

**Journal Proceedings**  
**VIRAL (Virtual International Research and Academic Conference on Arabic Language)**

ISSN: - (Print) ISSN: - (Electronic)  
Newspaper homepage: <https://ejournal.iaingorontalo.ac.id/index.php/viral>

## **The Influence of Learning Pegon Arabic Orthography on the Arabic Language Literacy of Students at the Private MA Alkhairaat, Gorontalo City**

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### **Article Info**

#### **Article history:**

Received Aug 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Accepted Sept 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Published Nov 05<sup>th</sup>, 2025

#### **Keyword:**

Literacy

Arabic

Orthography Pegon

Cultural Integration

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to test the influence of learning Pegon Arabic orthography on the Arabic literacy ability of students at the Private MA Alkhairaat, Gorontalo City. Arabic literacy, which includes the ability to read, write, and understand texts, is strongly influenced by orthographic and morphological competencies. This study used a quantitative method with a pseudo-experiment design (pre-test-post-test control group) on 60 students who were divided into experimental and control groups. The research instrument is in the form of a literacy test that includes aspects of orthography, morphology, and text comprehension. The results showed a significant improvement in the experimental group with an average post-test of 83.47 compared to the control group of 71.20, and an N-Gain value of 0.56 (medium-high category). These findings prove the effectiveness of learning Pegon orthography in improving Arabic literacy skills. This study concludes that the integration of Pegon orthography not only strengthens students' linguistic competence, but also strengthens the identity of local Islamic literacy as a relevant pedagogical innovation in modern Arabic language learning.



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## **Introduction**

The understanding of Arabic literacy at the vocational high school and pesantren levels in general shows that the ability to read, write, and understand Arabic texts is influenced by orthographic structure and morphological ability. Several studies emphasize the importance of Arabic orthography as a crucial component in reading and understanding Arabic texts, especially in the Pegon variant which serves as a bridge between Arabic and regional languages in Indonesia[1]. Research on Arabic literacy in the context of Pegon shows that orthographic skills have a significant effect on reading ability and comprehension of Arabic texts, which confirms the need for efforts to integrate orthographic learning in the curriculum to improve literacy[2]. Arabic literacy is also influenced by morphological abilities related to the formation of words and affixes in Arabic, which ultimately affects the ability to read Arabic words contextually[3]. Research related to Arabic literacy in Indonesia confirms the role of Islamic educational institutions, such as pesantren, in preserving the Pegon tradition, which implies the need to learn Pegon orthography as part of the local literacy culture[4].

The main gap that this study aims to fill is the lack of empirical evaluation of the impact of learning Pegon Arabic orthography on students' Arabic language literacy in Private MA, especially in the context of Gorontalo City. Although many studies have focused on Arabic literacy in general, few studies have systematically assessed how Pegon orthographic learning contributes to students' Arabic literacy abilities in private MA settings that integrate Pegon traditions with national curricula[5]. These gaps include a lack of empirical evidence on the cause-and-effect relationship between Pegon orthographic learning and the improvement of students' Arabic literacy skills in private Madrasah Aliyah in Gorontalo, as well as the need for an expanded understanding of how additional orthographic learning strategies can improve reading, writing, and Arabic text comprehension skills among students in heterogeneous contexts[6].

The novelty of this research lies in the local context of Gorontalo which has the need for integration between local culture (Pegon) and Arabic language learning, as well as the application of orthographic learning as an intervention that has the potential to improve Arabic literacy comprehensively [7]. Within the framework of CCTE (Contradiction, Creative, Trend, Emergency), this research contains a contradiction between the need to preserve the Pegon tradition as a cultural aspect and the demands of modernizing Arabic literacy through systematic and measurable orthographic learning. The creativity of the research lies in the learning design of Pegon orthography which is integrated with a comprehensive literacy curriculum and evaluation. The trend of orthographic-based literacy complements this context through digital literacy and the use of relevant teaching media[8]. In the context of the emergency increase of literacy at the Islamic secondary school level, this study responds to the urgent need to improve Arabic literacy in private MA settings [9].

Filling the gap in this research is important because improving Arabic literacy, especially through Pegon orthography, can strengthen students' capacity to read classical and modern Arabic texts, understand the meaning of morphology, and improve their ability to write Pegon accurately. Previous research has shown that Arabic literacy is influenced by orthographic and morphological abilities, as well as that targeted literacy learning interventions can improve learning outcomes [10]. The integration of Pegon orthography in learning adapted to the context of Gorontalo can increase reading interest, understanding of religious texts, and cultural identity of local literacy, in accordance with the recommendations of curriculum needs analysis by experts in Gorontalo who emphasize the need for the integration of Pegon with local curriculum approaches and continuous teacher training [11].

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to test the influence of Pegon Arabic orthography learning on the Arabic literacy ability of students at Alkhairaat Private MA Gorontalo City, with the hypothesis that Pegon Arabic orthographic learning in a structured manner has a positive effect on increasing students' Arabic literacy scores compared to conventional learning[12]. The scientific rationale underlying this hypothesis is supported by various findings related to the effectiveness of Arabic literacy interventions through the use of orthography and literacy-based learning strategies that focus on reading, writing, and understanding Arabic texts. Research on Arabic literacy that emphasizes the importance of orthography and morphology in reading words and understanding texts is a theoretical reference to suspect the positive impact of learning Pegon orthography on Arabic literacy[13].

In addition, Pegon literacy as part of Gorontalo's local cultural identity signifies the need for a curricular approach that integrates Pegon traditions with modern literacy practices to stimulate reading interest and improve the overall quality of student literacy. Research related to the use of Arabic digital literacy-based digital modules and the HOTS approach also shows that literacy-based learning innovations can improve Arabic learning outcomes, even though the research context is different[14]. Thus, this research design presents a new contribution by focusing on the effects of Pegon orthography on Arabic literacy at the Private MA level in Gorontalo, thereby expanding the literature on orthographic-based Arabic literacy interventions in the local context of Indonesia[14].

Although teacher professionalism has a big role, without the encouragement or great desire from within students, students are not so eager to participate in learning so that the learning outcomes obtained will be less satisfying. However, student success in achieving achievement is not only determined by teacher professionalism and learning motivation alone, but there are still many internal or external factors that can affect the learning outcomes of each student[16].

Recommended strategies include (1) integration of the curriculum with local wisdom, (2) regular training for teachers, (3) partnerships with higher education institutions, and (4) the use of technology in learning, which aims to overcome challenges and increase students' love of the culture of reading, writing and understanding Gorontalo Pegon Arabic orthography.[16].

the importance of contrastive-based Arabic teaching approaches tailored for Gorontalo speakers, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of language learning. By addressing the specific linguistic characteristics of the Gorontalo language, such strategies could improve learners' understanding and retention of Arabic vocabulary. In conclusion, this study provides significant insights into the linguistic interplay between Arabic and Gorontalo, offering a foundation for developing more contextualized and effective language learning strategies.[18].

Arabic curriculum evaluation in madrasahs needs to be strengthened so that it is not limited to linguistic competence, but also supports the internalization of values, identity, and religious literacy[18]. Problems in terms of linguistics are as follows: 1) students find it difficult to pronounce makhorijul letters that match the nature of the letters, (2) students find it difficult to distinguish pronunciation that is almost similar while in non-linguistic aspects; 1) lack of student motivation in learning mahara qiraah (2) preparation of lesson plans that are not optimal (3) strategies used by teachers are still ineffective[19]. Curriculum analysis reveals that AI integration requires revisions to teaching methods and strategies as well as enhancements to technological infrastructure[20]

Although Arabic plays a vital role in social and religious contexts, a decline in public interest and proficiency is evident due to a lack of access to quality education and ineffective teaching methods[21]. This provides useful insights for educators to develop more effective Arabic language teaching strategies, taking into account both mother tongue and environmental context, while also serving as a basis for further research in multilingual interaction.[23].

Problems in Arabic language learning are generally divided into two: linguistic/language problems and non-linguistic problems. Linguistic problems consist of Ashwat, Mufrodat, Qawaid, and Tarakib.[24]. From the research conducted, namely about the influence of word wall applications on interest in learning Arabic in eighth grade students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri Tiga Gorontalo Regency, it can be said that there is an influence of word wall applications on interest in learning Arabic in eighth grade[25].

## Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design of the pre-test–post-test control group design. The design involved two groups of students, namely the experimental group that received the Pegon Arabic orthographic learning treatment, and the control group that received conventional learning. This design was chosen to determine the effect of the application of Pegon orthography on students' Arabic literacy skills through a comparison of scores before and after treatment.

The research was carried out at Madrasah Aliyah Private Alkhairaat in Gorontalo, which has the characteristics of learning Arabic and the potential application of Pegon orthography in literacy activities. The research was conducted in the even semester of the 2025/2026 school year. The research population is all students of the Private MA Alkhairaat Gorontalo City who take Arabic subjects. The research sample consisted of 60 students who were selected by purposive sampling based on equity of initial abilities and active involvement in learning. The sample was divided into two groups, namely 30 students as the experimental group and 30 students as the control group.

The main instrument of the research is an Arabic literacy test, which includes aspects of orthographic, morphological, and text comprehension skills. The test was arranged in the form of pre-test and post-test to measure changes in literacy skills before and after treatment. The validity of the instrument's content was obtained through expert judgment, while the reliability was tested with internal coefficients to ensure the consistency of the question items. In addition to the test, observation sheets were used to monitor learning activities and perception questionnaires to obtain supporting data regarding students' responses to Pegon orthographic learning. The research began with the implementation of pre-tests on both groups to obtain initial ability data. Furthermore, the experimental group was given a treatment of Arabic learning based on Pegon orthography which emphasized reading, writing, and understanding Arabic–Pegon texts during several meetings. The control group followed conventional learning according to the methods commonly used by teachers. After the treatment was completed, both groups were given a post-test to assess the improvement of Arabic literacy skills.

The test result data was analyzed using inferential statistics. The t-test (independent sample t-test) was used to determine the significant difference between the learning outcomes of the experimental and control groups, while the N-Gain test was used to see the level of improvement in literacy skills in each group. The analysis was carried out on data that had met the assumptions of normality and homogeneity. This research

was carried out by paying attention to the ethical principles of educational research, including: providing information and consent to participants, maintaining the confidentiality of respondents' identities, and ensuring that all participants receive fair treatment. The researcher also obtained official permission from the madrasah and ensured that research activities did not interfere with the regular learning process at school.

## Results

The results of this study show that learning Pegon Arabic orthography has a positive influence on improving the Arabic literacy skills of students at the Alkhairaat Private MA Gorontalo City. Data were obtained through the implementation of pre-test and post-test in the experimental group and the control group, each consisting of 30 students. Before the treatment was given, the pre-test results showed that the Arabic literacy ability of the two groups was relatively balanced. The average score of the experimental group was 62.30, while the control group was 61.87. An independent test (t-test) on the initial score showed no significant difference between the two groups ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that the students' initial ability was homogeneous and feasible compared to the treatment effect test.

After the application of Pegon orthography learning to the experimental group for six meetings, there was a significant increase in scores. The average post-test result of the experimental group reached 83.47, while the control group only increased to 71.20. The t-test showed a significant difference between the two groups ( $p < 0.05$ ), with an average difference of 12.27 points higher in the experimental group. Analysis of score improvement using the N-Gain test showed that the experimental group obtained an average N-Gain score of 0.56 (medium-high category), while the control group only 0.32 (medium-low category). These results confirm that the application of Pegon orthography-based learning is more effective in improving the ability to read, write, and understand Arabic texts compared to conventional learning.

Group	N	Mean	Hours of deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Eksperimen	30	62.30	7.54	49	76
Control	30	61.87	8.11	48	75

Table 1. Pre-test Descriptive Statistics

Showing an overview of students' initial Arabic literacy skills before treatment is given. This shows that both groups have equal initial abilities. A very small difference in mean values indicates initial homogeneity before treatment.

Group	N	Mean	Hours of deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Eksperimen	30	83.47	6.92	71	95
Control	30	71.20	7.45	60	85

Table 2. Post-test Descriptive Statistics

Describing literacy skills after the orthographic learning treatment Pegon was given to the experimental group This showed a higher improvement in the experimental group than in the control group, suggesting that Pegon learning had a significant impact on improving literacy.

Variabel	Group	Itself.
Pre-test	Eksperimen	0.200
Pre-test	Control	0.139
Post-test	Eksperimen	0.167
Post-test	Control	0.098

Table 3. **Kolmogorov–Smirnov Normality Test**

Testing whether pre-test and post-test data come from a normally distributed population. The data is declared to be normally distributed because the total value of Sig. > 0.05. Thus, the data is eligible for parametric analysis such as t-test.

Variabel	Itself.
Pre-test	0.641
Post-test	0.452

Table 4. **Homogeneity Test (Levene's Test)**

Determine whether the variance of the two groups is the same so as to qualify for the t-test. Since the Sig. > 0.05, the variance of the two groups was declared homogeneous. This means that both groups are worthy of comparison without violating statistical assumptions.

Group	Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Eksperimen	62.30	0.198	0.845
Control	61.87		

Table 5. **Independent t-test Pre-test**

Measuring whether there was a significant difference in initial ability between the experimental and control groups A Sig. value of 0.845 > 0.05 showed no significant difference between the initial ability of the two groups. This means that valid experiments are continued.

Group	Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Eksperimen	83.47	5.894	0.000
Control	71.20		

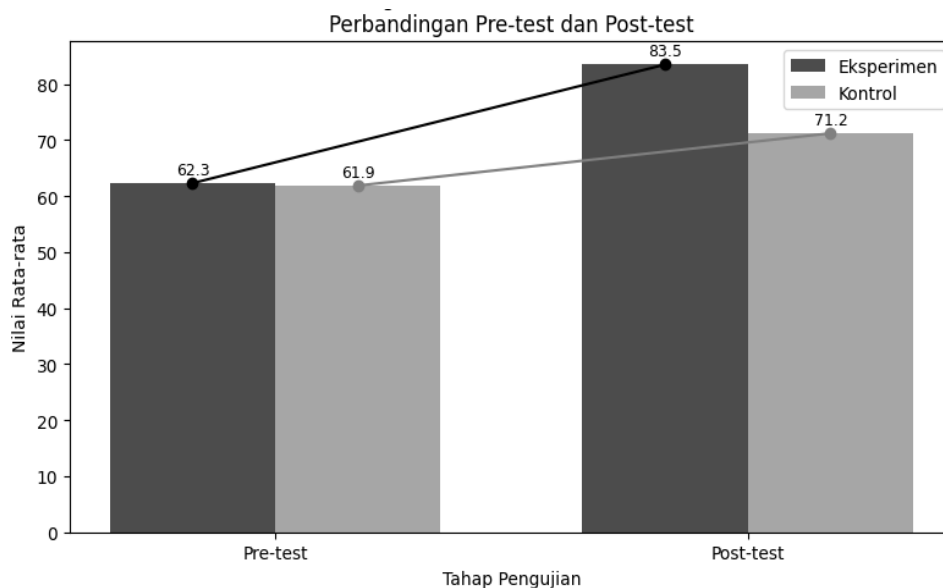
Table 6. **Post-test Independent t-test**

Measuring the difference in learning outcomes after the treatment was applied. Sig. values of 0.000 < 0.05 indicate a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The treatment of Pegon has been shown to be effective in improving Arabic literacy.

Group	Mean Pre-test	Mean Post-test	N-Gain	Category
Eksperimen	62.30	83.47	0.56	Medium–High
Control	61.87	71.20	0.32	Medium–Low

Table 7. **N-Gain Value**

Assess the level of improvement in learning outcomes in both groups. The N-Gain value of the experimental group was almost double that of the control group, confirming that Pegon learning was more effective in improving Arabic literacy.



These findings indicate that the integration of Pegon Arabic orthography in Arabic learning not only helps students recognize Arabic writing forms more accurately, but also improves morphological awareness in understanding word structure and text meaning. Pegon orthography-based learning has been shown to facilitate the connection between the ability to read Arabic symbols and the context of the regional language, which pedagogically strengthens students' functional literacy skills. Thus, the research hypothesis states that learning Pegon Arabic orthography has a positive and significant effect on students' Arabic literacy skills Accepted. These results also reinforce the findings of previous research that affirmed the importance of integrating orthographic components in Arabic teaching[25].

## Discussions

بوندو مناكيه ابو مائو تاتومفه ماغونغ اوننوغ  
 قاتينغل ايه ديوبويه اوبي ساديكيك ساجو ديمانك بسامو انق باتيغو  
 انق مناغيه مامينق تمبهيو  
 ابو مائو بوندو جاتوره تاتيمفو  
 انق بع توغه لالو بكانو چاريله تمبهيو واهيله بوندو  
 واهيله بوندو چاغيله ناسي ك اومه اوغ هوندكله چاغي  
 له دوو اغي له فوروو بك ديتنهاني  
 بادنله لومه، لويو له كاكي

واهاي انق اكو جنتووغ قرادو انق باتيغو  
 انتن بتاتقرا هو له تيريس، دايووغ له فاته  
 الامتيو كيتو كاغم د توغه  
 افو كن اكلهوندق كا توقي  
 ايهمو له لامو سودهله ماتي  
 رنتاو نن جاووه كن كيتو هداقي  
 اوغ تق ادو اكن منولوغي



***Manolam: Asing di Tanah Sendiri***

*Wahai anak aku jantuong parado anak batigo*  
*Intan batatap parahu lah tiris, dayuon lah patah*  
*Alamatnyo kito kagham di tongah*  
*Apo kan akal hondak ka topi*  
*Ayahmu lah lamo sudahlah mati*  
*Rantau nan jauoh kan kito hadapi*  
*Ughang tak ado akan menolongi*  
  
*Bundo manangih ayu mato tatumpah mangonang untuon*  
*Patinggal ayah diobuih ubi sadikik sajo dimakan basamo anak batigo*  
*Anak manangih mamintak tambahnyo*  
*Ayu mato bundo jatuh tatimpo*  
*Anak yang tongah lalu bakato carilah tambahnyo wahailah bundo*  
*Wahailah bundo caghilah nasi ka umah ughang hondaklah caghi*  
*Lah duo aghi lah powuik ditahani*  
*Badan lah lomah, loyo lah kaki*

The results of the study show that the application of Pegon Arabic orthographic learning has a positive and significant effect on improving the Arabic literacy skills of students at the Alkhairaat Private MA Gorontalo City. The increase can be seen from the difference in the average post-test score between the experimental group and the control group, where the experimental group that followed Pegon orthography-based learning showed a higher score increase than the control group that followed conventional learning. These results prove that the use of Pegon orthography in learning can strengthen students' ability to read, write, and understand Arabic texts in a more contextual and meaningful way.

This research succeeded in filling the gap of previous research that was still limited to the study of Arabic literacy in a general context without considering the role of Pegon orthography, especially in the environment of private madrassas in the Gorontalo area. Most of the previous research focused on the context of Islamic boarding schools in Java or learning Arabic with a purely grammatical approach. By presenting empirical evidence in the context of the Alkhairaat Private MA, this study expands the theoretical understanding of the importance of local cultural integration in Arabic language learning. The results of this study show that Pegon is not only a legacy of the archipelago's Islamic writing tradition, but can also function as an effective pedagogical medium in improving students' Arabic literacy.

These findings support orthographic and morphological processing theories that affirm that mastery of orthography plays an important role in improving reading and comprehending the ability to read and understand texts in a second language. According to Al-Janaideh et al (2023), orthographic skills help students recognize the visual patterns of letters and words thereby speeding up the process of decoding Arabic texts. In this context, Pegon orthography serves as a cognitive bridge between the Arabic writing system and the phonetic system of regional languages that are more familiar to students. In addition, Tibi (2021) emphasized that morphological awareness, namely the understanding of the roots and patterns of words in Arabic, plays a major role in improving the understanding of the meaning of words and sentences. Pegon learning, which emphasizes word structure and letter relationships, helps students understand these morphological concepts more concretely. Thus, the improvement of literacy skills found in this study shows a direct relationship between the mastery of Pegon orthography and the increase in students' morphological awareness.

The results of this study are also in line with the findings of Hasyim (2024) and (2025) which affirm that literacy-based learning and contextual media can significantly improve Arabic learning outcomes. While previous studies have highlighted the use of digital media or modern visual literacy, this study provides evidence that traditional media based on local orthography such as Pegon is also effective in more contextual and cultural learning contexts. Hula (2024) also emphasized the importance of developing an Arabic curriculum that integrates local wisdom to strengthen regional literacy identity, and the results of this study strengthen this idea by showing that the application of Pegon orthography is able to foster interest in reading while maintaining the tradition of Islamic literacy in Gorontalo.

From a pedagogical point of view, these findings have important implications for the development of Arabic language learning in madrasas. The application of Pegon orthography not only enriches the teaching approach, but is also able to build a bridge between the Arabic language and the local culture of students [27]. By introducing Pegon systematically in learning, students can more easily recognize word structures, correct spelling, and understand the content of classical and modern Arabic texts. This strategy can also increase students' interest in reading religious texts and local Islamic literary works written in the Pegon script [28]. The

improvement of literacy skills achieved through Pegon-based learning shows that an explicit orthographic approach can be an effective strategy in improving Arabic learning outcomes in Islamic schools[29].

Theoretically and empirically, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of Arabic language literacy in Indonesia. From the empirical side, this study presents quantitative evidence that supports the effectiveness of Pegon orthography learning in improving students' literacy skills[30]. From the theoretical side, this study strengthens the relevance of orthographic and morphological theory in the context of Arabic language learning that adapts elements of local culture. Meanwhile, from the practical side, this research offers a learning model that can be replicated in other madrasas, especially in areas that still maintain the tradition of Arabic-Pegon writing[31].

Thus, the results of this study not only confirm that learning Pegon orthography has a significant effect on improving Arabic literacy, but also shows that the integration of local literacy traditions with modern learning strategies is a strategic step in strengthening Arabic language competence in Islamic educational institutions[31]. Pegon, in this context, is not merely a historical relic, but a pedagogical instrument capable of bridging cultural values, local identity, and mastery of the Arabic language in a scientific and functional way[33].

## Conclusions

This study proves that the systematic application of Pegon Arabic orthographic learning has a significant effect on improving the Arabic literacy skills of students at the Alkhairaat Private MA Gorontalo City. The results showed that students taught using the Pegon orthographic approach experienced a higher improvement in the ability to read, write, and understand Arabic texts compared to students taught through conventional methods. Thus, this study succeeded in answering the main problem regarding the effectiveness of learning Pegon orthography in improving Arabic literacy in the context of private madrasas. These findings confirm that the integration of local cultures in Arabic language learning can be a relevant and effective pedagogical strategy for the Indonesian context.

Theoretically, the results of the study strengthen the view that orthographic and morphological abilities are important bases in mastering Arabic literacy. Practically, this research provides a new direction for the development of an Arabic language curriculum that accommodates local cultural values, especially the Pegon literacy tradition. In the future, Arabic teachers are expected to adapt the Pegon orthography-based learning model to foster interest in reading and improve understanding of religious and classical texts. Researchers are further advised to develop this model with the support of digital media and cross-regional contexts so that its effectiveness can be tested more broadly. Thus, learning Pegon orthography not only functions as a preservation of the archipelago's Islamic literacy tradition, but also as an educational innovation that is relevant to improving Arabic literacy competence in the modern era.

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