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## THE ROLE OF PESANTREN IN PRESERVING THE TRADITION OF *PEGON* ARABIC WRITING: A STUDY IN THE PESANTREN ILMU AL-QURAN SINGOSARI

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**Abstract:** Pesantren as a traditional Islamic educational institution still has a vital role in preserving the literacy tradition, especially in writing *Pegon Arabic*. Arab *Pegon* is the result of the acculturation of Arab intangible culture with Javanese culture through a writing system. Following the customs of the Muslim community in Java, where Arab culture is present, *Pegon* Arabic writing is written in various languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, Madura, and other regional languages in Indonesia. This reality gave birth to a literacy tradition that continues to grow. However, not many pesantren use *Pegon* Arabic script writing in Indonesian. The tradition of *Pegon* Arabic literacy in Islamic boarding schools in Java generally uses the local language, but the practice of writing *Pegon Arabic* script in the Singosari Islamic Boarding School uses Indonesian. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari in the preservation of the tradition of Arabic *Pegon* writing in Indonesian. This study uses qualitative research methods which include the collection of documentation, interviews, and observations. The findings of the study show that the Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari is accustomed to the practice of *Pegon* Arabic writing in almost all religious literacy activities. This habit has been proven to be able to increase students' interest and understanding of *Pegon* Arabic writing. This article concludes that pesantren play a strategic role in preserving the heritage of the *Pegon* Arabic writing tradition. In addition, it is important to teach *Pegon* Arabic writing literacy in Indonesian to students to attract their interest in studying Islamic books by classical scholars.

**Keywords:** Pesantren, Arabic *Pegon*, Ulama, Islam, Cultural Preservation

## A. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries that has been visited by other nations the most since ancient times. This is understandable because Indonesia has a geographical location as an archipelagic country that is rich in natural resources and a diversity of local community traditions. In fact, for centuries, the archipelago has become the center of the world's attention because of the abundance of various precious spices such as cloves, nutmeg, and pepper, which has attracted the interest of European nations such as the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Arabia.<sup>1</sup> This reason makes the archipelago experience of diverse cultural acculturation a necessity.

The Arabs were the earliest people to enter the archipelago around the 7th-8th centuries AD.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the Arabs have influenced the cultural expression of the tribes in the archipelago, especially in the linguistic aspects of the local community. The uniqueness of the Arabic language was not only absorbed in the form of words but also its development influenced the writing of Indonesian which at that time was more known as the Malay language. Through this linguistic aspect, it became the starting point for the process of acculturation of the Arab nation with the culture and traditions of the local community in Indonesia.

Recent research shows that the influence of Arabic culture continues to evolve and change according to the local context in Indonesia. For example, Ningsih emphasized that Islamic boarding schools, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, play an important role in the spread of Islamic values and Arab culture in Indonesia.<sup>3</sup> Islamic boarding schools not only teach religion but also maintain

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<sup>1</sup> Herdiana Anggrasari, Dhika Cahyasita, and Dinda Dewi Aisyah, "THE EFFECT OF INDONESIAN SPICE EXPORT TRADE LIBERALIZATION ON COMPETITION AND COMPETITIVENESS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS," *Jurnal Agribisnis Terpadu* 16, no. 1 (2023): 98-111, <http://dx.doi.org/10.33512/jat.v16i1.20163>.

<sup>2</sup> R Michael Feener, *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia* (OUP Oxford, 2013), [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=h3JjAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=R+Michael+Feener,+Shari'a+and+Social+Engineering:+The+Implementation+of+Islamic+Law+in+Contemporary+Aceh,+Indonesia+\(OUP+Oxford,+2013\).&ots=9mKmcS0bDZ&sig=0LrsuuFLQnCwP8cXmCFqXtnSVXg&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=R+Michael+Feener%2C+Shari'a+and+Social+Engineering%3A+The+Implementation+of+Islamic+Law+in+Contemporary+Aceh%2C+Indonesia+\(OUP+Oxford%2C+2013\).&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=h3JjAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=R+Michael+Feener,+Shari'a+and+Social+Engineering:+The+Implementation+of+Islamic+Law+in+Contemporary+Aceh,+Indonesia+(OUP+Oxford,+2013).&ots=9mKmcS0bDZ&sig=0LrsuuFLQnCwP8cXmCFqXtnSVXg&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=R+Michael+Feener%2C+Shari'a+and+Social+Engineering%3A+The+Implementation+of+Islamic+Law+in+Contemporary+Aceh%2C+Indonesia+(OUP+Oxford%2C+2013).&f=false).

<sup>3</sup> Indah Wahyu Ningsih, Hasan Basri, and Andewi Suhartini, "History and Development of Pesantren in Indonesia," *Jurnal Eduscience (JES)* 10, no. 1 (2023): 340-56, <https://doi.org/10.36987/jes.v10i1.3392>.

Arabic cultural traditions such as the use of the Arabic language in daily religious teaching and practice. In addition, Arifin discussed how Arabic affects Indonesian literature.<sup>4</sup> Many Arabic terms have been adopted into the Indonesian language, indicating the strong influence of Arabic culture in the development of modern Indonesian.<sup>5</sup> This study notes that the use of Arabic is not only in the context of religion but also as part of the intellectual culture and daily life of the Indonesian people.

The study of art and architecture by Idris also describes the impact of Arab culture in Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> The architectural style of mosques in Indonesia seems to reflect Islamic aesthetics influenced by Arabic art, with the use of traditional Arabic calligraphy and ornaments. The art of music and dance, which has roots in the Arabic tradition, has also become part of Indonesia's cultural richness.

However, despite the strong influence, Tiffany and Nurhayati revealed that this acculturation process does not always run smoothly.<sup>7</sup> There is a dynamic resistance of local culture to Arab culture, which reflects the complexity of cultural interaction in Indonesia. This research underscores the importance of understanding these dynamics to see how Arab culture adapts and interacts with the diverse local cultures in Indonesia. According to Maryeme Ouchen, resistance to Arab culture can be found in various aspects of life, including in the form of rejection of social norms that are considered contrary to local values.<sup>8</sup> In addition, in a study on Islamic education in Indonesia, Rochim, Ahmad Abdul and Amal Khayati show that there are efforts to maintain the unique characteristics of traditional

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<sup>4</sup> Zainul Arifin, "The Influence of Arabic on Indonesian Language," *Titian: Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (2017): 77–89, <https://doi.org/10.22437/titian.v1i1.3971>.

<sup>5</sup> Nafik Muthohirin and Suherman Suherman, "Resiliensi Pesantren Terhadap Ekstrimisme Kekerasan Berbasis Agama Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Masyarakat Pesisir Lamongan," *J-PAI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 7, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.18860/jpai.v7i1.11887>.

<sup>6</sup> Miftahul Akhera Idris et al., "MENILIK PERSPEKTIF POSITIF NON-MUSLIM TERHADAP URGENSI BAHASA ARAB SEBAGAI UPAYA MENAMPIK STIGMA SAKRAL DALAM MASYARAKAT UMUM DI INDONESIA," *FiTUA: Jurnal Studi Islam* 4, no. 1 (2023): 56–70, <https://doi.org/10.47625/fitua.v4i1.445>.

<sup>7</sup> Tiffany Tiffany and Nurhayatu Nufut Alimin, "Cultural Acculturation Study of Visual Form of Facades and Spatial Organization of Glodok's Shophouses, Jakarta Barat, Indonesia," *Journal of Architectural Design and Urbanism* 5, no. 2 (2023): 72–85, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jadu.v5i2.16338>.

<sup>8</sup> Maryeme Ouchen, "Resistance of the Minority Other and Their Coexistence Within the Dominant Group Translated To Portuguese," *Isagoge - Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2023): 219–33, <https://doi.org/10.59079/isagoge.v3i1.193>.

Indonesian Islamic boarding schools, despite the great influence of Arab education and culture.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, there are also efforts to campaign for local culture and recognize cultural diversity in Indonesia. Research by Idham and Noor Cholis highlights how Javanese people continue to practice their cultural traditions, by accommodating various new elements of Arab culture. This reflects the complex dynamics in cultural adaptation in Indonesian society.<sup>10</sup>

One of the important parts of the dynamics of the acculturation of Arab and Indonesian culture is the emergence of the *Pegon* script. *The Pegon* alphabet, which combines Arabic script with Javanese, has been used to write various religious texts and literary works in the archipelago. Historical studies show that the use of *the Pegon* script first emerged in response to the need to write Islamic religious texts in a local language that could be understood by the Javanese people. Aripuddin said that the *Pegon* alphabet developed in Java as a result of cultural interaction between Arab traders and Javanese people, which was later adopted by Islamic boarding schools as a tool to teach Islamic doctrines.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Sulistiani et al. (2023) argue that *the Pegon alphabet* is an important part of the literacy tradition of the Muslim community in Java and an important symbol of cultural acculturation in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the history of *the Pegon* alphabet not only reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of the archipelago but also enriches people's understanding of the complex cultural interactions between Arabia and Indonesia.

This study aims to examine the role of *pesantren* in implementing *Pegon* Arabic writing as a preservation of cultural traditions. This is seen as necessary as a form of concern for cultural traditions that have begun to be abandoned in recent decades. With the application using Indonesian, unlike other Islamic boarding

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<sup>9</sup> Ahmad Abdul Rochim and Amal Khayati, "Peran Pesantren Dalam Peningkatan Sumber Daya Umat," *J-CEKI: Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah* 2, no. 6 (2023): 521–26, <https://doi.org/10.56799/jceki.v2i6.1969>.

<sup>10</sup> Noor Cholis Idham, "Javanese Islamic Architecture: Adoption and Adaptation of Javanese and Hindu-Buddhist Cultures in Indonesia," *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 45, no. 1 (2021): 9–18, <https://doi.org/10.3846/jau.2021.13709>.

<sup>11</sup> Acep Aripudin, Nurman Kholis, and Ridwan Bustamam, "Dinamika Pesantren: Lokalitas to Globalitas," *DINAMIKA PESANTREN*, 2015, <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/id/eprint/39077>.

<sup>12</sup> Zumaroh Hadi Sulistiani et al., "Aksara Pegon Dan Transmisi Keilmuan Islam: Potret Dari Pesantren Babakan Ciwaringin Cirebon," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan* 21, no. 2 (2023): 117–37, <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v21i2.1415>.

schools in East Java that use Javanese, it is hoped that the preservation of the *Pegon* Arabic tradition will be able and continue to be in demand by the younger generation regardless of their tribal background.

## B. Research Method

This research article uses qualitative research that aims to collect and analyze data to answer research problems.<sup>13</sup> One type of qualitative research is case studies, which examine individuals, events, and groups intending to gain understanding and meaning from the situation and the individuals or groups involved.<sup>14</sup> The use of this method follows the purpose of this research which is to find out the role of the Singosari Al-Quran Science Islamic Boarding School in the preservation of the tradition of Arabic *Pegon* writing in Indonesian. The researcher also conducted field studies by observing and documenting research objects, as well as interviewing some teachers, students, and alumni of Islamic boarding schools who have received education and activities at Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari Malang. Meanwhile, field observation was carried out by participating in the learning process and the application of *Pegon* Arabic writing in the classroom. From this observation activity, the researcher obtained documentation that was used for research data. The three approaches were implemented within a period of two months (October – November 2022).

In the next stage, the researcher processed data from observations and field interviews using inductive analysis figures, namely analyzing problems with logical thinking to conclude special cases, which was then followed by thematic analysis. According to Creswell and Poth, the inductive approach allows researchers to understand the phenomenon in depth from the participant's perspective and in its

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<sup>13</sup> Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, "Dasar-Dasar Penelitian Kualitatif: Prosedur, Teknik Dan Teori Grounded, Terj," *HM. Djunaidi*, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Bob Algozzine and Dawson Hancock, *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers*, 3rd ed. (Columbia University: Teachers College Press, 2017), [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=FijGDQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Dawson+R.+Hancock+%26+B.+Algozzine.+\(2006\).+Doing+Case+Study+Research:+A+Practical+Guide+for+Beginning+Researcher&ots=56IW1KDrQE&sig=rMG1FhmlPLii2bRAGH0HyyKqb30&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Dawson R. Hancock %26 B. Algozzine. \(2006\). Doing Case Study Research%3A A Practical Guide for Beginning Researcher&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=FijGDQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Dawson+R.+Hancock+%26+B.+Algozzine.+(2006).+Doing+Case+Study+Research:+A+Practical+Guide+for+Beginning+Researcher&ots=56IW1KDrQE&sig=rMG1FhmlPLii2bRAGH0HyyKqb30&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Dawson R. Hancock %26 B. Algozzine. (2006). Doing Case Study Research%3A A Practical Guide for Beginning Researcher&f=false).

original context.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, according to Braun and Clarke, thematic analysis is one of the methods often used in inductive research, where researchers identify, analyze, and report research data in narrative research reports.<sup>16</sup>

### C. Result of Research and Discussion

Islamic boarding schools have long been known as traditional Islamic educational institutions that play an important role in shaping the character and religious knowledge of students in Indonesia. In recent years, Islamic boarding schools have also been increasingly recognized as a strategic place for strengthening literacy, both religious literacy and general literacy. According to Astuti, pesantren provides a conducive environment for the development of reading and writing skills because the comprehensive curriculum includes religious studies, Arabic, and classic books that require a high level of literacy.<sup>17</sup> Islamic boarding schools also contribute greatly to the preservation of the tradition of Arabic *Pegon* writing. As a traditional Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, pesantren teaches and practices the use of *Pegon* Arabic in various aspects of religious and cultural life.

In addition, *pesantren* or Islamic boarding school played a role in the production and distribution of the Yellow Book, many of which were written in the *Pegon* script. These books are not only used in pesantren but also distributed to the community to expand the literacy reach of *Pegon*.<sup>18</sup> Until now, there has not been an institution as massive as *Pesantren* in preserving the heritage of the *Pegon* Arabic writing tradition.

More than that, until now, there are still few Islamic boarding schools that apply *Pegon* Arabic writing in Indonesian. The application of *Pegon Arabic* writing

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<sup>15</sup> John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (United States of America: Sage publications, 2016), [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=DLbBDQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Creswell,+J.+W.,+%26+Poth,+C.+N.+\(2018\).+Qualitative+Inquiry+and+Research+Design:+Choosing+Among+Five+Approaches&ots=-io89aFVRA&sig=3CZYywwJqE6pZTDK2ZvzXrrQ\\_OM&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=DLbBDQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Creswell,+J.+W.,+%26+Poth,+C.+N.+(2018).+Qualitative+Inquiry+and+Research+Design:+Choosing+Among+Five+Approaches&ots=-io89aFVRA&sig=3CZYywwJqE6pZTDK2ZvzXrrQ_OM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>16</sup> Virginia Braun et al., "Applied Qualitative Research in Psychology," *Applied Qualitative Research in Psychology* 0887, no. 2006 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-35913-1>.

<sup>17</sup> Mardiah Astuti et al., "Mengoptimalkan Peran Pondok Pesantren Dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Umum* 1, no. 3 (2023): 157–68, <https://doi.org/10.47861/jkpu-nalanda.v1i3.237>.

<sup>18</sup> Ah Madi and Moh Badri, "Inovasi Strategi Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning Mi. Mambaul Ulum I Bata-Bata Pamekasan," *Studia Religia : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2023): 55–66, <https://doi.org/10.30651/sr.v7i1.18196>.

in Indonesian to Islamic boarding schools is not without reason considering that students who live in a *pesantren* come from various regions in Indonesia, so it can be ensured that they have a diversity of ethnicities, traditions, and languages. Thus, the use of the Indonesian *Pegon* Arabic script will be more understandable by all students.

The Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari has several educational programs that support students to have a comprehensive understanding of Arabic. These various programs are categorized into two models, namely regular and non-regular education. *First*, regular education at this Islamic boarding school includes three programs, namely the Al-Quran program, the Arabic language program, and Madrasah Diniyah. As the name implies, this Islamic boarding school makes the Qur'an the subject matter (other than Arabic). The learning stages in this material consist of two stages, the basic level and the advanced level. At the basic level, learners of Al-Quran material are carried out for 2 x 60 minutes a day or 40% of the total regular learning time. Meanwhile, in the advanced stage, the allocation of learning time is 20% of the regular learning time. Both stages use the Jibril method in their learning. Jibril's method emphasizes proper pronunciation following *the rules of tajweed*. Students are taught to pronounce each letter and punctuation correctly, following the way of pronunciation taught by the Prophet Muhammad to his companions.<sup>19</sup>

In the Arabic language program, Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari pays great attention to this, because various lessons taught inside and outside the classroom use Arabic. So Arabic language proficiency greatly affects academic performance in other subjects. This also has a great impact on students' literacy which includes the ability to read Arabic texts by understanding the meaning in depth. In addition, it is also important to understand the Al-Qur'an, Al-Hadith, and other Arabic literature.<sup>20</sup> As in the Al-Quran program, the Arabic language program is divided into two stages,

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<sup>19</sup> Wan Mazwati Wan Yusoff and Asyraff Hafdzan Abdullah, "Evaluation of Prophet Muhammad's Techniques in Managing Misbehaviors: Application in Primary School Classrooms," *EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH* 10 (2015): 33, 10.5901/jesr.2015.v5n1s1p185.

<sup>20</sup> Siti Nur Liyana Bakri and Rashid Abdul Hamed Kirembwe, "The Relationship between Arabic Reading Skills (ARS) and Arabic Verbal Expression (AVE) as Predictors for Undergraduate Students' Arabic Language Achievement," *Al-Azkiyaa: International Journal Languages and Education*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.33102/alazkiyaa51>.

namely the basic stage and the advanced stage with the same time allocation, namely 40% and 20%. Arabic language learning materials include phonology, morphology, cyclatics, and semantics. Thus, in the advanced stage, students have the opportunity to learn Arabic literature in more depth.

Meanwhile, the Islamic education program at Madrasah Diniyah is also an important part that focuses on non-Qur'an studies and Arabic. The material studied includes *fiqh*, morals, monotheism (*tauhid*), and other Islamic subjects. This program applies the writing of *Pegon* Arabic letters which is different from other Islamic boarding schools, namely using Indonesian. Instead of using Javanese, the various tribal backgrounds of students became a strong reason to apply *Pegon* Arabic writing in Indonesian.

This makes this pesantren have more value, namely the integration of the *Pegon alphabet* in the school curriculum which can strengthen cultural awareness and promote intercultural tolerance in Indonesia.<sup>21</sup> The time allocation given in this program is 60% of the total allocation of regular lessons or 3 hours a day. The amount of the allocation shows the high level of literacy applied.

*Second*, non-regular education includes memorizing Al-Qur'an, Islamic studies of *Ramadan*, *Tazkiyatun Nufus*, general recitation, study of tafsir, courses on the development of the Qur'an and Arabic, *Tashih* Al-Quran services, and others. These various activities are not only attended by students but also in great demand by the general public. According to one of the educators at the Islamic Boarding School of Qur'anic Sciences, various Islamic literacy activities and mastery of Arabic language skills are taught to students and the general public to improve the religious literacy of the community.

The Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program is a program for students who are interested in memorizing the Quran. This program has mandatory requirements so that students can later be declared to have passed the Al-Quran *bin-Nadhhor exam*, namely reading the Qur'an in front of a teacher or teacher with corrections if there are errors in both the pronunciation and the short length, as well as understanding the verses of the Qur'an. In addition, the non-regular education program also includes

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<sup>21</sup> Fika Hidayani, "Meningkatkan Kecintaan Budaya Lokal Melalui Pelatihan Membaca Naskah Kuno Beraksara Pegon Di Kampus IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon," *Yumary: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 3, no. 3 (2023): 183–89, <https://doi.org/10.35912/yumary.v3i3.1815>.



*Ramadan* activities which are attended by all students with activities to complete the understanding of the *books of turats* that have been determined in that month. This activity was guided by the ustadz under the supervision of madrasah *diniyah*. All writing activities in completing the understanding of the book are accustomed to Arabic *Pegon writing*. Likewise, public recitation was attended by students and the surrounding community. The distribution of Islamic knowledge is carried out by Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari through activities that are open to the wider community, including public recitations, tafsir recitations, and others. The Islamic study uses the writing of *Pegon Arabic script* in its teaching as a form of strengthening *Pegon Arabic script* literacy to students and the general public.

Non-regular activities also include the *Tazkiyatun Nufus* program, an Islamic literacy activity that accustomed students to recite shalawat *burdah*, *rattibul attas*, and *adzkarut thalabah* and some are carried out once a week, namely *khatmil Al-Quran*, *maulid habsyi*, *maulid Diba'*, and *manaqib* recitation. *Tazkiyatun Nufus* is a program consisting of various kinds of routine activities. Meanwhile, extracurricular activities consist of various activities to improve students' skills such as Indonesian and Arabic speeches, Student Creation *Mading* (window magazine), Journalism, and other activities that support the improvement of students' literacy. This confirms that almost all activities, both regular and extracurricular, are activities that strengthen literacy.

Non-regular activities are also supplemented by the *Bil-Qolam* program which is a practical training program to read the Qur'an for the public using a method commonly used by students of the Islamic Boarding School of Quranic Sciences, namely the Jibril Method, which is also known as the PIQ Method. The *Bil Qolam* training uses the arrangement of *'arobiy* words starting from introducing sounds per letter, two letters, three letters to one word, and even one sentence using the instrument of four songs typical of the Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari.

### **Inheriting the Pegon Arabic Literacy Tradition**

The use of *Pegon Arabic script* has long been taught in Islamic boarding schools in Java. In the contemporary era like now, the modern Islamic education style also maintains the tradition of Arabic *Pegon* learning, even including it in the learning

curriculum in madrasah and pesantren classes. *The Pegon script* plays an important role in the spread of Islamic science and Javanese culture because it allows scholars to convey religious teachings in a language that is understood by the local community.<sup>22</sup> However, currently, globalization and modernization have also affected the development and application of *Pegon* script writing in Islamic boarding schools. The use of the Pegon script, which is the Arabic script writing system for Javanese, Sundanese, and Madurese languages, has begun to decline in recent decades. This decline is mainly due to changes in the education system and modernization.

According to Aziz et al. (2020), with the introduction of the Latin alphabet as the main writing system in Indonesian schools, *the Pegon alphabet* began to be abandoned by the younger generation who are more familiar with the Latin alphabet. In addition, the article by Hula, et al. (2022), shows that globalization and the influence of mass media also contribute to the reduced use of the *Pegon* Arabic alphabet, as more global languages and writings tend to use the Latin alphabet. However, some Islamic boarding schools still maintain the use of *the Pegon alphabet* for special purposes, such as religious studies and the preservation of cultural traditions, as practiced in the Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari, Malang Regency.

The Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari applies the use of Arabic *Pegon* to various Islamic religious literacy activities. Unlike Islamic boarding schools in general in East Java that use Javanese, the Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari chooses to use *Pegon* Arabic in Indonesian. This is intended so that *Pegon* Arabic writing can be mastered by all students regardless of tribal background.

*Pegon* Arabic writing in Indonesian at the Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari is carried out in various activities, both inside and outside the classroom. This is because *Pegon's* Arabic writing is an effective medium for understanding the material of classical Islamic books. Various classic Islamic books written by scholars in the past written in Arabic script allow students to learn Islamic teachings in a language that is easier to understand. Aziz et al. (2020) said that the teaching of the Yellow Books through the Arabic writing of *Pegon* was to overcome complex Arabic

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<sup>22</sup> Sylvia Candra Devi and Dzulfikar Akbar Romadlon, "Al-Qur'an Learning with the Yanbu'a Model for the Quality of Pronunciation of Hijaiyah Letters at Islamic Boarding Schools," *Adabiyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4 (2023): 10-21070, <https://doi.org/10.21070/adabiyah.v4i0.1655>.

language constraints.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, students will be more familiar with the Arabic script so that they can improve their writing skills, but on the other hand, the preservation of traditions can be done along with learning activities.

The introduction of *Pegon* Arabic in class begins with the introduction of Arabic characters in Indonesian. Students learn the Arabic letters *Pegon* in Indonesian which in pronunciation are different from the pronunciation of Arabic characters. The introduction of Arabic script is a crucial first step in learning *Pegon* Arabic, where students are taught about the shape and variations of Arabic letters and their use in *the Pegon* script.

This introduction is accompanied by the habit of reading the *Pegon* Arabic script at the beginning of each lesson. Although some are much different from the pronunciation of Arabic Arabic characters, repeated practice can accelerate mastery of how to read the *Pegon* Arabic script in Indonesian. Reading practice is very important to help students master *Pegon* phonetics, where repeated exercises with varying levels of difficulty will strengthen their reading skills.

The introduction and habit of reading usually takes approximately one month for students who are familiar with the Arabic script to be able to read *Pegon* Arabic fluently. The habit of writing Arabic *Pegon* is the next stage that is carried out in all learning in the classroom. Students as a whole learn without any coercion because it has become a habit. However, mastering the skill of mastering *Pegon* Arabic writers requires intensive practice by Hakim.

The *Pegon* Arabic learning system at the Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an encourages students to learn it from the beginning of entering the Islamic boarding school. In the process, students do not necessarily immediately write in *the Pegon* script as a whole. There are several stages, where students can write words that they find difficult to write in the *Pegon* Arabic script with Latin characters.

In the next stage, students have reduced Latin writing and increased by writing *Pegon* Arabic script. This process arises because of the familiarity and desire of the students themselves to be able to write Arabic letters more. It is also influenced by the environment in which learning takes place. Then, after students have been able

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<sup>23</sup> Abdul Aziz et al., "Learning Arabic *Pegon* for Non-Javanese Santri at Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2022): 113–26, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v8i2.19581>.

to leave Latin writing in the learning process, the last stage is understanding the text and context. Understanding the text in its context provides students with a deeper insight into the use of *Pegon* in various aspects of cultural and religious life.<sup>24</sup> This understanding of the text and context is tested by practicing questions or exams at the end of each semester.

Learning to write *Pegon* Arabic at Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari is also carried out outside the classroom through non-regular activities, extracurricular activities, and other extracurricular activities, such as those contained in the Islamic studies program and Islamic studies with the general public. Various forms of *Pegon Arabic writing activities* outside the classroom are not as intensive as in the classroom. However, students have become accustomed to writing in the *Pegon* Arabic script so that indirectly this habit is carried over to non-regular activities, extracurricular activities, and others. The massive habit of writing Arabic *Pegon* for students at this Islamic boarding school indicates that this literacy tradition remains relevant until now. The learning model of *Pegon* Arabic writing has developed continuously because it has strong historical roots and an important role in the education of *Pegon* Arabic script. This style of Islamic teaching also serves as a bridge between the past and the present, as well as strengthening the relationship between Islamic doctrine and the traditions and culture of the Javanese people. Literacy work to preserve the development of the teaching of classical Islamic books through Arabic *Pegon* will continue to be an important part of Islamic educational literacy in Indonesia.

The Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari plays a role as a fortress in the preservation of *Pegon* Arabic writing in the archipelago. This confirms Martin van Bruinessen's thesis that pesantren is the last bastion in the teaching of Islamic books by classical scholars through the approach of *Pegon* Arabic writing.<sup>25</sup> A good understanding of the text and context in the *Pegon* Arabic script will be able to lead

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<sup>24</sup> M Fauzi, "Relevansi Makna Pegon Dalam Kajian Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Era Milenial," *Tadris: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam* 15, no. 2 (2021): 38-47, <https://doi.org/10.51675/jt.v15i2.180>.

<sup>25</sup> M Van Bruinessen, "The Turats: Islamic Boarding Schools and Tarekat" (Bandung: Mizan, 1995).

students to have a good understanding of classical books. Thus, this tradition can foster Islamic literacy, especially in Indonesia.

The Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari consistently implements learning to write *Pegon Arabic script* in Indonesian. This implementation is the result of the reading of pesantren *stakeholders* who from the beginning want to contextualize the learning of Islamic sciences with the progress of the times. The practice of writing *Arabic Pegon* in Indonesian means a form of accommodating attitude towards the culture and background of students studying at the *pesantren*. They come from various regions in Indonesia that have diverse traditions and languages, so to make it easier for them to understand the teachings of Islam through books by classical scholars, it can be easily done by learning to write *Pegon Arabic* in Indonesian. Thus, the preservation of the heritage of *Pegon Arabic* traditions is more in line with current conditions.

At the Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an Singosari, learning Arabic and *Pegon* script is carried out intensively. Students are taught Arabic grammar and how to write Indonesian in *the Pegon* script. This allowed them to understand ancient texts and write in the *Pegon* tradition. This habituation attitude, said Lukens, can prepare students to understand and continue the tradition of Islamic educational literacy.<sup>26</sup>

#### D. Conclusion

The Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an in Malang Regency plays an important role in preserving the tradition of *Pegon Arabic* writing. With the uniqueness of being practiced, namely the use of *Arabic Pegon* in Indonesian, the Islamic boarding school has succeeded in attracting the interest of students from various regional backgrounds in Indonesia to study Islamic books by classical scholars. Through various educational programs and religious activities, this Islamic boarding school has succeeded in maintaining the sustainability of the use of *the Pegon* script in

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<sup>26</sup> Ronald Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java*, 1st ed. (Chennai India: Springer, 2005), [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=qfDFAAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=R.+Lukens-Bull+\(2005\).+A+Peaceful+Jihad:+Negotiating+Identity+and+Modernity+in+Muslim+Java.+New+York:+Palgrave+Macmillan.&ots=9fCXGLDMOv&sig=3kg1lQklgniQoQW\\_OPnJcqbWqrM&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=R.+Lukens-Bull+\(2005\).+A+Peaceful+Jihad%3A+Negotiating+Identity+and+Modernity+in+Muslim+Java.+New+York%3A+Palgrave+Macmillan.&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=qfDFAAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=R.+Lukens-Bull+(2005).+A+Peaceful+Jihad:+Negotiating+Identity+and+Modernity+in+Muslim+Java.+New+York:+Palgrave+Macmillan.&ots=9fCXGLDMOv&sig=3kg1lQklgniQoQW_OPnJcqbWqrM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=R.+Lukens-Bull+(2005).+A+Peaceful+Jihad%3A+Negotiating+Identity+and+Modernity+in+Muslim+Java.+New+York%3A+Palgrave+Macmillan.&f=false)

learning the Yellow Book and other writing activities. The students are not only taught the ability to read and write in *the Pegon* script but are also given a deep understanding of the cultural and historical values contained in the tradition. The active role of caregivers and teachers in integrating the use of Arabic *Pegon* into various regular and non-regular Islamic education programs, as well as the daily activities of students shows the strong commitment of the Islamic boarding school in maintaining the heritage of Islamic literacy in the archipelago. Thus, Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an in Malang Regency not only functions as a religious educational institution but also as a fortress for the preservation of the Pegon Arabic writing tradition which is rich in religious values and local culture.

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