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# **The Effect of Exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic in the Manuscript of the Letter of King Angkerin on Improving Understanding of the Meaning of the Text: A Quantitative Research on Students of MTs Al-Islam Telaga Biru**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the effect of exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic on improving the ability to understand the meaning of texts in MTs Al-Islam Telaga Biru students. The background of this research departs from the gap in literature which shows that although modern learning strategies such as cooperative learning, mind mapping, and game-based media have been extensively researched, the use of local Arabic writing variants such as Pegon Banten as a medium of linguistic exposure is still very minimally explored empirically. This study uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design of the one-group pretest-posttest type on 60 grade VIII students selected through purposive sampling techniques. Research instruments in the form of pretest and posttest tests were used to measure the ability to understand the meaning of the text before and after treatment. Data analysis was carried out through descriptive statistics, Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, and effect size calculation. The results showed a significant increase in posttest scores compared to pretests, with the average score increasing from 59.45 to 73.27. The Wilcoxon test yielded a value of  $Z = -6.742$  with a significance of 0.000, indicating that the treatment had a significant effect. The effect size value of  $r = 0.87$  indicates that the effect of exposure to Pegon Banten is in the very large category. This result proves that Pegon Banten can function as an effective linguistic bridge, helping students associate Arabic writing forms with local languages thus facilitating the process of understanding the meaning of the text. This research makes a theoretical and practical contribution, showing that the integration of local media such as Pegon Banten can be an alternative strategy in learning Arabic in MTs. Recommendations are given for teachers to integrate Pegon texts in learning in a structured manner, as well as for follow-up research to test the effectiveness of Pegon on other Arabic skills such as writing, understanding the yellow book, and mastery of vocabulary.



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## Introduction

Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level has a central position in the Islamic education curriculum in Indonesia, considering that most religious literature, both in the form of classical books and contemporary texts, uses Arabic. Understanding the meaning of Arabic texts is one of the main goals that must be achieved by students, because this skill determines their ability to interpret, take meaning, and connect the content of the text with the religious and social context [1]; [2]. To achieve an adequate level of understanding of the meaning of the text, students are required to master linguistic elements such as *mufradat*, *taṣrīf*, and *syntax structure* or *al-ṣinā'at al-nahw*. These three elements are the foundation of meaning in interpreting Arabic texts, because without sufficient mastery of *mufradat*, students will have difficulty interpreting new words; without mastery of morphology, they find it difficult to determine the meaning of derivatives; and without an understanding of syntax, they have difficulty identifying relationships between sentence components.

In addition to structural linguistic elements, recent research emphasizes the importance of pedagogical approaches that are able to stimulate students' cognitive engagement. The cooperative approach, for example, has been widely used at the MTs level because it provides space for students to exchange ideas, discuss, and build meaning collectively. Learning through mind mapping also provides great benefits because it presents Arabic concepts visually, making it easier for students to map the structure of the text and the relationships between words [3]; [4]. Meanwhile, game-based learning media has been shown to increase students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, especially in learning vocabulary and text meaning, which requires interesting and non-monotonous repetition activities [5]; [6]. These studies show that learning design that combines linguistic and pedagogical aspects has a significant role in strengthening the competence of understanding the meaning of texts.

At the policy level, the national Arabic curriculum also emphasizes the importance of using contextual and adaptive learning approaches. This can be seen in the push to develop instructional designs that are more responsive to student characteristics, both from linguistic and sociocultural aspects [7]. The Arabic curriculum at the MTs level requires students not only to understand the structure of the language, but also to explore the meaning of the text contextually. Therefore, learning strategies that utilize students' linguistic environment, including regional languages or local media, are increasingly considered in various Arabic education studies. Thus, learning Arabic now tends to lead to an integrative approach that combines linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural elements.

In the context of Islamic education in the archipelago, PEGON has long been known as a writing system that serves as a tool to understand Arabic texts. PEGON is an Arabic script used to write regional languages such as Javanese and Sundanese, and is an important part of the Islamic boarding school literacy tradition. Through PEGON, local students and readers can understand the meaning of Arabic texts more easily because PEGON's translation and annotation help bridge the gap between fusha Arabic and regional languages [8]; [9]. Along with the times, PEGON is not only used in the context of reading the yellow book, but is also increasingly observed in informal educational environments such as madrasah diniyah, even in elementary Arabic language learning.

Exposure to PEGON in learning Arabic allows students to associate Arabic grapheme with linguistic meanings they are familiar with in their native language. In multimodal and contextual learning theory, the relationship of meaning between text and students' linguistic experiences plays an important role in improving reading comprehension [10]; [11]. This means that if students can see how an Arabic symbol in PEGON relates to a linguistic structure that is close to their lives, then the process of interpreting the text will be faster and more effective. The existence of PEGON as a local linguistic entity close to the student's culture shows how important it is to utilize local resources to enrich the Arabic learning experience at MTs.

Although PEGON holds an important position in the archipelago's Islamic literacy tradition, empirical research assessing the effectiveness of PEGON in formal Arabic learning in schools, particularly in MTs, is still very limited. Most previous research has focused on the philological aspects of PEGON, such as the study of the evolution of scripts, the categorization of the PEGON text, or its use in the yellow book [12]; [13]. However, there has not been much quantitative research that directly assesses the extent to which exposure to PEGON can improve students' understanding of the meaning of Arabic texts in the context of modern learning. This gap shows that there is a research space that needs to be filled immediately, especially considering the development of language pedagogy that demands an evidence-based approach (evidence-based learning).

In addition to the limitations of empirical research, the cognitive mechanisms of how PEGON helps the Arabic language interpretation process have also not been widely explored. Some studies have shown that PEGON can help students understand the structure of Arabic sentences because they can match Arabic words with Javanese or Sundanese glossaries found in PEGON texts. However, this mechanism has not been systematically tested using a quantitative approach that is able to measure changes in students' reading ability before and after exposure to PEGON.

[5]; [10]. In other words, although Pegon is theoretically considered a linguistic bridge, there has been no research that confirms how much of an impact it has in the context of formal schools.

The novelty of this research also lies in the effort to integrate Pegon in modern Arabic language learning combined with contemporary learning strategies such as mind mapping, cooperative learning, and multimodality. This is where the creative and trend elements in research are seen. In the midst of a global trend in education that emphasizes the integration of local culture and traditional wisdom in learning, the use of Pegon as a medium of exposure to local linguistics in MTs Arabic classes has never been comprehensively tested. In fact, in the tradition of Islamic education in Banten, Pegon has long been used in Islamic boarding schools and madrassas, but it has not been formalized in the Arabic curriculum of formal schools.

The element of contradiction in this study arises from the differences between formal education systems that focus entirely on fusha, while in many areas students are more familiar with the Pegon script in their cultural context. Students may be familiar with the Arabic phonological structure through Pegon from childhood, but formal learning relies only on fusha Arabic texts, without considering local linguistic resources that might actually facilitate the process of understanding[14]. This contradiction creates a need to reassess whether learning Arabic should ignore Pegon or instead utilize it as a potential learning resource. The element of urgency or urgency can be seen from the fact that the level of understanding of the meaning of Arabic texts by MTs students in various regions is still relatively low. National data shows that many students have difficulty understanding Arabic texts despite having studied them for years [11]. This situation shows that there is an urgent need to find alternative learning strategies that are more contextual and relevant, including the exploration of Pegon Banten as an intermediary medium that can increase the effectiveness of Arabic language learning.

This research was conducted to answer the need for Arabic learning media that is not only linguistically effective but also culturally relevant. The exposure of Pegon Banten has the potential to strengthen the process of interpreting Arabic texts because students can connect Arabic grapheme symbols with linguistic meanings that they have known since childhood [15]; [16]. In the perspective of educational psychology, learning connected to students' linguistic and cultural experiences has been shown to increase learning motivation, belonging, and active engagement in learning [17]; [18]. Thus, filling the research gap regarding Pegon Banten is an academic and pedagogic priority. From an applied linguistics perspective, exposure to Pegon Banten can help students identify the meaning of Arabic vocabulary through more familiar forms of local transcription. Pegon can serve as a tool to connect Arabic phonology with the semantic structure of the local language, making it easier for students to master *mufradat*, *taṣrif*, and syntax [10]; [12]. Thus, this study not only assesses the impact of exposure to Pegon on the understanding of the meaning of texts, but also investigates the linguistic mechanisms that make Pegon relevant in modern Arabic learning.

The one-group pretest-posttest quantitative approach was chosen because it was able to provide empirical evidence of changes in ability before and after treatment. This approach has been widely used in language literacy research to assess the impact of new learning media on students' reading comprehension [19]. By measuring students' comprehension scores before and after exposure to Pegon Banten, this study can provide an objective picture of the effectiveness of the media. In addition to the theoretical contribution, this research has significant practical implications for Arabic language learning in MTs. The integration of Pegon Banten in learning can be an innovation that combines cooperative, visual, and multimodal learning strategies in one comprehensive learning framework. Arabic teachers can use Pegon as a transitional medium to teach the structure of Arabic texts, making it easier for students to connect Arabic words with local meanings before understanding the meaning of fusha thoroughly. Finally, this study aims to test the hypothesis that exposure to Pegon Banten has a significant influence on improving the understanding of the meaning of students' texts. The findings of the research are expected to enrich the literature on Arabic learning based on the local context and provide recommendations for the development of an Arabic language curriculum that is sensitive to the cultural and linguistic dynamics of MTs students. Institutionally, this research has the potential to be the basis for madrassas to consider the integration of Pegon media in modern Arabic learning, as an effort to maintain the Islamic literacy tradition of the archipelago while improving the quality of results learn.

A theoretical study on the influence of exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic on the understanding of the meaning of texts in MTs students departs from the premise that Arabic language literacy in Indonesia develops in a multilingual and multicultural landscape. In this context, the comprehension of Arabic texts is not only determined by the ability to read the Arabic fusha grapheme and the mastery of its linguistic structure, but also by the ability of students to relate the form of writing to the local linguistic experience they have mastered. Understanding the meaning of text or meaning-making in Arabic is a complex cognitive process, as students must integrate lexical meaning, syntactic relationships, and contextual interpretation in a culturally diverse learning environment. The literature shows that the ability to understand Arabic texts can only be built effectively if the interpretation process makes room for students' linguistic experiences, including the regional languages they are familiar with [20]; [21]. In this context, the existence of local writing systems such as Pegon presents new possibilities for students to relate Arabic grapheme with semantic meanings in their local language.

Pegon Banten—an Arabic-based script used to write regional languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, or the Banten dialect—has long played an important role in the literacy tradition of Islamic boarding schools and madrassas. Previous studies have shown that the use of Pegon makes it easier for novice learners to read and understand Arabic texts because the structure of Pegon writing provides a transliteration that is closer to the phonological patterns of the local language [12]; [9]. In the modern context, Pegon is seen not only as a literacy legacy, but as a medium of linguistic exposure that can bridge the semantic differences between the Arabic grapheme fusha and the meaning of the student's local language. Pegon Banten's exposure allows students to identify the relationship between Arabic writing forms and contextual meanings in their everyday language. Thus, Pegon has the potential to strengthen the meaning-making process as students understand the meaning of Arabic texts through the meaning pathways that have been embedded in their linguistic experiences. However, empirical research that assesses the effectiveness of Pegon quantitatively in formal Arabic learning, especially at the MTs level, is still very limited, thus opening up space for this study.

The literature on contextual and multimodal learning supports the use of learning media that is relevant to local culture. Arabic language learning that integrates contextual media has been shown to increase motivation, reading interest, and ability to understand texts because students are more cognitively engaged when learning materials are connected to their socio-cultural environment[22]. In various studies, the use of cultural-based media such as local images, illustrated texts, contextual e-books, and concept maps had an effect on improving the understanding of the meaning of texts for MTs and junior high school students. The integration of Pegon Banten in Arabic learning is very much in line with the contextual learning framework, as Pegon provides a visual-linguistic medium that represents the relationship between Arabic and local languages. Pedagogically, this is in line with the theory of contextual literacy which states that the understanding of texts is shaped by the interaction between the reader, the linguistic context, and the structure of the text [23]. Thus, the use of Pegon Banten is not only about displaying local scripts, but also creating a more concrete meaning path and close to the student's experience.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, Pegon Banten's presentation facilitated the understanding of the meaning of the text through a trans-semantic mechanism, namely the relationship between Arabic grapheme and the meaning of the local language that has been embedded in students' linguistic memory. Studies of bilingual semantics show that language learners will understand the structure of a foreign language more quickly if the context of the meaning offered is in harmony with the structure of their first language [24]. Pegon Banten, which combines Arabic grapheme with local meaning, reduces semantic barriers and increases students' access to the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences in Arabic texts. Research on Arabic-Latin transliteration and Arabic-Sundanese phonological relationships also shows that writing forms that are close to students' phonetic experience will accelerate their understanding of Arabic. Thus, Pegon serves as a tool that helps students build a cognitive bridge between the structure of the Arabic language and the semantic structure of their local language.

In a methodological framework, the language learning literature shows that the one-group pretest-posttest research design is an appropriate approach to evaluate the impact of new learning interventions such as the exposure of Pegon Banten. This design allows for the measurement of changes in the ability to understand the meaning of the text directly before and after treatment. The construct of understanding the meaning of texts usually includes the ability to identify lexical meanings, understand syntactic relationships, capture key ideas, interpret explicit and implied meanings, and infer the meaning of texts holistically. Previous research has shown that contextual and multimodal media-based learning can enhance these abilities because students access texts through visual and linguistic cognitive pathways at the same time. Thus, the use of Pegon in Arabic language learning—if tested through a quantitative approach has the potential to show a significant improvement in understanding the meaning of texts.

Theoretically, the study of the exposure of Pegon Banten in Arabic language learning contributes to literature that emphasizes the importance of learning media based on local culture. Pegon can be seen as a form of linguistic representation that modulates the relationship between Arabic grapheme and local meaning, enriching our understanding of how Arabic texts can be understood in multilingual contexts. Practically, the integration of Pegon Banten in the Arabic curriculum can help teachers design more effective learning strategies, such as Pegon-based mind mapping, Pegon linguistic games, Pegon-Arabic reading exercises, and local text-based learning modules. In addition, the findings of this study can serve as a basis for the development of Arabic language learning evaluation instruments that are more responsive to students' linguistic diversity, especially for those living in communities that are familiar with the Pegon script tradition. Thus, this theory study as a whole confirms that exposure to Pegon Banten has great potential to improve the understanding of the meaning of texts in MTs students when integrated in a contextual, multimodal, and local culture-based learning design.

## Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design of the one-group pretest–posttest design, which aims to measure the influence of exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic on improving the understanding of the meaning of texts of MTs Al-Islam Telaga Biru students. The one-group pretest–posttest design was chosen because it allows researchers to assess changes in ability before and after treatment, as well as provide a quantitative picture of the effectiveness of the intervention given. In this design, the research group only consisted of one class that was given a pretest, followed by treatment in the form of exposure to the Arabic text of Pegon Banten, and then closed with a posttest to assess changes in learning outcomes. This design is one of the research models commonly used to evaluate the effects of learning when researchers are unable to apply control groups due to context limitations or the need for a single-class intervention.

This research was carried out at MTs Al-Islam Telaga Biru, an Islamic educational institution located in Gorontalo Regency. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that the school is one of the madrassas that consistently implements Arabic language learning in its formal curriculum, but has not explored much the use of local context-based media such as Pegon Banten. In addition, the sociolinguistic environment of students who are relatively homogeneous and do not have a Banten cultural background provides a unique opportunity to see the extent to which exposure to Pegon Banten can be applied cross-culturally. The research time includes three main stages, namely the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages, which are carried out in a span of two months in the current semester. The preparation stage includes the preparation of Pegon learning tools, instrument validation, and coordination with the school. The implementation stage includes providing pretests, providing treatment in several learning sessions, and providing posttests. The evaluation stage includes data analysis, statistical processing, and preparation of research reports.

The research population includes all students of MTs Al-Islam Telaga Biru for the current school year. From this population, the research sample was selected using the purposive sampling technique, which is the determination of the sample based on certain considerations relevant to the research objectives. The selected sample was one class consisting of 60 level VIII students. This class was chosen because it has a more stable Arabic learning schedule and has learned the basics of reading Arabic texts so that it has the initial prerequisites to take part in Pegon's intervention. In addition, the selection of a single class allows for the more effective execution of pre-experimental designs without disruption of the schedule between classes. Students who became samples were given an explanation of the purpose of the research and participated based on the approval of the teacher and the madrasah.

The research instrument used consists of several components. The main instruments are in the form of pretest and posttest tests designed to measure students' ability to understand the meaning of texts before and after receiving exposure to Pegon Banten. This test contains 10 multiple-choice questions that measure cognitive ability to understand words, phrases, sentences, and overall meaning in the context of the Pegon Arabic text. Each question item refers to comprehension indicators such as identifying word meanings, inference of sentence meanings, simple structure analysis, and interpretation of text content. To ensure the validity of the instrument's content, the questions were validated by Arabic linguists and two Arabic teachers at the relevant madrasas. In addition to the test, additional instruments in the form of observation sheets were used to monitor the implementation of interventions and student involvement during Pegon's learning sessions. Documentation instruments such as photos, class notes, and Pegon learning materials are also used as supports.

The research procedure was carried out in three main stages, namely: (1) pretest, (2) treatment, and (3) posttest. The pretest stage is carried out to measure students' initial ability to understand the meaning of the text before they are introduced to Pegon Banten. The pretest is carried out in the classroom and supervised by researchers and Arabic teachers. After the pretest, the research entered the treatment stage in the form of intensive exposure to the Arabic text of Pegon Banten for four learning sessions. At this stage, students are introduced to Pegon letters, Pegon Banten phonology, and some simple texts written in Pegon. Learning activities are carried out through the reading-writing method, independent reading exercises, cooperative discussions in small groups, and interpretation exercises. Students are invited to recognize the writing pattern of Pegon, associate the meaning of the word Pegon with the Arabic form of fusha, and identify the meaning in the context of the sentence. The learning process is also strengthened with mind mapping techniques to help students visualize the interconnectedness of textual meanings. At the end of the treatment, students were given a posttest to measure the improvement in understanding the meaning of the text after exposure to Pegon. The pretest and posttest scores were then compared to see the differences that emerged as the impact of the intervention.

The data analysis in this study was carried out through two stages, namely descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis is used to describe the distribution of data, such as minimum, maximum, average, and standard deviation values for pretest and posttest values. This stage provides a preliminary overview of data trends and patterns of value improvement. Next, a normality test was performed using Shapiro–Wilk to determine whether

the data was normally distributed. Based on the results of the normality test, the pretest and posttest data were not distributed normally, so nonparametric statistical analysis was chosen. This study uses the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test to determine the significance of the difference in pretest and posttest scores. The Wilcoxon test is used because it is appropriate for paired data that is not normally distributed. In addition, the effect size was calculated using the formula  $r = Z / \sqrt{N}$  to determine the magnitude of the effect of treatment on improving the ability to understand the meaning of the text. Thus, data analysis focuses not only on statistical significance, but also on the magnitude of the treatment effect.

## Results and Discussion

### Data description

Descriptive statistical analysis was carried out to find out the general picture of students' ability to understand the meaning of texts before and after being given treatment in the form of exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic. The statistics analyzed include minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviations from pretest and posttest scores.

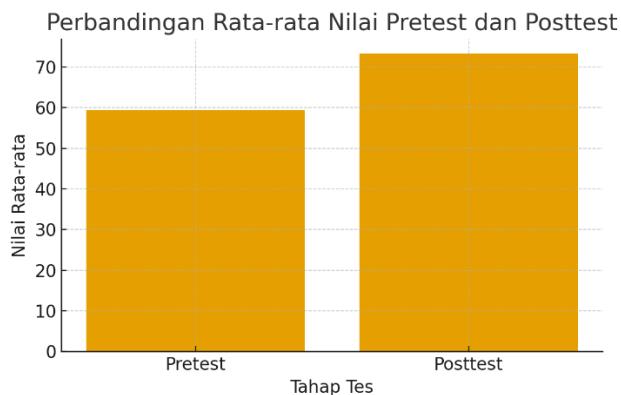
**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	60	42	79	59.45	10.665
Posttest	60	49	98	73.27	13.047
Valid N (listwise)	60				

Based on the statistical output, the pretest scores showed that out of 60 students, the lowest score was 42 and the highest score was 79, with an average score of 59.45 and a standard deviation of 10.665. This average score shows that students' initial ability to understand the meaning of the text is in the medium category and still needs improvement. The standard deviation of 10.665 indicates that there is a considerable variation in grades between students in initial ability.

Meanwhile, posttest scores showed a significant increase. The lowest increased to 49, and the highest increased to 98, with an average score of 73.27 and a standard deviation of 13.047. The average increase from 59.45 in the pretest to 73.27 in the posttest showed an increase in the ability to understand the meaning of the text after the students received the treatment. The standard deviation in the posttest was slightly higher (13.047) showing that the variation in student achievement remained, but in general the students' scores increased.

Overall, descriptive data showed that exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic contributed to an increase in students' scores on the text meaning comprehension test. This can be seen from a significant increase in minimum, maximum, and average values between pretest and posttest, thus strengthening the suspicion that the treatment has a positive impact before further statistical analysis is carried out.



This bar chart shows the comparison of students' pretest and posttest average scores after participating in learning with exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic. In the diagram, it can be seen that the average pretest score is 59.45, while the average posttest score increases to 73.27. The difference in bar height between the two values illustrates an increase in the ability to understand the meaning of the text after the treatment is given. This visualization confirms

that the exposure of Pegon Banten has a significant positive contribution to improving student learning outcomes, as well as supported by statistical analysis in other sections.

### Normality Test

The normality test is carried out to find out whether the pretest and posttest data are distributed normally so that they can determine the right type of statistical test to use. The normality test in this study used two techniques, namely Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, with Shapiro-Wilk as the main reference because the number of samples was less than 200.

**Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.122	60	.027	.947	60	.012
Posttest	.123	60	.024	.959	60	.041

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the Shapiro-Wilk test output, the significance value for the pretest was 0.012 and for the posttest was 0.041. Both values are smaller than the significance limit of 0.05, so it can be concluded that the pretest and posttest data are not normally distributed. These results are also consistent with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which showed significance values of 0.027 (pretest) and 0.024 (posttest), both  $< 0.05$ .

Thus, because the data does not meet the assumption of normality, statistical analysis using a parametric test (paired sample t-test) cannot be performed. Therefore, this study uses the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test to test the difference in pretest and posttest scores.

### Uji Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

Because the results of the normality test showed that the pretest and posttest data were not normally distributed, the analysis of the differences before and after treatment was carried out using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, which is a non-parametric test used for paired data in two conditions that are not normally distributed.

**Ranks**

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Posttest - Pretest	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>a</sup>	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	60 <sup>b</sup>	30.50	1830.00
	Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	60		

a. Posttest  $<$  Pretest

b. Posttest  $>$  Pretest

c. Posttest = Pretest

Based on the results of Wilcoxon's calculations, all 60 students showed an increase in scores after being given treatment, which can be seen from the existence of 60 positive ranks and 0 negative ranks. This shows that no students experienced a decrease in grades after getting exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic.

**Test Statistics<sup>b</sup>**

	Posttest-Pretest
Z	-6.742 <sup>a</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

The results of the analysis in the Test Statistics table show a value of  $Z = -6.742$  with a significance value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000. Since this significance value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a

significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. In other words, these results prove that exposure to Pegan Banten Arabic has a significant influence on improving students' understanding of the meaning of texts.

### **Uji Effect Size**

To determine the magnitude of the effect of the treatment, an effect size calculation was made based on the Z value of the Wilcoxon test. The formula used is:

$$r = \frac{Z}{\sqrt{N}}$$

With the value of  $Z = -6,742$  and the number of samples  $N = 60$ , the following calculations were obtained:

$$r = \frac{-6.742}{\sqrt{60}} = 0.87$$

The effect size value of 0.87 shows that the influence of exposure to Pegan Banten Arabic is in the very large category, based on the criteria of Cohen (1988) who stated that the values of 0.1 = small, 0.3 = medium, and 0.5 and above = large. Thus, in addition to being statistically significant, the treatment also has a very high power of influence practically on improving the understanding of the meaning of students' texts.

## **Discussion**

The results of this study fill a gap that has not been widely discussed in the literature, namely regarding the influence of exposure to Pegan Banten Arabic on the understanding of the meaning of texts in MTs students. Most of the previous research focused more on modern learning strategies such as cooperative learning, mind mapping, and game-based media to improve the understanding of Arabic texts [25]. However, there has been no empirical study that specifically tests the effectiveness of local Arabic variants, especially Pegan Banten, as a form of linguistic exposure to improve understanding of the meaning of texts. Thus, the findings of this study provide a new contribution that has not been widely explained in previous research.

The increase in students' average scores from 59.45 in the pretest to 73.27 in the posttest shows that Pegan Banten is able to function as an effective linguistic bridge. Pegan provides a visual and phonological proximity between Arabic letters and the local language, which makes the process of understanding more natural for students. This is in line with the theory of language acquisition which states that meaningful linguistic input (meaningful exposure) will accelerate the process of internalizing language and support the understanding of the meaning of texts. By providing stimulus in the form of more familiar Pegan writing, students get an easier starting point to interpret the meaning of words and sentences, before associating them with the Arabic form of fusha.

These results also strengthen the Arabic theory of applied linguistics which asserts that the understanding of the meaning of texts is greatly influenced by mastery of syntax, morphology (tashrif), and mufradat. Pegan Banten, although not fusha Arabic, still facilitates the process of activating Arabic vocabulary and mapping meaning through the context of the local language. This makes Pegan a cognitive tool that supports the formation of students' linguistic schemes. In this context, the research findings fill the theoretical gap that local Arabic variants can play a role as learning support in improving the understanding of Arabic texts.

In addition, the results of this study connect modern learning theory with local contexts. The use of Pegan in learning does not stand alone, but is combined with reading activities, small group discussions, and meaning mapping. In line with the principle of cooperative learning, students who read and interpret Pegan texts in groups can strengthen understanding through the exchange of ideas. This confirms that the integration of Pegan with cooperative methods expands the effectiveness of learning compared to previous research that only focused on one specific strategy.

The results of this study also fill the gap in terms of visual representation-based learning. Previous research confirms that the use of mind mapping helps students summarize concepts and understand the relationships between linguistic elements. In this study, the Pegan text provided can be used as a visual basis to create a concept map that connects the Pegan writing, the Arabic form of fusha, and its meaning. Thus, the use of Pegan enriches the visual representations used in learning, while increasing students' understanding of the structure and meaning of the text.

In terms of empirical findings, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test showed a value of  $Z = -6,742$  with a significance of 0.000, and an effect size of 0.87. This very large effect size value shows that the exposure of Pegan Banten is not only statistically significant, but also practically strong. These results fill a gap in previous research that only explained the effectiveness of learning strategies without considering the role of local linguistic exposure in

improving text comprehension. Thus, this study adds a new dimension to the understanding of how local Arabic variants can be used effectively to optimize the Arabic learning process.

Overall, this study fills the gap by showing that exposure to Pegon Banten—which has been positioned as a traditional literacy heritage—can be effectively integrated into modern learning to improve understanding of the meaning of texts. These findings link learning theory, previous research results, and local cultural contexts within a comprehensive pedagogical framework. With strong empirical evidence, this study provides the basis that the use of local media such as Pegon not only enriches students' learning experience, but also makes a significant contribution to their academic achievement in Arabic subjects.

### **Integration of the Arabic Manuscript of Pegon Banten**

The integration of the Arabic manuscript of Pegon Banten in Arabic language learning at the MTs level presents significant pedagogical opportunities, especially in a learning context that requires connectivity between Arabic grapheme symbols and local languages and cultures that are more familiar to students. Historically, Pegon Banten has been used in the scientific tradition of Islamic boarding schools and madrassas as a linguistic intermediary that connects Arabic texts with regional languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Banten dialects. This tradition places Pegon not only as an alternative writing system, but as a literacy medium that facilitates the interpretation of the meaning of Arabic texts through semantic pathways that correspond to the linguistic experience of learners [12]; [9]; [13]. Thus, the use of Pegon Banten in MTs offers a smoother transition for students who are learning to associate Arabic fusha grapheme with linguistic meanings in their own language, so that the meaning-making process can take place more effectively.

A literature review on local linguistic exposure media confirms that the use of Pegon has the potential to strengthen the connection between Arabic symbols and local meanings, especially in students who grow up in a multilingual environment. Pegon exposure makes the meaning of Arabic texts more accessible because students no longer have to go through the stage of abstract representation of Arabic grapheme without the support of the local context. Instead, Pegon help mediate meaning through semantic representations of the regional languages they have mastered from an early age [26]. This is particularly relevant to cognitive linguistics theory which states that the understanding of a second language is strongly influenced by the structure and experience of a student's first language. The closer the learning medium is to the structure of the student's mother tongue, the easier it will be for them to process the meaning of the text in a foreign language.

The use of the Pegon Banten manuscript is not only about the graphic display that uses Arabic letters, but also about the semantic meaning that is built through the cultural context of students. The educational experience in pesantren shows that students who are used to accessing the Pegon text find it easier to understand the concepts in the yellow book because they can relate the form of Arabic writing to the vocabulary of the regional language they have mastered [27]. Thus, the integration of Pegon in Arabic learning in MTs can expand the meaning-making pathway that was previously limited to the Arabic structure of fusha, so that the understanding of the meaning of the text can be formed through a combination of the local context and the Arabic linguistic structure that students learn. This process supports learning that is not only text-based, but also culturally context-based, so that students can understand meaning more comprehensively and relevant to their lives.

The integration of Pegon manuscripts in Arabic language learning can be done through various strategies, especially those based on the principles of contextual and multimodal learning. The use of Pegon text in modules or worksheets can enrich the learning material with a linguistic bridge that makes it easier for students to understand the relationship between Arabic words and local equivalent meanings. In addition, multimedia and digital platforms can support the use of Pegon in audio-visual form, for example in the form of interactive e-books, Pegon-based learning videos, or cloud learning applications that enable student collaboration in reading Pegon texts [28]; [29]. This approach is also in line with the development of modern pedagogy that encourages multimodal learning to increase students' interest and motivation, as well as build a more creative and collaborative learning environment.

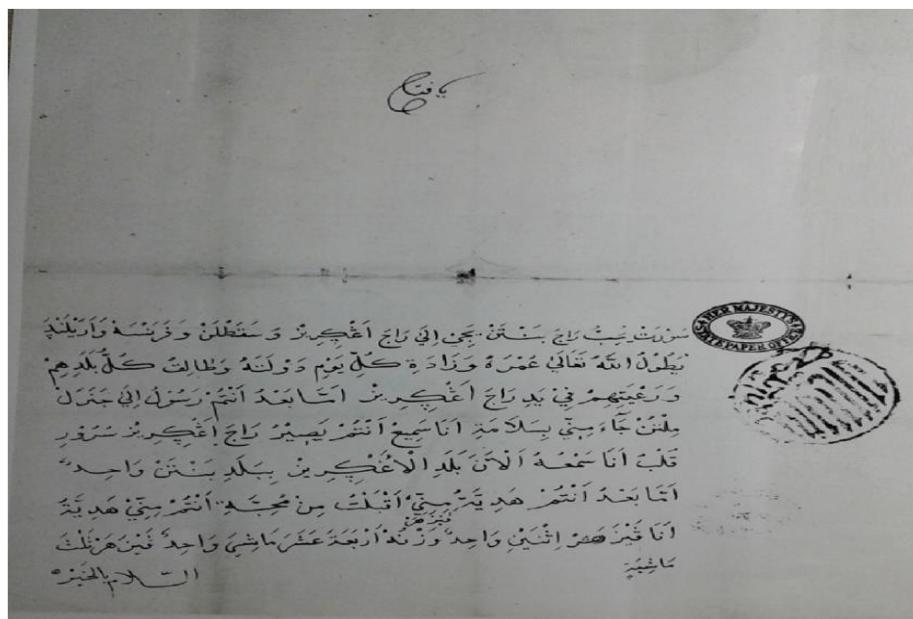
In the context of the curriculum, Pegon Banten can be integrated as part of learning based on local wisdom. For example, the activity of reading Arabic-Pegon texts can be associated with the analysis of the local culture of Banten, so that students not only learn the language but also understand the roots of their local literacy. Discussion-based learning activities, concept maps, and contextual interpretation can enrich students' understanding of the meaning of the text, as they are exposed to material that is close to their own linguistic world [30]. Learning evaluations can also use task-based approaches, such as Pegon-Arabic transliteration, text meaning reflection, and Pegon content analysis to measure students' ability to understand meaning in a local context.

On the other hand, the integration of Pegon Banten in Arabic language learning requires the readiness of educators and the availability of adequate teaching resources. Teachers must be competent in reading and teaching Pegon, as well as being able to explain the relationship between the structure of Pegon and the structure of the Arabic language fusha. The literature review confirms that professional training for teachers is a key factor for the successful

implementation of Pegon-based learning. In addition, the provision of Pegon-based digital learning resources can help overcome the limitations of conventional textbooks and encourage the use of technology in learning.

Cultural considerations and multicultural values also play an important role in the integration of Pegon Banten. Pegon teaching involves acknowledging students' cultural identity and respecting the literacy traditions that exist in society. This approach not only enriches Arabic literacy, but also creates space for strengthening local identity and cross-cultural understanding of students in MTs. Studies on cultural-based contextual education show that the integration of local culture in learning can increase students' sense of pride, motivation, and understanding of learning materials. In this context, Pegon not only serves as a literacy tool, but also as a vehicle for cultural inheritance that supports the formation of students' character and identity.

Overall, this discussion shows that the integration of the Arabic manuscript of Pegon Banten in Arabic learning has a strong pedagogical value for MTs students. Pegon functions as a linguistic bridge that facilitates the understanding of the meaning of Arabic texts through local contexts, supports multimodal learning design, and contributes to strengthening students' cultural identity. With the right instructional design, competent teacher support, and relevant learning resources, Pegon Banten can be an effective learning medium to improve Arabic literacy and facilitate a deeper meaning-making process for MTs Al-Islam Telaga Biru students.



Snippets of the script text:

يَا قَلْبُ سُورَةِ يُحْبُّ رَجَابَنْ يَجِي إِلَى رَجَا إِنْغُرِيْسْ وَسُطْلَنْ وَأَرَلَنْ

Transliteration:

Yā Fattāhu sūratu yuhibbu Rajā Banten yajī ilā Rajā English wa Saqotlan wa Faransah wa Arlanda.

This letter was written in standard Arabic script with full meaning without local modifications. This signifies both formal and diplomatic functions. This manuscript is proof that the Sultanate of Banten has a high literacy tradition and is able to use Arabic as a means of communication between Islamic countries.

This image is one example of a Banten Pegon manuscript used in the religious literacy tradition in Banten. This manuscript contains religious texts written in Arabic letters in the local language, demonstrating the function of Pegon as a linguistic intermediary for non-Arab communities in understanding Islamic teachings.

The Banten Pegon manuscript shown in the image shows the main characteristic of Pegon, namely the use of Arabic letters to write the local language (Javanese-Banten or Sundanese-Banten) through phonological adjustments. The linguistic characteristics of Pegon in this manuscript can be analyzed through several aspects:

#### a. Letter Structure

Arabic letters are used as in the Arabic writing of fusha, but with the addition of dots or changes in shape to symbolize local sounds that are not found in Arabic phonology. For example: The sounds of p, g, ng, and ny are

written with modifications of Arabic letters. This shows the complex phonological relationship between the local language and the Arabic letters.

#### b. Morphology and Lexicon

The language used in the manuscript is the local language (Banten/Javanese/Sundanese) but adopts certain Arabic vocabulary, especially religious terms. This shows the process of code-mixing and lexical borrowing, where the local language enriches itself with Arabic terms for the purpose of conveying Islamic texts.

#### c. Sentence Structure

The sentences in the manuscript follow the pattern of regional language syntax, not the Arabic fusha syntax. Thus, although the letters are Arabic, the sentence structure is very easy for local readers to understand.

#### d. Semiotic Functions

Pegon not only serves as a writing system, but also as a symbol of culture and religious identity. Pegon's writing reflects the role of the people of Banten in preserving religious literacy through a medium that is familiar to its readers.

This analysis shows that Pegon has pedagogical potential because: it introduces Arabic letters naturally, makes it easier to understand the meaning of the text, and connects students with linguistic meaning through a language that is closer to their daily lives.

The findings of this research are further strengthened by the existence of the Banten Pegon Arabic manuscript which is an important part of the archipelago's Islamic literacy tradition. The manuscript as shown in the picture shows how Pegon has been used as a medium for recording knowledge, delivering advice, and teaching religion by Banten scholars since ancient times. The writing structure that appears in the manuscript shows the typical characteristics of Pegon, namely the use of Arabic letters to write the local language so as to produce a form of text that can be read by people who do not master fusha Arabic. Thus, Pegon functions as a transitional literacy tool that helps people access Islamic knowledge more easily.

The relationship between the Banten Pegon manuscript and the results of this research can be seen from the way students understand the language composition listed in the Pegon text. Exposure to Pegon texts allows students to see the relationships between sound structures, writing forms, and meanings expressed in the context of the local culture. This process of comprehension is in line with language acquisition theory that emphasizes the role of comprehensible input—where students are more likely to understand the text if the material is presented in a form that is close to their linguistic experience. The Pegon manuscript provides a form of visual representation of the language, but still gives elements of Arabic language through a certain letter system and lexical component.

The integration of Pegon manuscripts also helped fill in the gaps of previous research that more highlighted modern learning strategies without involving traditional authentic sources. This kind of manuscript is historical as well as pedagogical evidence that Pegon has become an effective medium in transmitting Islamic knowledge through a local literacy approach. In the context of modern learning, the use of Pegon manuscripts can enrich students' learning experiences by providing real examples of how religious texts are practiced in the Banten tradition. It also supports the idea of contextual learning that utilizes authentic sources to enhance the meaning of learning.

Furthermore, the existence of the Banten Pegon manuscript provides added value in strengthening the effects of the treatment found in this study. When students are introduced to the written form of Pegon through learning materials, they not only learn letter patterns and meanings mechanically, but also enter a historical context that has long placed Pegon as an effective educational medium. In other words, learning that utilizes Pegon not only teaches the language, but also instills the identity of Islamic literacy in the archipelago which has historically been proven functional in facilitating the understanding of Arabic texts.

Thus, the Pegon Banten manuscript is not only a historical background for this research, but also a proof of the sustainability of the function of Pegon as an effective learning medium from time to time. This shows that the integration of Pegon in modern Arabic learning is not only pedagogically correct, but also has strong cultural and historical legitimacy. Therefore, the findings of this study not only fill the empirical gap regarding the effectiveness of Pegon, but also strengthen the relevance of Pegon as part of the local literacy heritage that can still be optimized in Arabic language learning in MTs today.

## Conclusion

The results of the study showed that exposure to Pegon Banten Arabic had a significant and strong influence on improving the understanding of the meaning of the text in MTs Al-Islam Telaga Biru students. The increase in the average score from pretest to posttest, as well as the results of the Wilcoxon test which showed high significance,

confirmed that the treatment provided was able to answer the formulation of the research problem. Thus, this study proves that the use of Pegon Banten as a form of linguistic exposure is not only statistically effective, but also pedagogically relevant in supporting the ability to understand Arabic texts at the MTs level.

These findings have important significance for the development of Arabic language learning in the future. First, the use of Pegon Banten can be used as an alternative strategy in teaching Arabic, especially for beginner students who still have difficulty understanding the structure and meaning of Arabic fusha texts. Second, this research opens up opportunities to integrate local literacy of the archipelago into modern Arabic language learning, thereby creating more contextual, meaningful, and in accordance with the history of Islamic literacy in Indonesia. Third, these findings emphasize the importance of utilizing authentic sources such as the Pegon manuscript in learning, as it can increase motivation, understanding, and cultural closeness between students and the material being studied.

The recommendations that can be given from this study include several aspects. Pedagogically, Arabic teachers are advised to include Pegon texts in a structured way in learning as a transitional medium to understand fusha Arabic. Pegon learning can also be combined with other strategies such as cooperative learning, mind mapping, and game-based media to strengthen the learning experience. Institutionally, madrasas can consider the preparation of a local content curriculum that utilizes the Pegon literacy tradition as part of the archipelago's Islamic scientific identity. In addition, researchers are further encouraged to test the influence of Pegon in broader contexts, such as Arabic writing ability, vocabulary mastery, or comprehension of the yellow book, as well as to use experimental designs with control groups to obtain more comprehensive results. Overall, this study confirms that the exposure of Pegon Banten is a potential learning innovation that is worthy of being developed in Arabic language education in the future.

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