Al-Nabr: Analisis of Quranic Recitation through Spectrographic Method

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Abstract
Al-Nabr is an element in voice intonation related to Quranic recitation that holds implication to the meaning of word recited. Scholars of vocal phonetics and qurra (reciters) have explained on subject of al-nabr through respective fields' perspective. However, incompleteness of recitation by ignoring al-nabr aspect has been connected to recitation error although there is no clear argument on this subject except several general discussions on it. Therefore, to validify the existence of al-nabr recitation dan its practice among reciters then analysis of recitation through spectrographic method was performed on recordings of recitation from authorised reciters. Analysis found that al-nabr recitation is not a practice among the reciters and as a whole explains their practical recitation practice on this al-nabr.

Introduction
Arguments on al-nabr among reciters is anew subject included in books of Tajwid knowledge. Signs on al-nabr recitation practice is not so widespread among past reciters. In fact, it is a discussion that becomes a focus among scholars in Arabic phonetics fiels only. However, recently al-nabr argument begins to be detailed by contemporary fogures of reciters as scholars of Arabic linguistics begin to connect al-nabr element to Quranic recitation.

In phonetics study, Arabic scholars have surpassed western scholars through Quranic phonetics study. Al-Quran al-Karim which has to be recited with certain recitation methods is the main source of phonetics study in Arabic language. Research on properties of vocal discipline named phonetics study has begun to grow in Arabic language through arrival of Islam bringing along the holy book al-Quran al-Karim (Rahman, 2002). Phonetics study is divided into articulatory phonetics, auditory phonetics and acoustics phonetics. Articulatory phonetics discusses on speaking skills using organs and articulatory zones. Auditory phonetics meanwhile describes listening skills to produced sounds. While for acoustics phonetics, it studies transmission of sounds produced by articulatory organs (Zahid

& Omar, 2006). Acoustics phonetics involve three physical features of lingual speech which are pitch, intensity and length (Jalaluddin, 2007).

Scholars of Arabic linguistics (Fikri, 1995; Basir, 2000) have listed suprasegmental aspects that should be emphasised in Arabic speech:

1- Pronunciation of letter, syllable, compound word and sound clearly.
2- Stress (firm or soft).
3- Mora or mad (long or short).
4- Pause (its usage is to separate linguistics elements that can bring change in meaning)
5- Intonation (raising or lowering of pitch)

Voice stress (*al-nabr*) is one of suprasegmental aspects that should be attended in Arabic speaking skills. According to *al-Mu'jam Al-'Arabiy Al-`Assasiy* (1999) *al-nabr* literally means a syllable in word which is the most prominent in speech. According to Ladefoged (1993); al-Khuli (1990); Abdullah (2004) *al-nabr* is stress of the more prominent syllable compared to other syllables in Arabic word pronunciation. The prominence meant is the higher and longer voice strength and also the one most attractive to the listener compared to other syllables in the word. The stressed word also shows higher pitch making it clearer if compared to other syllables in the word. Roach (2009) stated that every stressed syllable in word owns a similar feature which is more prominent compared to other syllables. Prominent voice stress *(al-nabr)* can be measured through several methods, among them are intensity, vowel length, pitch and vowel quality.

Al-Quran is words of Allah S.W.T which is a miracle descended upon Prophet Muhammad S.A.W through intermediary of angel Gabriel A.S. It is written on several mashafs quoted and arranged from authentic narrations and its recitation is considered a worship ritual. Based on unique and 'ijaz (إعجاز) properties of al-Quran, then it is needed for everyone to master several knowledge to perfect the knowledge of Quranic recitation revealed by Allah S.W.T. Al-Quran as known by Muslim community is the greatest miracle inherited from Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Miracles of al-Quran are so wide encompassing all aspects, including linguistics and phonetics aspect that should be unveiled and discovered.

Therefore, qurra have contradicted in views on this subject by three groups which are the one that permits it by most of contemporary qurra', the one that denies it such as Syeikh Al-Sahhabiy and the one in moderate between those two such as Syeikh Ibrahim al-Akhdar (Ahmad, 230:2017).

Issue & Problem
To qurra' permitting it either involving all words or some of them, they believe that reciting without al-nabr is included in category of hidden error (lahn khafiy) with ruling of makruh (al-Attar: 207:2008). As it is connected to one of Quranic recitation forms, then an experimental examination should be performed by analysing qurra's recitations through spectrogram to investigate the extend of their recitation practice regarding this al-nabr.

Definition of al-Nabr
Al-Nabr in *Kamus Besar Arab-Melayu Dewan* (2006 : 2287) is defined as raising or loudening of voice or putting of hamzah at its end or pressure (pressure producing loud voice).

Methodology

This study generally aimed to explore al-abr recitation among qurra' to benefited alongside recent technology. Specifically, this study aimed to analyse al-nabr recitation among qurra' in Quranic recitation through spectrogram application by examining voice stress among qurra' through spectrogram application. Analysis performed was based on recordings of Quranic recitation by four authorised Quranic figures who were Syeikh Dr. Ayman Suwayd, Syeikh Dr. Ali al-Huzaifiy, Syeikh Mahmud Khalil al-Husariy dan Syeikh Mahmud Ali al-Banna. The recitations were specified to the word in qurra's attention such as (وقالا الحمد) verse 15 surah al-Naml and (ذاقا الشجرة) verse 22 surah al-A'raf.
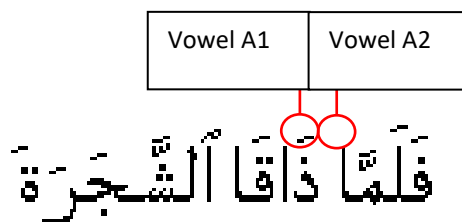
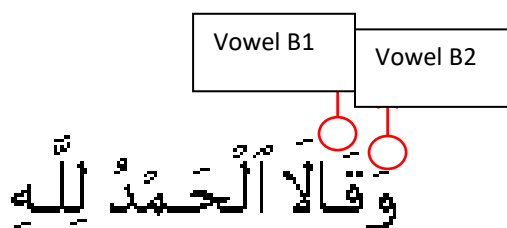Figure 1 Verse 22 surah al-A'raf (first sample)

Figure 2 Verse 15 surah al-Naml (second sample)

The intensities of these samples were measured at vowels which represent the formant area as in Figure 1 and Figure 2, as it is the peak of wave spectrum in voice signal (Subali et al., 2015). The spectrogram used was from Praat software (Version 5.3.56; Boersma and Weenink, 2013). The settings for spectrogram in this analysis are: Dynamic range of 40 Decibles, Window length of 0.025 seconds and View range of 0-5000 Hertz. The samples were opened and analysed from intensity aspect through 'Intensity' function in Praat. The patterns of intensity line for the first and second vowel were compared. Then, the average intensity value for vowel area was compared between the first and second vowel.

Analysis and Findings

The followings are spectrographic displays for both samples from the four qurra'.
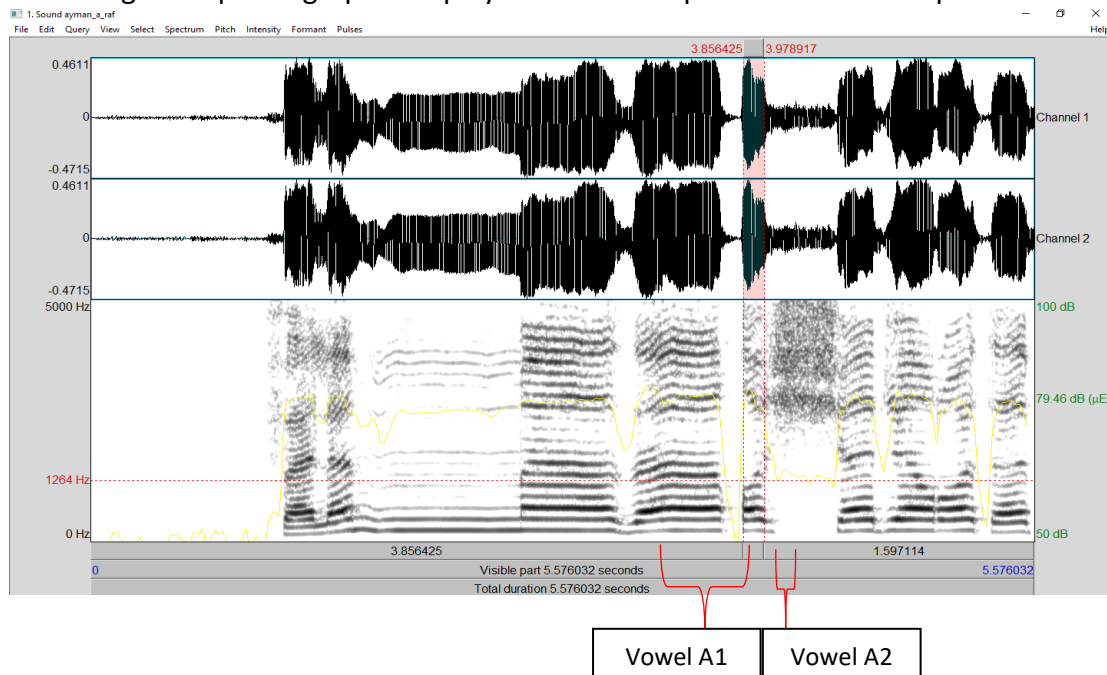
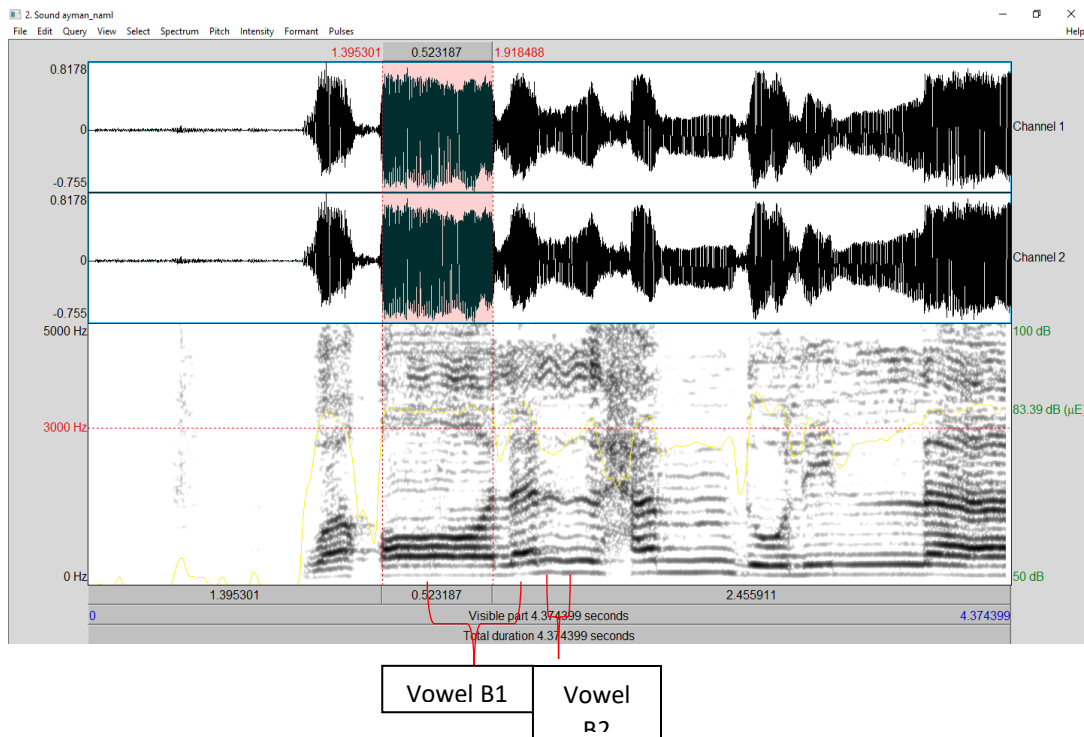Figure 1a Spectrographic display for first sample by Dr. Ayman Suwayd

Figure 1b Spectrographic display for second sample by Dr. Ayman Suwayd
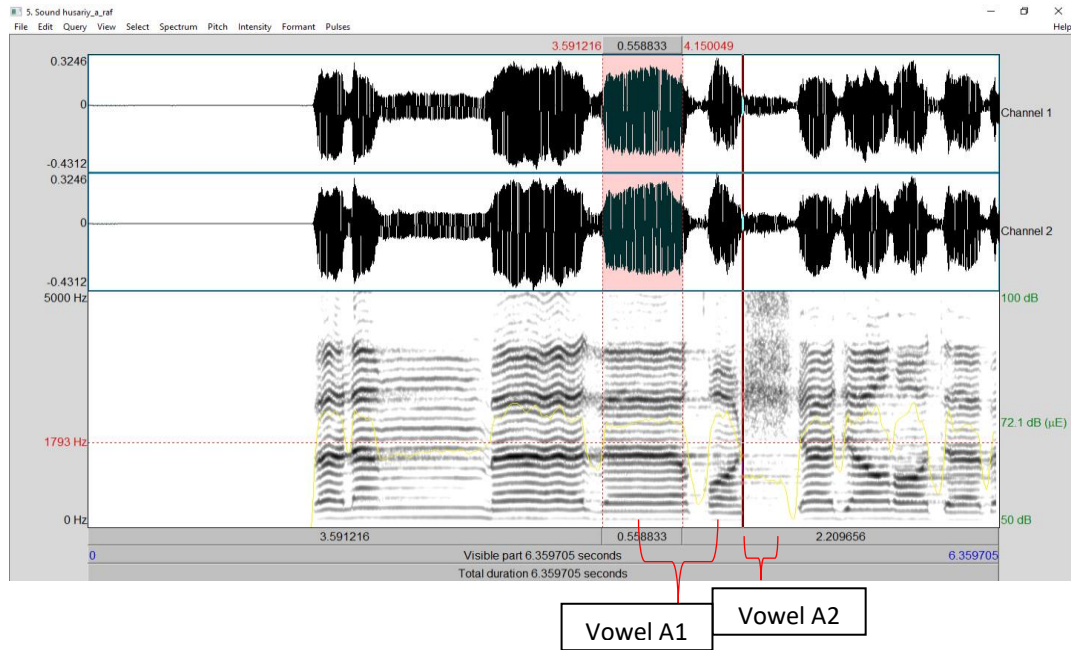
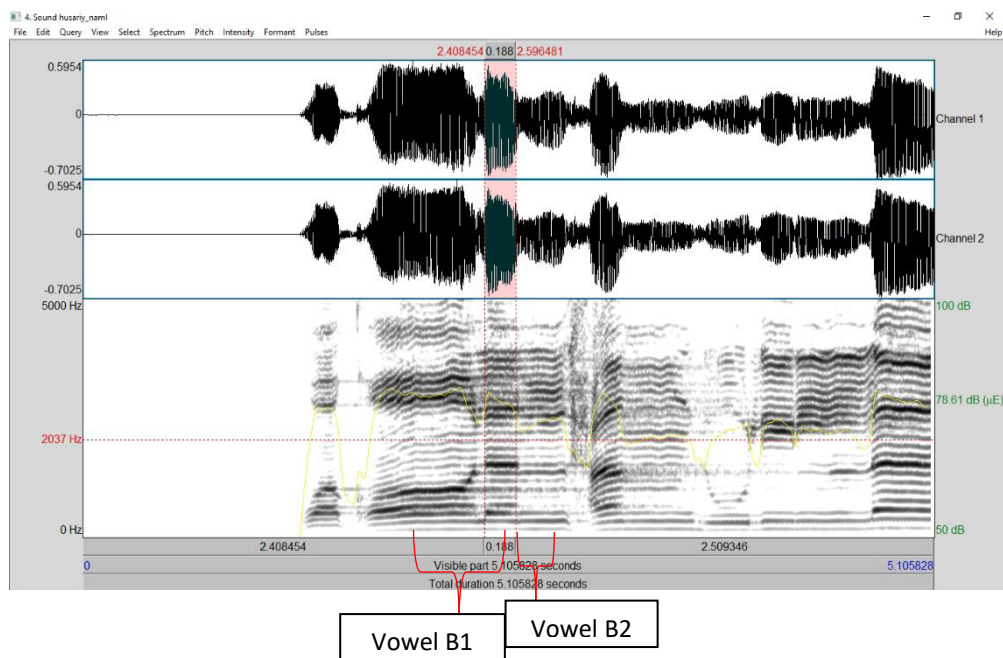Figure 2a Spectrographic display for first sample by Sheikh Mahmud Khalil al-Husariy

Figure 2b Spectrographic display for second sample by Sheikh Mahmud Khalil al-Husariy
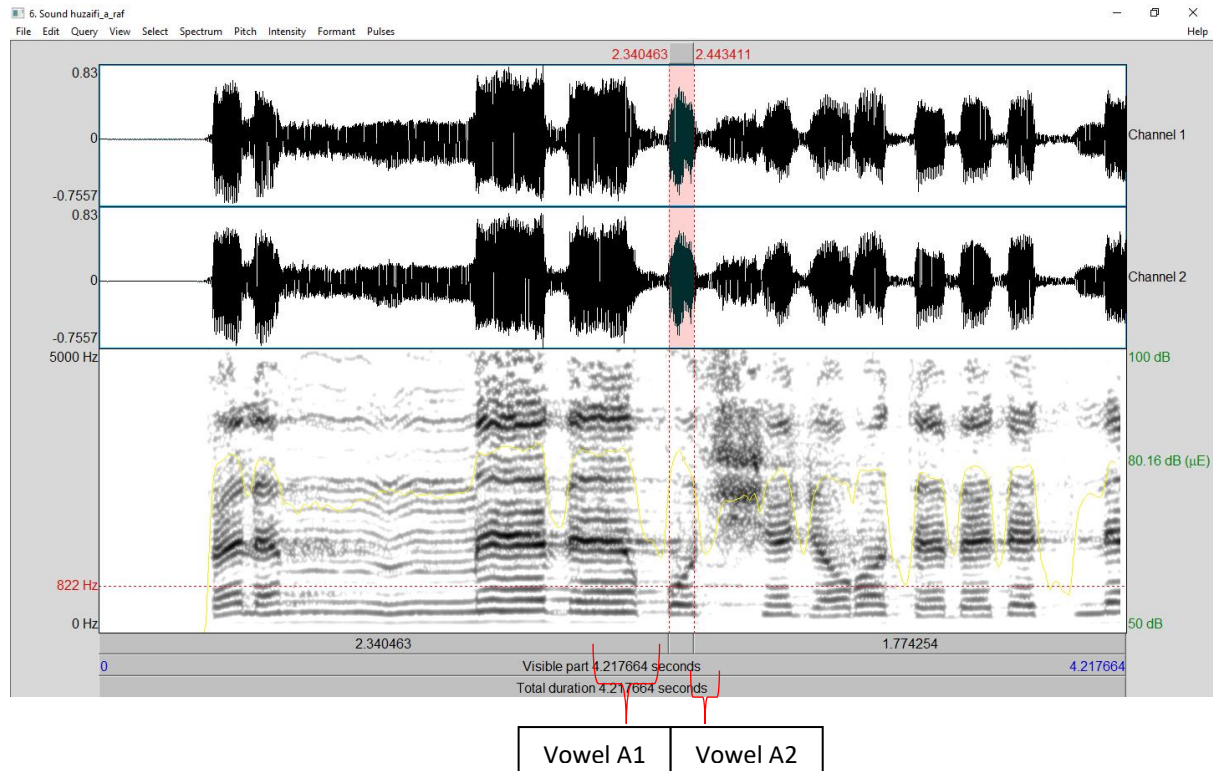
Figure 3a Spectrographic display for second sample by Sheikh Sheikh Dr. Ali al-Huzaifiy
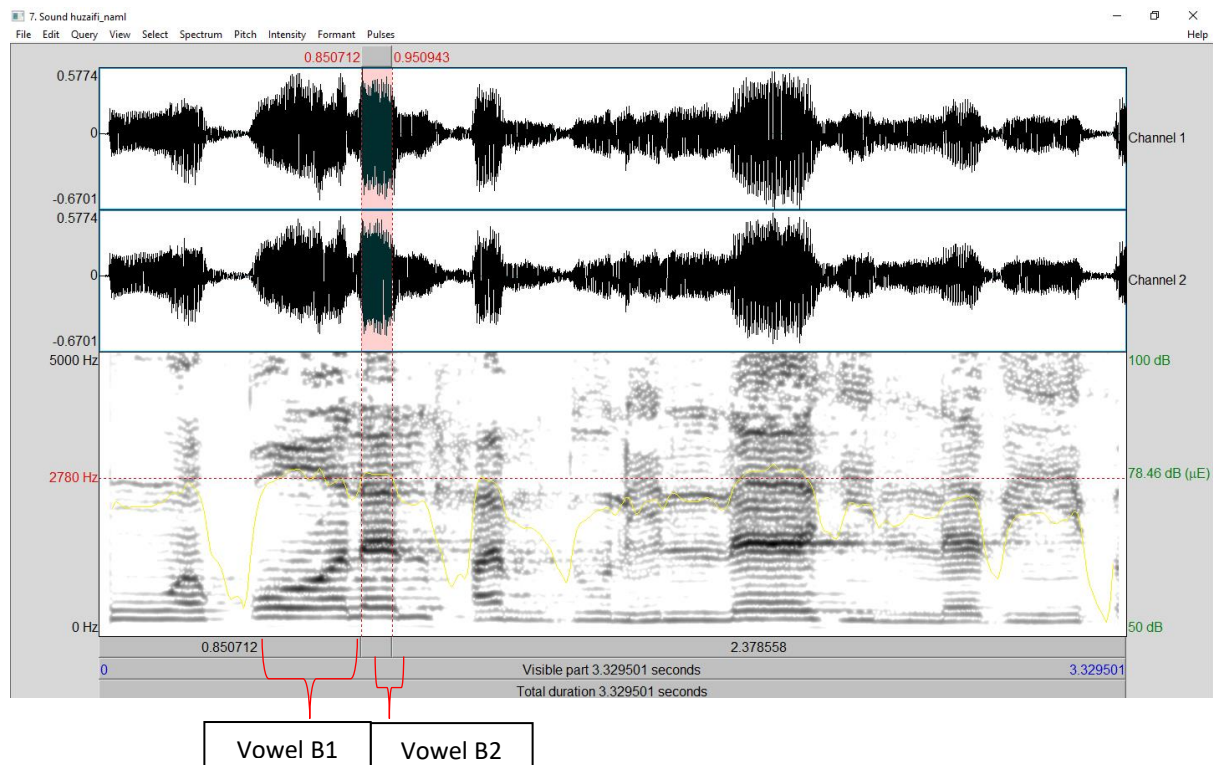

Figure 3b Spectrographic display for second sample by Sheikh Dr. Ali al-Huzaifiy
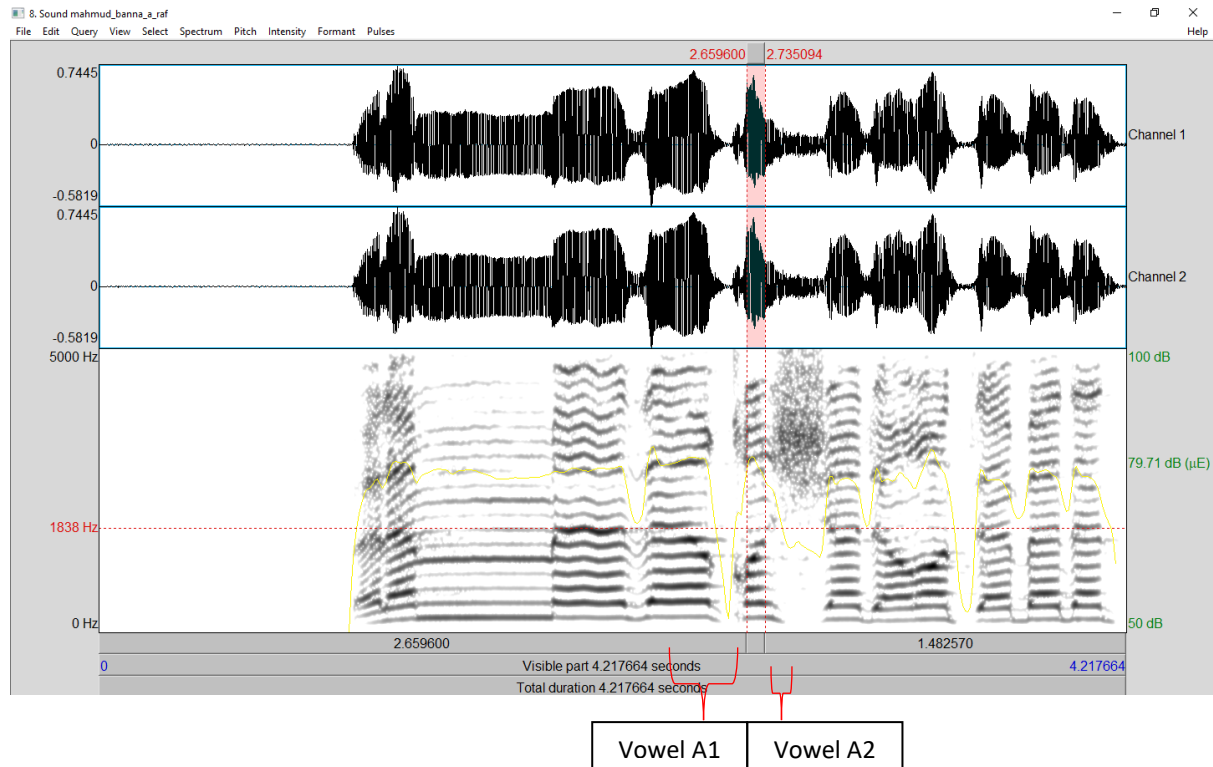
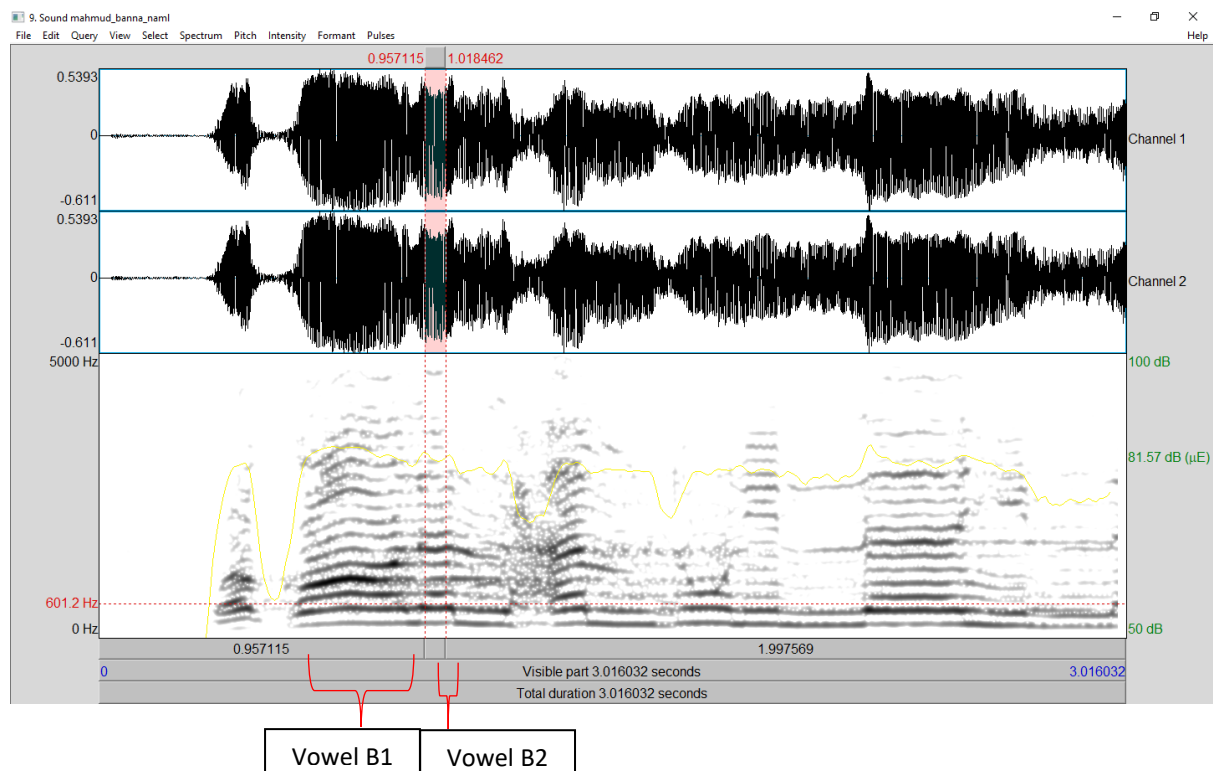Figure 4a Spectrographic display for first sample by Sheikh Mahmud al-Banna

Figure 4b Spectrographic display for second sample by Sheikh Mahmud al-Banna

In the spectrographic displays, the intensity level is indicated by the yellow horizontal line. From the data, it is generally observed that the intensity line for the second vowel is not always prominently higher than for the first vowel. Meanwhile, the intensity values for the vowels are visualised in Table 1 in details.

Table 1
Average Intensity Value of Vowels for Qurra'

Qari	Average intensity value of vowel			
	A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**
Dr. Ayman Suwayd	80.23	79.46	83.39	83.17
Sheikh Mahmud Khalil al-Husariy	72.13	73.48	79.70	78.61
Sheikh Dr. Ali al-Huzaifiy	81.70	80.16	77.82	78.46
Sheikh Mahmud al-Banna	80.58	79.71	82.88	81.59

From Table 1, it is seen that for all pairs of vowels, the intensity value for first vowel is always larger than the second one. Only for pair A1 and A2 for Sheikh Mahmud Khalil al-Husariy and pair B1 and B2 for Sheikh Dr. Ali al-Huzaifiy show larger intensity value for second syllable compared to the first one. Generally, it can be concluded that there is no consistent practice of al-nabr among all qurra' involved in this study. If al-nabr is consistently practised, the intensity value for the second value must always be higher than the first one.

Conclusion
From the analysis, it is observed that the intensity line and intensity value for the second syllable is not always higher than for the first syllable. This shows that al-nabr is not a common practice among the qurra'. Should it be compulsory, the second syllable must always show higher intensity line and value. But it is not the case. Therefore, it should not be a dispute and worrisome among Muslim community of not practising al-nabr in Quranic recitation.

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