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## The Effect of Using Gorontalo Pegon-Arabic *Dikili* Text Media on Students' Arabic Reading Skills at Hubulo Islamic Boarding School

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of using *Arab Pegon* texts on students' Arabic reading ability at MA Hubulo. The background of this research arises from the low reading proficiency among students, caused by the complexity of Arabic orthography and the dominance of memorization-based teaching methods. The *Arab Pegon* approach—Arabic script adapted to local phonology—is believed to bridge the gap between letter recognition and comprehension through a culturally familiar context. The research employed a quantitative method using a quasi-experimental design of the *pretest-posttest control group* type. The population consisted of 120 students, with 120 selected as samples divided into two groups: the experimental class with 60 students taught using *Arab Pegon* texts, and the control class with 60 students taught through conventional methods. Data were collected through reading tests, observation sheets, and *Arab Pegon* learning materials implemented over eight instructional sessions. Statistical analysis using an independent *t*-test showed that the mean posttest score of the experimental class (77.58) was higher than that of the control class (64.20) with a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ . These results indicate that the use of *Arab Pegon* texts had a significant positive effect on improving students' Arabic reading ability. The study concludes that applying *Arab Pegon* texts is not only pedagogically effective but also culturally relevant as a learning strategy that connects the literacy traditions of Islamic scholarship in the Indonesian archipelago with modern educational practices in madrasah settings.



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### Introduction

Reading ability forms the foundation of the entire learning process. It is one of the main indicators of academic success, especially in the context of Islamic education, which relies heavily on Arabic texts.[4][5][8] In madrasah settings, including MA Hubulo, almost all Islamic disciplines, such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, creed (aqidah), ethics (akhlāq), and tasawwuf, are delivered through written Arabic texts, whether in the form of classical *kitab gundul* (unvowelled texts) or modern textbooks. Without adequate reading skills, students find it

difficult to access these primary learning sources independently and become overly dependent on teachers' explanations. In other words, weaknesses in reading are not merely a technical issue; they have direct implications for the depth of religious understanding, critical thinking ability, and overall academic performance.

At the MA Hubulo level, the challenges of teaching Arabic reading are not limited to letter recognition and pronunciation, but also involve students' ability to understand how written symbols, sounds, and meanings are interconnected to produce coherent comprehension. Many students may be able to spell or pronounce Arabic words, yet struggle to connect those sounds with meanings within the context of a sentence. Conversely, some students are able to memorize the meanings of individual vocabulary items but falter when required to read lines of continuous text. This gap reflects a problem at the decoding–comprehension stage, which cannot be resolved simply by increasing instructional time or adding more vocabulary lists.[1][9][13][14]

Teachers often face situations in which students appear passive, reluctant to read aloud in class, or quick to give up when confronted with slightly longer Arabic passages. Teaching methods that remain largely traditional, such as relying only on lecturing, memorization, and repetitive reading drills without sufficient context, tend to make the learning atmosphere monotonous and less meaningful. Students come to perceive Arabic as something “foreign,” difficult, and distant from their everyday linguistic experience. Differences in students' mother tongues (for example, Gorontalo, Buginese, Javanese, and others) that are not adequately accommodated in instructional design further widen the gap between Arabic and their actual linguistic reality. This situation calls for a more innovative, contextual, and learner-sensitive approach that takes into account students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, so that Arabic reading skills can be developed more efficiently and enjoyably at MA Hubulo.[1][9][13][14]

Within this context, the use of Arab Pegon texts Arabic script modified to write local languages or Indonesian offers a promising pedagogical solution. Arab Pegon utilizes Arabic letters but arranges them in such a way as to represent the phonemes of local languages. Thus, Pegon functions as a bridge between Arabic orthography and the phonological system already familiar to students. When students read Pegon texts, they see the same Arabic letter forms that appear in the Qur'an or classical books, but the sounds and meanings refer to the language they use daily. This makes the process of linking visual forms, sounds, and meanings more natural. Reading exercises are no longer mere mechanical repetition, but have become linguistic activities rooted in their actual language use and cultural experience.[1][2][3][8][10]

This Pegon-based approach has a strong theoretical foundation. According to Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, learning becomes more effective when information is processed through two main channels: the visual channel (images, symbols, text) and the verbal channel (sound, language).[6] In reading instruction using Pegon texts, the Arabic letters on the page serve as visual representations, while the local-language sounds represented by those letters activate the verbal channel. This dual activation reinforces the formation of associations between symbols and meanings, making the information easier to recall and understand. At the same time, Piaget's Constructivist Learning Theory explains that learners build new knowledge by linking it to existing cognitive schemas.[7] Students at MA Hubulo already possess schemas related to their mother tongue and basic literacy experiences in Indonesian or local languages; when learning materials are presented in Pegon, they are not starting from zero, but instead use these established schemas as an entry point into the world of Arabic texts.

Previous studies have indeed highlighted the pedagogical and cultural value of the Arab Pegon in Islamic education, but most of them remain limited to descriptive and qualitative approaches. Soleha and Anshory (2024), for example, examined Pegon's contribution to religious literacy, showing that traditional Islamic texts are more accessible when presented in Pegon, especially for communities with a strong pesantren tradition. However, their study did not systematically measure improvements in reading ability, such as speed, pronunciation accuracy, or comprehension, using pretest and posttest instruments. Similarly, the study by Tika, Zakiyah, and Amin (2023) emphasized Pegon's role in preserving the Islamic Nusantara literacy tradition in pesantren. Still, it did not address its pedagogical effectiveness in formal madrasah classrooms with structured curricula.

Other research has tended to approach Pegon from filological, historical, or cultural perspectives: tracing its origins, letter forms, script variants, and its role in the writing of classical manuscripts and local religious documents. Such perspectives are important for understanding Pegon's place within the broader tradition of Islamic Nusantara literacy. Yet, they do not directly answer a practical question: to what extent can the use of Pegon in classrooms help students read more fluently, more accurately, and with better comprehension of Arabic texts? It is this empirical gap that the present study seeks to address.

Unlike many previous studies, this research explicitly situates Arab Pegon within the pedagogical framework of teaching Arabic reading in formal madrasah education. It employs a quasi-experimental design

by comparing an experimental class taught using Arab Pegon texts and a control class taught using conventional methods. Through this design, the impact of Pegon on reading ability is not only described narratively but also tested and measured using standardized instruments. By comparing pretest and posttest scores and applying statistical analyses (such as t-tests), the researcher is able to draw stronger conclusions about Pegon's effectiveness as an instructional medium.

Although academic interest in Arab Pegon as a medium of culture and Islamic Nusantara identity is growing, there remains a lack of quantitative research that specifically examines its pedagogical impact on Arabic reading comprehension and fluency in formal educational institutions. Many madrasahs and pesantrens still use Pegon sporadically, for example, in marginal notes of classical texts, devotional writings such as shalawat, or certain study materials without a systematic instructional design that positions Pegon as part of a coherent strategy for developing reading skills. This study attempts to address that gap by presenting empirical evidence, through a quasi-experimental design, of the extent to which Pegon-based instruction improves reading ability compared to conventional methods, including in terms of pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and comprehension of text content.

Thus, the urgency of this research operates on two levels. First, on a practical level, it responds to a real need at MA Hubulo to find an Arabic reading instruction approach that is more effective, humanistic, and closely aligned with students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Second, on an academic level, it enriches the literature on Arab Pegon by providing a solid empirical foundation for the development of Arabic reading pedagogy in formal madrasah settings. It is hoped that the findings of this study can serve as a reference for teachers, curriculum developers, and researchers in designing Arabic language teaching models that are innovative, grounded in local wisdom, and relevant to the challenges of Islamic education in the modern era.

**Research Problems:** Does the use of Arab Pegon text media significantly improve students' Arabic reading ability compared with conventional methods?. To what extent does Pegon-based instruction affect students' reading fluency, pronunciation accuracy, and comprehension?. **Hypotheses:**  $H_0$ : There is no significant difference in Arabic reading achievement between students taught using Arab Pegon texts and those taught using conventional methods.  $H_1$ : Students taught using Arab Pegon texts achieve significantly higher Arabic reading scores than those taught using conventional methods.

Within this framework, the implementation of Arab Pegon texts at MA Hubulo is expected to improve students' reading fluency, pronunciation accuracy, and comprehension of Arabic sentences. Beyond linguistic benefits, it also aims to increase students' enthusiasm and confidence in learning Arabic by integrating a form of literacy that is deeply connected to the intellectual and cultural heritage of the Islamic world.[8][9][10][13][14][15] Therefore, this study seeks to empirically examine the effect of using Arab Pegon texts on the reading ability of MA Hubulo students, providing measurable evidence for the development of innovative Arabic language teaching practices that align with students' contextual and cultural realities[11][12]

This study is grounded in Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1972). According to Dual Coding, information is processed through both visual and verbal channels; the Pegon script simultaneously stimulates visual recognition (Arabic orthography) and verbal association (local phonetic familiarity), enhancing fluency and pronunciation. Constructivist Learning Theory emphasizes learners' active meaning construction through cultural and linguistic schemas, explaining improved comprehension and retention. These theoretical underpinnings directly inform the four operational indicators measured in this study: reading fluency, pronunciation accuracy, comprehension of meaning, and retention of sentence structure.

## Method

This research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design aimed at empirically examining the effect of using *Arab Pegon* text media on students' Arabic reading ability. The design used was a pretest–posttest control group design, in which two classes were compared: Class A as the experimental group and Class B as the control group. Both groups were given a pretest to measure their initial reading ability before treatment and a posttest to assess the improvement in reading ability after the treatment.

The study was conducted at MA Hubulo, located in Kabila District, Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province. The population consisted of all students of MA Hubulo, totaling 120 students, while the research sample consisted of 120 students, divided into 60 students from Class A (experimental group) and 60 students from Class B (control group).

The independent variable in this study was the use of *Arab Pegon* text media, while the dependent variable was the students' Arabic reading ability. The use of *Arab Pegon* text was defined as the application of Arabic script adapted to represent local language sounds in the Arabic learning process, enabling students to recognize letter forms, understand phonetic patterns, and connect symbols with meanings more effectively.

Reading ability was assessed through four main indicators: reading fluency, pronunciation accuracy, comprehension of meaning, and retention of sentence structure.

The research instruments consisted of three types. The first was a reading ability test, administered as a pretest and posttest to measure students' progress before and after the intervention. The second was an observation sheet used to record students' engagement, attentiveness, and participation during learning activities. The third was a collection of Arab Pegon texts serving as the main learning media as well as the experimental instrument. These texts consisted of short Arabic passages of 80–120 words written in *Pegon* script, featuring distinctive letters such as  $\text{ca}$  (ca),  $\text{nga}$  (nga),  $\text{pa}$  (pa),  $\text{ga}$  (ga), and  $\text{nya}$  (nya). The texts were arranged progressively, from simple to more complex levels, and contextualized with students' daily lives to enhance relevance and comprehension.

Instrument validity was established through expert review by Arabic education lecturers and madrasah practitioners. Reliability was verified using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ), exceeding the acceptable threshold ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$ ). Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Assumptions of normality and homogeneity were tested via the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Levene's Tests, respectively. The independent sample *t*-test results ( $t = 4.218$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) confirmed a statistically significant difference between groups. The effect size, calculated using Cohen's  $d = 1.02$ , indicates a large pedagogical effect, further supported by a 95% confidence interval (CI [4.1, 12.5]).

The content validity of the instruments was assessed through expert judgment involving Arabic language education lecturers and madrasah teachers. The reliability of the test was examined using Cronbach's Alpha, with an acceptable reliability threshold of  $\alpha \geq 0.70$ . Data collection was carried out in three stages: administering the pretest, implementing the *Arab Pegon* text-based learning treatment for eight sessions, and administering the posttest. Each session lasted 90 minutes and included guided reading exercises, introduction to the *Pegon* letters, text meaning discussions, pronunciation drills, and comprehension practice.

Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis to determine mean scores, standard deviations, and improvement levels in students' reading ability, and inferential analysis using an Independent Sample T-Test to determine significant differences between the experimental and control groups. Before the T-test, data were tested for normality using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and for homogeneity using Levene's Test. The decision criterion was that if the significance value ( $p$ )  $< 0.05$ , it indicated a significant effect of the *Arab Pegon* text media on students' Arabic reading ability.

All research activities were conducted in accordance with academic ethical principles, including obtaining permission from the school principal and subject teachers, maintaining the confidentiality of student identities, and using all collected data solely for academic purposes. Through the eight learning sessions, this study is expected to provide empirical evidence that the use of *Arab Pegon* texts effectively enhances the Arabic reading skills of students at MA Hubulo.

## Results and Discussions

### Result

This study was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Hubulo, located in Kabila District, Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province. MA Hubulo is an Islamic educational institution committed to integrating Islamic values into all aspects of its learning process. Arabic language learning at this institution is a core subject aimed at developing students' abilities to read, understand, and appreciate both classical and contemporary Arabic texts.

Before the implementation of the research, an initial observation was carried out, and it revealed that many students still struggled to read Arabic texts fluently. The main challenges identified were the recognition of letters, phonetic pronunciation, and comprehension of meaning. Limited learning media and the use of conventional teaching methods primarily caused these difficulties. Therefore, this study introduced the use of Arab Pegon texts as an alternative instructional medium to enhance students' Arabic reading skills.

The Arab Pegon text Arabic script, adapted to represent local language sounds, was considered a suitable medium because it bridges the gap between the students' native linguistic system and Arabic orthography. Through this medium, learners can better associate written symbols with their corresponding sounds and meanings. The application of this approach at MA Hubulo was expected to improve reading fluency, pronunciation accuracy, and comprehension, while also increasing students' motivation and confidence in learning Arabic.

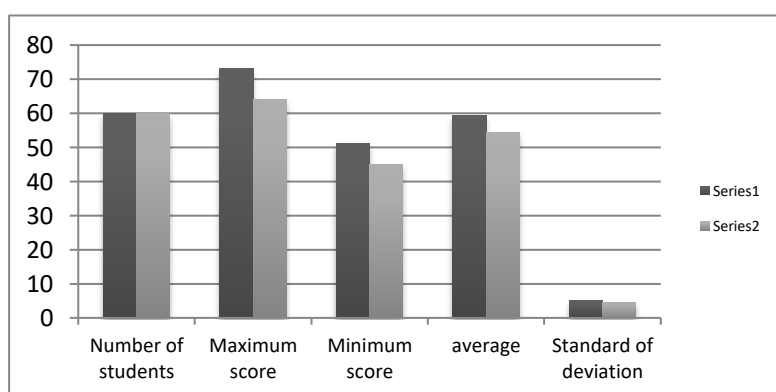
This study involved two classes as research subjects: Class A (experimental group), consisting of 60 students who were taught using Arab Pegon texts, and Class B (control group), consisting of 60 students who were taught using conventional methods.

Before the treatment, both groups were given a pretest to measure their initial reading ability. After completing eight learning sessions, both groups were given a posttest to evaluate their progress in Arabic reading comprehension.

The results of data collection indicated that there was an increase in the average reading ability scores in both groups; however, the improvement in the experimental group was significantly greater. The learning outcomes can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. result of pretest

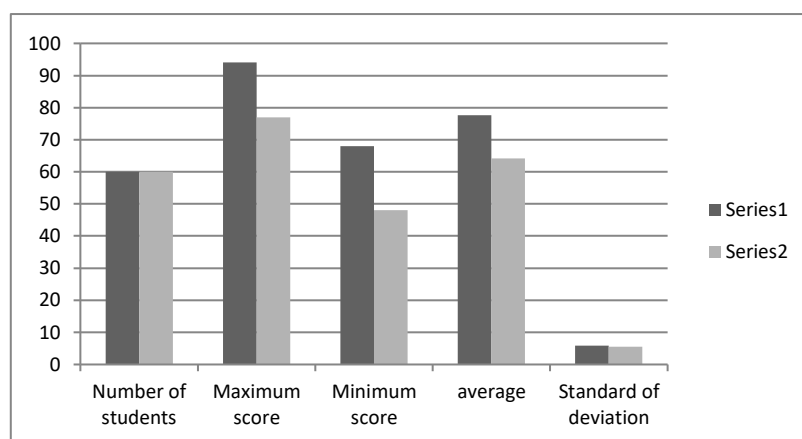
Category	experiment	control
Number of students	60	60
Maximum score	73	64
Minimum score	51	45
average	59,40	54,23
Standard deviation	5,009	4,589
Result of homogeneity	homogeneity	



Based on the data in Table 1, it can be seen that the average score of the experimental class (59.40) is lower than that of the control class (54.23). The mean scores of both classes are still categorized as low because they are below the minimum mastery criterion (KKM). In addition, both classes are homogeneous, which means that they have the same initial ability. The post-test results of the experimental and control classes on the topic of heat can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2. result of posttest

Category	experiment	control
Number of students	60	60
Maximum score	94	77
Minimum score	68	48
average	77,58	64,20
Standard deviation	5,927	5,553
Result of normality	normality	normality
Result of homogeneity	homogeneity	homogeneity
Result of t – test	$t = -12.763; p = 0.000$ ( $p < 0.05$ )	$t = -12.763; p = 0.000$ ( $p < 0.05$ )
Conculation of the result	$H_0$ rejected, $H_a$ accepted	Significant difference between groups



Based on the posttest results presented in Table 2 above, it is evident that the mean score of the experimental group is 77.58, whereas the control group achieved an average of 64.20. The difference of 13.38 points signifies more than just a numerical discrepancy; it indicates a genuine disparity in reading achievement between the two cohorts. The experimental group, which was subjected to treatment through the use of Arab Pegon text media, demonstrated superior learning outcomes in comparison to the control group, which was instructed using conventional methods predominantly relying on lectures, memorization, and monotonous reading exercises. Therefore, it can be generally asserted that the application of Arab Pegon text media has a positive impact on enhancing students' Arabic reading skills.

Inferentially, the t-test results reinforce these descriptive findings. The t-count value of 12.763 with a significance level of  $p = 0.000$ , which is smaller than 0.05, indicates that the difference in the average scores between the experimental and control classes is not a difference that occurred by chance. In other words, statistically it can be concluded that the treatment given, namely the use of Arab Pegon text media, has a significant effect on students' reading achievement. In the context of hypothesis testing,  $H_0$ , which states that there is no difference in learning outcomes between the two groups, is rejected, while  $H_1$ , which states that there is a significant difference, is accepted. This strengthens the assumption that the use of appropriate media in instruction has a direct impact on the quality of learning outcomes.

When linked to aspects of reading ability, these findings show that students in the experimental class experienced greater improvement in several key components, such as the ability to recognize letter forms, connect sounds with symbols, and understand the meaning of texts. Arab Pegon texts, which combine Arabic script with the phonetics of the local language, make the decoding process easier because the sound patterns used are already familiar in the students' daily lives. Thus, the cognitive load that usually arises when students must simultaneously process a foreign writing system and a foreign language can be reduced. Students are no longer entirely "disturbed" by unfamiliar sounds, so they can focus more on understanding meaning.

In addition, the use of Arab Pegon texts provides a linguistic bridge between students' mother tongue or everyday language and the Arabic language they are learning. From the perspective of second language acquisition theory, the presence of this bridge helps activate the schemata already present in students' minds. They find it easier to associate Arabic vocabulary with concepts they already know because they are supported by a phonetic representation that is close to the regional language or Indonesian that they use. This accelerates the process of internalizing vocabulary and language structures, while simultaneously increasing students' confidence in reading activities.

The results of this study are also in line with the concept of culturally responsive teaching, in which instructional materials and media are adapted to the cultural background and lived experiences of learners. Arab Pegon texts are part of the Islamic Nusantara literacy tradition that is close to the culture of society, especially in educational institutions with a pesantren or madrasah background. When students feel that the media used is "theirs," a sense of emotional closeness and identity attachment emerges. This has an impact on increasing intrinsic motivation to engage actively in learning activities, including reading Arabic texts.

From the perspective of classroom dynamics, the use of Arab Pegon text media also has the potential to create a more interactive and dialogical learning atmosphere. Teachers do not merely read and explain the text, but can invite students to discuss similarities and differences in sounds, meanings, and structures between pure Arabic texts and Arab Pegon texts. Such activities encourage students to ask questions, express opinions, and confirm their understanding, so that the learning process is no longer one-way. This active engagement contributes to improved learning outcomes, as reflected in the higher posttest scores in the experimental class.



On the other hand, the learning outcomes of the control class taught with conventional methods are relatively lower. This can be interpreted to mean that instruction that does not utilize culturally based media tends to be less able to meet the needs and characteristics of today's learners. Conventional methods that overemphasize memorization and mechanical drills often make students quickly bored, feel pressured, and less motivated to read independently. As a result, although they may recognize letters and basic rules, their ability to understand the content of texts does not develop optimally.

This study also provides practical implications for Arabic language teachers at MA Hubulo. Teachers can use Arab Pegon texts as a transitional medium in teaching reading. At the initial stage, students are introduced to Arabic texts in Pegon form to strengthen phonetics and comprehension, then they are gradually shifted to standard Arabic texts (*rasm imlā'ī*/'*utsmānī*). This gradual strategy can reduce psychological and linguistic barriers while consolidating the foundations of reading skills. Thus, Arab Pegon text media is not positioned as a permanent substitute, but as a strategic tool to guide students toward the ability to read Arabic texts more independently.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the view that contextual and meaningful learning tends to produce better outcomes than learning that is abstract and detached from students' realities. Integrating elements of local culture into foreign language instruction not only enriches teaching materials but also facilitates the process of constructing meaning in learners' minds. In this way, this study not only provides empirical evidence of the effectiveness of Arab Pegon texts but also affirms the importance of instructional design that is sensitive to social and cultural contexts.

Overall, it can be concluded that learning through Arab Pegon text media significantly improves students' reading ability, both in terms of cognitive comprehension and in terms of motivation and learning engagement. Students become more capable of recognizing letters, connecting sounds with symbols, and understanding the content of texts due to support from a writing system that is close to their linguistic experience. At MA Hubulo, the implementation of this media has proven effective in enhancing Arabic reading achievement, as reflected in the difference in average posttest scores and the significant t-test results. These findings suggest that the development of local culture-based learning media, such as Arab Pegon texts, deserves to be continually explored and implemented as an important innovation in Arabic language teaching in madrasahs and other Islamic educational institutions.

## Discusions

The results of this study confirm that the use of Arab Pegon text media has a significant effect on improving students' Arabic reading skills at MA Hubulo. Based on the post-test results, the average score of the experimental class was 77.58, while the control class obtained an average of 64.20. The score difference of 13.38 points is not merely a numerical gap, but reflects a real disparity in reading achievement between the two groups. The t-test result, which shows a t-value of 118 and  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , further strengthens this finding, as it statistically indicates that the difference is not due to chance, but is genuinely related to the instructional treatment given. Thus, it can be concluded that Arabic language learning using Arab Pegon texts is far more effective in improving students' reading ability compared to conventional methods that have been used so far.

The effectiveness of Arab Pegon text media lies primarily in its linguistic and phonetic proximity to students' mother tongue. Pegon script uses Arabic letters to represent the sounds of regional languages or Indonesian, making it easier for students to connect written symbols with sounds they already know. The process of decoding text becomes faster and more intuitive, because students do not need to fully adapt to an unfamiliar sound system. In the context of language learning, this reduces the cognitive load that usually arises when learners have to simultaneously acquire a new writing system and a new language. With Pegon, one of these "new" elements is reduced: the sounds remain familiar, while the Arabic-letter script can gradually be introduced.

From the perspective of learning psychology, this effectiveness can be explained through Dual Coding Theory proposed by Paivio (1986). This theory states that memory and understanding of information increase when learning involves two processing channels at once, namely verbal and visual. In Arab Pegon text media, the Arabic letters function as visual stimuli, while the familiar phonetic system acts as verbal stimuli. Both work in parallel and mutually reinforce each other in helping students recognize, pronounce, and understand words and sentences. When students read Pegon, they do not merely "see" letters, but immediately associate them with sounds and meanings already stored in long-term memory.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1972), which emphasizes that knowledge is most effectively constructed when learners are able to connect new information with prior knowledge, experience, and cultural context. Learning to read through Pegon texts enables students to construct meaning gradually through familiar linguistic and cultural associations. Students in the experimental group not only showed improvement in reading fluency and pronunciation accuracy, but

also displayed increased motivation, self-confidence, and active engagement in the process of learning Arabic. They felt that the texts they were studying were “close” to them, not something strange or intimidating.

When compared with previous studies, this research provides several new contributions that enrich the discussion on the use of Arab Pegon in Arabic language teaching. For instance, Soleha & Anshory (2024) found that Arab Pegon texts can enhance students’ religious literacy by enabling better understanding of traditional Islamic texts. However, their study focused more on religious literacy in general and did not specifically measure phonetic accuracy, reading speed, or gains in reading ability through pretest and post-test instruments. This study expands the scope by providing stronger quantitative evidence through the analysis of learning outcomes before and after the treatment, thus offering a more measurable picture of students’ improvement in reading skills.

Meanwhile, the study by Tika, Zakiyah, and Amin (2023) highlighted the role of Pegon in preserving Islamic literacy culture in pesantren settings. They showed that Pegon is an important part of the scholarly tradition and the transmission of Islamic knowledge in the Nusantara context. However, their research did not sufficiently explore how Pegon can be optimized pedagogically in formal madrasah settings with structured curricula and clearly defined competency targets. The present study at MA Hubulo broadens this perspective by proving that Pegon is not only culturally relevant in traditional education, but also pedagogically effective in modern formal educational environments. Thus, this research fills a gap in earlier studies by demonstrating that Arab Pegon has a dual function: as an effective instructional tool and as a medium for preserving the Islamic Nusantara literacy tradition.

The novelty of this study lies in its empirical validation of Arab Pegon as instructional media in a formal madrasah context, a domain that has previously tended to be discussed from historical, cultural, or qualitative angles. By combining a quasi-experimental design with theoretical frameworks such as Dual Coding and Constructivism, this research provides robust quantitative evidence that Pegon-based learning can enhance students’ linguistic competence, particularly in reading skills, while maintaining cultural engagement in the process of learning Arabic. This shows that the integration of local wisdom into instruction does not diminish academic quality; instead, it can serve as a catalyst for improved learning outcomes.

Another important finding is that the use of Arab Pegon texts significantly increases students’ motivation and participation during the learning process. Classroom observations and student responses indicate that students in the experimental class were more enthusiastic, more willing to try, and less likely to give up when faced with Arabic texts. They perceived the learning materials as easier, closer, and more meaningful. This aligns with the findings of Apriyanto (2023), who showed that a culturally contextual approach can increase students’ self-confidence in reading Arabic texts. However, the present study adds a new dimension by highlighting students’ emotional engagement, showing that those who learned with Pegon media appeared more focused, more enthusiastic, and more active in asking questions than those in the control class taught using Latin transliteration or directly with standard Arabic script.

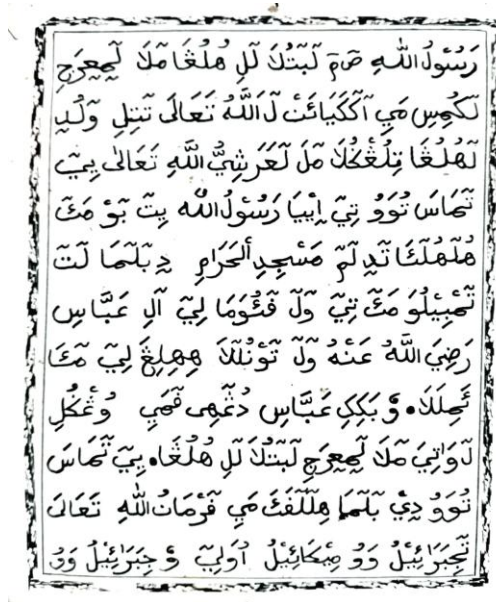
Theoretically, these findings lead to the understanding that Arab Pegon text media functions as an intercultural learning medium. Arab Pegon is not only a linguistic tool that assists in letter and sound recognition, but also a vehicle for transmitting values, history, and Islamic Nusantara cultural identity within Arabic language education. The integration of visual elements (Arabic letters), phonetic elements (local sounds), and cultural elements (pesantren and community literacy traditions) makes the learning process more contextual, humanistic, and meaningful. Students are not merely learning “Arabic” as a detached linguistic system; they also realize that Arabic has historical and cultural imprints that live within their own environment through the Pegon medium.

The practical implications of these findings are highly significant for the development of Arabic language education in madrasah and pesantren settings. First, teachers can utilize Arab Pegon texts as a linguistic bridge to introduce Arabic phonology and vocabulary through a framework that is more familiar to students. Second, Pegon can be used as an effective transitional tool for beginners before they are gradually directed toward standard Arabic texts (Fusha), so that the shift from what is “familiar” to what is “new” proceeds more smoothly. Third, these findings open opportunities for developing Arabic teaching materials based on local wisdom—for instance, modules, textbooks, or student worksheets that combine Pegon texts with standard Arabic texts for various proficiency levels.

In conclusion, this study makes an important contribution to the development of modern Arabic pedagogy by emphasizing the importance of integrating linguistic adaptation and local cultural values into instructional design. The implementation of Arab Pegon texts has been proven to significantly improve reading ability, intrinsic motivation, and learning engagement among students at MA Hubulo. This medium successfully integrates linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural aspects into a coherent and effective instructional approach, and it is capable of responding to the challenge of low Arabic reading skills among madrasah



students in the modern era. Therefore, Arab Pegon deserves consideration as a strategic innovation in Arabic language teaching that is contextual, relevant, and aligned with the characteristics of Indonesian learners.



Here is the *dikili* text in Arabic Pegon, along with the corresponding Gorontalo Pegon letters:

Phoneme	Letter	Explanation
a	ا	Alif: carrier of the vowel /a/, included among the 16 standard Arabic orthographies used in OAPG.
b	ب	Consonant /b/.
t	ت	Consonant /t/.
j	ج	Consonant /j/.
d	د	Consonant /d/.
r	ر	Consonant /r/.
s	س	Consonant /s/.
f	ف	Consonant /f/; in this article, this letter is also used for the sound /p/ (OAPG does not use ف).
gh	غ	Voiced velar fricative consonant /ɣ/, especially in Arabic loanwords.
k	ك	Consonant /k/.
l	ل	Consonant /l/.
m	م	Consonant /m/.
n	ن	Consonant /n/.
w, u, o	و	Consonant /w/ and carrier of the vowels /u/ and /o/ depending on diacritics/context.

y, i, e	ي	Consonant /y/ and carrier of the vowels /i/ and /e/ depending on diacritics/context.
ʔ (hamzah)	ء	Independent hamzah: glottal stop /ʔ/ in the middle or at the end of a word.
c / "ch"	چ	Pegon letter specifically for the sound /c/; the article mentions the shape چ and also the digraph ch [č].

Here are the Latin transcription and the translation of the following text:

Rasulullah SAW lobotulo lolihulungo mola lo mi'raji lo kumisi mayi o kokaya'an lo Allah Ta'ala to tili wulude lo hulunggula mola lo 'arasyi Allah ta'ala yiyo to masa tuwau tiyo eya Rasulullah yito bo mao hulo hulo'o todelomo masjidil haram de boloma lo to tombiluwa mao tiyo wolo po'uwama liyo ole abbasi radhiyallahu anhu wolo tonulola hihilinga liyo moa amilala. Wubakiki abbasi dungahi pohayi wunguguli lo watiya mola lo me'eraji lo botula lo li hulunga yoyo to masa tuwau de boloma hilolopa'a mayi formanu Allah Ta'ala to jibril wu mikail uwaliya wau jibril wau mikail.

Translation:

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was taken up to the heavens for the mi'raj and witnessed the power of Allah, ascending until he reached the seventh heaven, which is the Throne of Allah. One day, the Messenger of Allah was sitting in the mosque and speaking to his uncle, named Abbas, about the Isra' and Mi'raj. Then his uncle Abbas listened attentively as the Messenger of Allah ascended to the heavens for the mi'raj, received the words of Allah, and was accompanied by Jibril (Gabriel) and Mikail (Michael).

## Conclusions

The conclusion of this study is intended to help readers gain a comprehensive understanding of why examining the use of Arab Pegon text media is important for improving students' Arabic reading skills at MA Hubulo. This research does not merely present numerical differences between two groups, but also seeks to interpret the meaning behind the data from pedagogical, cultural, and theoretical perspectives. Quantitatively, the findings show that the experimental class taught using Arab Pegon text media achieved a higher posttest mean score of 77.58, while the control class taught using conventional methods only reached an average of 64.20. This difference was then tested using a t-test, yielding a t-value of 118 with a significance level of  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . These results confirm that there is a significant difference between the two groups, and that this difference can convincingly be attributed to the use of Arab Pegon text media in the learning process.

Statistically, the rejection of  $H_0$  and the acceptance of  $H_1$  indicate that Pegon-based instruction has a real impact on the improvement of students' Arabic reading ability. In other words, the use of Arab Pegon texts is not just a methodological variation, but genuinely produces a measurable effect on learning outcomes. This reinforces the assumption that the design of instructional media that is appropriate to learners' characteristics is a key factor in the success of foreign language learning, including Arabic in the madrasah context. Thus, the observed difference in scores is not simply the result of chance, but the outcome of a deliberately designed pedagogical intervention.

Substantively, these findings show that the Arab Pegon functions as an effective pedagogical tool. Through Pegon texts, students find it easier to recognize letters, connect phonetic patterns, and understand the meanings of texts. This advantage emerges because the Pegon script is phonologically close to the language students use in their daily lives, whether Indonesian or local languages. This linguistic proximity reduces the cognitive load when students decode written texts. Whereas standard Arabic texts require students to deal with an unfamiliar writing system and sound patterns, Pegon texts offer familiar reference points, enabling the comprehension process to proceed more smoothly.

This can be better understood through relevant learning theories. First, Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986) explains that information presented through two representational systems—verbal and visual—tends to be more easily processed and retained. In this context, Arab Pegon presents visual representations of Arabic letters combined with local language sound systems, thereby strengthening the link between form, sound, and meaning. When students read Pegon texts, they are not merely processing foreign symbols; they are also connecting them with sound patterns embedded in their long-term memory. This makes reading a more meaningful, rather than purely mechanical, experience.

Second, Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1972) emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge based on pre-existing cognitive schemes. Arab Pegon provides a “constructive bridge” that allows students to link new knowledge (Arabic vocabulary and structures) to cognitive structures they already possess, namely their mastery of the mother tongue and their literacy experiences in local contexts. The processes of assimilation and accommodation become easier because the material being learned is not entirely foreign, but appears in a partially familiar form. As a result, Arabic language learning through Pegon media becomes a more natural, constructive process and feels less forced.

From a cultural standpoint, this study affirms that Arab Pegon is not only a vehicle for preserving traditional Islamic literacy, but is also relevant for integration into modern madrasah education. Historically, Pegon has often been seen primarily as part of the older tradition of writing classical Islamic texts, such as kitab kuning and local religious manuscripts. This research extends that view by showing that Pegon, when used within a formal instructional setting in an MA, can revitalise this literacy tradition productively and adaptively. The integration of Pegon into Arabic instruction at MA Hubulo demonstrates that cultural preservation and the improvement of educational quality are not mutually exclusive, but can in fact reinforce one another.

The findings also indicate an increase in students’ motivation, participation, and engagement during the learning process. Students in the experimental class tended to be more enthusiastic and more willing to attempt reading, because they felt that the media used was close to their identity and cultural background. Culturally rooted learning, in this case, the Pegon literacy tradition, creates a warmer and more inclusive learning environment. Students do not feel “alienated” by the foreign language they are learning; instead, they discover points of contact between Arabic as a religious language and their mother tongue as a medium of everyday expression. This condition not only enhances linguistic competence but also strengthens their emotional and cognitive engagement in learning.

In summary, this study concludes that the implementation of Arab Pegon text media significantly improves both Arabic reading skills and learning motivation among students at MA Hubulo. Arab Pegon serves as an effective transitional medium, helping students move from unfamiliarity with Arabic texts toward more autonomous and confident reading ability. The study further underscores the importance of integrating culture-based learning media into Arabic language teaching in order to create learning experiences that are more meaningful, contextual, and relevant to the realities of Islamic education in Indonesia.

In addition, this research opens up opportunities for broader and deeper future investigations. First, it is recommended that similar studies be replicated in various madrasah contexts and at different educational levels, both in urban and rural settings, and at the MTs, MA, and higher education levels. Such replication is crucial to test the consistency and generalizability of the findings, so that the effectiveness of Arab Pegon is not only demonstrated at MA Hubulo but also in other institutions with diverse learner characteristics. Second, longitudinal studies are needed to determine the extent to which the positive impact of Pegon-based learning is sustained over time, including its influence on other Arabic language skills such as writing and speaking.

Third, further research may focus on the analysis of special Pegon letters such as ك, ف, غ, ج, and ن to identify their specific contributions to students’ phonological processing. Such an inquiry would help explain how the representation of local sounds through these letters affects learners’ ability to distinguish and produce similar sounds in Arabic, and how this, in turn, supports the development of accurate reading skills. Fourth, the use of mixed-method designs is recommended to capture learners’ cognitive and affective engagement more comprehensively, not only through quantitative data such as test scores, but also through interviews, classroom observations, and students’ reflective accounts of their learning experiences with Pegon media.

Fifth, it is important to investigate more deeply the correlation between Pegon literacy and higher-order comprehension skills, such as the ability to infer, analyse argument structures, evaluate textual content, and relate readings to broader social and religious contexts. If it is proven that Pegon mastery can also foster the development of critical thinking in Arabic, then Arab Pegon may be positioned not only as a supporting tool at the beginner stage, but also as part of advanced literacy strategies in Arabic language education.

In conclusion, this study not only provides empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the Arab Pegon in improving Arabic reading ability but also opens new directions for the development of Arabic pedagogy that is contextual, culture-based, and aligned with the characteristics of Indonesian learners. Arab Pegon emerges as a medium that bridges tradition and modernity: on the one hand, preserving the legacy of Islamic Nusantara literacy, and on the other, supporting innovative instructional practices that respond to the needs of today’s learners. These findings are expected to serve as a foundation for teachers, researchers, and policymakers to continue developing Arabic language teaching models that are more humanistic, contextual, and rooted in the richness of local culture.

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