

Revitalizing *Kitab Kuning* Instruction in Islamic Higher Education: Structural Challenges and Curriculum Integration

^{1a*} Erma Suriani, ^{1b} Erlan Muliadi, ² Ulyan Nasri

^{1a} Pendidikan Bahasa Arab; ^b Pendidikan Agama Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Jl. Gajah Mada No. 100, Jempong Baru, Mataram 83127, Indonesia.

² Pendidikan Agama Islam, Institut Agama Islam Hanzanwadi Nahdlatu Wathan, Jl. Mataram-Lb. Lombok KM 49 Anjani, Lombok Timur 831659, Indonesia.

*Corresponding Author e-mail: ermasuryani@uinmataram.ac.id

Received: July 2025; Revised: October 2025; Published: November 2025

Abstract

The teaching of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) remains a defining yet increasingly marginalized component of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. This study examines the structural, pedagogical, and curricular factors shaping students' *turats* literacy and explores strategies for revitalizing classical text instruction within contemporary university contexts. Using a qualitative multi-site case study design, data were collected during the 2024–2025 academic year through interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, document analysis, and a diagnostic assessment conducted at one state Islamic university and three private Islamic higher education institutions in West Nusa Tenggara. Qualitative data involved 19 informants comprising lecturers, students, and curriculum developers, while a separate diagnostic assessment was administered to 67 undergraduate students to evaluate proficiency in reading unvoweled Arabic texts. The findings indicate that a substantial proportion of students experience persistent difficulties in engaging independently with *kitab kuning*, which are closely associated with weak linguistic foundations, uneven lecturer competence, and the marginal positioning of classical texts within formal curricula. Clear contrasts were observed between state universities and institutions affiliated with *ma'had* or *pesantren* traditions, where sustained textual engagement supports stronger *turats* literacy. Based on these findings, the study proposes an integrative curriculum framework that embeds *kitab kuning* instruction across progressive stages of undergraduate education, aligns learning outcomes and assessment with direct textual engagement, and strengthens lecturer qualification standards, contributing an empirically grounded model for revitalizing *turats* literacy in Islamic higher education.

Keywords: *Kitab Kuning*; *Turats* Literacy; Islamic Higher Education; Curriculum Integration; *Ma'had*-based Learning

How to Cite: Suriani, E., Muliadi, E., & Nasri, U. (2025). Revitalizing *Kitab Kuning* Instruction in Islamic Higher Education: Structural Challenges and Curriculum Integration. *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengkajian Ilmu Pendidikan: E-Saintika*, 9(3), 858-886. <https://doi.org/10.36312/zfmrtx55>



<https://doi.org/10.36312/zfmrtx55>

Copyright© 2025, Suriani et al.

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](#) License.



INTRODUCTION

Classical Islamic texts, commonly referred to as *kitab kuning* or *turats*, constitute the epistemological foundation of Islamic scholarship and continue to shape the transmission of Islamic knowledge across generations. These texts function as primary sources for jurisprudence, theology, Qur'anic exegesis, ethics, and Sufism, and they mediate the formation of interpretive authority and scholarly norms within Islamic intellectual traditions. In the Indonesian context, *kitab kuning* has historically served as the main medium through which Islamic knowledge is transmitted, scholarly

legitimacy is cultivated, and intellectual continuity is sustained, particularly within *pesantren*-based education that prioritizes direct engagement with classical sources (Dahlan, 2018; Murdianto, 2023; Qari et al., 2024; Ubaidillah et al., 2023). Mastery of *kitab kuning* has therefore been widely regarded as an indicator of intellectual maturity and scholarly competence, reflecting the ability to access foundational Islamic knowledge independently rather than through secondary mediation (Murdianto, 2023; Qari et al., 2024).

Engagement with *kitab kuning* presupposes advanced Arabic language competence, especially the ability to read unvoweled texts and to apply grammatical knowledge during interpretation. Studies on classical Islamic learning consistently emphasize that such competence is not acquired through theoretical grammar instruction alone, but through sustained and repetitive interaction with primary texts that demands continuous grammatical reasoning and contextual interpretation (Qari et al., 2024; Tamam, 2015; Ubaidillah et al., 2023). Insights from psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research further indicate that Arabic reading relies heavily on morphological processing and root-pattern awareness, while diglossic distance between spoken Arabic and formal written Arabic creates persistent challenges in reading unvoweled texts (Boudelaa & Marslen-Wilson, 2013; Saiegh-Haddad & Schiff, 2016; Taha Thomure et al., 2025)). These linguistic characteristics underscore why engagement with *turats* requires learning environments that normalize difficulty, repetition, and guided correction rather than isolated skill acquisition.

Traditional *pesantren* pedagogies address these demands through intensive textual immersion. Instructional practices such as *sorogan* and *bandongan* situate grammatical learning within direct and continuous engagement with unvoweled texts, enabling learners to internalize syntactic and morphological structures through practice rather than abstraction (Qari et al., 2024; Wekke, 2015; Yusuf & Wekke, 2015). Empirical studies in Indonesian Islamic education demonstrate that students with *pesantren* backgrounds often exhibit stronger grammatical mastery and reading competence due to prolonged exposure to classical texts, although this advantage does not necessarily extend to communicative proficiency (Azizah et al., 2024; Norlaila et al., 2025). These findings suggest that *turats* literacy is shaped by pedagogical environments that integrate language, text, and practice over extended periods of engagement.

In contemporary Indonesian Islamic higher education, Arabic language mastery is formally recognized as essential for accessing primary Islamic sources. However, a growing body of research indicates that Arabic instruction in university settings frequently fails to support the level of functional reading competence required for meaningful engagement with *kitab kuning*. Studies conducted across madrasah, *pesantren*, and Islamic universities consistently report that students struggle to apply grammatical knowledge when confronted with unvoweled texts, despite having completed multiple Arabic language courses (Atabik et al., 2023; Husein et al., 2023; Tamam, 2015; Ubay et al., 2025). Instructional constraints such as limited contact hours, densely structured curricula, and lecture-dominated pedagogy further restrict opportunities for sustained textual engagement, resulting in heavy reliance on translations and lecturer explanations (Asse et al., 2023; Norlaila et al., 2025). These patterns point to a persistent gap between Arabic language instruction and the actual demands of *turats* literacy.

At the institutional level, Islamic higher education in Indonesia operates under a dual mandate that requires balancing the advancement of modern academic disciplines with the preservation of Islamic intellectual traditions. As universities increasingly adopt competency-based curricula, standardized learning outcomes, and market-oriented educational models, the curricular position of Arabic and *kitab kuning* instruction has become progressively constrained. Research on Arabic curriculum development shows that Arabic courses are often weakly integrated with Islamic studies, limiting their function as a foundation for engaging primary texts (Rahmatullah, 2014; Raswan et al., 2025; Rekan et al., 2025). Comparative studies from other higher education contexts further demonstrate how language policies and standardization frameworks can marginalize foundational languages when institutional priorities privilege global academic capital over local epistemic needs (Al-Bataineh, 2021; Mohamed, 2023). These dynamics resonate with concerns in Islamic higher education, where Arabic may retain high symbolic value while occupying a peripheral position within formal academic structures.

Lecturer competence and instructional orientation further mediate these structural conditions. Empirical studies indicate that students' engagement with *kitab kuning* is closely linked to lecturers' confidence in reading classical texts and their ability to integrate grammatical instruction with direct textual engagement (Burhanuddin, 2024; Wildan & Fuad, 2019). Instructional practices that prioritize translation or thematic exposition tend to mediate students' interaction with classical texts, limiting opportunities for independent reading and interpretive development (Qari et al., 2024; Ubaidillah et al., 2023). In contrast, practice-oriented instructional models that emphasize repeated exposure to unvoweled texts and guided reading have been shown to foster greater fluency, confidence, and interpretive competence (Azizah et al., 2024; Wildan & Fuad, 2019).

Despite the expanding literature on Arabic learning, *kitab kuning* pedagogy, and curriculum development, existing studies often address linguistic competence, instructional methods, and institutional policy in isolation. Limited attention has been given to how these dimensions interact structurally within Islamic higher education settings, particularly in comparative analyses between state Islamic universities and institutions affiliated with *ma'had* or *pesantren* traditions that differ markedly in instructional intensity and learning environments (Murdianto, 2023; Qari et al., 2024; Raswan et al., 2025). This gap highlights the need for a structural and comparative examination of *kitab kuning* instruction that situates students' learning experiences within broader institutional, curricular, and pedagogical contexts.

Responding to these gaps, the present study examines the teaching of *kitab kuning* in Indonesian Islamic higher education as a structural and institutional phenomenon through a multi-site qualitative case study. The study aims to identify linguistic, pedagogical, and structural factors that hinder students' ability to read and interpret classical texts, to analyze differences in *turats* literacy outcomes between state Islamic universities and institutions affiliated with *ma'had* or *pesantren* traditions, and to formulate curriculum and institutional strategies capable of strengthening *kitab kuning* instruction within contemporary university contexts.

Taken together, the preceding discussion indicates that students' *turats* literacy is shaped by the interaction of multiple factors, including Arabic language foundations, lecturers' pedagogical orientations, curriculum design, and institutional

learning environments. These factors operate through instructional processes such as learning intensity, modes of textual engagement, and assessment practices, producing varied levels of students' ability to engage independently with *kitab kuning*. To capture these interrelationships systematically and to guide the analysis of linguistic, pedagogical, and institutional dynamics across different contexts, this study is informed by a conceptual framework that maps the connections between structural inputs, instructional processes, and learning outcomes. The conceptual framework of the study is presented in Figure 1.

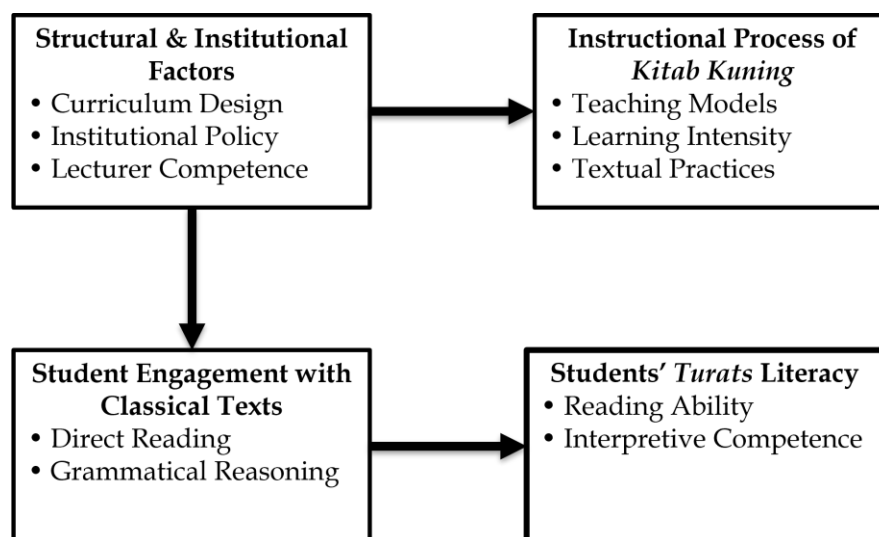


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of *kitab kuning* instruction and students' turats literacy in Islamic higher education

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multi-site case study design to examine the teaching of *kitab kuning* in Islamic higher education. Qualitative case study was selected because the research seeks to understand a complex educational phenomenon that is embedded in specific institutional, curricular, and pedagogical contexts, rather than to isolate variables or test causal relationships. In line with methodological critiques, the study explicitly treats each institution as a bounded case and emphasizes coherence between research questions, contextualization, and analytic focus, thereby avoiding the common problem of treating case study merely as a data collection technique (Hyett et al., 2014). A multi-site design was adopted to enable analytic comparison across institutions with differing curricular orientations and levels of affiliation with *Ma'had* or *pesantren* traditions, allowing patterns of similarity and difference to be examined across institutional contexts (Hyett et al., 2014; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data collection was conducted during the 2024–2025 academic year, encompassing both odd and even semesters. Prolonged engagement across two consecutive semesters supported iterative movement between data generation and analysis, enabling emerging interpretations to inform subsequent data collection. The study was organized into three sequential phases: (1) an initial baseline phase focusing on institutional mapping and preliminary interviews; (2) an intensive data collection

phase involving interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and diagnostic assessments; and (3) a consolidation phase emphasizing follow-up clarification and cross-case analysis. This phased and iterative design aligns with qualitative methodological principles that prioritize reflexivity, analytic development, and transparency over linear or purely procedural research trajectories (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Levitt et al., 2018; Nowell et al., 2017). Figure 2 presents the methodological workflow of the study.

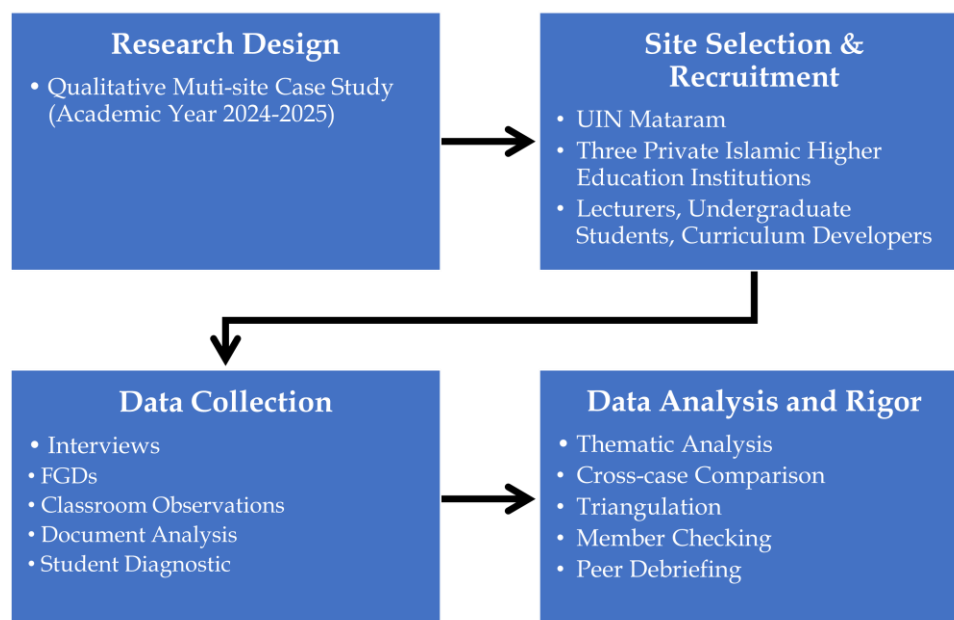


Figure 2. Research workflow showing site selection, participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Sites and Participants

The study was conducted in four Islamic higher education institutions located in West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia: Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Mataram, Institut Agama Islam Hamzanwadi NW Lombok Timur, STIT Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang, and STIT Palapa Nusantara NTB. These institutions were selected using purposeful sampling to capture variation in institutional status (state versus private), curriculum structure, and approaches to *kitab kuning* instruction. Purposeful sampling was employed to ensure that cases were information-rich and analytically relevant to the research questions, rather than statistically representative, thereby enabling meaningful comparison across institutional contexts (Palinkas et al., 2015). Treating each institution as a bounded case also aligns with qualitative case study principles that emphasize contextual integrity and analytic coherence (Hyett et al., 2014).

A total of 19 qualitative informants participated in interviews and focus group discussions, consisting of 11 lecturers, 6 undergraduate students, and 2 curriculum developers. Of the 11 lecturers involved as qualitative informants, eight participated in individual interviews, while the remaining lecturers contributed through classroom observations and informal discussions. Informant selection was guided by analytic relevance, with lecturers recruited based on their direct involvement in teaching Islamic studies, Arabic language, or *kitab kuning*-related courses; students selected from programs where classical texts were integrated into instruction; and curriculum

developers included due to their role in curriculum design and academic policy. Such role-based sampling supports depth of understanding and facilitates triangulation of pedagogical, experiential, and institutional perspectives, consistent with qualitative research practices that prioritize methodological integrity and transparency over numerical adequacy (Levitt et al., 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015). **Table 1** summarizes the distribution of qualitative informants across institutions and roles.

Table 1. Distribution of Qualitative Informants

Institution	Role	Number of Informants	Field / Department
UIN Mataram	Lecturers	4	Arabic Language Education
UIN Mataram	Students (FGD)	6	Arabic Language Education
IAI Hamzanwadi NW Lombok Timur	Lecturers	3	Islamic Education
STIT Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang	Lecturers	2	Arabic Language
STIT Palapa Nusantara NTB	Lecturers	2	Islamic Education Program
UIN Mataram	Curriculum Developers	1	Faculty / Academic Affairs
STIT Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang	Curriculum Developers	1	Faculty / Academic Affairs
Total		19	

In addition to qualitative informants, approximately 67 undergraduate students participated in a diagnostic assessment designed to examine basic proficiency in reading unvoweled Arabic texts (*kitab kuning*). Participants were recruited from the same four institutions using purposeful sampling, with inclusion criteria consisting of enrollment in Islamic studies or Arabic-related programs and prior exposure to Arabic grammar instruction. Purposeful sampling was employed to ensure analytic relevance and to capture variation in students' functional reading competence rather than to generate statistically representative (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Some students who participated in focus group discussions were also included in the diagnostic assessment; however, the diagnostic data constituted a distinct dataset and were analyzed separately from interview and FGD data. This separation was maintained to preserve methodological integrity and to avoid conflating experiential accounts with performance-based indicators, ensuring coherence between data type, analytic purpose, and interpretive claims (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data Collection

Data were collected using multiple qualitative techniques to support triangulation and to capture instructional practices, institutional arrangements, and participant perspectives across research sites. The use of multiple data sources was intended to enhance analytic depth by enabling comparison across perspectives rather than procedural verification (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017). Semi-

structured interviews were conducted with lecturers and curriculum developers to explore approaches to *kitab kuning* instruction, perceived challenges in teaching classical texts, lecturer competence, and institutional curriculum policies. A total of ten individual interviews were conducted with eight lecturers and two curriculum developers selected based on their direct involvement in teaching practices and curriculum-related decision-making. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The semi-structured format allowed consistency across cases while remaining responsive to participants' situated meanings and contextual explanations, in line with qualitative reporting principles emphasizing reflexivity and methodological integrity (Levitt et al., 2018; Shaw et al., 2019).

Table 2. Diagnostic Criteria and Rubric for Reading *Kitab kuning*

Proficiency Level	Diagnostic Criteria	Description of Student Performance
Proficient	Accurate identification of grammatical structures (<i>i'rāb</i>), correct recognition of verb patterns, and coherent interpretation of unvoweled Arabic text	Students are able to read unvoweled Arabic passages fluently, apply <i>nahwu</i> and <i>sharaf</i> rules consistently, and explain the meaning of the text with minimal assistance.
Partially Proficient	Partial application of grammatical rules with recurring errors in syntax or morphology	Students can identify some grammatical elements and read parts of the text, but frequently hesitate, misread verb forms, or rely on lecturer guidance to complete interpretation.
Not Proficient	Inability to apply basic <i>nahwu-sharaf</i> rules in reading unvoweled text	Students are unable to read the text independently, show confusion in determining sentence structure, and depend almost entirely on translations or lecturer explanations.

Notes: The diagnostic assessment consisted of a short *nahwu-sharaf* test and an unseen unvoweled Arabic passage that required oral reading and basic grammatical analysis. Classification was based on overall performance across both components.

Student perspectives were explored through two focus group discussions involving six undergraduate students. Each discussion lasted approximately 90 minutes and focused on students' learning experiences, difficulties encountered when engaging with unvoweled Arabic texts, and the instructional support available within their academic programs. Focus group discussions were used to facilitate interaction and collective reflection, allowing shared and divergent experiences to be articulated within a group setting (Levitt et al., 2018). In addition, classroom observations were conducted to document teaching practices and patterns of student engagement during *kitab kuning* instruction. A total of twelve classroom sessions were observed across the four institutions, with each session lasting between 90 and 120 minutes. An observation checklist was employed to guide systematic documentation of instructional strategies, lecturer-student interactions, and the extent to which

classroom activities involved direct engagement with unvoweled Arabic texts. The combined use of interviews, focus groups, and observations reflects a triangulation strategy oriented toward analytic richness rather than checklist-driven rigor (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Buus et al., 2025).

To complement interview, focus group, and observational data, document analysis and a diagnostic assessment were incorporated as additional analytic resources. Eighteen institutional documents, including curricula, syllabi, course outlines, and academic guidelines, were reviewed to examine how *kitab kuning* is formally positioned within academic programs. The diagnostic assessment was administered to 67 undergraduate students and focused on their engagement with unvoweled Arabic texts through tasks that required oral reading and the application of grammatical knowledge during basic text analysis. Student responses were examined using predefined analytic criteria that emphasized observable reading practices and grammatical application, and the resulting patterns were organized to support interpretive comparison across institutional contexts. The analytic criteria used to guide this assessment and the interpretive descriptors applied to student responses are summarized in Table 2. The diagnostic assessment was used as an analytic support rather than as a standardized measure, maintaining coherence between data type, analytic purpose, and interpretive claims (Levitt et al., 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015; Sinha et al., 2024).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using reflexive thematic analysis, following the approach articulated by Braun and Clarke (2020). This approach was selected to foreground the active and interpretive role of the researcher in meaning-making, treating themes as analytic constructions rather than as patterns that passively “emerge” from data. Interview transcripts, focus group discussion recordings, classroom observation notes, and institutional documents were read repeatedly to achieve familiarity and to support immersion across data sources. Analysis was iterative rather than linear, with movement back and forth between data, codes, and developing interpretations as analytic understanding deepened (Braun & Clarke, 2020).

The unit of analysis was defined as a meaningful segment of text, such as an utterance, interactional exchange, or paragraph, that was relevant to instructional practices, students’ engagement with *kitab kuning*, lecturers’ pedagogical orientation, or curriculum positioning. Initial codes were generated inductively across the dataset, attending to both semantic content and underlying assumptions reflected in participants’ accounts. Coding was conducted manually by the primary researcher as an interpretive process rather than as a mechanical procedure. Peer discussion with two colleagues experienced in qualitative research was used as a form of analytic reflexivity, supporting critical interrogation of developing interpretations rather than achieving coding agreement or consensus, which is inconsistent with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020; Levitt et al., 2018).

Codes were subsequently organized into broader themes that captured patterned meanings related to linguistic challenges, pedagogical practices, lecturer confidence and background, curriculum positioning, and institutional learning environments. Cross-case analysis was then undertaken to examine how these themes

were articulated differently across institutional contexts, with particular attention to contrasts between state Islamic universities and *ma'had-affiliated* institutions. To enhance analytic transparency, the relationship between selected codes, thematic interpretations, and representative anonymized excerpts is presented in Table 3, which illustrates how core themes concerning students' engagement with *kitab kuning* and the sustainability of *turats* literacy were constructed through the analytic process. Data from the diagnostic assessment were examined descriptively and used to contextualize qualitative interpretations, supporting analytic insight rather than statistical generalization, in line with principles of methodological integrity and coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2020; Levitt et al., 2018).

Table 3. Illustrative Codes, Analytic Interpretations, and Representative Excerpts

Code	Analytic Focus	Representative Excerpt
Difficulty applying <i>nahwu-sharaf</i>	Tension between formal grammar learning and practical text engagement	"We have learned <i>nahwu</i> and <i>sharaf</i> since the first semester, but when we are asked to read <i>kitab kuning</i> without <i>harakat</i> , we become confused." (Student, FGD)
Dependence on lecturer explanation	Mediated engagement with classical texts	"Most of the time we wait for the lecturer to explain the text first instead of trying to read it by ourselves." (Student, FGD)
Limited lecturer confidence	Translation-centered pedagogy	"I rely on translations because reading classical texts directly in front of the class is difficult for me." (Lecturer)
<i>Pesantren</i> -based pedagogy	Direct textual engagement as norm	"Students must read the text themselves first, even if they make mistakes." (Lecturer)
Curriculum marginalization	Peripheral status of <i>kitab kuning</i>	" <i>Kitab kuning</i> is not a core subject in our program." (Curriculum developer)
Absence of explicit learning outcomes	Lack of formal <i>turats</i> literacy targets	"There is no specific guideline that obliges us to include <i>kitab kuning</i> as a main learning outcome." (Curriculum developer)
Routine textual engagement	Normalization through repetition	"Because we read the <i>kitab</i> every day, it becomes normal for us." (Student)
Confidence through repetition	Reduced anxiety over time	"At first it was difficult, but gradually we became used to the text." (Student)

Trustworthiness and Reflexivity

This study approached trustworthiness through sustained attention to coherence across research design, data generation, analysis, and reporting. Multiple sources of data were used to support analytic triangulation by enabling comparison across

perspectives, practices, and institutional contexts. Interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, institutional documents, and diagnostic assessments were examined in relation to one another to deepen interpretation and to situate participants' accounts within their broader educational environments (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017). Peer discussion with colleagues experienced in qualitative research functioned as a reflexive space for questioning analytic assumptions and refining interpretations throughout the analytic process (Levitt et al., 2018).

Reflexivity was embedded throughout the research process. The researchers' professional engagement in Islamic higher education shaped access to research sites, interactions with participants, and sensitivity to pedagogical and institutional contexts. These positional influences were documented through ongoing reflexive memo writing during data collection and analysis. Memo writing was used to record analytic decisions, emerging interpretations, and moments of uncertainty, supporting transparency and critical self-awareness. This approach reflects qualitative perspectives that view researcher subjectivity as integral to interpretation and meaning-making rather than as a factor to be eliminated (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Shaw et al., 2019).

The reporting of this study prioritizes clarity, transparency, and alignment between research questions, methodological choices, analytic procedures, and interpretive claims. The manuscript follows principles articulated in the APA Journal Article Reporting Standards for Qualitative Research, which emphasize methodological integrity and contextual explanation across diverse qualitative traditions (Levitt et al., 2018). This reporting orientation is informed by critical scholarship that cautions against rigid checklist compliance and highlights the limitations of prescriptive frameworks when applied without epistemological reflection (Buus et al., 2025; Sinha et al., 2024). Trustworthiness in this study is therefore demonstrated through coherent design, reflexive analysis, and detailed contextualization rather than through procedural verification.

Ethical Considerations

This study received ethical approval from the Center for Research and Scientific Publication, Institute for Research and Community Service, Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, under Approval No. 123/LP2M-UINM/VIII/2024, issued on 15 August 2024. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and diagnostic assessments were conducted. Participants received information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any point without consequence.

Measures were taken throughout the research process to protect confidentiality and data security. All data were anonymized during transcription and analysis and stored securely with access limited to the research team. Institutional permission was obtained to disclose the names of participating institutions for academic reporting purposes. Ethical practice was treated as an ongoing responsibility that guided researcher conduct, participant engagement, and the representation of findings within their institutional and cultural contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Proficiency in Reading Kitab kuning

Classroom observations and a diagnostic assessment administered to 67 undergraduate students across four Islamic higher education institutions indicate that many students experience difficulty reading and interpreting unvoweled Arabic texts (*kitab kuning*). During observed classroom sessions, students frequently hesitated when reading aloud, misidentified verb patterns, and relied on lecturer explanations to determine sentence structure and meaning. When encountering unfamiliar syntactic constructions, students often paused for extended periods and rarely attempted independent interpretation before seeking assistance.

These observed difficulties were echoed in focus group discussions. One student stated:

“Actually, we have learned *nahwu-sharaf* since the first semester. But when we are asked to read *kitab kuning* directly, especially without *harakat*, we become confused. We know the rules, but we do not know how to apply them to the text in front of us” (Student-FGD1)

Another student described a similar pattern of reliance on lecturer mediation:

“Most of the time we wait for the lecturer to explain the text first. If we are asked to read by ourselves, we are afraid of making mistakes. So, we usually rely on translations or explanations instead of reading directly from the *kitab*.” (Student-FGD3)

Student reading proficiency was classified using predefined diagnostic criteria based on performance in an unvoweled Arabic reading task and basic grammatical analysis. The rubric used to categorize proficiency levels is presented in Table 3, while variations in proficiency across institutions are summarized in Figure 3.

Table 3. Diagnostic Criteria and Rubric

Proficiency Level	Diagnostic Criteria	Description of Student Performance
Proficient	Accurate identification of grammatical structures (<i>i'rāb</i>), correct recognition of verb patterns, and coherent interpretation of unvoweled Arabic text	Students are able to read unvoweled passages fluently, apply <i>nahwu-sharaf</i> rules consistently, and explain the meaning of the text with minimal assistance.
Partially Proficient	Partial application of grammatical rules with recurring errors in syntax or morphology	Students can identify some grammatical elements but frequently hesitate, misread verb forms, or rely on lecturer guidance to complete textual interpretation.
Not Proficient	Inability to apply basic <i>nahwu-sharaf</i> rules in reading unvoweled text	Students are unable to read the text independently, show confusion in determining sentence structure, and depend almost entirely on translations or explanations provided by the lecturer.

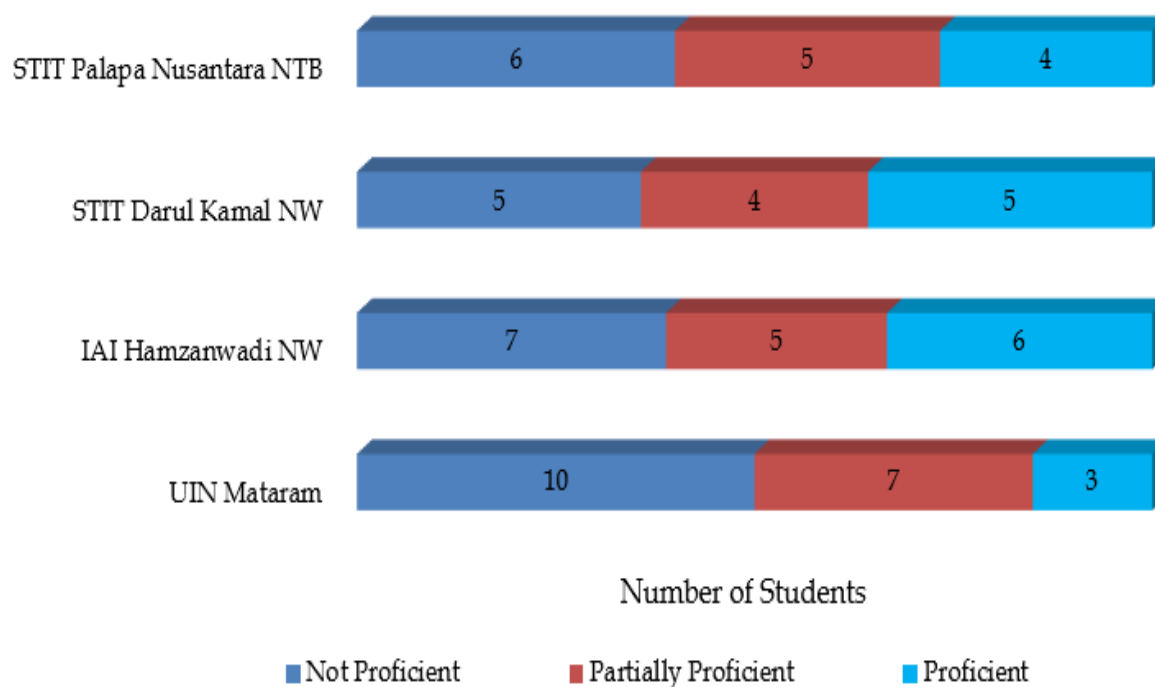


Figure 3. Student Proficiency in Reading *Kitab kuning* by Institution

Figure 3 shows a clear contrast in student proficiency between the state Islamic university and *ma'had*-affiliated institutions. At UIN Mataram, a larger proportion of students were classified as *not proficient*, indicating persistent difficulty in reading unvoweled Arabic texts independently. In contrast, *ma'had*-affiliated institutions demonstrated a more favorable proficiency distribution, with higher proportions of students categorized as *partially proficient* and *proficient*.

Variability in Lecturer Competence

Interview and classroom observation data reveal substantial variation in lecturers' competence and instructional approaches in teaching *kitab kuning*. Lecturers with *pesantren* or *ma'had* educational backgrounds tended to engage students directly with original Arabic texts through reading aloud, grammatical analysis, and guided interpretation. In contrast, lecturers without such backgrounds more frequently emphasized translations or thematic summaries.

One lecturer acknowledged limitations in direct textual engagement:

"To be honest, I am not fully confident reading *kitab kuning* directly in front of the class. I understand the content, but explaining the grammatical structure in detail is challenging for me. That is why I often use translations so that students can still understand the material." (Lecturer-L2)

Another lecturer described a contrasting instructional approach:

"In my class, students must read the text themselves. Even if they read slowly or make mistakes, that is part of the learning process. Without facing the text directly, they will never become familiar with *kitab kuning*." (Lecturer-L5)

Differences in lecturers' educational backgrounds, teaching experience, and instructional approaches are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Lecturer Profiles and Teaching Backgrounds

Lecturer Code	Institution Type	Years of Teaching Experience	<i>Pesantren</i> / <i>ma'had</i> Background	Courses Taught	Primary Teaching Approach
L1	State Islamic University	>10 years	Yes	Fiqh, <i>Kitab kuning</i>	Direct text reading, grammatical analysis (<i>sorogan</i> style)
L2	State Islamic University	5–10 years	No	Islamic Studies	Thematic explanation using translations
L3	State Islamic University	>10 years	Yes	Arabic Grammar, Turats	Text-based instruction with <i>bandongan</i>
L4	State Islamic University	<5 years	No	Islamic Education	Lecture-based, limited textual engagement
L5	Private HEI (<i>ma'had-affiliated</i>)	>10 years	Yes	<i>Fiqh</i> , <i>Tasawwuf</i>	Daily text reading and discussion
L6	Private HEI (<i>ma'had-affiliated</i>)	5–10 years	Yes	<i>Kitab Akhlaq</i>	Guided reading with repetition
L7	Private HEI	>10 years	No	Islamic Education	Summary-based explanation
L8	Private HEI	5–10 years	No	Arabic Language	Grammar-focused, limited text use
L9	Private HEI	<5 years	Yes	<i>Kitab kuning</i>	Assisted text reading
L10	Private HEI	>10 years	Yes	Fiqh	Integrated <i>pesantren</i> pedagogy
L11	Private HEI	5–10 years	No	Islamic Studies	Translation-centered instruction

Notes: Lecturer identities are anonymized to protect confidentiality. Profiles are intended to illustrate patterns of teaching background and instructional approaches rather than to evaluate individual performance.

Curriculum Position of *Kitab kuning*

Analysis of institutional curriculum documents and interviews with curriculum developers indicates that *kitab kuning* is not consistently positioned as a core component of formal curricula. In several institutions, classical texts were offered as elective courses or implemented informally without explicit learning outcomes related to reading and interpreting primary texts.

One curriculum developer explained:

“There is no specific regulation that obliges us to include *kitab kuning* as a core subject. Each study program decides for itself. Some programs emphasize it, but others do not, depending on their orientation.” (Curriculum-Dev1)

Another informant highlighted the consequences of this condition:

“Because there is no clear guideline, the implementation depends very much on who teaches the course. If the lecturer has a *pesantren* background, *kitab kuning* is taught seriously. If not, it becomes very minimal.” (Curriculum-Dev2)

The formal status of *kitab kuning* across institutions, including credit allocation and learning outcomes, is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Curriculum and Policy Mapping of *Kitab kuning* Instruction

Institution	Status of <i>Kitab Kuning</i> in Curriculum	Credit Allocation	Explicit Learning Outcomes on Turats	Regulatory / Policy Reference
UIN Mataram	Elective/ Supplementary course	2 credits (elective)	Not explicitly stated	University curriculum guideline
IAI Hamzanwadi NW Lombok Timur	Integrated in selected programs	2-4 credits	Partially stated	Faculty-level curriculum policy
STIT Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang	Extracurricular / Non-credit	None	Not stated	Informal departmental practice
STIT Palapa Nusantara NTB	Program-dependent	2 credits	Implicit	Program study curriculum document
National Level (MoRA)	Not mandated	Not specified	Not specified	No specific national regulation

Notes: The table is based on analysis of institutional curriculum documents, syllabi, and policy guidelines. “Explicit learning outcomes” refer to formally stated competencies related to reading and interpreting classical Islamic texts.

Stronger Turats Literacy in *ma’had-affiliated* Contexts

A contrasting pattern was observed in institutions affiliated with *ma’had* or *pesantren* traditions. In these contexts, students demonstrated greater confidence and fluency in reading *kitab kuning*. Classroom observations show that students were more willing to read texts aloud, attempt grammatical analysis, and engage directly with the text before seeking clarification.

Students attributed their developing competence to sustained and routine exposure to classical texts. One student stated:

“In the Ma’had, we read kitab every day, not only in class but also outside class hours. At first, it was very difficult, and we made many mistakes. But because we read regularly, gradually we became used to the text.” (Student-I7)

Another student emphasized the role of practice:

“Because reading *kitab kuning* is part of our daily routine, we are not afraid anymore. Even if we do not fully understand, we try to read first and then ask.” (Student-I9)

Differences in student proficiency between the state Islamic university and *ma’had-affiliated* institutions are illustrated in Figure 4.

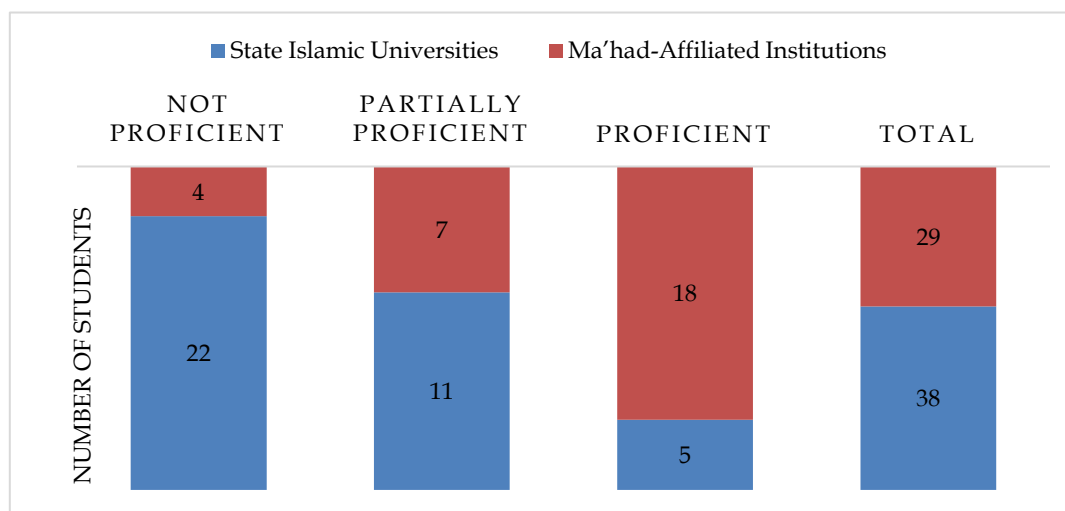


Figure 4. Student Proficiency by Institutional Type

Discussion

Structural Nature of Turats Literacy Decline

The findings of this study indicate that students’ difficulties in reading *kitab kuning* are best understood as a structural and institutional phenomenon rather than as a consequence of individual linguistic deficiency. This perspective aligns with a growing body of research in Arabic and Islamic higher education which emphasizes that learning outcomes are shaped by curriculum organization, instructional intensity, and institutional priorities (Husein et al., 2023; Norlaila et al., 2025). In the present study, weak structural support for sustained engagement with unvoweled Arabic texts was evident in fragmented curricula, limited instructional time, inconsistent pedagogical practices, and the peripheral placement of *kitab kuning* within formal programs. These conditions significantly constrained students’ opportunities for cumulative skill development. Moreover, Arabic language instruction that remains disconnected from the sustained use of classical texts limits meaningful textual immersion, a pattern that has also been observed in Islamic universities where curriculum density and insufficient instructional time hinder deep engagement with primary sources (Asse et al., 2023).

Importantly, these structural and curricular conditions also help explain why difficulties in reading *kitab kuning* persisted across institutions despite variation in students’ prior educational backgrounds. Consistent with earlier findings, students from pesantren, modern pesantren, and general schooling backgrounds experienced

similar challenges when grammatical instruction was not systematically integrated with sustained engagement in classical texts (Azizah et al., 2024; Norlaila et al., 2025). Under such conditions, knowledge of *nahwu* and *sharaf* tends to remain compartmentalized and is difficult for students to mobilize during direct textual reading. Studies on Arabic curriculum implementation further indicate that when learning outcomes prioritize general language proficiency without explicitly articulating discipline-based textual literacy, responsibility for *turats* instruction becomes diffused across courses and weakly institutionalized at the program level (Mohamed, 2023; Raswan et al., 2025).

From a broader epistemological perspective, the marginalization of *kitab kuning* within university curricula reflects wider tensions in language policy and knowledge production. Studies on language use in higher education demonstrate that when a language retains symbolic or religious prestige but receives limited institutional investment, its role in academic knowledge construction becomes increasingly fragile (Al-Bataineh, 2021). Research on linguistic capital in Islamic institutional spaces similarly shows that inadequate pedagogical mediation can transform Arabic from a resource into a barrier, weakening students' sense of epistemic access and institutional belonging (Gonzalez-Dogan, 2022). These findings suggest that the decline of *turats* literacy is inseparable from broader institutional choices regarding curriculum priorities and language policy.

Role of Lecturer Background and Pedagogical Practice

Lecturer background emerged as a key factor shaping how institutional structures are enacted at the classroom level. Studies of *pesantren*-based education highlight that instructors with prolonged exposure to classical pedagogical traditions tend to emphasize direct textual engagement, grammatical application, and repeated reading as core learning practices (Wekke, 2015; Yusuf & Wekke, 2015). The findings of this study confirm that such pedagogical orientations create learning environments in which engagement with unvoweled Arabic texts becomes routine rather than exceptional. Research on student trajectories in Islamic higher education further shows that prolonged exposure to classical texts strengthens grammatical awareness and reading confidence, particularly among students with *pesantren* educational experience (Azizah et al., 2024).

By contrast, lecturers without sustained training in classical pedagogy often rely on translations or thematic explanation as primary instructional strategies. Although this approach may support short-term comprehension, it mediates students' interaction with the text and limits opportunities for developing independent reading competence. Studies on instructional diversity in Arabic language education indicate that when pedagogical practice depends heavily on individual lecturer preference, students encounter uneven learning experiences that weaken curricular coherence (Asse et al., 2023; Husein et al., 2023). Over time, this variability contributes to persistent gaps in students' ability to engage directly with classical texts.

These patterns point to the importance of institutional intervention in lecturer development. Research on Arabic learning difficulties consistently emphasizes that sustainable improvement depends on coordinated strategies that align lecturer preparation, curriculum design, and learning environments (Raswan et al., 2025; Rekan et al., 2025). Without such institutional mechanisms, disparities in pedagogical

practice are likely to persist, reinforcing existing inequalities in *turats* literacy outcomes and limiting the capacity of Islamic higher education institutions to sustain their epistemological distinctiveness (Al-Bataineh, 2021; Mohamed, 2023).

Curriculum Design and Policy Implications

Research on Arabic learning in Islamic higher education consistently indicates that curriculum design mediates the relationship between institutional ideals and actual learning practices (Husein et al., 2023; Mohamed, 2023; Norlaila et al., 2025; Raswan et al., 2025; Rekan et al., 2025). The findings of this study show that the marginal positioning of *kitab kuning* within formal curricula is not accidental, but reflects policy orientations that privilege general language competence and administratively measurable outcomes over discipline-specific textual literacy. As observed across research sites, Arabic courses tend to emphasize grammatical knowledge in isolation, while sustained engagement with unvoweled classical texts remains weakly articulated within curricular structures. Similar misalignments between curriculum intent and instructional practice have been documented in studies of Arabic education where learning objectives are insufficiently linked to advanced reading demands (Mohamed, 2023; Raswan et al., 2025).

The absence of explicit curricular articulation regarding *kitab kuning* further contributes to fragmented implementation. Findings from document analysis and interviews indicate that when curriculum guidelines do not specify the epistemic role of classical texts, responsibility for *turats* literacy becomes dispersed across departments and individual lecturers. This condition produces uneven learning trajectories even within the same institution, a pattern also identified in qualitative studies of Arabic learning difficulties across diverse educational backgrounds (Asse et al., 2023; Azizah et al., 2024). In such contexts, grammatical competence acquired through formal instruction remains difficult to mobilize during direct engagement with classical texts, reinforcing students' dependence on translation and lecturer mediation (Norlaila et al., 2025).

From a policy perspective, these findings suggest that curriculum reform involves more than expanding Arabic course offerings or increasing instructional hours. What is at stake is the epistemic status of classical texts within institutional governance. Studies examining language policy in higher education show that when a language is symbolically valued but structurally under-supported, its role in academic knowledge production becomes increasingly fragile (Al-Bataineh, 2021). A similar dynamic emerges in Islamic higher education, where Arabic retains high religious and symbolic capital but lacks consistent curricular mechanisms to support advanced textual engagement. Research on linguistic capital in Islamic institutional spaces further suggests that such conditions risk transforming Arabic from an epistemic resource into a pedagogical barrier for students (Gonzalez-Dogan, 2022).

Explicit learning outcomes, credit recognition, and assessment alignment therefore function as institutional mechanisms that stabilize expectations and reduce reliance on individual lecturer initiative. Evidence from curriculum-oriented studies indicates that when advanced reading competence is formally embedded within program structures, instructional consistency increases and learning outcomes become more comparable across sites (Mohamed, 2023; Raswan et al., 2025). In this

sense, curriculum policy operates as a structural condition that shapes the sustainability of *turats* literacy rather than as a neutral administrative framework.

Learning from Ma'had-Affiliated Contexts: Selection or Treatment Effect?

The stronger *turats* literacy observed in *ma'had-affiliated* institutions provides a comparative lens for understanding how structural design shapes learning outcomes. Findings from classroom observations show that in these contexts, engagement with *kitab kuning* is embedded within routine instructional practices rather than treated as an advanced or supplementary activity. Sustained exposure to unvoweled texts appears to normalize difficulty and reduce students' anxiety over time. Studies examining educational background diversity similarly report that prolonged exposure plays a decisive role in supporting gradual development of grammatical sensitivity across student cohorts, regardless of prior schooling (Azizah et al., 2024; Norlaila et al., 2025).

Pedagogical sequencing within *ma'had-affiliated* environments further illuminates this pattern. Students are expected to attempt reading before receiving explanation, which shifts responsibility from lecturer mediation toward learner engagement. Research on Arabic literacy development suggests that such sequencing is particularly important in diglossic language contexts, where learners must navigate syntactic and morphological complexity without reliance on vowelization (Abu-Rabia, 2012; Saiegh-Haddad & Schiff, 2016; Taha Thomure et al., 2025). Rather than avoiding textual difficulty, these learning environments treat struggle as an integral part of the acquisition process, enabling students to develop tolerance for ambiguity and interpretive flexibility.

These findings resonate with broader studies of Arabic pedagogy that emphasize immersion, repetition, and routine textual engagement as key conditions for developing advanced reading competence (Bar-On et al., 2018; Khatib-Abbas & Lipka, 2025; Wekke, 2015; Yusuf & Wekke, 2015). Importantly, *ma'had-affiliated* practices do not operate in isolation from institutional structures. Instead, they are supported by learning environments that align instructional routines, assessment expectations, and daily academic rhythms. Research on Arabic learning and institutional adaptation suggests that such alignment is critical for sustaining pedagogical practices over time and across cohorts (Asse et al., 2023; Atabik et al., 2023).

Taken together, the comparative evidence suggests that *ma'had-affiliated* contexts offer not an alternative model, but an analytic resource for curriculum development in Islamic higher education. Integrating structured reading routines and guided textual analysis into formal programs can help bridge the gap between traditional learning cultures and contemporary university frameworks. Studies on Arabic curriculum implementation indicate that such integration is most effective when pedagogical principles are embedded structurally rather than appended as optional enrichment (Mohamed, 2023; Raswan et al., 2025; Rekan et al., 2025). Through this lens, *ma'had-affiliated* institutions illuminate how *turats* literacy can be sustained within modern academic constraints while maintaining epistemological depth.

Toward an Integrative Curriculum Model

The findings of this multi-site study suggest that efforts to strengthen *turats* literacy, particularly students' capacity to read *kitab kuning*, require an integrative curriculum model rather than isolated instructional interventions. Consistent with

research in Arabic and Islamic higher education, grammar instruction that is treated as a standalone component limits students' ability to mobilize linguistic knowledge during direct engagement with unvoweled texts (Atabik et al., 2023; Husein et al., 2023; Norlaila et al., 2025). The present study confirms this pattern, as students across institutions demonstrated conceptual familiarity with *nahwu-sharaf* but struggled to apply this knowledge in authentic reading contexts. These findings imply that linguistic instruction should be functionally embedded within sustained textual practice rather than positioned as a preparatory stage completed in advance.

At the pedagogical level, the findings underscore the importance of instructional processes that support the enactment of linguistic knowledge. Evidence from *ma'had*-affiliated learning environments indicates that routine exposure to classical texts, guided reading, and iterative correction facilitate the gradual internalization of grammatical structures and reduce reliance on translation-based strategies (Azizah et al., 2024). This is reinforced by studies on Arabic literacy development showing that repeated engagement with complex, unvoweled texts enhances syntactic processing and interpretive flexibility, particularly in diglossic contexts (Saiegh-Haddad & Schiff, 2016; Taha Thomure et al., 2025). Accordingly, curriculum integration should be understood not only as content alignment, but also as the deliberate sequencing of learning activities that renders textual difficulty pedagogically productive.

Lecturer development constitutes a further structural implication. The study reveals that variation in instructional practice across institutions is closely linked to differences in lecturers' educational backgrounds and familiarity with classical pedagogical traditions. This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing that pedagogical coherence in Arabic instruction depends on institutional investment in lecturer preparation rather than individual initiative alone (Asse et al., 2023; Atabik et al., 2023). When professional development is aligned with curriculum design, lecturers are better positioned to integrate linguistic instruction, textual analysis, and assessment into coherent learning trajectories.

At the policy level, the findings highlight the importance of formally embedding *kitab kuning* instruction within curriculum structures. Research on higher education language policy suggests that when a language maintains symbolic prestige without sustained curricular support, its role in academic knowledge production becomes increasingly fragile (Al-Bataineh, 2021). Explicit recognition of *turats* literacy as a programmatic learning outcome can stabilize institutional expectations and reduce dependence on localized or informal instructional arrangements. In this sense, curriculum integration functions as an epistemic mechanism for sustaining continuity between classical Islamic knowledge traditions and contemporary academic governance (Mohamed, 2023).

Despite these contributions, this study has limitations. The qualitative data were drawn from a limited number of informants, and the diagnostic assessment was conducted within a single province, which may restrict broader generalization. Classroom observations may also have been influenced by reactivity effects, and data analysis relied primarily on a single primary coder. These limitations indicate the need for future research examining the implementation and impact of integrative *turats* curricula across diverse institutional and regional contexts, as well as longitudinal studies that assess cumulative learning outcomes over time.

Integrative Curriculum for Kitab Kuning

Rationale for Curriculum Integration

The findings of this study demonstrate that the decline of *kitab kuning* literacy in Islamic higher education is primarily shaped by structural misalignment between linguistic preparation, curriculum sequencing, and pedagogical practice, rather than by individual student motivation or ability. Across research sites, Arabic grammar instruction was often delivered as a standalone component, while sustained engagement with unvoweled classical texts was weakly articulated within formal curricula. Similar patterns have been reported in studies of Arabic learning in Islamic universities, where grammatical knowledge remains detached from authentic textual practice (Asse et al., 2023; Husein et al., 2023).

An integrative curriculum therefore responds not to a lack of instructional content, but to a disconnect between curricular design and the epistemic demands of classical Islamic scholarship. When learning outcomes emphasize general language proficiency without explicitly articulating how grammatical knowledge should be mobilized in reading *kitab kuning*, *turats* literacy is implicitly assumed rather than pedagogically scaffolded (Mohamed, 2023; Rekan et al., 2025). This condition reproduces reliance on prior educational background and lecturer mediation, rather than ensuring equitable learning opportunities through curriculum design.

Against this backdrop, an integrative curriculum model is proposed to restore the epistemological centrality of *kitab kuning* while remaining responsive to contemporary academic governance. Instead of positioning *turats* as an isolated or supplementary subject, the curriculum embeds classical text study across progressive stages of undergraduate education. This longitudinal design aligns linguistic foundations, methodological training, thematic exploration, and experiential learning into a coherent learning trajectory. Evidence from *pesantren*- and *ma'had*-affiliated contexts suggests that such sustained and cumulative engagement supports gradual skill development and reduces students' dependence on translation and lecturer mediation (Azizah et al., 2024; Wekke, 2015; Yusuf & Wekke, 2015).

Structure of the Integrative Turats Curriculum

The proposed curriculum is organized as a sequence of six credit-bearing courses distributed across six semesters, each addressing a distinct dimension of *turats* literacy. The sequencing reflects cross-case findings showing that students' difficulties were most pronounced when grammatical instruction, textual methodology, and interpretive practice were separated across unrelated courses. Research on Arabic pedagogy similarly indicates that learning trajectories are strengthened when linguistic knowledge is introduced in close alignment with its immediate textual application (Asse et al., 2023).

The curriculum begins with instruction in Arabic morphology and syntax to establish the grammatical competence required for reading unvoweled texts (Abu-Rabia, 2012; Bar-On et al., 2018). Rather than functioning as a terminal prerequisite, this component is designed to prepare students for early engagement with classical materials. The curriculum then progresses to methodological training that equips students with strategies for navigating classical manuscripts, addressing difficulties commonly reported in applying grammatical knowledge during direct reading (Abidin, 2018). Advanced courses emphasize thematic engagement with selected

turats works, enabling students to encounter classical discourse within substantive areas such as jurisprudence and Sufism while refining interpretive skills.

The curriculum culminates in an experiential practicum conducted in *ma'had* or *pesantren* settings, where sustained textual practice is embedded within daily learning routines. Both the findings of this study and prior research indicate that immersion-based environments normalize engagement with unvoweled texts and foster confidence through repetition and guided practice (Azizah et al., 2024; Yusuf & Wekke, 2015). By formally recognizing such experiential learning within the curriculum, Islamic higher education institutions bridge traditional pedagogical strengths with contemporary academic structures. The overall structure and sequencing of the proposed curriculum are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Proposed Integrative Curriculum for *Kitab kuning* Instruction

Course Title	Credits	Semester	Description
Basic Arabic Morphology and Syntax (<i>Nahwu-Sharaf</i>)	2	1	Introduction to grammatical structures required for reading unvoweled texts
Islamic Legal Maxims (<i>Qawā'id al-Fiqhiyyah</i>)	2	2	Core jurisprudential principles derived from classical texts
Methodology for Reading Classical Texts	2	3	Techniques for navigating unvoweled Arabic manuscripts
Thematic Study of Classical Texts (<i>Fiqh/Tasawwuf</i>)	2	4	In-depth engagement with selected <i>turats</i> works
<i>Turats</i> and Contemporary Issues	2	5	Linking classical discourse with modern socio-religious challenges
<i>Ma'had/ Pesantren</i> Practicum	Mini 2	6	Experiential learning through traditional <i>pesantren</i> practices

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Alignment

Within an integrative curriculum framework, learning outcomes are formulated to conceptualize *turats* literacy as a form of disciplinary competence rather than as a purely linguistic skill (Nassiri et al., 2023). Accordingly, students are expected not only to demonstrate technical accuracy in reading unvoweled Arabic texts, but also to engage analytically with classical arguments by situating them within their legal, theological, and socio-religious contexts (Mahbubi et al., 2024; Zulhannan et al., 2025). Research on Arabic learning and literacy development in Islamic higher education consistently indicates that reading competence is most effectively developed when grammatical analysis, semantic interpretation, and contextual reasoning are treated as interdependent processes rather than as separate instructional targets (Rakhlin et al., 2021). Learning outcomes in this curriculum therefore emphasize students' ability to mobilize linguistic knowledge in authentic encounters with *kitab kuning*.

In alignment with these outcomes, assessment strategies are designed to evaluate students' actual engagement with classical texts rather than their capacity to reproduce memorized grammatical rules or translations. Studies on Arabic literacy and reading development show that performance in controlled grammar tests often overestimates students' ability to process unvoweled texts in real reading situations (Khatib-Abbas & Lipka, 2025; Saiegh-Haddad & Schiff, 2016). In response, assessment

within the integrative curriculum prioritizes unseen text reading, grammatical reasoning embedded in textual analysis, oral explanation of interpretive choices, and reflective portfolios that document students' reading processes over time. Such assessment practices foreground comprehension, interpretive decision-making, and learning trajectories, thereby aligning evaluation with the epistemic demands and interpretive practices of classical Islamic scholarship.

Lecturer Qualification and Institutional Support

The effectiveness of an integrative curriculum for *turats* instruction depends on institutional recognition of lecturer competence as a structural condition rather than an individual attribute. Findings from this study indicate that lecturers with sustained exposure to *pesantren*-based learning or long-term engagement with classical texts are more likely to emphasize direct reading, iterative correction, and student-led interpretation, while those with limited textual immersion tend to rely more heavily on translation and thematic summarization. Similar patterns have been documented in studies of Arabic pedagogy, which link instructional practices closely to lecturers' educational trajectories and levels of textual confidence (Azizah et al., 2024; Wekke, 2015).

In this context, proficiency in reading and interpreting unvoweled Arabic texts constitutes a core qualification for lecturers assigned to *turats*-related courses. Such competence may be developed through formal academic training, extended *pesantren* experience, or sustained scholarly engagement with classical Islamic texts. Research on Arabic education in higher education suggests that in the absence of explicit institutional standards, disparities in lecturer competence tend to persist and are reproduced as uneven learning experiences for students (Husein et al., 2023; Norlaila et al., 2025).

Institutions are therefore encouraged to articulate minimum qualification benchmarks and to provide structured professional development programs for lecturers. These initiatives should focus on strengthening lecturers' confidence in direct textual engagement while supporting the integration of traditional pedagogical practices with contemporary instructional strategies. By formalizing lecturer qualifications and development pathways, institutions shift responsibility for instructional quality from individual initiative to institutional governance, thereby reinforcing a collective commitment to the sustainability and rigor of classical Islamic scholarship.

Implementation Strategy

The implementation of the integrative *kitab kuning* curriculum is conceptualized as an institutional process that links curriculum design, pedagogical practice, and lecturer capacity within a coherent logic of change. The findings of this study demonstrate that students' limited *turats* literacy is not attributable to isolated instructional shortcomings, but to fragmented curriculum structures and uneven pedagogical enactment. Consequently, effective implementation requires coordinated alignment between institutional commitment, curriculum policy, and instructional practice rather than ad hoc or lecturer-dependent initiatives.

To articulate this alignment, the implementation strategy is informed by a curriculum logic model that clarifies how institutional inputs are expected to generate sustainable learning outcomes. As illustrated in **Figure 5**, the logic model positions

institutional commitment, lecturer competence in classical text pedagogy, curriculum policy support, and access to learning resources as foundational inputs. These inputs are operationalized through integrated instructional activities, including functionally embedded *nahwu-sharaf* instruction, methodological training for reading unvoweled texts, thematic engagement with selected *turats* works, and experiential learning through *ma'had* or pesantren-based practicum. Through these activities, the curriculum is expected to produce intermediate outputs such as regular student engagement with *kitab kuning*, improved application of grammatical knowledge during reading, and greater consistency in instructional and assessment practices. Over time, these outputs contribute to longer-term outcomes, including strengthened *turats* literacy, reduced dependence on translation, and enhanced epistemological continuity within Islamic higher education.

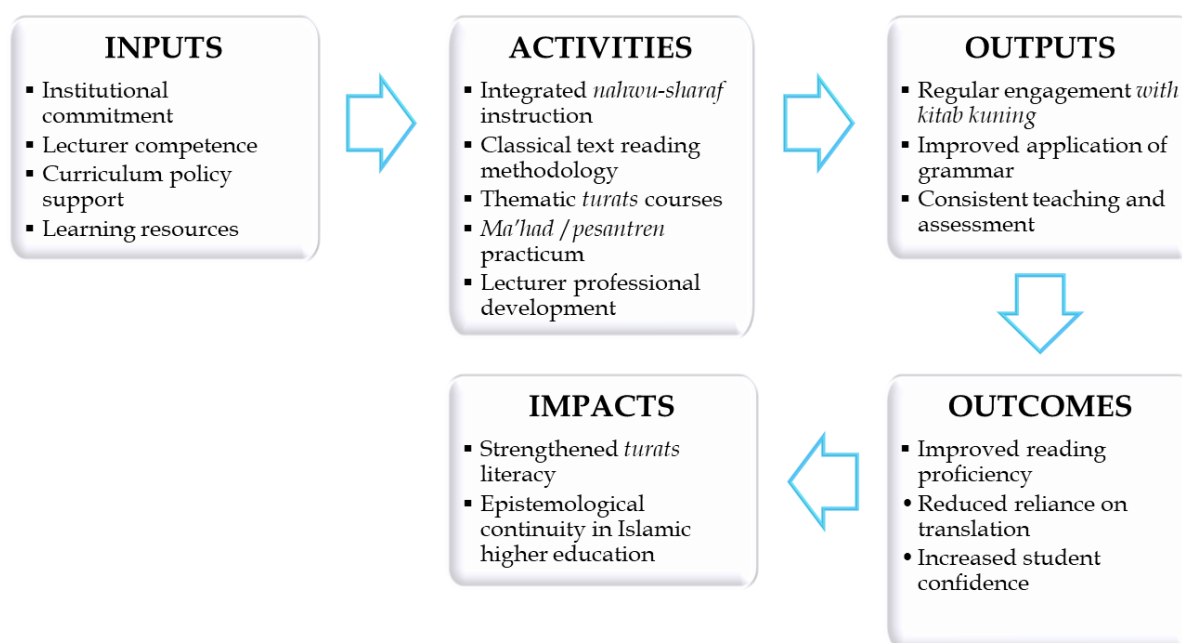


Figure 5. Curriculum Logic Model for the Integrative *Kitab Kuning* Curriculum

To ensure feasibility and institutional sustainability, the implementation of the integrative curriculum is organized through a phased sequence rather than immediate full-scale adoption. This staged approach responds directly to the study's findings regarding variability in lecturer competence and instructional practice, which indicate that abrupt implementation risks reproducing existing disparities. The temporal sequencing of curriculum enactment is presented in **Figure 6**, which outlines the progression from curriculum alignment to institutionalization over a defined implementation period.

The first phase focuses on curriculum review and alignment, during which existing program structures, learning outcomes, and assessment principles are revised to explicitly recognize *turats* literacy as a core academic competence. This phase establishes the formal and regulatory foundation necessary for subsequent instructional change. The second phase emphasizes lecturer preparation and professional development, reflecting evidence from this study that lecturer confidence and competence in engaging directly with classical texts significantly shape students' learning experiences. Professional development during this phase prioritizes

pedagogical strategies for sustained textual engagement rather than content transmission alone.

The third phase involves pilot implementation in selected programs or departments. Pilot enactment allows the curriculum to be tested under authentic teaching conditions, enabling institutions to identify challenges related to instructional workload, student progression, and assessment alignment. The fourth phase is dedicated to evaluation and revision, during which feedback from lecturers, students, and diagnostic reading outcomes is used to refine course sequencing, learning materials, and assessment practices. Full-scale implementation occurs only after these revisions are completed, ensuring that curriculum expansion is grounded in institutional learning rather than administrative compliance.

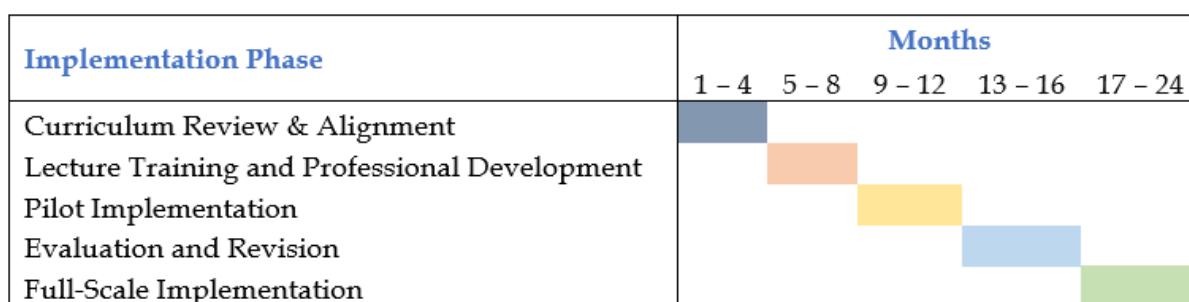


Figure 6. Phased Implementation Timeline (Gantt Chart) for the Integrative *Kitab Kuning* Curriculum

Taken together, the curriculum logic model and phased implementation timeline clarify how the proposed integrative curriculum moves from conceptual design to sustainable institutional practice. By explicitly linking structural inputs, instructional processes, and learning outcomes, the implementation strategy positions *kitab kuning* instruction not as an optional enrichment activity, but as a systematically supported component of undergraduate Islamic higher education. This alignment strengthens the feasibility of curriculum reform while preserving the epistemological foundations of classical Islamic scholarship within contemporary academic governance.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the weakening of *kitab kuning* literacy in Islamic higher education is not primarily a consequence of individual student limitations, but rather the result of interrelated structural and institutional conditions. The misalignment between Arabic linguistic preparation, lecturer competence, and curriculum design has created learning environments in which sustained engagement with classical Islamic texts is difficult to achieve. When *turats* is positioned as a supplementary or elective component rather than as a core academic foundation, students encounter classical texts only sporadically and without systematic progression. This fragmented exposure limits their ability to internalize grammatical knowledge, develop interpretive confidence, and engage independently with unvoweled Arabic texts. The absence of explicit curricular mandates and standardized learning outcomes further exacerbates this condition by weakening institutional responsibility for *kitab kuning* instruction and allowing instructional practices to vary widely across programs and institutions.

At the same time, the findings demonstrate that stronger *turats* literacy remains attainable within institutional contexts that provide consistent pedagogical support and curricular coherence. Institutions affiliated with *Ma'had* or *pesantren* traditions illustrate how routine exposure to classical texts, structured reading practices, and learning environments that normalize direct textual engagement can foster student confidence and competence over time. These patterns suggest that the decline of *kitab kuning* literacy is not inevitable, but contingent on how Islamic higher education institutions organize learning structures and prioritize epistemological foundations. By situating curriculum reform as a central strategy, this study emphasizes that revitalizing *kitab kuning* instruction is essential not only for improving student proficiency, but also for sustaining the intellectual continuity of Islamic scholarship within contemporary higher education settings.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on these conclusions, this study recommends the systematic adoption of an integrative curriculum framework that positions *kitab kuning* as a central component of undergraduate Islamic higher education. Curriculum reform should ensure clear alignment between Arabic linguistic foundations, methodological training for reading classical texts, thematic engagement with selected *turats* works, and experiential learning through *Ma'had* or *pesantren*-based practices. Institutions are encouraged to formalize *kitab kuning* instruction through explicit learning outcomes, credit allocation, and assessment strategies that prioritize authentic engagement with classical texts rather than rote memorization. Strengthening lecturer qualification standards is equally critical, and institutions should provide structured professional development to enhance competence in classical text pedagogy. At the policy level, closer alignment between institutional curricula and regulatory frameworks is necessary to legitimize *turats* literacy as a core academic outcome. Future research is recommended to examine the implementation, adaptation, and long-term impact of integrative *kitab kuning* curricula across diverse institutional and regional contexts, with particular attention to student learning trajectories and lecturer professional development.

Funding Information

This research received no external funding.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Erma Suryani	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Erlan muliadi	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓			
Ulyan nasri		✓				✓		✓		✓				

Conflict of Interest Statement

Authors state no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

Ethical Approval

This study was approved by the Center for Research and Scientific Publication, Institute for Research and Community Service (LP2M), Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Mataram (Approval No. 123/LP2M-

UINM/VIII/2024), on 15 August 2024, and all participants provided informed consent prior to data collection.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

REFERENCES

- Abidin, N. (2018). Analysis of Arab Nahwu Textbooks in The Ta'lim Line of Al-Lughah Al-'Arabiyat li An-Natiqina Bighairiha. *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education*.
- Abu-Rabia, S. (2012). The Role of Morphology and Short Vowelization in Reading Morphological Complex Words in Arabic: Evidence for the Domination of the Morpheme/Root-Based Theory in Reading Arabic. *Creative Education*, 03(04), 486–494. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2012.34074>
- Al-Bataineh, A. (2021). Language policy in higher education in the United Arab Emirates: proficiency, choices and the future of Arabic. *Language Policy*, 20(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-020-09548-y>
- Asse, A., Putri, F. F., Fatimah, T., Nursyam, N., & Faqihuddin, D. (2023). Diversity Problems in Students' Educational Backgrounds and Learning Program Policies of Arabic Language Education. *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 4(4). <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v4i4.701>
- Atabik, A., Yahya, M. S., & Mustajab, M. (2023). Life Skills Approach in Arabic Language Learning at Islamic Boarding School-Based Madrasah Aliyah. *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v7i2.378>
- Azizah, A. K., Mukarromah, F., & Ainiy, N. (2024). The Influence of Pesantren Educational Background on Arabic Language Competence of Students in Islamic Higher Education. *Journal of Arabic Language Learning and Teaching (JALLT)*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.23971/jallt.v1i2.143>
- Bar-On, A., Shalhoub-Awwad, Y., & Tuma-Basila, R. I. (2018). Contribution of phonological and morphological information in reading Arabic: A developmental perspective. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 39(6). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716418000310>
- Boudelaa, S., & Marslen-Wilson, W. D. (2013). Morphological structure in the Arabic mental lexicon: Parallels between standard and dialectal Arabic. *Language and Cognitive Processes*, 28(10), 1453–1473. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01690965.2012.719629>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>
- Burhanuddin. (2024). The Urgency, Strategies, and Problems of Mastering Arabic Language for Islamic Preaching Communication. *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(4). <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v5i4.1164>

- Buus, N., Ong, B., Einboden, R., Juel, A., & Perron, A. (2025). Constructing Research Quality: On the Performativity of the COREQ Checklist. *Qualitative Health Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323251323225>
- Dahlan, Z. (2018). *Khazanah Kitab kuning: Membangun Sebuah Apresiasi Kritis. ANSIRU PAI: Pengembangan Profesi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.30821/ansiru.v2i1.1624>
- Gonzalez-Dogan, S. (2022). Linguistic Othering and “knowledge deserts”: Perspectives on Arabic use in linguistically diverse Islamic institutions. *Linguistics and Education*, 71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101076>
- Husein, S. Y., Hasaniyah, N., Murdiono, M., & Akmaluddin, A. (2023). Teaching Methods, Challenges, And Strategies For Improving Students’ Arabic Linguistic Competence. *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v6i3.23558>
- Hyett, N., Kenny, A., & Dickson-Swift, V. (2014). Methodology or method a critical review of qualitative case study reports. In *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being* (Vol. 9, Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v9.23606>
- Khatib-Abbas, S., & Lipka, O. (2025). Teacher identification of reading difficulties among Arabic-speaking third graders in Israel: a pilot study. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 75(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-025-00331-4>
- Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research in psychology: The APA publications and communications board task force report. *American Psychologist*, 73(1). <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000151>
- Mahbubi, M., Shahidi, N., & Gunawan, R. (2024). Implementation of the Amtsilati Method in Improving the Ability to Read the Yellow Book in Islamic Schools. *Electronic Journal of Education, Social Economics and Technology (EJESET)*, 5(2).
- Mohamed, S. (2023). The development of an Arabic curriculum framework based on a compilation of salient features from CEFR level descriptors. *Language Learning Journal*, 51(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1923781>
- Murdianto. (2023). Balancing Traditional Values and Innovation in *Pesantren* Education in Lombok. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 12(4).
- Nassiri, N., Cavalli-Sforza, V., & Lakhouaja, A. (2023). Approaches, Methods, and Resources for Assessing the Readability of Arabic Texts. *ACM Transactions on Asian and Low-Resource Language Information Processing*, 22(4). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3571510>
- Norlaila, N., Muradi, A. R., Oensyar, M. K. R., & Arifin, A. (2025). Students’ Difficulties In Arabic: A Study Of The Background Of Students Arabic Language Education. *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v8i2.32092>

- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Qari, R., Ja'far, J., & Iqbal, M. (2024). Dayah and Classical Islamic Texts in Contemporary Gayo Land. *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.53802/fitrah.v5i1.817>
- Rahmatullah, S. (2014). Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Bahasa Arab bagi Penutur Bahasa Indonesia (Orang yang Berbahasa Indonesia). *SYAMIL: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education)*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v2i1.488>
- Rakhlin, N. V., Aljughaiman, A., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2021). Assessing language development in Arabic: The Arabic language: Evaluation of function (ALEF). *Applied Neuropsychology: Child*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622965.2019.1596113>
- Raswan, R., Husni, A., Mudhofir, I., Qodri, M., Husein, S. Y., Muradi, A., & Ashfia, A. (2025). Developing A Competency-Based Arabic Curriculum to Foster Merdeka Belajar in Indonesian Madrasah. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 13(3). <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i3.1930>
- Rekan, A. A., Howell, H. R., Salleh, M. N. M., Rosin, N., Tabrani, Z. A., Ma`arif, M. A., & Adnan, M. A. M. (2025). Arabic Language Curriculum as a Foundation for Strengthening Religious Education in Public Higher Education. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v22i1.11340>
- Saiegh-Haddad, E., & Schiff, R. (2016). The Impact of Diglossia on Voweled and Unvoweled Word Reading in Arabic: A Developmental Study From Childhood to Adolescence. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 20(4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2016.1180526>
- Shaw, R. L., Bishop, F. L., Horwood, J., Chilcot, J., & Arden, M. A. (2019). Enhancing the quality and transparency of qualitative research methods in health psychology. In *British Journal of Health Psychology* (Vol. 24, Issue 4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjhp.12393>
- Sinha, P., Paudel, B., Mosimann, T., Ahmed, H., Kovane, G. P., Moagi, M., & Phuti, A. (2024). Comprehensive Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (CCQR): Reporting Guideline for Global Health Qualitative Research Methods. In *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (Vol. 21, Issue 8). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21081005>
- Taha Thomure, H., Taha, H., Sabella, T., & Saleh, R. (2025). A systematic review of teaching and learning in the context of Arabic diglossia. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 12, 102281. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SSAHO.2025.102281>

- Tamam, B. (2015). Hubungan Antara Kemampuan Memahami *Kitab kuning* dengan Kemampuan Lisan dan Tulisan dalam Bahasa Arab. *SYAMIL: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education)*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v3i1.289>
- Ubaidillah, Kamil, A. M., Diasyhuri, A. M., & Khasanah, S. (2023). Teaching Humanity and Spirituality through *Kitab kuning*: An Insight from *Pesantren As-Shuffah. Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2023.17.2.25751>
- Ubay, Muh Jabir, Hakim, M. A., Nursyam, & Umi Kalsum. (2025). Comparison of Arabic Learning Outcomes through the Tarjamah Method. *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v6i2.1877>
- Wekke, I. S. (2015). Arabic Teaching and Learning: A Model from Indonesian Muslim Minority. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.236>
- Wildan, K., & Fuad, A. J. (2019). Implementasi Metode Tamyiz Dalam Pembelajaran Baca *Kitab kuning*. *AL-WIJDĀN Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.58788/alwijdn.v4i1.301>
- Yusuf, M., & Wekke, I. S. (2015). Active Learning on Teaching Arabic for Special Purpose in Indonesian *Pesantren*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.245>
- Zulhannan, Kesuma, G. C., Musyarrofah, U., & Andriansyah, Y. (2025). Enhancing Communicative Arabic Teaching: Evaluating the Al-Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik Model. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2025-0100>