

An Analysis of Classical Arabic Teaching Methods in the Study of Classical Islamic Texts: A Case Study at an Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract: Arabic language learning using classical methods is part of the tradition of studying *kitab kuning* through *sorogan* and *bandongan*. This method preserves the integrity of the chain of knowledge transmission from teacher to santri. The challenges of modernization demand more adaptive and efficient methods; however, the classical approach remains superior in maintaining the depth of textual understanding and the validity of knowledge. This study aims to analyze the implementation of classical Arabic learning methods in understanding *kitab kuning* at Pondok Pesantren Assalafiyah Purworejo, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and examine the urgency and relevance of these methods in the contemporary era. This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical model based on field study. The results show that learning is carried out through a complementary combination of *sorogan* and *bandongan*, where *sorogan* emphasizes the readiness and responsibility of santri, while *bandongan* provides a basic understanding collectively. The continuity of the method is supported by the authority of the kiai, a structured learning environment, and the readiness of santri, but is constrained by limited time, the quality of instructors, and differences in santri ability. The urgency of this method lies in its ability to maintain the accuracy of text comprehension as well as the continuity of the pesantren's scholarly tradition.

Keywords: *Arabic Language, Classical Arabic Learning Methods, Kitab Kuning, Pondok Pesantren Assalafiyah.*

Abstrak : Pembelajaran bahasa Arab dengan metode klasik merupakan bagian dari tradisi pengkajian kitab kuning melalui *sorogan* dan *bandongan*. Metode ini menjaga kemurnian mata rantai pengajaran dari guru ke santri. Tantangan modernisasi menuntut metode yang lebih adaptif dan efisien, namun pendekatan klasik tetap unggul dalam menjaga kedalaman pemahaman teks dan keabsahan keilmuan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi metode pembelajaran bahasa Arab klasik dalam memahami kitab kuning di Pondok Pesantren Assalafiyah Purworejo, mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat, serta menganalisis urgensi dan relevansi metode tersebut di era kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan model deskriptif-analitis berbasis studi lapangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran dilaksanakan melalui kombinasi *sorogan* dan *bandongan* yang saling melengkapi, dengan *sorogan* menekankan kesiapan dan tanggung jawab santri, sedangkan *bandongan* memberikan pemahaman dasar secara kolektif. Keberlangsungan metode didukung oleh otoritas kiai, lingkungan belajar yang terstruktur, dan kesiapan santri, namun dibatasi oleh keterbatasan waktu, kualitas pengajar, dan perbedaan kemampuan santri. Urgensi metode ini terletak pada kemampuannya menjaga ketepatan pemahaman teks sekaligus kesinambungan tradisi keilmuan pesantren.

Kata Kunci : *Bahasa Arab, Kitab Kuning, Metode Pembelajaran Klasik, Pondok Pesantren Assalafiyah.*



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PENDAHULUAN

Arabic in the Islamic educational tradition is not only positioned as a means of communication, but also as a bridge of understanding that connects students with classical scientific treasures[1, p. 323]. In this context, mastery of classical Arabic is a mandatory provision to understand the yellow book according to its original meaning and be scientifically responsible. Arabic as a foreign language requires a learning model that not only emphasizes linguistic aspects, but is also oriented towards the ability to understand texts directly[2]. However, the reality of learning Arabic in various educational institutions shows a significant gap between mastery of language rules and the ability to understand texts independently. Learning tends to focus on the theoretical aspects of nahwu and sharaf, while the ability to read and interpret the text of the yellow book independently is still low[3, p. 1034]. Many students are able to memorize the rules of nahwu and sharaf, but experience difficulties when faced with the text of the yellow book without the help of meaning. The indicators can be seen in the dependence on the teacher's explanation and the low ability to independently read bare Arabic texts. This condition shows that the learning approach that emphasizes too much on the theoretical aspect is not fully effective in building competence in understanding the text directly. If this condition continues, access to classical scientific treasures will be increasingly limited and has the potential to weaken the intellectual tradition of the pesantren itself. This shows that the mastery of grammatical aspects is not automatically directly proportional to the ability to understand the text, thus raising fundamental problems in the effectiveness of Arabic language learning in Islamic educational institutions.

Learning Arabic with the classical method cannot be separated from the tradition of studying the yellow book that has been going on for generations. In Islamic boarding schools, the yellow book is the main basis of learning that forms the intellectual tradition of students through a text-based approach. Through this approach, students are not only required to understand the structure of language, but also have precision, discipline, and responsibility for the validity of meaning[4, p. 770]. Character in pesantren education, in addition to being oriented to the cognitive (material) aspect, also emphasizes the behavioral aspects and character values of the students[5, p. 8].

One concrete form of this tradition is the use of classical Arabic learning methods such as sorogan and bandongan. These two methods act as a learning mechanism as well as a scientific transmission that maintains the continuity of sanad between teachers and students[6],[7, p. 33]. Sorogan involves an independent learning process where each student deposits his or her book reading to the kiai for immediate correction. In contrast to bandongan, which is a collective teaching through the reading and elaboration of the text by the kiai to a group of students simultaneously[8, p. 11]. These characteristics show that classical Arabic learning methods have a distinctive pedagogical structure and are different from modern learning approaches that tend to be more flexible and media-based[9].

A number of previous studies have shown that learning Arabic and the yellow book in Islamic boarding schools has a significant contribution to improving reading and understanding classical texts. Research by Mochammad Deddy Soe'aiddy confirms that the Amtsilati method is effective in improving the ability to read the yellow book and accelerating the understanding of nahwu and sharaf, but it focuses more on the achievement of learning outcomes without in-depth examining the process of implementing the method in learning practice[10]. Meanwhile, research by Norma Yulianti, Ikhwan Aziz, and Rina Mida Hayati shows that the sorogan method is able to improve the ability to read the yellow book through the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation, although it still faces obstacles in the aspects of motivation and student involvement, but this study focuses more on the effectiveness of the method without associating it with the dynamics of sustainability in the pesantren system[11]. On the other

hand, research by Syukran highlights innovations in learning the yellow book through the integration of traditional methods with digital technology, but the focus on these aspects of adaptation and innovation has not elaborated in depth on the practice of implementing classical methods in the context of salafiyah Islamic boarding schools that maintain tradition consistently[12].

In general, the three studies show the same tendency, which focuses on aspects of results, effectiveness, or method innovation. However, these studies have not comprehensively explained how the process of implementing the method takes place in daily practice. This limitation shows an important research gap, because without an analysis of the implementation process and sustainability dynamics, the understanding of classical Arabic learning will tend to be partial and not able to fully explain the continuity of the Islamic boarding school scientific tradition.

However, the development of Islamic education in the contemporary era presents a new challenge to the sustainability of the classical learning method. This condition reflects the need to balance traditional values and the demands for a more adaptive learning system efficiency in the context of Islamic boarding schools[13],[14]. On the one hand, education modernization requires innovation in learning methods that are more adaptive, efficient, and in accordance with the characteristics of today's students. On the other hand, the classical learning method actually has advantages in maintaining the depth of understanding of the text and the validity of the science [15, p. 65],[16]. This phenomenon puts pesantren in a position to continue to balance the demands of renewal and the commitment to maintaining the authenticity of tradition. In the tradition of pesantren, these dynamics have actually been bridged for a long time through the principle:

المُحَافَظَةُ عَلَى الْقَدِيمِ الصَّالِحِ وَالْأَخْذُ بِالْجَدِيدِ الْأَصْلِحِ

“Keeping good old traditions and taking on new and better things”.

The application of this principle does not mean that pesantren close themselves to change, but rather become a filter in filtering new things without having to throw away the original scientific foundation[17, p. 97]. Initial observations at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School show that the classical Arabic language learning method is still applied consistently through the practice of *structured sorogan* and *bandongan*. The learning process does not only take place in formal activities, but also through strict stages of preparation, implementation, and evaluation, and involves the active role of kiai (ustāz) and students in maintaining the quality of understanding of the yellow book. However, in its implementation, various dynamics are still found, both those that support and hinder the sustainability of the method.

Based on this description, the formulation of the problem in this study is: *first*, how to implement the classical Arabic learning method in understanding the yellow book at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School; *second*, what factors support and hinder the sustainability of the method; and *third*, how is the urgency and relevance of classical Arabic learning methods in the context of Islamic education in the contemporary era. Based on the formulation of the problem, this study aims to: *first*, analyze the implementation of classical Arabic learning methods in understanding the yellow book; *second*, identify the factors that affect its sustainability; and *third*, examine its urgency and relevance in the context of contemporary Islamic education.

The novelty of this research lies in the empirical analysis of the practice of implementing classical Arabic learning methods in the context of Islamic boarding schools based on classical learning methods. In contrast to previous research that focused on the effectiveness or

innovation of methods, this study directly examines how *the sorogan* and *bandongan methods* are carried out in daily learning practices at the Assalafiyah Islamic Boarding School. In addition, this study integrates implementation analysis with internal and external factors that affect the sustainability of the method, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of classical Arabic learning while explaining the mechanism of the sustainability of the scientific tradition of Islamic boarding schools in the modern era.

METHOD

This research is a *field research* that applies a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical model to examine the implementation of classical Arabic learning methods in understanding the yellow book at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School. The application of this qualitative approach aims to capture the phenomenon of learning as it is by highlighting the perspective of the perpetrator and the depth of meaning contained in the learning process [18, p. 37]. Through a descriptive-analytical nature, this study not only describes the implementation of learning methods, but also dissects the patterns and factors that affect the use of the classic method in understanding the yellow book in Islamic Boarding Schools. In the initial stage (pre-field), the researcher determines the location of the research, *purposively identifies informants*, and prepares research instruments as the basis for the implementation of data collection in the field.

At the research implementation stage, the data collection technique was carried out for one week and one day, namely from December 1 to 8, 2025. The method was used through interviews, observations, and documentation studies of informants who *were purposively selected* based on their involvement in the use of the yellow book. The selection criteria include: *first*, active involvement in the learning activities of the Yellow Book; *Second*, experience following the Sorogan and Bantongan methods; and *third*, the ability to provide information related to the learning process and dynamics. The research informants consisted of one kiai/caregiver as a learning policy maker, three alumni who acted as teachers/ustaz, and three students representing the initial level (first grade meaning) and advanced level (second and third grade meaning). The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, supported by the researcher's participatory observation to directly observe the interaction and dynamics of the learning process. The research instruments include interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation. Data collection was stopped after the information obtained showed a recurrent tendency and no significant variation in findings was found.

At the data analysis stage, this study uses an interactive model through the process of reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn [19, p. 519]. The validity of the data is strengthened through triangulation techniques and source triangulation, as well as member checks to ensure the consistency of the information obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of Classical Arabic Learning Methods in Understanding the Yellow Book at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School

Arabic learning with the classical method at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School is carried out through two main methods, namely *the sorogan* and *bandongan methods* as the core in the process of understanding the yellow book. These two methods not only function as learning techniques, but also as a mechanism for scientific transmission that takes place directly between kiai and students in one continuous learning system [20]. In the context of pesantren, this kind of learning pattern shows that the process of understanding the yellow book is inseparable from the direct relationship between teachers and students as part of the

Islamic scientific tradition. This is in line with the research of Syu'aib and Husni who conceptualized pesantren as an integrative institution between theological doctrine and local wisdom, where the internalization of disciplinary values and students' obedience to the authority of the teacher is the main foundation in the transmission of the knowledge of the Yellow Book in daily life[21, p. 420].

Operationally, the *sorogan method* at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School is applied in two models, namely *First*, *sorogan* uses a book that has been equipped with the meaning of *pegon* (Javanese Arabic text), which is located under the lines of Arabic text in the yellow book. In this model, students focus on reading the text and its meaning fluently. *Second*, *sorogan* uses *bare books* or plain texts, which are Arabic books that are not accompanied by any explanation of meaning or punctuation (*ḥarakat*). In this second model, students are required to determine the meaning and grammatical position of each word independently before reading it in front of the *kiai*. In the first model, the learning process takes place through the stages of preparation, implementation, and evaluation. In the preparation stage, the students rewrite the text of the book, then perform *taḥrīk* (giving *ḥarakat* in Arabic letters) and the meaning with the senior students, followed by re-reading in front of the senior students and the *ta ḥḥīḥ* (*correction of errors*) process to test the accuracy of the reading and meaning[20]. As stated by one of the senior students, "...Usually, students are not allowed to come forward before the meaning is really checked. If it is still wrong, we ask for it to be corrected first, because later in front of the *kiai* it must be ready." [22] This stage shows that before dealing with the *kiai*, the students have gone through a fairly intensive initial learning process.

Furthermore, at the implementation stage, students read the text individually in front of the *kiai* and get direct corrections related to reading, sentence structure, determination of *i'rāb*, and the meaning of the text. This process is also a form of evaluation that takes place directly and can be corrected immediately. As for the second model, namely *the bare book sorogan*, the process carried out is basically the same, but without the help of meaning, so it requires a stronger mastery of the rules of the Arabic language than the students[20]. The caretaker of the pesantren revealed that, "*The students do not only read, but must understand and be ready to account for their reading. If it is still wrong, repeat until it is correct, because this is not just reading, but understanding knowledge*" [20]. This pattern emphasizes that *the sorogan* method places students as active subjects who are responsible for their learning readiness. This is in line with the research of Rozi, et al. Who researches the *sorogan method*, that the position of the students as active subjects through the reading of the book directly in front of the *kiai*, so that the process of improving the reading can be carried out individually and comprehensively[4, p. 767].

What is characteristic of the implementation of *sorogan* at the Islamic boarding school is the existence of a mechanism of scientific responsibility involving senior students. When there is an error in reading or meaning, the *kiai* not only corrects the advanced students, but also traces who the senior students are guiding them, then the senior students are called to be tested again. This mechanism shows the existence of scientific control that is not individual, but collective and tiered, so as to allow the formation of the continuity of scientific sanad in the learning process[23, p. 44]. In contrast to previous studies that emphasized *sorogan* as an individual method, the findings in this study show that the effectiveness of the method lies in the support of the collective system, especially through the role of senior students and tiered control that was not highlighted much in previous research. On the other hand, the *bandongan* method is implemented as a form of collective learning that functions to provide a global understanding of the text. In this method, the *kiai* interprets the Arabic text *laf ziyyah* into

Javanese, then explains the meaning in general to the students. The students listened to the explanation while writing the meaning under the text using *pegon writing*.

The implementation of *bandongan* is carried out with a classical system (per class) with books adjusted based on the level of students[20],[24]. In the process of understanding the yellow book, students not only participate in formal learning, but also through repeated stages, namely interpreting the text, following *sorogan* and *bandongan*, and repeating the material that has been learned. This pattern suggests that understanding is not acquired instantaneously, but rather through a continuous and structured process[25, p. 6467]. In addition, there are adjustments to the current conditions, such as the use of the classical system in *bandongan* learning which allows students to understand the yellow book gradually according to their level. This adjustment shows that the classic method is not rigid, but it is still adaptable without losing its basic character. In addition, the implementation of the two methods (*sorogan* and *bandongan*) is inseparable from the role of the kiai as a fulcrum of learning. Because of its crucial role in the Islamic boarding school system, as a facilitator, motivator, as well as an evaluator who ensures the validity of students' understanding of the text of the yellow book.

This role shows that the success of the learning method is not only determined by the techniques used, but also by the scientific authorities that direct the learning process. Khoiruddin in his book reinforces this finding, stating that in the tradition of pesantren, students do not just study texts rigidly, but become part of a scientific community that is bound by ethics and a clear structure of authority. In line with that, the identity as *ṭālib al-'ilm* (student of knowledge) is formed through intensive interaction, both with teachers and fellow students. As quoted in the book, Azyumardi Azra's view also emphasizes that the transmission of Islamic knowledge takes place through a strong social network, so that the educational process develops in an interconnected intellectual ecosystem, not in an isolated individual space[23, p. 11].

This is strengthened in the research of Zarkasi et al. who stated that "*This integration between general and religious subjects aims to foster communication and collaboration among madrasah communi ties, aligning toward the objective of nurturing students who are intellectually compe tent and also devout in their faith,...*". In this context, the findings can be interpreted that learning is not only oriented to the mastery of knowledge, but also to the integration between the intellectual dimension and values. This is in line with the findings of this research, where the authority of the kiai does not only function as a teacher, but as a controller of the scientific direction that ensures the integration between the understanding of the text and the internalization of values in the learning process of students.[26]. Thus, it was concluded that the implementation of the classical Arabic learning method at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School took place through a combination of *sorogan* and *bandongan methods* that complemented each other. The learning process runs gradually through the stages of preparation, implementation, and evaluation, and is supported by a tiered mechanism of scientific responsibility. This learning method plays a role in shaping the ability of students to read and understand the yellow book through a systematic and continuous process.

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of the Sustainability of Classical Arabic Learning Methods at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School

The continuity of classical Arabic learning methods at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School is inseparable from various interrelated factors, both from within the pesantren (internal) and from outside the pesantren (external). These factors not only affect the course of the learning process, but also determine the consistency of the application of *the sorogan* and *bandongan methods* in understanding the yellow book[27].

The *first* factor that is the main supporter is the strong scientific authority of kiai in managing learning. Kiai not only acts as a teacher, but also as a facilitator, motivator, and evaluator who ensures the validity of students' understanding of the yellow book[28],[29]. This role shows that the sustainability of classical methods is highly dependent on the scientific authority that the kiai has and is consistently carried out by the kiai. In addition to the perspective put forward by Khoiruddin, this is also strengthened by Zamakhsyari Dhofier's opinion quoted in Muhajir's dissertation. Dhofier emphasized that the kiai is a central figure as well as the center of pesantren life that not only transfers the depth of religious knowledge, but also moves traditions through strong moral charisma. As a fulcrum, kiai goes beyond technical teaching because it serves as a standard of values and a role model that ensures that the entire intellectual ecosystem within it remains grounded in the authority of the preserved traditions[30, p. 33].

The *second* factor is a conducive and structured pesantren environment in shaping the learning habits of students. This environment is demonstrated through the setting of a clear and repeatable learning schedule every day. The sorogan preparation activity was carried out at night at 21.00-23.00 WIB., then continued with the implementation of sorogan and evaluation at the time after the dawn prayer at 04.30–06.00 WIB. The bandongan method is carried out after the Isha prayer at 19.30-21.00 WIB. in the classical system per class[27]. This scheduled time pattern forms an intensive and continuous learning rhythm, so that students are accustomed to preparing, following, and repeating the material in a disciplined manner. Thus, the pesantren environment is not only a place to learn, but also a system that shapes the learning patterns of students consistently. To clarify the regularity of the schedule, the following are the details of the time for the implementation of student learning:

Table 1. schedule of classical Arabic learning activities at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School

Implementation Time	Types and Characteristics of Activities
19.30 – 21.00 WIB	Bandongan Method (Classical): Building a basic understanding of the material collectively per class after the Isha prayer.
21.00 – 23.00 WIB	Sorogan Preparation (Independent/Guided): deepening of the material, <i>tahrīk</i> , and <i>tashīh</i> before deposit.
04.30 – 06.00 WIB	Evaluation & Evaluation Method: A culmination of learning activities to test reading accuracy and individual responsibility.

Based on the table, it can be seen that learning does not take place incidentally, but is arranged in a systematic flow between the stages of preparation, implementation, and evaluation. This regularity of time shows that the pesantren environment actually forms a directed and repetitive learning pattern, thus supporting the creation of disciplined and sustainable learning habits in students.

The *third* factor is the motivation and readiness of students to follow the learning process. Based on the results of the research, the motivation of the students arises from the encouragement of the kiai and the desire to be able to understand the yellow book as mastered by the teachers. In addition, the readiness of students is also formed through the preparation stage before sorogan, which requires students to learn, interpret, and repeat the reading before being deposited to the kiai. This process shows that learning does not take place spontaneously, but through stages that require active involvement and responsibility of students in the learning process. This active involvement reflects the moral commitment of the students in practicing

good study ethics and seriousness in deepening the teachings of the book as part of their scientific responsibilities[31, p. 50].

The *fourth factor* is the kiai's support for the sustainability of classical learning methods. This support can be seen from the consistency of the kiai in maintaining *the sorogan* and *bandongan* methods, as well as in facilitating the entire learning process related to these methods. Kiai also plays a role in ensuring that the teachers involved have adequate competence in mastering and delivering the yellow book. This shows that the sustainability of the classical method does not only depend on the system, but also on the commitment of the leader in maintaining and developing the tradition of learning. This commitment is in line with the view of Mujamil Qamar in Muhammad Tolib's research which emphasizes that *the sorogan* method has high didactic effectiveness because it allows kiai or ustaz to supervise, assess, and guide the ability of students to the maximum. Through this intensive interaction, teachers can ensure complete mastery of the material, including instructions to repeat certain parts if the students' understanding is felt that they have not reached the set standards[32, p. 104].

The *fifth factor* is external support from the government, the community, and alumni. Government support, especially through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, is manifested in the form of operational facilitation of Islamic boarding schools. The community provides support in the form of motivation for the sustainability of pesantren education, while alumni play the role of teaching staff who help the learning process of the yellow book[20]. The nanny revealed, "...The form of support for Islamic boarding schools cannot be separated from material and immaterial support from various sectors, such as from the environment, society, alumni and also the government..."[20]. In addition, the available facilities such as classrooms for each level and halls used in sorogan activities also support the optimal implementation of learning. The social environment of the pesantren that supports each other also strengthens the sustainability of this method. The support of these facilities and social ecosystems is in line with Nurhayati's views in Nur Aflizah's research, which emphasizes that strengthening the quality of educational services through adequate support contributes positively to improving academic achievement and strengthening the skills of students as a whole[33, p. 3].

On the other hand, there are several factors that are obstacles in the implementation of classical Arabic learning methods. The *first factor* is the limited learning time due to the dense activities of students. Students not only participate in pesantren activities, but also formal madrasah activities, so that the time available for deepening the yellow book is limited. This condition has the potential to reduce the intensity of exercises that should be done repeatedly in the classical method.

The *second factor* is the limitation of teaching resources, especially in terms of the quality of teachers who are able to teach the yellow book in depth with classical methods. Not all teachers have the same ability to master the material and teaching methods, so it has an impact on the variation in the quality of learning received by students. This shows that the sustainability of the classical method is also greatly influenced by the quality of the available teaching staff.

The *third factor* is the diversity of students' ability backgrounds. Students who come from different educational backgrounds have different levels of Arabic language mastery, thus affecting the speed of learning, especially in the *sorogan method* which requires individual readiness. This factor is related to the difference in the learning experience of students, both those who have a previous basic Arabic language and those who are new to it through formal education. These differences cause inequality in the speed of understanding the material. With the various complexities of these obstacles, the accuracy of the methods applied by the kiai is the main determinant in ensuring that the material is absorbed well while maintaining the effectiveness of learning the yellow book in the midst of existing limitations[34, p. 1581].

Based on the results of the research, the sustainability of classical Arabic learning methods at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School is supported by several main factors, namely the scientific authority of the kiai, a structured pesantren environment, the motivation and readiness of students, the commitment of the kiai in maintaining the method, and external support from the government, the community, and alumni. The inhibiting factors include limited time, limited quality of teachers, and differences in students' ability backgrounds. These factors directly affect the implementation of learning, but do not eliminate the sustainability of *the sorogan* and *bandongan methods* as the core of the scientific tradition of Islamic boarding schools.

3. The Urgency and Relevance of Classical Arabic Learning Methods in the Study of the Yellow Book in the Contemporary Era

The classical Arabic learning method at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School shows a strong urgency in building students' ability to understand the yellow book in depth. This is reflected in the learning pattern that not only emphasizes the final result, but also a strict and tiered process, especially through the *sorogan* method which requires students to read directly in front of the kiai. This pattern is built through a structured and layered process, not just instant mastery of the material. In line with this, Syauqy in his journal emphasized that the tradition of direct interaction between kiai and students is the main key in honing individual skills. Syauqy also quoted the opinion of Rasyid Anwar Dalimunthe who emphasized that this method is very crucial for a deep mastery of the grammar of nahwu and sharaf as the foundation for understanding the yellow book[35, p. 414].

This urgency is increasingly evident from the evaluation mechanism that not only focuses on student mistakes, but also traces the learning process that has been undergone, including the involvement of senior students in the preparation stage before sorogan. In this context, learning Arabic with the classical method functions as a scientific control system that ensures that understanding of Islamic texts is obtained through a process that can be accounted for, both academically and scientifically in the pesantren. This control system is strengthened by the role of senior students in assisting daily discipline and student activities to ensure that each stage of learning is maintained consistently. In line with this, Sukari, Suhadi, and Puji Ardiyanto in their research emphasized that the active involvement of senior students is an important instrument to ensure the continuity of measurable and accountable scientific transmission[36, p. 30]. In addition to the cognitive aspect, this learning method also contributes to the formation of student character.

The demand to read independently, account for meaning, and readiness to face direct correction from the kiai forms an attitude of responsibility, precision, and manners in pursuing knowledge. This yellow book reading activity is an effective means to instill personal discipline while allowing the learning process to take place more personally according to the unique characteristics of each student[37, p. 158]. These findings are in line with the view that pesantren based education is not only oriented to knowledge transfer, but also to internalizing values and character formation through a continuous learning process[5]. In the context of linguistics, the classical Arabic learning method still shows its relevance as an approach that emphasizes depth of understanding. According to the opinions of Anggie Sri Utari, Misra Nova Dayantri, and Fatma Yulia in their journals reviewing Makdisi's views, the relevance of classical learning methods lies in its focus on deep mastery of texts through the sharpening of critical skills and philosophical discussions. Although the modern era brought significant changes, the teaching model remained relevant in facing the challenges of the times without losing its intellectual character[38, p. 143]. In this method, students are not only required to understand grammatical rules, but also relate the structure of language to the meaning of the

text directly. This shows that learning Arabic in Islamic boarding schools is not mechanical, but functional and contextual, as it is emphasized that mastery of Arabic includes the ability to understand and convey meaning in its entirety, not just grammatical aspects[3].

In the midst of the development of modern learning methods that tend to be practical and technology-based, the classical approach is still maintained through limited adaptations such as the application of the classical model and book deliberation forums. This innovation is realized through the division of structured material levels, a series of systematic evaluations, and the optimization of the role of senior students as assistant kiai. This condition shows that pesantren does not completely reject change, but conducts a selection process for innovations that are considered relevant to learning needs without eliminating the main character of the classical method. In line with this, in their journals, Allam Tri Mufadhhol and Neni Nuraeni, emphasized that the existence of classical methods that is still maintained is now able to coexist harmoniously with modern innovations.

This integration practice has proven to be the most effective model for accelerating vocabulary mastery and deepening syntactic understanding, thus creating a flexible and contextual approach without reducing Islamic values[39, p. 104]. Within this framework, the continuity of classical Arabic learning methods in Islamic boarding schools can be understood through the principles that develop in the Islamic scientific tradition, namely:

المُحَافَظَةُ عَلَى الْقَدِيمِ الصَّالِحِ وَالْأَخْذُ بِالْجَدِيدِ الْأَصْلِحِ

“Keeping good old traditions and taking on new and better things”[17, p. 97].

This principle shows that the preservation of *the sorogan* and *bandongan methods* is not solely a form of conservatism, but part of an effort to maintain the quality of scientific understanding while opening up space for adaptation to the development of the times[17, p. 97]. Thus, the classical method is still maintained because it is considered to still have substantive relevance in building the depth of students' understanding of the yellow book. In addition, the classical Arabic learning method also plays a role in maintaining the continuity of Islamic scientific traditions in Islamic boarding schools. The learning process that is carried out in a continuous manner, starting from basic to advanced mastery, shows a pattern of structured knowledge transmission between generations. In this context, the classical method not only functions as a learning strategy, but also as an instrument for preserving the scientific identity of pesantren in the midst of contemporary educational dynamics.

Based on the results of the research, the classical Arabic learning method at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School has an urgency in building an in-depth understanding of the yellow book through a systematic, rigorous, and continuous learning process. In addition, this method remains relevant in the contemporary era because it is able to adapt selectively without losing its basic character. The main findings of this study show that the effectiveness of learning the yellow book at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School is not solely determined by the use of sorogan and bandongan methods as learning techniques, but by the integration between the pedagogical system, the scientific social structure, and the tiered control mechanism that forms a unified knowledge transmission system. More specifically, this study reveals that learning success is supported by three main components: *first*, direct interaction-based learning practices that demand individual student accountability; *Second*, the involvement of the collective structure through the role of senior students in the learning process; and *third*, the authority of the kiai as the controller of scientific validity. Thus, the classical Arabic learning method in the context of pesantren can be understood as an epistemic system that integrates cognitive, social, and cultural aspects in maintaining the continuity and validity of the Yellow Book scholarship in the pesantren environment.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The effectiveness of learning the yellow book at the Assalafiyah Purworejo Islamic Boarding School in this finding depends on an integrative mechanism that combines individual student accountability, collective control through senior students, and kiai authority as the final validator of science. In this mechanism, the sorogan method does not function simply as a reading exercise, but as a tool for verifying understanding that forces students to build meaning independently before being confronted with scientific authorities. Meanwhile, bandongan serves as a meaning-oriented framework that maintains uniformity of basic understanding, but does not replace the individual validation process that occurs in sorogan.

These findings suggest that the accuracy of the understanding of the yellow book is not generated by separate methods, but rather by a clear distribution of functions between individual processes and tiered control systems. The involvement of senior students is not just technical assistance, but serves as an initial verification layer that expands the range of kiai control. Consequently, misunderstandings do not stop at the individual, but are traced as failures in the chain of knowledge transmission. This structure explains why the classical method is still able to maintain the accuracy of comprehension even though it takes place in a non-formal system and without formalized written evaluation standards as in the modern education system.

The contribution of this research lies in the explanation that sorogan cannot be understood as a purely individual method, as many have assumed in previous research, but rather as part of a social-scientific system that relies on collective control and distribution of authority. Thus, the success of learning the yellow book is more accurately explained through a multi-layered system model, rather than through the effectiveness of a single method.

The limitation of this study lies in the focus that only examines one pesantren with a relatively strong salaf character, so that it does not capture the variety of practices in pesantren with different levels of modernization. In addition, this study has not measured comparatively the success rate of students' understanding between the meaningful book-based sorogan model and the bare book, so it has not been able to show a measurable difference in effectiveness between models in the same method.

The implications of the urgency and relevance of these findings lie in their ability to offer a new paradigm regarding the quality assurance system of Arabic language teaching in the contemporary era. The uniqueness of this layered system model proves that the effectiveness of the sorogan tradition does not rest on its purely individual nature, but on the strict chain of collective accountability involving senior students and kiai. The logical consequence for the development of Islamic education today is that the presence of a new, more modern model or curriculum does not necessarily eliminate such classical practices. Both approaches can go hand in hand by placing traditional methods as instruments that guarantee the accuracy and validity of text comprehension from the basic level. The maintenance of this collective control structure is crucial so that the transformation of contemporary Islamic education does not lose its authentic scientific transmission anchor.

The direction of further research needs to be focused on testing this layered system model in the context of different pesantren namely salaf, semi-modern, and modern pesantren to see the consistency of scientific control mechanisms. In addition, it is necessary to conduct a data-based comparative study of students' ability to test the extent to which variations in the shape of sorogan (with or without meaning) affect the depth of understanding of the text, not just reading fluency. Without this testing, claims of the effectiveness of classical methods will remain conceptual and have not been fully empirically verified.

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