

TRANSFORMING PEGON SCRIPT THROUGH BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE MIDST OF MODERNIZATION

Neng Nurcahyati Sinulingga¹, Amsal Qori Dalimunthe², Resti Oktriani Sinulingga³
Nurdila Nasution⁴

Universitas Medan Area, Fakultas Agama Islam, Medan, Indonesia

nurchayati@staff.uma.ac.id

amsalqori@staff.uma.ac.id

nurdila940@gmail.com

oktrianisinulingga@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of boarding school in transforming the Pegon script so that it remains relevant in the midst of changing times. The method used is descriptive qualitative with a literature study, to explore the challenges, opportunities, and contributions of boarding school in preserving the Pegon script. The results showed that boarding school have an important role in teaching the Pegon script through the learning of ancient books, but they face major challenges in integrating digital technology. The use of technology, such as learning apps, can help increase the appeal of learning Pegon script for the younger generation. In addition, boarding school can serve as agents of change in maintaining the sustainability of Pegon script through relevant curricula and digital-based training. Thus, boarding school education plays an important role in maintaining Indonesia's Islamic cultural identity and preserving this writing tradition in the midst of globalization.

Keywords: *Pegon; Boarding School; Modernization*

INTRODUCTION

In the midst of rapid technological development and modernization, many aspects of traditional culture, including the Pegon script, are threatened with extinction. Pegon script, a writing system that uses Arabic letters to write Javanese, Malay and other local languages, has an important role in the spread of Islam and intellectual development in the archipelago. (Dita Hendriani, 2017) However, in this digital era, the use of Pegon script is declining, especially among the younger generation who are more accustomed to the Latin alphabet. Boarding school, as an educational institution that upholds Islamic traditions, has great potential to transform and preserve the Pegon script in the midst of modernization. In this context, experts such as (Nursyam, 2010) state that boarding school are not only centers of religious education, but also preservers of local culture such as the Pegon script.

On the other hand, (Abdurrahman, 2015)(Abdurrahman, 2015) reminded that boarding school must adapt to technological developments to remain relevant, including in teaching Pegon script with a digital approach. (Sudaryanto, 2012)proposes that the teaching of traditional scripts such as Pegon can be combined with technology, to make it more interesting and easy for the younger generation to understand. In line with that, (Zainuddin, 2017) emphasizes that the use of digital technology, such as Pegon script learning applications, can be the key to expanding the reach of learning this script, including for those who are not in boarding school In addition, (Alwi, 2019) argues that innovations in boarding school education that combine conventional and digital methods can be a way to preserve the Pegon script in this increasingly globalized world. Therefore, it is important to examine how boarding school education can be an agent of change in transforming the Pegon script so that it remains relevant, alive, and

valued by today's generation, while becoming part of Indonesia's cultural identity in the midst of globalization.

METHOD

This research aims to explore and describe the various problems that arise in the effort to transform Pegon script through boarding school education in the midst of modernization. In order to do so, the approach used is descriptive qualitative, which allows researchers to understand existing phenomena in depth through descriptive data analysis. This approach is considered appropriate because it can provide a richer picture of the cultural and educational context of boarding school, which is greatly affected by the times. As explained by (Nurdin, I., dan Hartati, 2019) Qualitative research provides freedom for researchers to explore data through direct observation, interviews with boarding school leaders, and documentation related to Pegon script learning. In addition, the data collection technique used in this research is literature study, which aims to obtain relevant literature regarding the history and teaching of Pegon script in the boarding school tradition.

According to (M. Sutrisno, 2013) literature study is a method that relies on data sources from various written literature such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other documents that contain important information about the topic under study. (Zed, 2019) emphasizes that research using the literature study method not only serves to design the initial research framework, but also helps researchers obtain empirical data to explore ongoing phenomena. In this study, the literature sources used include books and articles that discuss the teaching of Pegon script in pesantren and the influence of modernization on the sustainability of this tradition. Thus, this research is expected to provide insight into how Pegon script remains relevant and can be taught in pesantren even in the midst of rapid modernization. Several studies have used the same approach in the context of this study, such as (Apriliyanti & Rizki, 2023; Mulia et al., 2024; Murad & Rizki, 2023; Rizki et al., 2022; Syamsuar et al., 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Islamic Boarding School Education in Preserving Pegon Script as an Islamic Cultural Heritage

The role of boarding school education in preserving the Pegon script as an Islamic cultural heritage is very significant, considering that this script has a close relationship with the development of Islam in Indonesia, especially in religious, literary and historical aspects. Pegon script is a modified form of Javanese script used to write Arabic, which is generally used in writing ancient Arabic books translated into Javanese. (Masnawati et al., 2024). This script not only functions as a communication tool, but also as a symbol of cultural diversity and Islamic identity in Indonesia. boarding school education has a dual role in the process of preserving the Pegon script, which will be described as follows:

- a. Boarding school functions as an educational institution that teaches religious studies, one of which is the learning of the Qur'an and Hadith, which in many cases uses the Pegon script to facilitate the understanding of students in reading ancient books. (Basyir, 2017).
- b. Boarding school also serves as a center for learning Arabic language and literature which is closely related to the Pegon script, as many religious and scientific texts are copied in this script. (M. Ahmad, 2019)

Through teaching methods based on ancient books written in Pegon script, boarding school not only teach religious teachings, but also preserve and develop cultural heritage that has existed since the early centuries of the spread of Islam in Indonesia. (Sabiq, 2020) Furthermore, in this context, boarding school education acts as an institution that keeps the Pegon script from being lost to the times, even though the use of Latin and Arabic scripts increasingly dominates daily life. In addition, the kyais and scholars in boarding school are also often the guardians and successors of the tradition of writing in Pegon script. They teach santri not only about religious texts, but also the importance of understanding and preserving the script as part of the local cultural identity that is closely related to Islam. (Suyanto, 2018) Through this teaching, boarding school contribute to maintaining Indonesia's cultural diversity, as well as teaching the Islamic values contained in ancient books written in Pegon script. On the other hand, there are major challenges faced in the effort to preserve the Pegon script. Modernization, globalization and the dominance of information technology in communication have shifted the use of this traditional script, resulting in fewer people being able to read and write using the Pegon script.

Therefore, boarding school need to innovate by integrating Pegon script learning in their educational curriculum to ensure its preservation in the future. Through a more contextualized and relevant approach, boarding school can create an atmosphere that allows the younger generation to understand and appreciate Pegon script not only as a form of writing, but also as an integral part of Islam's rich cultural heritage. Innovations in teaching methods such as the use of digital technology or more interesting teaching materials can also increase the appeal of learning Pegon script, so that it can be more easily accepted by santri, the majority of whom are millennial and Z generations.

In this way, boarding school can facilitate santri to have skills that are not only useful in teaching religion, but also become an added value in preserving local culture. Pesantren that teach Pegon script also play a role in building cultural awareness among the wider community, given that Pegon script is not only used in the boarding school environment, but also has a great influence in Javanese literature and Islamic religious traditions in Indonesia. For example, classical texts written in Pegon script, such as ancient books containing Islamic teachings, often become important references in religious and cultural studies. In this context, the Pegon script is not just a written heritage, but also a bridge to understanding the intellectual history of Islam in Indonesia.

Pesantren education must also pay attention to teaching Pegon script systematically by developing a clear syllabus, utilizing experts in the field of Pegon script, and involving the community around the pesantren to maintain its sustainability. In addition, the government and other educational institutions also need to provide support for the preservation of Pegon script, both in terms of policies and the necessary resources. Thus, boarding school education that integrates Pegon script learning will make a significant contribution to maintaining the sustainability of Islamic cultural heritage in Indonesia, as well as increasing santri's love for their cultural identity.

Challenges Faced by Islamic Boarding Schools in Maintaining Pegon Script in Today's Digital Era

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, as educational institutions that have a vital role in preserving religious and cultural teachings, are now facing great challenges in maintaining the existence of the Pegon script amid the swift flow of modernization and the development of information technology. Pegon script, a writing system that

combines Arabic letters to write local languages such as Javanese and Madurese, has become an inseparable part of the religious tradition in boarding school, especially in writing classical books. (Ainul et al., 2022). However, in the midst of advances in digital technology, the Pegon script is now facing potential extinction, especially with the lack of technological literacy that supports the use of this script in digital media.

One of the biggest challenges is the limited software and digital applications that can support the use of the Pegon script, which focuses more on the standard Arabic script or Latin alphabet. This makes Pegon script difficult to access and learn by younger generations who are more familiar with digital technology. According to (Mulyadi, 2020), boarding school have an important role in maintaining the sustainability of the Pegon script, but currently many pesantren have difficulty balancing traditional teaching and the need to adapt to the digital world. This is due to the lack of training for boarding school teachers in utilizing technology to preserve the Pegon script. (Yusuf, 2018) adds that, although some boarding school try to integrate digital technology to teach Pegon script, most existing applications do not sufficiently accommodate this need. Coupled with the tendency of the younger generation to prefer using social media and Latin-based applications that are more accessible, Pegon script is increasingly marginalized. Furthermore, in a study conducted by (Z. Ahmad, 2021) shows that many pesantren still rely on conventional methods in teaching Pegon script, namely through the recitation of the yellow classical books and direct training to students. However, this method is starting to be considered not relevant enough to attract students in the digital era.

Further, (D. Sutrisno, 2019) highlighted the importance of integrating Pegon script in the curriculum of technology-based pesantren, where the teaching of this script can be done through more interactive and interesting learning applications, for example using video tutorials or digital-based educational games that can be accessed through smartphone devices. However, the gap between the older generation who still master the Pegon script and the younger generation who are more likely to use the Latin script creates its own challenges in preserving the Pegon script. One of the solutions offered by (Nadia, 2020) is to develop a Pegon script teaching system that does not only rely on direct lessons in pesantren, but also introduces this script through various digital platforms such as applications or social media, so that it can be more easily accepted by younger santri who are more tech-savvy. According to (Samsudin, 2021), this will accelerate the process of digitizing the Pegon script and provide an opportunity for the wider community to get to know the Pegon script without having to come to the pesantren.

But, of course, this effort requires collaboration between boarding school, technology developers, and the government to provide adequate facilities and support so that the Pegon script is preserved in the midst of rapid changes. Not only that, according to (Wahyudi, 2018) the role of pesantren must also be further enhanced in maintaining the sustainability of this cultural heritage by organizing technology-based trainings involving students and the general public, in order to open up opportunities for the utilization of Pegon script in various forms of media and digital literacy. Thus, the teaching of Pegon script can become more inclusive and adaptive to changing times without ignoring the traditional values contained in it.

Teaching Pegon Script in Boarding School Contributes to Understanding and Strengthening Islamic Cultural Identity in Indonesia

The teaching of Pegon script in boarding school in Indonesia plays a very important role in deepening the santri's understanding of Islamic teachings and at the same time strengthening the Islamic cultural identity that developed in the country. Pegon script is a form of Javanese writing using Arabic letters, which is often used in writing ancient Islamic books in Indonesia.(Sulistiani et al., 2023). In this context, the Pegon script is not only a writing tool, but also an important means of connecting Islamic teachings with local culture. boarding school as traditional educational institutions have a central role in preserving the Pegon script, while ensuring that Indonesia's Islamic cultural identity is maintained. In the learning process, santri are not only taught about religious theories, but also trained to recognize and master the Pegon script, which is the bridge between classical religious texts and Indonesia's diverse cultural life.

Pegon script is used in many ancient books that are the main reference in boarding school education. These books not only contain religious teachings, but also contain cultural values that are very thick with Indonesian traditions. By learning Pegon, santri not only understand the moral message and teachings of Islam, but also understand how Islam is translated and applied in the context of Indonesian society. In this case, the Pegon script plays a role as a cultural bridge that brings together Islamic teachings with local traditions, which in turn helps shape the character and cultural identity of Indonesian Muslim society.(Rohman et al., 2022).

In addition, the teaching of Pegon script in boarding school also has an important historical value in preserving Indonesia's Islamic cultural traditions. In the past, the Pegon script became the main tool for spreading the teachings of Islam among the Javanese community, especially in rural areas that had limited access to modern education. Books written in Pegon script became the main source of knowledge for many, and the continuation of Pegon script learning in pesantren allows this tradition to remain alive today. In this process, boarding school not only function as religious education institutions, but also as guardians of cultural traditions rooted in Indonesian society.(Mawaddah, 2022)

The teaching of Pegon script in boarding school also has an impact on santri's understanding of the importance of maintaining Islamic values that are in accordance with local culture. Through learning Pegon script, santri are taught to appreciate the richness of Islamic traditions in Indonesia, which have often been neglected in the dominance of more global religious thought and practice. This also leads to strengthening Indonesia's rich and diverse Islamic cultural identity, as well as strengthening a sense of pride in its cultural heritage. This teaching process not only teaches about religious teachings theoretically, but also teaches santri about the importance of local culture as part of their religious expression.(Jannah et al., 2024).

In the modern context, the Pegon script remains relevant in boarding school education as it can help connect the younger generation with Indonesian Islamic history and tradition. Through learning Pegon script, santri not only master an important writing tool in Indonesian Islamic history, but also gain a deeper understanding of the role of boarding school in shaping Islamic identity in Indonesia. The Pegon script, which was used to write classical books, is still preserved today as part of the boarding school rich intellectual tradition. This teaching is very important in keeping the Islamic cultural values that have grown and developed in Indonesia alive and passed on to the next generation.

Thus, based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the teaching of Pegon script in boarding school makes a significant contribution to the understanding of Islamic teachings and the strengthening of Islamic cultural identity in Indonesia.

Through the Pegon script, the pesantren acts as a link between religious teachings and local culture, preserving traditions, and strengthening a sense of pride in the cultural heritage of the Indonesian Muslim community. The teaching of Pegon script is not only important for cultural preservation, but also for developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between Islam and local culture in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

boarding school education plays a very important role in preserving the Pegon script as an Islamic cultural heritage in Indonesia. The Pegon script, which is a modification of the Javanese script for writing Arabic, serves not only as a means of communication, but also as a symbol of Islam's rich cultural identity. Through the study of ancient books written in Pegon script, boarding school not only teach religious teachings, but also act as preservers of the Islamic intellectual tradition that has developed in Indonesia since the early centuries of the spread of Islam.

However, major challenges have arisen due to modernization and the dominance of technology that has shifted the use of this traditional script. The lack of integration of Pegon script in digital platforms and more conventional teaching methods puts its preservation at risk. Therefore, boarding school need to innovate by incorporating technology and more interesting approaches to engage the younger generation. This approach will not only facilitate the understanding of Pegon script, but also strengthen the teaching of Indonesia's Islamic cultural identity, ensuring its preservation in the future.

Overall, the teaching of Pegon script in pesantren contributes significantly to a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and the strengthening of Indonesia's Islamic cultural identity. By preserving the Pegon script, pesantren play a role as a link between religious tradition and local culture, preserving cultural heritage, and strengthening a sense of pride in the cultural wealth of the Indonesian Muslim community.

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