

Instructional Interactions Based on Peer-Assisted Learning in Classical Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Learning

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Abstract

Large-class Qur'an memorization instruction requires learning interactions that provide sufficient opportunities for listening, repetition, and feedback. This study examined the implementation of *peer-assisted learning* (PAL) through reciprocal *tasmi'* in whole-class Qur'an memorization (*tahfidz*) instruction at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bondowoso, focusing on peer interaction, perceived contributions to recitation accuracy and memorization maintenance, and supporting and constraining factors. A qualitative case study involved seven informants: one Head of the Religious Program, two *tahfidz* instructors, and four male students from Class XI A1. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of the *tahfidz* curriculum, lesson plans, and *mutaba'ah* records, and analyzed through condensation, coding, categorization, data display, and conclusion drawing. Three findings emerged. First, reciprocal peer *tasmi'* functioned as a preliminary quality-control mechanism before teacher validation. Second, peer encouragement, repeated *muroja'ah*, and parental supervision formed a complementary support system for maintaining memorization fluency. Third, limited independent *muroja'ah*, differences in memorization pace, and competing academic demands affected weekly target consistency, prompting adaptive use of collective *muroja'ah*. These findings position PAL not as a substitute for the *tahfidz* teacher, but as a classroom-management mechanism that distributes listening and feedback opportunities in large classes. Given the qualitative, single-site, and non-comparative design, the findings reflect perceived contributions and implementation dynamics rather than causal evidence of PAL effectiveness or statistically verified improvements in long-term memory.

Keywords: *Peer-assisted learning, Reciprocal tasmi', Qur'an memorization, Peer learning, Muroja'ah.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Qur'an memorization (*tahfidz Al-Qur'an*) in formal educational institutions requires instructional management that addresses not only the quantity of memorized material but also the accuracy and maintenance of students' memorization (Moh. Abdullah et al., 2026). From a cognitive perspective, memorization involves encoding, consolidation, retrieval, and repeated rehearsal, all of which contribute to the maintenance of information in long-term memory (Azzahra et al., 2026). The quality of this process is influenced by the learning strategies employed during instruction (Batool et al., 2022). Accordingly, effective *tahfidz* instruction should provide students with sufficient opportunities to rehearse previously memorized verses, identify recitation errors, and receive appropriate feedback so that memorized material can be maintained over time (Rea et al., 2022). Within this context, *muroja'ah* (systematic review of memorized verses) and opportunities to recite memorization to others become important components of the instructional process.

In formal educational settings, whole-class instruction is frequently used because it allows teachers to manage relatively large numbers of students within limited instructional time and classroom resources (Jin & Peng, 2022). However, applying this model to *tahfidz Al-Qur'an* presents particular challenges because Qur'an memorization requires individual recitation, careful listening, and corrective feedback (Zainuri et al., 2026). A teacher working with a large class may have insufficient time to listen to each student individually and provide detailed correction within a single lesson (Wahyuni & Handriani, 2025). Differences in students' memorization pace and recitation proficiency further complicate this situation. Students who require additional repetition may receive fewer opportunities for individualized attention, while teachers must simultaneously maintain collective learning targets and monitor the quality of recitation across the class (Boulaares, 2026). Thus, a central instructional challenge lies in reconciling the efficiency of whole-class organization with the individualized listening and feedback required in *tahfidz* learning.

One approach that may address this challenge is the integration of *tasmi'* with *peer-assisted learning* (PAL). PAL organizes students to support one another through structured peer interaction rather than relying exclusively on teacher-directed instruction (Avci, 2024). In the context of *tahfidz, tasmi'*, which involves reciting memorized Qur'anic passages while another person listens attentively, can be organized reciprocally among students (Rahman et al., 2025). In this arrangement, students alternate between the roles of reciter and listener, allowing them to rehearse memorized passages and receive immediate peer feedback before presenting their memorization to the teacher. Such an arrangement transforms a predominantly teacher-centered interaction into a more participatory learning structure in which listening and feedback are distributed among members of the class (Grøndahl Glavind et al., 2023). Peer interaction may therefore provide additional opportunities for students to identify recitation errors, repeat difficult passages, and prepare their memorization before formal teacher validation (L. Li et al., 2025).

Previous studies have examined *tasmi'* and related strategies in *tahfidz Al-Qur'an* learning. Much of this literature has focused on *tasmi'* as an individual memorization-deposit activity between students and teachers or on its implementation in relatively small groups within Islamic boarding-school settings (Nasri & Mulyohadi, 2023). Other studies have investigated factors associated with Qur'an memorization, including learning motivation and memorization progress, using quantitative approaches. However, relatively limited attention has been given to how reciprocal peer interaction is systematically incorporated into the management of whole-class *tahfidz* instruction in formal madrasah settings (R. Li & Lin, 2025). In particular, existing studies provide limited explanation of how peer-based *tasmi'* is organized within a large class, how responsibilities for listening and feedback are distributed between teachers and students, and what conditions support or constrain its implementation (Butarbutar, 2025).

This limitation is important because introducing peer interaction into *tahfidz* instruction involves more than simply asking students to listen to one another. The instructional process requires clear organization of peer roles, procedures for correcting recitation, repeated *muroja'ah*, and subsequent teacher validation. Its implementation may also be influenced by differences in students' memorization pace, willingness to conduct independent review, academic workload, and support beyond the classroom. Without appropriate instructional organization, whole-class *tahfidz* learning may provide insufficient opportunities for individual recitation and feedback, which may affect students' engagement and consistency in maintaining their memorization (Rahma, 2025). Examining PAL in this context is therefore important for understanding how peer interaction can be structured as part of classroom management rather than treated merely as an informal supplementary activity.

This instructional practice is evident in the *tahfidz Al-Qur'an* program at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bondowoso. The program combines whole-class instruction with reciprocal peer *tasmi'* as part of students' memorization activities (Anwar Dwi Maulana et al., 2025a). Within this setting, students work in peer groups and alternately recite and listen to memorized passages before teacher validation. The practice creates an instructional structure in which students with different memorization progress participate simultaneously in listening, correction, and repeated *muroja'ah*. Its implementation also extends beyond classroom interaction because students' memorization practices may be influenced by parental supervision at home, independent review habits, differences in memorization pace, and competing academic demands. MAN Bondowoso therefore provides a relevant bounded case for examining how peer-based *tasmi'* operates within the organizational constraints of formal whole-class *tahfidz* instruction.

Against this background, the present qualitative case study examines how *peer-assisted learning* is organized through reciprocal *tasmi'* in whole-class *tahfidz Al-Qur'an* instruction at MAN Bondowoso. Specifically, the study focuses on the structure of peer interaction during *tasmi'*, participants' perceptions of its contribution to recitation accuracy and the maintenance of memorization, and the factors that support or constrain its implementation. By examining these dimensions, the study seeks to provide a contextual understanding of PAL as a classroom-management mechanism that distributes opportunities for listening, repetition, and feedback without replacing the teacher's role in validating students' memorization. The findings are expected to inform the organization of large-class *tahfidz* instruction in formal educational settings while

providing empirical insight into the implementation dynamics of structured peer interaction in Qur'an memorization learning.

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the implementation of *peer-assisted learning* (PAL) through reciprocal *tasmi'* in whole-class *tahfidz Al-Qur'an* instruction at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bondowoso (Xue & Li, 2026). Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the *tahfidz* program (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). Seven informants participated in the study: one Head of the Religious Program, two *tahfidz* instructors, and four male students from Class XI A1 who actively participated in peer *tasmi'* groups. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis (Njeri Mugwe & Runo, 2026). Observations focused on peer-group organization, reciprocal *tasmi'*, peer correction, *muroja'ah*, and teacher involvement during whole-class instruction. Interviews explored participants' experiences and perceptions regarding peer interaction, recitation accuracy, memorization maintenance, and factors supporting or constraining the implementation of PAL. Documentary data included the local *tahfidz* curriculum, lesson plans, and students' *mutaba'ah* memorization records, which were used to complement and contextualize the observational and interview data.

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative procedures of data condensation, coding, categorization, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Zhang et al., 2023). Initial codes from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were organized into broader themes concerning the structure and function of reciprocal peer *tasmi'*, support for maintaining memorization, and factors constraining the consistency of *tahfidz* learning. Descriptive-analytical matrices were used to compare patterns across participants and data sources (Wu, 2024; Calderai-González et al., 2026).

The credibility of the findings was strengthened through method and source triangulation. Evidence from observations, interviews, and documents was compared across the Head of the Religious Program, *tahfidz* instructors, students, and relevant instructional records. This process was used to identify convergence and differences across data sources before the final themes and conclusions were established.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

Before presenting the thematic findings on instructional interactions, the characteristics of the informants are briefly described to clarify their roles within the *tahfidz* program. Pseudonyms and informant codes were used to protect participants' confidentiality. The seven informants consisted of one Head of the Religious Program (Informant 1/IR, male, eight years of service), two *tahfidz* instructors (Informant 2/YS, male, five years of service; Informant 3/BL, male, six years of service), and four male students from Class XI A1 who actively participated in peer groups (Student A/AR, Student B/HF, Student C/MR, and Student D/HH). Analysis of observations, interviews, and documents generated three interrelated themes concerning the structure of peer interaction, factors supporting the learning process, and barriers and adaptive strategies in implementing reciprocal *tasmi'*.

1. Patterns of Peer-Assisted Instructional Interaction in Whole-Class Tahfidz Learning

Field observations showed that the *tahfidz Al-Qur'an* program at MAN Bondowoso combines whole-class instruction with structured peer cooperation. Within the large classroom setting, students do not merely receive one-way instruction from the teacher (Kara & Tekindur, 2025), but are organized into small groups according to similarities in their memorization pace and achievement (*ability grouping*). Peer interaction is primarily organized through reciprocal *tasmi'* (*simak-simakan*). Students alternate between the roles of reciter and listener, while their peers follow the recitation, identify errors, and provide immediate correction, particularly regarding *makhraj* and *tajweed* (Hinayah, 2024). This peer-based activity functions as a preliminary checking stage before students individually

present their memorization to the *tahfidz* instructor for final validation. Informant 2 (YS, *Tahfidz* Instructor) described this procedure as follows:

"In this classical setting, with more than thirty students in one big classroom, it is practically impossible for me to listen to each student from the beginning. Therefore, we structured the class into peer dyads or small groups. They must perform reciprocal tasmi' first. A student cannot come to my desk for the final deposit unless their peer partner has signed their slip, indicating that the reading is clean from tajweed errors."

The student perspective was consistent with the instructor's account. Student A (AR) explained that the reciprocal checking process encouraged greater attention while listening to peers:

"The peer checking system forces us to be highly focused. When my group partner recites, I must carefully look at the Al-Qur'an to spot any misplaced vowel or prolonged recitation. We correct each other immediately, so when we finally queue up at the teacher's desk, we feel more confident and less nervous."

Document analysis further supported the observed structure. The local *Tahfidz* Curriculum and Lesson Plan (RPP) formally allocated a specific period for reciprocal peer *tasmi'* following the morning *tausiyah*. The RPP designated a 45-minute session for "Peer-Assisted Reciprocal *Tasmi'* and Simulation." Taken together, the observation, interview, and documentary evidence indicates that reciprocal *tasmi'* is not merely an informal peer activity but is structurally incorporated into whole-class instruction as a preliminary checking mechanism before teacher validation.

2. Factors Supporting the Learning Process

Observations and interviews identified support from both the peer environment and the family as important factors in the implementation of reciprocal *tasmi'*. Within the classroom, peer groups created a sense of positive competition that encouraged students to prepare their memorization and maintain progress alongside their classmates (Najari, 2025). Student B (HF) described this peer influence as follows:

"Seeing my classmates in the group progressing smoothly and consistently hitting their targets makes me feel left behind if I slack off. There is an unspoken competition in the group, but it is a healthy one. It pushes me to prepare my verses thoroughly before coming to school."

Support also extended beyond the classroom. Interviews indicated that parental encouragement and supervision contributed to students' preparation before participating in *tasmi'* at school (Ilahy et al., 2025; Abdumajidov & Kozimbekovna, 2025). Students were encouraged to conduct independent *muroja'ah* at home, including through the use of digital *murattal* audio (Syafrinal, 2025). Informant 1 (IR, Head of the Religious Program) explained the relationship between home preparation and school-based activities:

"The efficiency we achieve in the classical class is highly dependent on what happens at home. We have established a firm understanding with the parents. School hours are for validation and peer-testing, while the initial retention consolidation must take place at home under parental supervision."

This account illustrates a division of learning responsibilities between home and school. Initial memorization and independent *muroja'ah* are primarily conducted at home, whereas classroom time is used for reciprocal listening, correction, repetition, and teacher validation. The *mutaba'ah* records further showed that home-based review formed part of the monitoring process. Thus, the implementation of reciprocal *tasmi'* was supported by an interconnected system involving peer encouragement at school, repeated *muroja'ah*, parental supervision, and teacher validation.

3. Instructional Barriers and Mitigation Strategies

The findings also revealed several barriers affecting students' consistency in achieving weekly memorization targets. One frequently reported internal challenge was reduced motivation to conduct independent *muroja'ah*. Students reported that memorized passages became more difficult to recall when they were not reviewed regularly. This difficulty was compounded by competing academic demands, as students had to divide their time between general academic assignments and *tahfidz* targets. Student C (MR) described this challenge:

"Our biggest challenge is when the assignment load from general subjects like physics or mathematics peaks. We lose our concentration and track of time for independent muroja'ah at night, which directly leads to forgetfulness when we undergo the peer tasmi' session the next morning."

Differences in memorization pace constituted another challenge. Some students were able to prepare memorization relatively quickly, whereas others required substantially more time. Informant 3 (BL, *Tahfidz* Instructor) described this variation:

"The learning pace variation is highly evident in a classical setup. While high-achieving students can consolidate a page in fifteen minutes, lower-paced students struggle with half a page. This causes a bottleneck during individual deposits."

The *mutaba'ah* records were consistent with these accounts, showing lower fluency and reduced completion of weekly memorization targets during periods of increased general academic demands, particularly around midterm and final examinations. Rather than indicating a uniform pattern of memorization progress, these records illustrated fluctuations associated with students' competing academic responsibilities. Teachers responded to these conditions by adapting the use of whole-class instructional time. When several students experienced difficulty meeting their targets, individual memorization deposits were temporarily reduced and greater time was allocated to collective *muroja'ah* (Alfiyanto et al., 2025). Student D (HH) described this adjustment:

"When the teacher notices from our mutaba'ah books that many of us are falling behind due to exam week, the individual deposits are temporarily halted. The classical hour is shifted entirely into a collective muroja'ah where the fast-paced students lead the recitation, helping the rest of us regain our memory stability."

These findings indicate that collective *muroja'ah* functions as an adaptive instructional response when independent review decreases or academic demands interfere with students' regular memorization progress. Rather than maintaining identical instructional procedures throughout the semester, teachers adjust the balance between individual deposits, peer *tasmi'*, and collective review according to students' observed progress.

Table 1. Analysis of Supporting Factors, Barriers, and Mitigation Strategies in Whole-Class Reciprocal Tasmi'

No.	Instructional Dimension	Field Findings	Observed/Perceived Implications	Mitigation/Reinforcement Strategies
1	Internal supporting factor	Positive competition within peer <i>tasmi'</i> groups	Encouraged students to prepare and maintain memorization progress	Group organization based on comparable memorization pace
2	External supporting factor	Parental supervision of <i>muroja'ah</i> at home	Supported preparation before classroom <i>tasmi'</i>	Use of <i>mutaba'ah</i> records and parental monitoring
3	Internal barrier	Reduced motivation for independent review and variation in memorization pace	Inconsistent achievement of weekly memorization targets	Teacher guidance and adjustment of peer-group activities
4	Academic/curricular barrier	Competing demands between general subjects and <i>tahfidz</i>	Reduced time for independent <i>muroja'ah</i> and difficulty recalling memorized passages	Allocation of whole-class sessions for collective <i>muroja'ah</i>

Taken together, Table 1 shows that the implementation of reciprocal *tasmi'* is shaped by the interaction of classroom, individual, and family-related factors. Peer-group interaction and parental supervision support students' preparation and continuity of *muroja'ah*, whereas reduced motivation for independent review, differences in memorization pace, and competing academic demands contribute to inconsistencies in weekly target achievement. The findings also indicate that these barriers are addressed through adaptive instructional practices, particularly adjustments in peer-group organization, teacher guidance, parental monitoring through *mutaba'ah* records, and the use of collective *muroja'ah* when individual progress declines. Thus, reciprocal *tasmi'* operates within a broader support system rather than as an isolated peer activity, with its implementation depending on coordination among students, teachers, and families.

B. Discussion

The findings reveal that the implementation of peer-assisted reciprocal *tasmi'* in whole-class *tahfidz* learning is shaped by interconnected instructional, social, and individual factors. Rather than functioning merely as a peer-based recitation activity, reciprocal *tasmi'* operates within a broader instructional system involving peer interaction, teacher validation, home-based *muroja'ah*, and parental support. At the same time, differences in memorization pace, independent learning routines, and competing academic demands influence the consistency of its implementation. Accordingly, the discussion is organized around three interrelated aspects: the role of Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) in whole-class instruction, tripartite collaboration in supporting memorization maintenance, and learning barriers viewed from the perspective of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL).

1. Efficiency of Peer-Assisted Learning in Whole-Class Instruction

The findings on reciprocal *tasmi'* among students at MAN Bondowoso indicate that limitations related to instructional time and teacher-student ratios in whole-class *tahfidz* learning can be addressed through structured peer interaction. Pedagogically, the reciprocal listening and correction activities are consistent with the principles of *Peer-Assisted Learning* (PAL) and peer assessment, which emphasize learning through social interaction and collaborative support (Fungamwango Hashel Mwansa, 2023). From a sociocultural perspective, more fluent students can provide scaffolding for their peers by helping identify errors in *makhraj* and *tajweed* before memorization is formally presented to the *tahfidz* instructor (Bamford et al., 2022). Importantly, this does not position peers as substitutes for teachers; rather, peer interaction functions as a preliminary checking mechanism before teacher validation.

This structure provides a practical response to the challenges of managing large classes. Distributing listening and corrective activities among peers allows multiple students to participate simultaneously instead of waiting individually for teacher feedback, thereby increasing opportunities for active engagement (Wilkins et al., 2023). In this context, whole-class instruction, which can otherwise become predominantly teacher-centered, is reorganized into a more participatory learning environment through reciprocal *tasmi'* (Wang et al., 2025). The present findings therefore extend previous discussions of *tahfidz* learning management by showing how peer-based preliminary checking can be incorporated into formal classroom procedures while final validation remains under teacher supervision (Anwar Dwi Maulana et al., 2025b; Hauk & Gröschner, 2022). Rather than demonstrating causal effectiveness, the findings illustrate how PAL can redistribute listening and feedback functions within a large formal *tahfidz* classroom.

2. Tripartite Collaboration in Supporting Memorization Maintenance

The interaction among *tahfidz* teachers, peer groups at school, and parental supervision at home indicates that maintaining Qur'anic memorization is embedded within a broader social support system (Taufikin et al., 2025). The findings suggest a tripartite pattern in which teachers organize and validate learning, peers provide reciprocal listening and immediate feedback, and parents support independent *muroja'ah* outside school. This

pattern is consistent with the view that collaboration among teachers, students, and families can provide complementary forms of support for students' learning processes (Muslim et al., 2026). Motivation and encouragement provided by teachers, peers, and parents may further contribute to students' willingness to maintain regular memorization practices (Alhebaishi et al., n.d.).

This finding extends previous studies that have primarily examined *tasmi'* as a method implemented within the school setting (Tasmim, 2025). In the present case, the use of digital *murattal* audio and parental supervision of *muroja'ah* demonstrates that preparation for reciprocal *tasmi'* also occurs outside formal classroom hours. This arrangement shares some characteristics with flipped learning, in which preparatory activities occur before formal classroom interaction (Tazhenova et al., 2024). However, the present findings should not be interpreted as evidence that home preparation directly produces long-term memory retention. Rather, participants perceived regular home-based *muroja'ah* as important preparation for peer listening and teacher validation at school. The *mutaba'ah* record further connects these learning environments by documenting students' memorization activities and progress. Thus, the findings highlight the importance of coordination between school-based and home-based practices in sustaining the implementation of whole-class *tahfidz* learning.

3. Learning Barriers and Self-Regulated Learning

Reduced motivation for independent *muroja'ah*, difficulties recalling previously memorized passages, differences in memorization pace, and competing academic responsibilities emerged as important barriers to maintaining consistent weekly targets (Immanuel & Ike, 2025). These findings can be interpreted through the perspective of *Self-Regulated Learning* (SRL), particularly students' capacity to organize time, maintain learning routines, monitor progress, and regulate effort independently. Regular retrieval and repetition are important for maintaining previously learned material, whereas insufficient independent review may make recall more difficult (Seban & Urban, 2024). The lower fluency and target completion recorded in *mutaba'ah* documents during examination periods further suggest that competing academic demands may interfere with students' regular *muroja'ah* routines (Rabbani et al., 2025).

The findings also demonstrate how peer and teacher support can compensate, at least temporarily, when students experience difficulties in maintaining independent learning routines. Peer groups provide opportunities for reciprocal monitoring, encouragement, correction, and repeated practice (Mandelid et al., 2026; Hladik et al., 2024). When several students fall behind their memorization targets, teachers adapt the instructional arrangement by allocating more whole-class time to collective *muroja'ah* rather than maintaining individual deposits as the primary activity (Aufa et al., 2024). This adaptive response suggests that PAL in formal *tahfidz* education serves a broader function than correcting pronunciation errors alone. Within this case, peer interaction also operates as a social support mechanism that helps students sustain participation and review practices when individual learning routines are disrupted by differences in memorization pace or competing academic demands.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study shows that peer-assisted reciprocal *tasmi'* at MAN Bondowoso functions as a structured pre-deposit mechanism in which students listen to, correct, and rehearse one another's recitation before final verification by the *tahfidz* instructor. Within a large whole-class setting, this arrangement provides additional opportunities for attentive listening, immediate peer feedback, and preparation for teacher assessment. The implementation is supported by an interconnected system of independent *muroja'ah*, peer encouragement, parental supervision, and teacher monitoring, but becomes less consistent when independent review declines, academic demands increase, or students differ substantially in memorization pace. In response, teachers adapt classroom activities by strengthening collective *muroja'ah*. Given the qualitative, single-site, and non-comparative design, these findings should not be interpreted as evidence of PAL's causal

effectiveness in improving long-term memory. Rather, the study contributes a context-specific model of *tahfidz* instruction in which peer interaction redistributes preliminary listening and correction while final validation remains under teacher authority. Future studies should quantitatively examine memorization outcomes and investigate the accuracy, equity, and sustainability of peer correction across different *tahfidz* learning contexts.

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