Pondok Learning Methods in Developing Students’ Nonverbal Politeness

Siti Saniah Abu Bakar¹, Dahlia Janan², Alizah Lambri³, Nurul Rafina Ruzuwan⁴

¹,²,³ Department of Malay Language and Literature, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris saniah@fbk.upsi.edu.my, dahlia@fbk.upsi.edu.my², alizah@fbk.upsi.edu.my³, nurul.rafin15@gmail.com⁴

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Abstract: Studying in the pondok institution is increasingly gaining ground in the society because this institution has produced many generations of students who have deep religious knowledge and high moral rectitude. Hence, this study was carried out to: (i) identify the methods practised by the teachers at the pondok learning institution in producing students who are polite in terms of nonverbal aspects and (ii) analyse the students’ acceptance of the methods employed in the pondok institution in shaping nonverbal politeness of the students. Phenomenological approach was used to explore the teaching and learning methods used in the pondok institution. Data were obtained through observations and interviews. The founder, teachers and students of one of the pondok institutions in Alor Setar, Kedah were selected as the study’s respondents. Findings of the study show that three methods of teaching are practised in the pondok learning institution, namely the tafaqquh method, the talaqqi method, and the itqan method. Through these three methods, the pondok teachers instilled good manners and shaped the students into polite students who are modest in their dressing, courteous, obedient and well-mannered while learning. This study also shows that the teaching methods practised in this pondok institution are well received by the students. It is evident that the teaching methods used in this pondok institution are able to develop the students’ nonverbal politeness. The effectiveness of these methods warrants the integration and implementation of these methods in the mainstream education system so that the characteristics of these nonverbal politeness can be applied in the daily schools which are presently lacking in terms of politeness values.

Keywords: Teaching method; PONDOK learning; polite language; nonverbal politeness; Malay language

1. Introduction

The arrival of Islam to Malaya in the 15th century AD created a system of education among the Malays. At first, the community only received education based on culture and in the form of skills, aimed at meeting the needs of daily living. Schools for Al-Quran recitation were then introduced to the Malay children. For the adults, religious teachings were conducted at home, surau (place of worship smaller than a mosque), and mosques. Later, a formal form of Islamic education was established which is more known as the pondok institution. This pondok learning institution (pondok) was one of the most important mediums at the time in the development of knowledge, especially in Islamic sciences (Masyhurah Mohamad Rawi, Harun Baharudin, Maimun Aqsha Lubis & Siti Aisyah Romli, 2015).

The latest development in the pondok system of education is that it is increasingly gaining a place in the hearts of the community, not only in Malaysia, but also in Indonesia and Thailand. This is because these pondok institutions have produced thousands of students to the point that there exists a generation of students who has profound religious knowledge, has memorised the Al-Quran, is skilled in the Arabic language, and is competent at preaching (da’wah). To date, more than 281 pondok schools are registered with Pondok Development Foundation of Malaysia (YPPM). According to Abdul Munir Ismail and Nurul Farhana Abdul Samat (2014), the influence of the pondok education system on the development of Muslims’ moral character is at a high level. Students of pondok learning institutions are not only virtuous but are also successful in life and have an honourable place in the society.

There are several traditional teaching methods in the pondok learning institutions such as the talaqqi learning tradition (learning from a teacher face to face), the values of tafaqquh (profound and refined) and itqan (perfection of action) in the student as well as the activities of munazorah (debating) and mujadalalah (dialogues) (Mashitah Ibrahim, 2015). Aminah (2013) mentioned that good values are instilled in the students in all aspects of their daily life in the pondok through levels of transformation, transaction and transinternalisation. Mastery of knowledge about values based on the Al-Quran and As-Sunnah is carried out through the learning activities in the class by using the teaching methods which are adapted to the materials delivered or presented.

Nevertheless, one of the problems faced by the world of education is the dearth of values education (Fatah Syukur, 2007) to the point that it resulted in the society no longer practising polite language (Noor Hatini Zolkifli & Siti Saniah Abu Bakar, 2011; ZaifulAzma Zainol Hamzah, 2012). AinulNuriman (2015) even remarked that the present generation perceives language politeness as an ancient value that is incompatible with current developments and that this generation is less sensitive to the use of polite language. Generally, it can be
said that communication impoliteness will occur when a speaker uses a variety of spoken forms that are impolite and that can threaten as well as contribute to negative effects on the listener’s image (Mansor, Mamat, Che Omar & Ahmad Ghazali, 2014). In fact, there are a number of religious teachers who have behaved uncivilly in locutionary acts that students then imitated or followed (Zainal, Mohd Sharif, Abdul Rahman & Mydin, 2019).

This situation will undermine the formation of a civilised and ethical society as enshrined in our fifth National Principle (Rukan Negara) which is courtesy and morality. The National Education Philosophy that aims to produce Malaysians who are knowledgeable, competent, virtuous, responsible, and capable of achieving personal well-being as well as contribute to the harmony and prosperity of the family, society and the nation will be undermined if this situation is not addressed immediately. Thus, a detailed study is needed to examine the types of teaching methods practiced by the pondok institutions in developing language polite students, focusing on the aspects of nonverbal politeness.

2. Studies Related to Language Politeness

In general, the aspect of language politeness has been extensively studied by previous researchers. However, the focus of these studies has been mainly on politeness in terms of the verbal aspect. Accordingly, research concerning language politeness in relation to nonverbal aspect among students and its relationship with the teaching methods used in educational institutions is still limited.

According to Awang Sariyan (2007), language politeness refers to the use of good, courteous, civilised language, exemplifying virtuous character and showing respect during conversations. The enculturation and usage of language that is characterised by politeness can certainly produce a courteous society (Beden & Zahid, 2016). The language in question is not only in terms of the oral or written aspect, but also involves the body movements of the individual and elements of symbolism. In other words, language politeness can be divided into two, namely verbal politeness and nonverbal politeness. This verbal interaction politeness is the use of good language, the selection of courteous words, or polite intonation which are used in the interaction with other interlocutors. Meanwhile, nonverbal politeness refers to the use of body language, facial expressions and body movements during conversation.

In general, nonverbal interaction means interaction that only uses body movements and gestures as the communication tool with others without using any words. Nonverbal interaction involves body movement, posture of the body and facial expression that are intended to deliver the communication in a more profound manner. These body parts play a very important role in nonverbal interaction. Body movement in terms of the aspect of politeness during interactions can be seen in various different parts of the body such as the hands, head and feet. For example, when a person uses the right hand in giving or receiving something, this is considered politeness in nonverbal interaction. Giving or receiving something using the left hand is considered impolite. Additionally, facial expression is also very important in communicating a message. This is because the face or its expression can convey a person’s emotion.

Za’ba (1950) wrote about values in Malay behaviour and ethics in the Journal of the Malayan Branch. Za’ba discussed the concept of conversational politeness and voice control. According to Za’ba, a person is considered as impolite if he or she shouts or raises his or her voice, talks too much and indulges in self-praise. In addition, Za’ba also discussed politeness in terms of actions. Za’ba remarked that politeness is not just about using language alone. He gave several examples of actions and behaviour that are well-mannered and polite. Among these are the practice of handshaking, presenting a smiling face, sitting in an orderly and likeable manner, entertaining guests by serving them food, bowing or bending the upper body slightly when crossing in front or behind others as well as using the thumb when wanting to show or point at something. The use of polite language will not be complete without these polite behaviours.

In addition, Sujud, Salleh and Nik Muhamad Affendi (2007) conducted a study titled Verbal and Nonverbal Language as a Reflection of the Society in Malay Novels. The novels examined were Putera Gunung Tahan by Ishak Haji Muhammad, Julia by Abu Hassan Morad, Konserto Terakhir by Abdullah Hussain, and Seteguh Karang by Tuan Faridah Syed Abdullah. Based on the study, it can be concluded that language is a communication medium that is not only limited or confined to the verbal forms alone. Statements that are nonverbal in nature can also serve as channels to convey and express one’s meaning as well as thinking. Each time verbal interaction is interweaved between two parties, unknowingly this interaction will also involve nonverbal interaction, namely actions or gestures, eye movement, changes in body posture, and facial expressions. Consciously or otherwise, these actions and gestures that are projected or displayed are added to complement the actual conversational situation.
Clearly, this situation shows that nonverbal language communication plays an important role in the everyday human life. This is because verbal and nonverbal politeness are indeed interrelated and dependent on each other. Previous studies that have been carried out did not discuss much about nonverbal politeness. Hence, this study focused on nonverbal politeness.

3. Objective

This research was carried out to:

1. Identify the methods practiced by the teachers at the pondok learning institution in developing the students’ nonverbal politeness.
2. Analyse the students’ acceptance of the methods adopted by the pondok learning institution in developing their nonverbal politeness.

4. Methodology

This study was carried out with the purpose of identifying the teaching methods practised by the teachers at the pondok learning institution and analysing the students’ acceptance of these methods. Therefore, the most appropriate research design for this study is phenomenological research design. Othman Lebar (2009) explained that phenomenological approach is a theoretical framework that emphasises the study of how daily experiences influence and shape human behaviour. It involves how humans interpret and give meaning to things or events that they experience and go through in their daily lives. Thus, this phenomenological study was based on the research process of the researcher’s exploration of the experiences that have been built in the teachers and students at the pondok institution.

Qualitative study which involved field study design and literature review was employed. Hence, the data collection process was carried out using observation and interview method. The data obtained were then stored in the form of audio recording, visual recording and field notes. The pondok institution selected as the study location is one of the pondok institutions in Alor Setar, Kedah. This study involved respondents that included the founder of the pondok (mudir), 9 teachers as well as 9 male and 6 female students.

Open coding technique was used to analyse the data. Coding was carried out as a way of forming categories which were obtained from the observation and interview data and developed from the literature review, and these were subsequently linked to each other until they formed a description of the phenomenon being studied. Later, in the final stage, data filtering technique, data coding and summary were carried out to report the final data of the study and subsequently provide answer to the research questions that emerged.

5. Findings and Discussion

Methods Practised by the Teachers in Developing Students’ Nonverbal Politeness

Based on the observations and interviews at the study location, it was found that this pondok institution practised several methods of teaching including the talaqqi, itqan and tafaqquh methods. Additionally, the methods practised by the teachers at this pondok institution have managed to influence the nonverbal politeness of the students.

The Talaqqi Method

Based on the observations, the learning system that is implemented at the pondok institution combined good traditional methods and beneficial modern methods. One of them is the talaqqi method. The traditional talaqqi method is a method of teaching that features all the students sitting in front of the teacher irrespective of their level of study and the age of the students. In addition, the traditional talaqqi method does not use any intermediary tools except for the religious books or kitab (Sedek bin Ariffin, 2009). However, several factors have led to the integration of the traditional talaqqi method with the modern talaqqimethod at this pondok institution. These factors are attributable to the differences in the level of study and the age of the students at the pondok learning institution.

The traditional talaqqi method practised at the pondok is carried out during the umummi (general) class which is conducted at the mosque. This umummi class involves all students regardless of the students’ gender, age and level of study. The students will sit in a halaqat form (circular) in the mosque to listen to the lecture from the
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teacher in charge. The teacher will read the book in Arabic and review it in the Malay language. Additionally, the *talaqqi* method in the pondok institution at the study location has also been modernised by carrying out the method in the class based on the students’ level of study.

This pondok institution also separates the male and female students during the teaching and learning session. During the umummi class, the male and female students would gather in the mosque, but the male students would be sitting in front and the female students would be sitting in the rear part of the mosque. During the teaching and learning session in the class, the male students would be learning in the class with the teacher similar to the normal practice in schools.

In contrast, the female students would be in their own class and would only hear the voice of the teacher from the male students’ class via a loudspeaker. Previously, the female students could see their teacher through the video that was connected from the male students’ class; however, the video got damaged and the female students therefore could only hear the audio. The *talaqqi* method implemented in the class features a teacher who would be sitting in front of his students while going through the book or the *kitab* and the students who would be sitting in front of their teacher with the book to be studied as well as a notebook to write additional notes. Apart from using a notebook, the students would also use the method of *dobekkitab*. This method involves the students writing notes on the pages of their religious book while listening to their teacher reading from the book. The following is a picture of a students’ religious book where the *dobekkitab* method was employed:

![Figure 1.DobekKitab](Writing of notes on the pages of the book studied)

Additionally, based on the observations carried out, the researcher found that the students would get ready at their respective place before the lecture or class began by sitting cross-legged and facing their teacher. The students would sit properly without being told and get ready to begin their teaching and learning session. This is evident based on the analysis of the pictures below which show the male and female students who were sitting in an orderly manner and getting ready to start the teaching and learning session:
The findings based on the pictures showed the male students from the class of 2 *Dakwah* and the female students from the *Mutawassit* 2 class were in their respective classes and sitting cross-legged in a proper and polite manner while listening to the lecture delivered by the teacher despite the fact that the female students were listening to the teacher’s voice through the loudspeaker only. Data triangulation through analysis of the field notes also revealed the same situation. The following is an excerpt of the notes written in the field notes during the observation.

The notes in the field notes showed that the female students were sitting in an orderly manner even though they were having a teaching and learning session without the teacher in front of the class. This situation is considered polite in nonverbal interaction as stated by Za’ba (1950), in that sitting in such an orderly manner is one of the examples of good and polite behaviour and conduct. Za’ba mentioned that courtesy is not merely the
use of language alone and that goodmanners would not be complete without being accompanied by courteous behaviour. Clearly, this shows that the talaqqi method has influenced the nonverbal behaviour of the students in the pondok institution studied.

The talaqqi method is also an exceptional teaching method even during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). According to Al Buti (1991) and Mohd Yusuf (2000), the history of the talaqqi method in the teaching and learning of the Al-Quran began when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was retreating in solitude and worshipping in the cave of Hira’. The talaqqi method can be seen in the story of the angel Jibril (AS) and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the event in the cave of Hira’ when the Al-Quran was first revealed. In the event, the angel Jibril first recited the verses of the holy Quran and was listened to by the Prophet (PBUH). Then, the Prophet (PBUH) imitated the recitation while being watched by Jibril (AS). After that, the Prophet (PBUH) memorised the verses and subsequently recited them to his companions. His companions then imitated the recitation of the Prophet (PBUH). This story clearly shows that the talaqqi method is a method that requires the student to be face-to-face with the teacher in seeking the knowledge the student wishes to learn. In addition, the talaqqi method also influences a person’s language politeness because the method requires the student to sit facing his teacher.

This pondok institution certainly prioritises manners while learning. Therefore, the teaching methods practised in this pondok greatly instils learning etiquettes or manners between students and teachers. This matter was commented by the pondok’s mudir or founder during the interview conducted.

“...so pondok if it does not emphasise manners it is not pondok. That is why there is one book on manners that cannot be left out. Must be taught here, guiding light of the students.”

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The talaqqi method practised can indeed instil politeness in the students and the teachers. In short, the pondok places great importance on manners to the extent that everyone who lives in the pondok is required to practice good manners and politeness. In addition, nonverbal politeness can be seen in the talaqqi method as these students were dressed modestly, cleanly and covered their aurah (body parts that must be covered in public except the hands and face) while in class or in the pondok area. Dressing modestly, covering up the aurah, and being clean are also in keeping with the personality of Imam Malik. When Imam Malik was delivering and teaching the Prophet’s (PBUH) hadiths to others, he would always be in ablution (wudu), put on clean clothing and wear perfume (Habib Ali Zaenal Abidin Al-Hamid, 2017).

The male and female students dressed according to the rules set by the pondok learning institution. The attire of female students is black coloured robes and hijab (head covering scarf or veil). Meanwhile, male students wear baju Melayu (a traditional Malay attire for men) or robes together with kain pelikat (a kind of male sarong) and serban (Muslim man’s headdress of a scarf wound round a skull cap). The following is an excerpt from the field notes based on observations noted by the researcher during the umummi class at the mosque:

![Image](CNL5/L2/KS/04052017)

**Figure 5.** Notes in the Field Notes on Students Dressing Modestly

The students were dressed modestly and appeared neat and clean during the conduct of the teaching and learning process. The students followed the dress code that has been set by the pondok institution. This situation can also be seen in the following pictures:
Based on the researcher’s observation at this pondok, the male and female students were always in neat, polite, modest and clean clothing that covered their aurah the whole time they were in the area of the pondok institution. Figures 6 and 7 above show the male and female students wearing neat, modest and polite clothing while going through the talaqqi method in class. Even though the female students went through the talaqqi method in their hostel without the teacher, these students still adhered to the clothing etiquette or dress code that has been set. This shows nonverbal politeness in terms of clothing. Sibarani (2004) stated that politeness in dressing is a way of dressing that is appropriate according to the circumstance and situation. There are two things that need to be highlighted in terms of politeness in dressing: firstly, dressing modestly in public and secondly, dressing neatly and appropriately to the situation.

In addition, based on the observations and interviews conducted, the researcher also found that nonverbal politeness was also demonstrated in terms of the students’ behaviour. While carrying out the talaqqi method in class or in the mosque, the female students who were sleepy would get up and would continue to stand to overcome their sleepiness. These students would also warn and caution other friends who appeared sleepy and ask them to stand up as well. This is to show respect to their teacher so that no students would fall asleep in the class while the teacher was teaching.

Nevertheless, this situation only applies to the female students. This is because the female students would be sitting at the rear of the mosque in the female section during the umummi class in the mosque. Therefore, there is a partition between the Muslim male and female section in the mosque. As a result, female students can stand up if they feel sleepy. The following is a picture taken during the observation while the umummi class was conducted:
Based on the picture in Figure 8 above, it is evident that several students were standing up while listening to the lecture from their teacher. These students were aware that the action of sleeping in class is a disrespectful behaviour towards their teacher and shows a lack of manner. As a result, there were several students who controlled their sleepiness by standing up while listening to the lecture. In addition, excerpts from the researcher’s field notes for the dawn (subuh) lecture also illustrated a similar situation, and the excerpts from the field notes are as follows:

The annotations in the field notes in Figure 9 indicated that there was a student who was sleepy, and her friends started to alert or warn the student by caressing her. After that, the sleepy student was seen pinching herself to overcome their sleepiness. However, the student was then seen standing up to overcome her sleepiness without being asked by anyone. This action can be linked to nonverbal politeness in terms of behaviour because these students minded their manners while learning.

Moreover, the interview carried out with a teacher also revealed that this situation is common in this pondok institution where the students would take their own initiative to stand up because this conduct or good manner has been instilled in the students since the first year of their study. The following is a transcription of the interview conducted with the teacher:

“By the third year, I see that I no longer need to go for tahajud (night) prayers with them, no longer need to gocongregate with them. Because there are elder sisters (female senior students) who would take care of them and there is self-initiative where those who are sleepy would immediately stand up. That I have instilled in them from the first year we opened (the school). Can carry on doing all these things even among those who have graduated from here. Can still carry on doing the things we instilled since the first year.”

TB/L2/G4/06022017

Additionally, when the researcher carried out observations for the second visit to the umummi class during the dawn lecture, there were also some male students who appeared sleepy in the class. The students were reproached by the teacher by way of the teacher spraying water on the students. There were also students who
took their own initiative by asking for the spray bottle from the teacher to wash their face with the water to avoid sleepiness. Excerpts from the researcher’s field notes also demonstrated the situation, as shown below:

Figure 10. Notes from the Field Notes on the Umummi Class during the Dawn Lecture

Additionally, there was also a teacher assigned to wake up the male students who were asleep during the *umummi* class in the mosque. The following is a picture of the situation that shows a teacher who was assigned to wake up the male students who were sleepy or who fell asleep in class:

Figure 11. A Teacher Reproaching Students Who were Asleep or Sleepy

Based on the researcher’s observation, the teacher would use the *rida’* cloth (a piece of long cloth or shawl usually draped over the shoulder) to awaken the students who were sleepy or who fell asleep in class. Nevertheless, this situation would only occur among the male students.

In general, the *talagqi* method is a traditional pondok teaching method that is practised at all pondok institutions. Clearly, the *talagqi* method which is adopted at the pondok can influence students’ language politeness in relation to the nonverbal aspect. Nonverbal politeness that can be observed from the *talagqi* method practised at this pondok was demonstrated in several ways such as the students sitting in an orderly manner, dressing modestly and covering their *ihraruh* as well as standing up when feeling sleepy to show respect to the teacher who is teaching.

The *Tafaqquh* Method

The *tafaqquh* method is a process in which a student pursues the knowledge delivered by the teachers in earnest. This method requires the students to pay attention in class, ask questions and understand the knowledge as well as practice it. This description is consistent with the findings of a study carried out by Shuhadak Mahmud and Ibno Azli Ibrahim (2014) where they stated that the *tafaqquh* process will occur if the student approaches his
teachers and ask questions as well as have discussions to deepen his understanding of the knowledge delivered by his teachers.

Based on the observations and interviews conducted at this pondok institution, the researcher found that the students who did not understand something that was taught in class would immediately meet with the teacher to ask for further clarification. Once the teaching and learning session was over, the students who lacked understanding would meet with the teacher to ask questions related to the book they had discussed earlier in class. Hence, the tafaqquh method is practised in this pondok when the students approach their teachers to gain better understanding and in-depth knowledge.

The tafaqquh method practised has certainly managed to instil nonverbal politeness in the students. This is because the students’ etiquette and good manners with the teachers while carrying out the tafaqquh method could be clearly observed. During the teaching and learning process in class, the students would not ask any questions to their teacher. They would only ask questions when asked or the students would meet with the teacher once the class was over. The students regard asking questions while the teacher explains something as ill-mannered behaviour. This was mentioned by a student (P11) in the interviews conducted. The following is an excerpt from the interview transcript:

“Like having no manners. Not polite at all. Ustaz is giving a lecture and we keep putting up our hands to ask questions.”
TB/L3/P11/09042017

Accordingly, the students would not ask questions to their teacher throughout the teaching and learning session out of respect for their teacher who was delivering the lecture. This situation can also be associated with the story of Imam Malik who was bitten by a scorpion while reciting the Prophet’s (PBUH) hadith to the extent that he looked pale. However, Imam Malik did not stop and continued reciting the hadith. Once the teaching was over, Imam Malik said that he patiently endured the pain of the bite so that the hadith that he was reciting would not be interrupted (Habib Ali ZaenalAbidin Al-Hamid, 2017). This shows that Imam Malik greatly respected the hadiths delivered by the Prophet (PBUH), and similarly, these pondok students in deferenceto their teacher refrained from asking questions in class so that their teacher’s delivery of the lecture would not be interrupted. Thus, these students would meet with their teacher once class was over or would go to the teacher’s house to gain deeper understanding of the knowledge so as to ensure that the delivery in class progressed smoothly.

Similarly, the female students would also ask questions to their teacher but by means of a piece of paper because female students are not allowed to meet the male teachers who taught them. The teacher would then explain the answers for the questions in the next class. The following is an excerpt of the interview conducted with a student who explained about the tafaqquh method they practised:

“Sometimes we go to ustazah’s house to ask. Or ustazah comes to our hostel. We ask ustazah. Ustaz tells us to ask questions. If ustaz wants to collect the books, Ustaz asks who do not understand, want to ask anything. Write it down and then put it in the book. After that, when it reaches ustaz, ustaz will read it. After that when ustaz comes to class the next week, ustaz will explain it again.”
TB/L3/P1/09042017

Based on the interview, it can be concluded that the students would always put in the effort to approach the teachers in order to gain deeper understanding of something that was not understood. This nonverbal politeness can also be seen when the female students would only write their questions on paper to be given to the male teachers. This indicates that the female students are very polite and maintain their manners with regard to the relationship between males and females. In addition to approaching their teachers, the students would also approach their peers who are at the same level or at a higher level of study. Undeniably, practising the tafaqquh method is really beneficial for every student as they could gain better and deeper understanding of the knowledge taught.

Language politeness in terms of nonverbal aspect that can be seen through the tafaqquh method in this pondok institution was demonstrated when the male students did not ask their teachers questions during the teaching and learning session. They would only meet with their respective teachers to ask questions once the class was over. In addition, some students would go to their teachers’ house that is within the same vicinity of the pondok institution. This shows nonverbal politeness, namely being courteous and well-mannered with the teachers. According Sujud et al. (2007), each time there is verbal interaction between two parties, unknowingly the interaction would involve nonverbal interaction such as gesture, eye movement, and facial expression. All these influenced the politeness of the students when practising the tafaqquh method at this pondok institution.
The *Itqan* Method

The *itqan* method is a method in learning something that is taught diligently and assiduously to acquire knowledge. This method occurs when the students sit around the teacher and the students then diligently listen to each word uttered by the teacher. In the *pondok*, almost all the books that need to be learnt are in the Arabic language which is difficult for the students to understand. Therefore, the teacher has to explain the meaning of each sentence to the students from the front to the back cover of the book.

Based on the observations conducted, the researcher found that the teacher would first recite the parts from the book that he wished to teach to his students. Next, the teacher would ask his students to recite the parts. After that, the teacher would translate the parts from the book into the Malay language. The following is a picture that depicts the male students of *Mutawassit* 2 class diligently learning the knowledge being taught in class.

![Male Students of the Mutawassit 2 Class Diligently Learning while the Teacher was Teaching](image)

Based on the researcher’s observation, the *itqan* method was well implemented in this *pondok* and this method also benefited the students tremendously. The following is a transcription of the interview with one of the teachers who explained about the *itqan* method:

“Before I lecture, I will recite the hadith first, ask them to understand the diacritical markings correctly and the pronunciation of the words so that it is accurate and clear, and I will ask each one to recite. Because they will be able to master the knowledge in terms of recitation, understanding and writing. We want these three things. We don’t want when we lecture, maybe they could not recite. Later, when they have advanced to level 4, when we ask them to read, they could not do so. So, we don’t want that to happen. So, we want, we read and they have to listen and they have to look carefully and give full attention. We want them to understand these three things. The first is recitation, the second is understanding, and the third is writing. I instil these three things.” (G6)

Language politeness in terms of nonverbal aspect that is evident from the *itqan* method was observed when the students would sit in an orderly manner and listen diligently to each word of their teacher during the teaching and learning session. The following is an excerpt from the researcher’s field notes which was taken while carrying out observations in the *Mutawassit* 2 class for the female students:
Based on the observation, the researcher found that the female students would obey the instructions of their teacher who told them to recite the hadith to be studied even though the students were not visible to the teacher. In addition, the students would also take notes based on the explanation provided by their teacher. This clearly indicates that the principle of *sami’ nawaatha’na* (we hear, and we obey) exists in the relationship between the teacher and the students when the *itqan* method is carried out. This is because the students listened to and obeyed their teachers. Therefore, the role of education is not merely to convey the contents of knowledge in any field; it also has the role of developing humans who are virtuous and responsible by going through the process of life and thinking. The process of education also demands a close relationship between the teacher and students (Abu Bakar, 2017).

Moreover, the students at the pondok were also very respectful of their teachers and did not disobey the words of their teachers when the *itqan* method was conducted. The students would always be diligently learning when the method was carried out by giving their full attention and writing down the additional notes delivered by their teacher. Students taking notes when the teacher is lecturing is one of the nonverbal politeness in terms of politeness of behaviour or conduct. The following is a picture showing the students taking notes during class:

Therefore, it is clear that the *itqan* method has influenced the students’ nonverbal politeness. This method has made the students diligently learn while in class, sit in an orderly manner while listening to the teacher’s explanation and take notes of the lectures delivered by their teacher.
Students’ Acceptance of the Methods used in Developing Nonverbal Politeness

Based on the observations and interviews conducted at this pondok institution, the researcher found that the students accepted the methods adopted by this pondok learning institution, namely the talaqqi method, the tafaqqhu method and the itqan method as the methods of teaching practised at the institution.

Students’ Acceptance of the Talaqqi Method

Based on the observations and interviews, it can be seen that the talaqqi method is well received by the students at this pondok institution. The talaqqi teaching method or more known as learning from the teacher methodis carried out through the traditional as well as the modern approach. The traditional talaqqi method is carried out during the umummi or general class at the mosque while the modern talaqqi method is carried out in class similar to the teaching and learning activities conducted in a typical day school.

Throughout the time carrying out observations at this pondok institution, it was evident to the researcher that the system practised here was well received by the students. The following is an excerpt from the interview transcript of one of the male students regarding his acceptance of the system or the methods practised at the pondok institution:

"Because it has its own system, I guess it has its own rules. It’s like not so free. I guess I can follow its system. Because when I was at the taftiz school, I followed its system as well. Because if we come to the pondok to seek freedom, the fear is that they cannot study. That is one thing to be afraid of. It’s true because staying at the pondok, they have freedom, can bring motorcycles and all. True they come to class but sometimes they go to class sometimes don’t. Something like that. I guess here it has its own system, can follow."
TB/L3/P6/08042017

Based on the student’s statement, it is evident that this student accepted the system implemented at the pondok institution. This is because the learning system implemented at this pondok institution has its own rules that have to be abided by each student. Hence, the talaqqi method itself has influenced the students’ nonverbal politeness.

During the observations, the researcher could see that the talaqqi method has influenced the nonverbal politeness of the students when the students were always sitting properly and were ready at their own respective places before the lecture began. This situation was also seen happening in the female students’ class even though they were not sitting face-to-face with the teacher and they could only hear the voice of their teacher through audio alone. The researcher found that none of the students in class were sleeping, eating or chatting with their peers while in class.

Additionally, these female students appeared very comfortable while following the learning session in class. This shows that the students accepted the methods practised at this pondok institution positively. The following are the transcriptions of the interviews with several female students in relation to their acceptance of the talaqqi method adopted at the pondok:

“For me, it’s just normal. Because from the first year did not sit in front of the ustaz. It’s just normal.”
TB/L3/P1/09042017

“Initially, when starting level 1, they have television so we can see the ustaz’s face. But since which year I can’t remember, no television. Feels like not so nice when studying without being able to see the ustaz’s face. After that, we thought, previously the female senior students, how did they study. They too did not see the ustaz. We have to follow their example. After that, put our own effort after that...initially feels a bit difficult but after a while feels quite okay. When the ustaz reads, we dobek (write down the notes on the pages of our book).Ustaz speak, we just write.”
TB/L3/P1/09042017

“That’s a misconduct. Eating and sleeping in class. Cannot do that. When the ustaz is teaching. We must mind our manners. Even if we can’t. Must mind our manners. How we act in front of the ustaz, that is how we must maintain (our manners).” (P1)
TB/L2/P1-P2-P3/04022017
Based on the students’ statements, the researcher can conclude that the learning system or method implemented at this pondok learning institution has managed to educate the students to mind their manners. These students would constantly be reminding themselves and their friends to pay attention to their manners despite not being face-to-face with the teacher. In addition, the students’ statements also show that the talaqqi method practised at the pondok institution is well received by the students. Hence, these students would always abide by the instructions and practise them well without any objections. They also seemed to be very comfortable with these methods.

The talaqqi method of learning has also influenced the students’ nonverbal politeness with regard to the way they dress in that these students were found to be always modestly dressed and covering their aurah when in class or in the pondok area. Based on the observations conducted by the researcher, all the students accepted the dress code that has been set by the pondok institution. The female students wore black robes and black coloured headscarves or veil while the male students wore bajuMelayu (traditional Malay male attire) or robes together with the kainpelikat (a kind of male sarong) and alsoaserban (Muslim man’s headdress of a scarf wound around a skull cap).

The students accepted the rules and they would always abide by the rules when at the pondok institution. In fact, when the researcher carried out the interviews with the students, the researcher found that these students would dress in the same way that they dress while at the pondok institution even when in areas outside the pondok institution or in the village.

“Wear the veil, because already familiar with it. It’s like weird if people see if we don’t wear, feel embarrassed.”
TB/L3/P1/09042017

“Go back home, Istilahwear like this as well.”
TB/L3/P11/09042017

“Yes, at home wear bajuMelayu…Yes, I wear like this also.”
TB/L3/P6/08042017

“Indeed, I wear like this.”
TB/L3/P4/08042017

Based on the statements from the interviews, it is evident that the dress code that has been set by the pondok institution is well received by the students. The researcher found that the students would always dress modestly and would always cover their aurah, and that they practised the dress code irrespective of where they are, whether in the pondok area or areas outside the pondok.

Additionally, the talaqqi method has also influenced the students’ nonverbal politeness in terms of their behaviour or conduct. The female students who were sleepy would get up and immediately stand to overcome their sleepiness. These students would also constantly remind their peers who appeared sleepy to continue paying attention while in class. Based on the researcher’s observations, it can be surmised that the method applied is well received by the female students because they were constantly practising it while in the traditional and modern talaqqi class. The following is an excerpt of the transcription based on the interview with a teacher regarding the situation:

“During the first year, I took care of them. Sleepy stand up, sleepy stand up. I observe each one. After that the female senior students, my committee members, I told them, you don’t just do your work, you look at the way ustazah trains them because after this you will be training them. Entering the third year, see I no longer need to go for tahajjud prayers with them, no longer need to be in congregation with them. Because there are seniors who would take care of them and there is self-initiative where those who feel sleepy would immediately stand up. That I have instilled in them from the first year we opened (the pondok). Can continue with all these things even the ones who have graduated from here too. Can still continue with what we have instilled in them since the first year.”
TB/L2/G4/06022017

Based on the interview, it can be concluded that the teacher has guided and trained the students from the very beginning of their study at the pondok. These students also accepted the talaqqi method practised at the pondok. Therefore, these students were able to take their own initiative without being asked by the teacher. As a conclusion, the students accepted the talaqqi method implemented at this pondok institution favourably.
Students’ Acceptance of the Tafaqquh Method

Based on the researcher’s observation, the students accepted the tafaqquh method implemented at the pondok institution. Although the female students could not see their male teachers, these students still worked hard to gain deeper understanding of the knowledge taught. The following is an excerpt from the interview transcript of a teacher concerning the students’ acceptance of the tafaqquh method:

“Despite not being face-to-face, they can still do it. Sometimes if female students, for my own class that is. She writes, ustaz please repeat. So, I would repeat in the next class. I collect the books, the wrong ones, I correct. And then I don’t mention their names. The ones who got it wrong, please correct it. They have to understand because the ones who got it wrong, they would know who they are. After that if they ask to repeat again, I will repeat because they ask me to repeat.” (G5) TB/L2/G5-G6-G7-G8/05022017

Based on the interview, it can be seen that these students would always try to approach their teacher to gain better knowledge of the lectures delivered. The teacher mentioned that the female students would always put in the effort to ask questions to the teacher even though they could not communicate face-to-face. Hence, the students demonstrated that they embraced the tafaqquh method. This is evident from the achievement of the female students who excelled even though they could not be face-to-face with the teacher during the teaching and learning session. The following is an excerpt from the interview with one of the teachers who stated that the female students outshined the male students even though they could not meet or be face-to-face with the teachers during the learning session in class:

“Female students, have no ustaz, no one. They learn using the speaker. Then the male students, the ustaz is right in front of them but when it comes to exams, number 1 girls 97%, 93%. Number 1 boys 71%. You can see that the boys play about a lot actually. Many of the girls work hard. Ask Iyani, she knows because she takes care of them. But on that point, there are also parents who asked how would the girls study without the ustaz, afraid that they would not pass the exam because they cannot study but when the exam comes, Masyallah. Every year is like that, the girls are more outstanding.” (G10) TB/L3/G9-G10/06042017

This clearly shows that the tafaqquh method practised as a learning method at this pondok institution is well received by the students.

Students’ Acceptance of the Itqan Method

Based on observations and interviews carried out at this pondok learning institution in AlorSetar, the findings show that the itqan method is also well-received by the students. The itqan method is a method of acquiring knowledge that is taught diligently and assiduously to acquire knowledge. The teachers would be using the itqan method when conducting the teaching and learning session to ensure that the students would be able to understand the things learnt. The teacher would first recite from the book and then the teacher would ask the students to recite the excerpts from the book. After that, the teacher would translate and explain the excerpts from the book in the Malay language.

The researcher’s observations when the itqan method was carried out revealed that the male and female students favourably regarded the itqan method practised. The students were attentive while listening to each word uttered by the teacher during the teaching and learning session. The following is an excerpt of the transcript from the interview carried out with one of the female students regarding the itqan method practised at the pondok institution:

“Sometimes we can’t even do other work. Sometimes we cannot hear from the speaker. We consider, now it is this ustaz’s time...cannot do any other work. We really just have to concentrate even though sometimes we cannot hear; we just have to wait until the speaker arrives. That’s what it’s like for those who really want to mind their manners.” (P2) TB/L2/P1-P2-P3/04022017

Based on the interview transcript, it can be concluded that the female student accepted the itqan method practised at this pondok institution favourably even though there were several constraints such as not being able to hear their teacher’s voice through the speaker. Nevertheless, these students still put in the effort to diligently learn the knowledge presented.
The students were also obedient of their teacher’s instructions and did not object when the teacher asked them to do something such as recite the hadiths, practice and take notes. This is because these students have accepted the learning methods adopted at this pondok learning institution. The following is an excerpt of the interview transcript in relation to the students’ acceptance of the itqan method:

“Yes, for myself. Because whatever we learn is actually for our own self. For example, like fardhu ain (religious obligations). Indeed, it is for our own self-improvement. Don’t really want to achieve number one or whatever. Those I put aside first; the most important is I want to learn about religion.”

“The main goal is that the books we study are to bemadeourguidance. That is what I’m seeking.”

Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that these students accepted the itqan method that is practised at this pondok institution. These students believe that this teaching method can help them in learning religious knowledge and in making the books or kitab as a guidance in life.

6. Conclusion

There are five traditional pondok teaching methods, namely the talaqqi method, the tafaqquh method, the itqan method, the munazoroh method and the mujadalah method (Mashitah Ibrahim, 2015). However, findings from the research carried out at the study location revealed that from the five traditional pondok teaching methods, only three methods of teaching were directly practised at this pondok institution, namely the talaqqi method, the itqan method and the tafaqquh method. The mujadalah method and the munazoroh method were not practised at this pondok institution (Abu Bakar, Janan, Lamri & Ruzuwan, 2019).

Based on the findings of this study, nonverbal politeness was demonstrated when nonverbal interaction that involved body movement and facial expression occurred. Meanwhile, for the talaqqi method, nonverbal politeness could be seen when the students were always sitting in an orderly manner, getting prepared before class, standing up when feeling sleepy to show respect for the teacher, dressing modestly and covering up their aurah. In terms of the tafaqquh method, nonverbal politeness was observed when the students did not ask the teacher questions while the teacher was explaining something in class. This is because the students consider asking questions while the teacher is talking an ill-mannered situation. Hence, these students would go and meet their teachers after the class ended.

Additionally, nonverbal politeness demonstrated through the tafaqquh method is also reflected in the manners maintained between the male teachers and the female students. The female students would not meet with the male teacher to ask questions but would write their questions on a piece of paper which is then handed to their teacher. The teacher would then explain the answers to their questions in the following class. Meanwhile, the itqan method has also influenced the nonverbal language politeness of the students when this method managed to make the students at this pondok constantly learn in a diligent manner in class, sit in an orderly manner while listening to the teachers’ explanation and take notes of the explanations delivered by the teacher.

Based on the findings of this study, it is also evident that the students accepted the teaching methods implemented at this pondok learning institution favourably even though the approach used differed between male and female students. The male and female students respectively showed positive acceptance of the teaching and learning methods implemented in class and out of class at this pondok institution. On the whole, all the students appeared to be very comfortable during the learning session at this pondok learning institution.

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