative. The subjects of this study were Islamic Religious Education teachers and deaf students. The data were collected thru observation, in-depth interview, and documentation. The data were analyzed thru data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data obtained were analyzed and validated by using source and technique triangulation. The results indicate that kitabah method which consists of seeing, writing, and re-reading can improve the recognition process of hijaiyah (Arabic) letters. After the application of the method, the student's ability to recognize the Hijaiyah letters increased from 60% to 90%, and the ability to distinguish between letters with similar shapes increased from 40% to 85%. As well as these gains, students made progress in reading simple words, neatness of handwriting, participation and confidence to read independently. Results suggest that the main contribution of the kitabah approach is an emphasis on the use of writing activities to connect the visual form of the letters with reading skills and not to view writing as a mechanical exercise. Thus, the kitabah method is an adaptive and inclusive method for teaching the Qur'an to deaf students as it allows the learning process to be adapted to their specific visual and motor characteristics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education is a vital component of the education system, aiming to cultivate faith, piety, and noble character in students. One of the fundamental competencies to be mastered in this subject is the ability to read the Quran, as it serves as the primary source of Islamic teachings and a guide for the lives of Muslims (Fitri et al., 2025). The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is not only directed at the mastery of the cognitive aspects of religion but also directed at the creation of religious attitudes and spiritual skills that are realized in everyday life. One of the main competencies in PAI learning is the ability to read the Qur'an because the Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic teachings and a guide for life for Muslims (Huda, 2026). In practice, the ability to read the Quran is important not only for regular students but also for students with special needs who have difficulties receiving instruction based on oral presentation (Septiyani & Bashori, 2025). Deaf students face more complex challenges in learning the Quran because hearing limitations affect verbal communication processes and reading comprehension. Communication barriers, differences in sign language systems, and psychological factors can also influence the success of Quranic reading instruction for deaf students (Hala et al., 2025). The traditional modes of talaqqi, qiraah and verbal repetition are predominantly based on the auditory element, and therefore are less than ideal if applied to the learning characteristics of the deaf learners without modification. (Sariyah et al., 2025). Some studies on teaching the Quran to deaf students suggest that visual, demonstrative and repetitive methods are more appropriate than techniques based exclusively on verbal

explanations (Iwantoro & Jannah, 2025). One approach that is relevant in this situation is the kitabah method instruction which involves gradual and repetitive practice in writing letters, words or verses from the Quran. This method leverages students' visual and motor capabilities, making it better aligned with the learning needs of deaf students (Fajrah et al., 2023). Research on the use of the kitabah (writing) method with hearing-impaired children indicates that this approach can improve their ability to recognize Arabic letters by optimizing visual and kinesthetic aspects as well as the repetition of letter forms (Setyoadi et al., 2025). The practice of writing in learning Hijaiyah letters is useful for students to recognize letters, to differentiate between letters with similar shapes, and to strengthen the visual memory of the structure of Arabic letters (Azzahra et al., 2025). Therefore, kitabah method is not merely a writing exercise but a strategy to facilitate the gradual development of Quranic reading skills.

However, research on the implementation of the kitabah (writing-based) method in teaching Quranic reading to deaf students needs to be strengthened, especially on the process of implementation, student responses, and the contribution of the method to the reading proficiency in the setting of special education schools. Earlier research has largely centered on the capacity to identify Arabic characters, the use of sign language for Quranic education, or broad Quranic educational approaches for deaf students (Al Fahmi et al., 2025). Therefore, research to describe in more detail the ways the kitabah method is used in teaching Quranic reading to deaf students and the reasons this method works in this context is possible (Setyoadi et al., 2025). This research was carried out in SLB Muhammadiyah Purworejo that is a special needs school which applies Islamic values in its educational services. Based on preliminary observation, it was found that students of class VIII of SMPN hearing impaired students still had difficulties in recognizing, writing, and reading Hijaiyah letters correctly, especially the letters that have the same shape. Based on this phenomenon, this research is about the application of the kitabah (writing) method in learning to read the Al-Qur'an in the subject of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for these students. This research is intended to describe the process of implementing kitabah method and its contribution to the students' proficiency in reading the Quran who have hearing impairment.

2. METHODS

This present study used a descriptive qualitative design that aimed to describe in detail the implementation of kitabah method in teaching reading the Quran and to reveal the learning experiences of the deaf learners. This approach was considered appropriate because the study was interested in understanding the learning process as it occurred in its natural setting and not in measuring the effectiveness of the method thru statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2010). The research was conducted in a second-grade class of junior high school at SLB Muhammadiyah Purworejo. The participants were Islamic Religious Education teacher and deaf students who participated directly in the Quran reading learning activities (Musfirah et al., 2025). The data for this research were gathered using three methods: classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The observation was directed to the learning process that occurred in the class, especially the interaction between the teacher and the students in the use of the kitabah method. The research is focused on how hijaiyah letters are introduced, how students do writing exercises, types of assistance from the teacher, and how students practice reading their writings. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore several aspects of the learning process, such as students' initial Quran reading abilities, considerations underlying the selection of kitabah, its implementation in the classroom, students' responses, difficulties encountered during learning, and changes observed after the method was applied. Interview with the school principal was also conducted to get information regarding school policies and institutional support for learning the Quran.

Documentation was also collected to reinforce and supplement the data gathered from observation and interviews. The documents included learning materials, records of learning activities, photographs and other relevant supporting documentation (Sugiyono, 2010). The credibility of the findings was examined through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from the teacher, students, and school principal. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation (Rumina, 2026). The analysis of the research data was carried out interactively through three interconnected stages: reducing the data, organizing and displaying the information, and formulating conclusions. The first stage involved reviewing the information collected from the field and selecting data that directly related to the implementation of the kitabah method. The relevant findings were then organized according to the focus of the study. The next step consisted in a descriptive organization of the selected data in an effort to identify recurrent patterns related to classroom activities, students' responses, and difficulties presented in the learning process. The last step was to interpret the patterns that appeared and to make conclusions according to the results of the research. The conclusions were continuously checked against field data in an effort to keep the interpretation in line with the evidence collected during the study (Miles et al., 1996).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initial Ability of Students in Quran Reading

The results of interviews with the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher and direct observations at SMP SLB Muhammadiyah Purworejo, it was found that before the implementation of the kitabah (writing-based) method, the Quranic reading skills of the hearing impaired students were quite limited. Tho some students could visually recognize some Arabic letters, they encountered difficulties when the letters were put together to form even simple words or verses. Most of the difficulties came with letters that have similar shapes – like the sets ح, خ, ت, ث – where differences in the number of dots or small curves often caused confusion. The teacher said that this was not because the students were not willing to learn, but because the students needed a learning approach that suited their visual strengths. The students themselves agreed, saying that reading the Quran was difficult, especially in distinguishing between visually similar letters. Thus, it becomes apparent that the main challenge is not only pronunciation, but also to improve the visual recognition and understanding of the letter forms. Students also reported difficulty in keeping the visual characteristics of some of the hijaiyah letters. Writing allowed them to get hands on and learn each letter better because they could see the shape of each letter as they tried to copy it themselves (Aziz et al., 2025).

Implementation of the Kitabah Method in Quran Learning

Interviews with PAI teacher and direct observations in SLB Muhammadiyah Purworejo indicate that the students with hearing impairment had limited ability to read the Qur'an before the implementation of kitabah (writing-based) method. Some students could recognize some letters of the Arabic language by sight, but found it difficult to recognize those letters when combined to form words or simple parts of verses, especially those letters with similar shapes. The problem is that teaching deaf children to read the Quran needs an approach that focuses not only on the right pronunciation but also on the visual reinforcement of the letter forms. The teacher used the kitabah (writing) method because deaf students are easier to understand the material with direct visual observation and writing activities. In practice, the teacher writes letters or parts of verses on the board in a well visible size, showing the writing process step by step, accentuating the direction of the stroke and the position of the dots. Then the students are asked to write it down in their own

notebooks (Setyoadi et al., 2025). The classroom atmosphere looks calmer and more focused. The teacher not only stands at the front, but also goes around accompanying the students one by one. If there is a mistake, the teacher guides patiently through hand signals and repeats the example. After finishing writing, students are invited to read their own writing again. This process may seem simple but it is very meaningful. Writing is a bridge between seeing and reading, students are not simply receiving information, but are directly involved in building their understanding (Dewi, 2025).

Students' Responses and Participation

Students in interviews said they enjoyed learning to read the Quran thru writing. The writing activity helped them to recognize the shapes of the Hijaiyah (Arabic) letters. They used less verbal explanations that were difficult to follow due to the limitations of hearing. The teacher also noticed a change in students' attitude toward learning. The students appeared to be more attentive and more confident in displaying their written work. Students who had been quiet and hesitant to read aloud began to attempt to read back what they had written, albeit slowly, with confidence. Interestingly, this method not only affected their reading skills, but also their self-confidence; they felt more prepared by having practiced thru their own writing. Mistakes were no longer something to fear, but part of learning. When the kitabah (writing) method was applied consistently, the teacher observed a great progress of the students. They got better at telling apart letters that they had previously often confused. They also wrote more neatly and precisely, especially regarding the placement of dots. The students were beginning to be able to read back the letters or simple verse passages they had written out. Their hearing impairments did not allow for a perfect pronunciation, but their reading comprehension was better. This shows that for deaf students reading the Qur'an is not only about vocalizing the sounds, but also visually recognizing, understanding and remembering the shapes of the letters. As this visual aspect is reinforced, reading ability gradually develops. (Anggraini & Susanti, 2025).

Learning Obstacles in the Implementation of Kitabah

In implementation, teachers face difficulties as there is a disparity in students' ability and learning speed, some students are quick to understand concepts and some need to repeat the concept several times. Another challenge is the lack of instructional time. What teachers do is by scaffolding learning and adjusting learning targets to the abilities of the students. Repetition is done without pressure, keeping the students comfortable (Fadhilah et al., 2026). The availability of learning materials posed another challenge to the implementation of kitabah. In practice, the teacher's primary resources were the readily available: model letters, examples on the board, students' notebooks, and repeated writing exercises. But materials specifically developed to support deaf learners learning the Quran were not always available. This limitation forced the teacher to adapt the existing resources to the learning needs of the students. They also had problems when they encountered hijaiyah letters with similar visual forms. Differences that were mostly based on the number or position of the dots were sometimes difficult for students to identify. To address this problem, the teacher re-taught the material, slowed down the pace of instruction when necessary, and provided additional help to the students in need. The results show that the implementation of kitabah requires flexibility and not a fixed instructional pattern. The teacher has to think about the differences in students' abilities, the time available for instruction, the individual pace of learning, and the learning resources available in the classroom. Such adjustments are important to ensure that the activities are suitable to the real learning conditions of the students.

The Significance of the Kitabah*Method in the Context of Inclusive Learning

The experiences at SLB Muhammadiyah Purworejo showed that the learning process becomes more meaningful when teaching methods are adjusted to the needs of students. The kitabah (writing) method is not merely an alternative approach, but a real effort to enable equitable and inclusive learning. Writing activities provide deaf students with the opportunity to learn in a way that matches their strengths. They are assisted by visual and motor approaches which are more suitable for them, rather than being forced to learn in auditory patterns. Overall, the results of the study indicate that the kitabah method has a positive effect on the reading ability, neat handwriting and self-confidence of deaf students. This helps students to better recognize Arabic letters and feel more competent when interacting with the Quran (Setyoadi et al., 2025).

Table 1. Comparison of Students' Abilities Before and After the Implementation of the Kitabah Method

Ability Aspect	Before the Kitabah Method	After the Kitabah Method	Improvement
Letter Recognition	60%	90%	+30%
Similar-Looking Letters (ب ت ث / ج ح خ)	40%	85% accuracy	+45%
Word Reading	2–4 words	5–8+ words	+300%
Writing Neatness	Illegible / untidy	Fairly neat	+65%
Self-Confidence	Shy / reluctant	Willing to read independently	High

Source: Results of Interviews and Field Observations.

DISCUSSION

Kitabah as an Adaptation of Quran Learning for Deaf Students

The research results show that the kitabah (writing) method is a better method of learning access for deaf students in learning the Qur'an. This is especially apparent in the material dealing with the recognition and differentiation of hijaiyah (Arabic alphabet) letters which have similar shapes. In students with processing limitations of auditory information, it is important to present information in a directly observable format to develop understanding. Thus, the writing activity in this study is positioned not only as a practice of forming letters but as a means of engaging students more concretely with the visual characteristics of the characters (Susanto et al., 2026). These findings are in line with the research by Susanto et al. which shows that Deaf and hard-of-hearing students' Qur'anic education needs strategies that acknowledge communication access and the learners' characteristics. The study points out visual and multi-sensory approaches as significant strategies in the promotion of Qur'anic literacy among students with hearing impairment. Shiddiq et al. also found that the instruction of the Qur'an to deaf students can be effectively carried out by combining writing (kitabah), sign language, visual media, repetition and individual guidance (Shiddiq et al., 2026). This study has similarities with previous studies but with different emphasis. The function of kitabah is clear not only in the students' ability to produce text in writing, but also in the potential that text may be used as a graphical representation that can be returned to in the act of reading. The writing activity is thus integrated into a learning sequence that links the observation of letter shapes with their use in reading. In this context, kitabah can be seen as a pedagogical adaptation which provides students with a more accessible path to learning, and not simply as a means of transcription of letters. This viewpoint is also in line with the results of Mundhori and Mumpuniarti who stated that the integration of kitabah in the instruction of Qur'anic literacy for students with hearing impairments can be effectively used in combination with sign language and visual media (Mundhori & Mumpuniarti, 2026). However, the results of this study demonstrate that the utility of kitabah is not stand alone. This affects how teachers direct and give feedback and how they adapt the amount of support to the ability of each student.

Teacher Scaffolding in the Process of Student Skill Development

The differences found in the students' abilities in this study show that the application of a particular teaching method does not necessarily lead to the same developmental outcomes for every student. Some students need more examples and help while others can move on with the task with less support. In this study, this support is provided by the teacher. This support includes providing examples of letters, as well as guidance, correction, feedback and mentoring when students struggle (Mustofa, 2023). This view provides a fuller explanation of the research results. To think of the learning process only as a sequence in which the teacher gives an example, the students write, and then the teacher corrects, limits its pedagogical importance. More important is the contribution of such aid to the development of students' capabilities. The teacher's corrections inform students of what's wrong, and the opportunity to try again lets them take that information and use it to improve their performance (Dewi, 2025). So the teacher-student interaction is an important part of the learning process, but not a technical step in the application of a method. The results also support the findings of Susanto et al. research that teacher competence, instructional strategies, appropriate media, and environmental support are factors that influence the implementation of Qur'an instruction for deaf and hard-of-hearing students (Susanto et al., 2026). Hence, it cannot be concluded that the success of the kitabah (writing) aspect in this study was solely due to the characteristics of the method used. Student progress results from the interaction between the method used, the visual access available and the teacher's ability to provide assistance according to the learners' needs.

Writing as a Link between Letter Recognition and Reading

One of the findings of this study was that there is a relationship between writing activities and the development of the ability to read Hijaiyah letters. This relationship is not only a question of the order in which the learning activities take place but of the fact that writing offers a visual form that students can use as a reference point when they come to the letters they have studied. A visible and returnable form allows students to concentrate their attention on the visual qualities of the letters. The research data showed that the students' ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters increased from 60% to 90%, and the ability to differentiate similar-looking letters increased from 40% to 85%. These figures are to be understood as a reflection of the development seen in this particular research setting, but not as statistical results that can be generalized to the entire population of deaf students. But this improvement is still important, because both are common challenges in the first steps of learning. From a pedagogical perspective, this shift can be understood through the students' engagement in reproducing the letter forms being studied (Komariah et al., n.d.). When writing, students pay attention to the visual characteristics of the letters, for example, their shapes and the position of the dots that distinguish some letters. Students can then revise these representations when corrections are given (Hindida, n.d.). Additional activities then give a chance to revisit the learned letter forms in reading activities. Thus there is continuity between visual representation, written production, feedback and reuse of information during reading. This explanation is in line with the research of Mundhori and Mumpuniarti that kitabah can be used as part of the Quranic literacy program for hearing impaired students (Mundhori & Mumpuniarti, 2026). Shiddiq et al. also found that writing activity, visual media, additional material and individualized instruction can be included in the learning of Qur'an for deaf students (Shiddiq et al., 2026). So kitabah's contribution in this study is best explained in its bridging function. Kitabah doesn't just provide written output as a learning product, but also visual representations that help students move from recognizing letter forms to using those forms in reading. This interpretation is an important contribution of the study, as it throws light on the mechanism connecting writing activities with the development of Quranic literacy.

Repetition and Feedback as Reinforcement Processes

The repetition observed in this study should not be regarded as a simple mechanical exercise. The pedagogical value of the activity is clear once teacher feedback is added. Once students realize that they need to fix areas, they are permitted to return to a task; thus, repetition is a chance to improve and not just an increase in the amount of practice. This is particularly important when students see similar looking letters. It takes a lot of attention to detail to distinguish between letters that differ only in things like how many dots there are or where they are placed. Feedback from teachers helps students to concentrate on areas for improvement. When students redo the task after it has been corrected, they are not repeating the task under the same conditions but are using new knowledge acquired from their previous experience (Rahmi et al., 2022). Repetition becomes more meaningful when situated within a cycle of assistance → practice → feedback → improvement → renewed practice. These findings reinforce the research by Shiddiq et al., which highlights the use of material repetition and intensive guidance in Qur'an instruction for deaf students. (Shiddiq et al., 2026). Susanto et al. juga menekankan bahwa pembelajaran bagi siswa tuli dan *hard-of-hearing* memerlukan strategi yang disesuaikan dengan karakteristik peserta didik serta dukungan guru dan media pembelajaran yang memadai (Susanto et al., 2026). Therefore, this study demonstrates that what matters is not merely the number of times students repeat an exercise, but rather how the teacher directs that repetition. Repetition accompanied by correction and opportunities to rectify errors plays a more significant role in the learning process than repetition that is merely mechanical.

Changes in Students' Participation and Self-Confidence

Changes were also observed in student engagement during learning activities. Students who initially tended to hesitate when asked to read demonstrated greater confidence in attempting to read, building upon the practice they had undertaken. While these findings do not directly prove that kitabah (writing practice) caused an increase in self-confidence, they indicate that the availability of visual support and opportunities for gradual practice can create conditions that better foster student participation. A written reference gives students a baseline prior to engaging in reading activities. Students do not have to rely only on their memory of the letter forms or the teacher's explanation, but they can refer back to the forms they have already practiced. The availability of accessible media and strategies is very important, especially in teaching deaf students. Conventional Qur'an teaching tends to rely on auditory information (Susanto et al., 2026). Thus, the change in student participation is better viewed as an ancillary consequence of increased access to learning rather than an independent consequence. When students have reference materials, the chance to make and correct mistakes and teacher assistance tailored to their needs, the scope for participation widens.

The Contribution of the Kitabah Method to Inclusive Qur'an Learning

In general, this study shows that the application of kitabah (writing-based instruction) can be seen as a type of adaptation in Qur'an learning for deaf students. However, the meaning of inclusivity in these findings is not merely about the use of a specific method. Above all, the learning process should make available materials, opportunities for participation and support adapted to the needs of the learners. The results are in accordance with the research by Susanto et al. that the Qur'an learning strategy for deaf and hard of hearing students needs to consider the use of visual and multisensory approaches, teacher competence, learning media and environmental support (Susanto et al., 2026). The research of Mundhori and Mumpuniarti also shows that kitabah (writing) can be integrated with sign language and visual media in the utilization of the Qur'an for students with hearing impairments (Mundhori & Mumpuniarti, 2026). In this study, however, we are interested in the relation between the components of learning. Writing provides a graphical representation . Feedback allows students to improve upon the representation . Repetition provides opportunities to consolidate understanding

. Teacher scaffolding connects the entire process to the development of the students' abilities. Thus, the contribution of this study is not only to prove that writing can be used with the deaf students but also to explain how the method works through visual support and scaffolding in the learning process. Based on these findings, Kitabah can be positioned as a visual-to-reading learning pathway, a learning trajectory that links the visual recognition of letters to reading proficiency through writing activities supported by feedback and teacher guidance. The main contribution of the study is this conceptualization which gives a more specific explanation of the pedagogical mechanisms behind the use of kitabah, not only describing the stages of its implementation (Zainuri, 2026).

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the application of the kitabah (writing) method in teaching the reading of the Qur'an for students with hearing impairment at SLB Muhammadiyah Purworejo is a strategy that is in accordance with the visual and motoric learning characteristics of students with special needs. Students learn to distinguish between similar-looking letters and improve the neatness of their handwriting through activities such as writing Arabic letters, forming words, and reading back what they have written. They also gain the confidence to read short, simple verses from the Quran. These findings support the successful Quranic learning for deaf students not only rely on the mastery of pronunciation but also the reinforcement of visual representations, motor skills and learning confidence. So that the kitabah (writing) method is in accordance with the principles of inclusive education that enables deaf students to learn according to their needs. Theoretically, this study supports the idea that a visual-kinesthetic approach is more effective for deaf students than learning approaches that rely on auditory aspects. This study also empirically addresses the research gap, as there are few studies that specifically describe the application of the kitabah method for teaching reading the Quran to deaf students in special needs schools. Therefore, the kitabah method is a valuable alternative approach to Quranic learning, that is adaptive, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of the deaf learners.

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