

Bandongan-Based Arabic Learning and Students' Reading Improvement in Islamic Boarding Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of Bandongan-based Arabic learning to improve students' Arabic reading skills in Islamic boarding schools. Using a qualitative case study approach at a pesantren in Pacitan, Indonesia, the research involved eighth-grade students, Arabic teachers, and administrators. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing techniques. The findings show that the Bandongan method improves students' reading fluency, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation accuracy, and comprehension of classical Arabic texts. This method also enhances discipline, listening skills, concentration, and collaborative learning. Furthermore, integrating kitab kuning traditions into modern Arabic instruction creates contextual and culturally rooted learning experiences. This study demonstrates that traditional Islamic learning methods remain relevant and effective in contemporary Arabic language education.

Keywords: Bandongan Method, Arabic Learning, Reading Skills, Islamic Boarding School, Kitab Kuning.

I. Introduction

Arabic learning in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) has long been associated with traditional instructional models that emphasize mastery of classical Islamic texts, commonly known as *kitab kuning*. Within the pesantren educational tradition, Arabic is not merely taught as a foreign language or communication tool, but also functions as the primary medium for understanding Islamic sciences, religious teachings, and classical scholarly heritage (Aldbyani, 2026). Consequently, Arabic learning occupies a central position in the curriculum of Islamic boarding schools because students are expected to acquire the linguistic competence necessary to access and interpret various religious references written in Arabic. The educational process in pesantren is therefore closely connected with the preservation of Islamic intellectual traditions through the study of classical texts and teacher-guided learning activities.

Among the various pedagogical approaches implemented in pesantren education, the Bandongan method remains one of the most enduring and influential learning traditions. This method generally involves teachers reading and explaining Arabic texts while students listen attentively, annotate important explanations, and collectively interpret the material under teacher supervision (Rohman et al., 2025). Through



repetitive reading practices and guided textual interpretation, students gradually develop their understanding of Arabic grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and textual meaning. Historically, the Bandungan method has played an important role in transmitting Islamic knowledge across generations in Indonesian pesantren culture. Despite significant educational transformations occurring in contemporary society, many Islamic boarding schools continue to preserve Bandungan learning as a central component of Arabic instruction because of its cultural, pedagogical, and religious significance (Najib et al., 2026). In recent years, educational scholars and practitioners have increasingly discussed the challenge of integrating traditional Islamic learning methods with contemporary educational demands. The rapid development of educational technology, globalization, and modern pedagogical theories has encouraged many educational institutions to adopt communicative learning approaches, digital learning media, and student-centered instructional strategies. Modern Arabic pedagogy often emphasizes active classroom participation, communicative competence, collaborative learning, and the use of multimedia technologies to support language acquisition. These developments have influenced the direction of Arabic language education in many formal educational institutions, including Islamic schools and universities.

However, within the context of Islamic boarding schools, traditional instructional practices continue to play a significant educational role. Many pesantren educators believe that traditional learning methods, such as Bandungan, not only strengthen students' linguistic competence but also cultivate discipline, concentration, moral character, and respect for scholarly authority. Consequently, the relationship between traditional and modern educational approaches has become an important issue within contemporary Islamic education discourse. Rather than replacing traditional methods entirely, many scholars argue that educational innovation should involve the integration of traditional pedagogical values with modern instructional principles in order to create more balanced and contextually appropriate learning environments (Suresman et al., 2025).

Reading skill (*maharahqira'ah*) is widely considered one of the most fundamental competencies in Arabic language learning because it enables students to understand religious texts, acquire vocabulary, and develop broader linguistic proficiency. Strong reading competence is especially important within pesantren education because students regularly engage with classical Arabic texts that contain complex grammatical structures and limited vowel markings. Reading proficiency therefore involves not only the ability to pronounce Arabic words correctly but also the ability to comprehend textual meaning, identify grammatical patterns, and interpret contextual information accurately. Students who possess effective reading skills are generally better equipped to understand Islamic literature and participate actively in academic and religious learning activities. Nevertheless, many students in Islamic educational institutions continue to experience difficulties in reading Arabic fluently, particularly when dealing with unvowelized classical texts commonly used in pesantren learning (Jundi & Nabila, 2023). Several factors contribute to these difficulties, including limited vocabulary mastery, weak grammatical understanding, insufficient reading practice, and low confidence when interpreting Arabic passages independently. Students often rely heavily on teacher guidance because they struggle to identify sentence structures and contextual meanings within classical Arabic texts. These challenges indicate the need for effective instructional approaches capable of improving students' reading competence while simultaneously preserving the educational characteristics of pesantren learning traditions.

Previous studies on Arabic language education have mainly focused on modern communicative approaches, technology-assisted learning media, and student-centered instructional strategies. Research findings generally indicate that interactive learning models, digital educational tools, and collaborative classroom activities contribute positively to students' motivation and language acquisition. However, relatively limited attention has been given to the pedagogical relevance of traditional pesantren learning methods such as Bandungan within contemporary educational settings. Most existing studies emphasize educational modernization while overlooking the possibility that traditional instructional models may

continue to offer significant pedagogical benefits, particularly in strengthening foundational reading competence and textual understanding(Najib et al., 2026).

This situation creates a research gap concerning how traditional instructional practices can contribute to improving students' reading competence within modern Islamic educational contexts. While contemporary Arabic pedagogy increasingly prioritizes communicative interaction and technological innovation, traditional learning approaches may still possess important educational strengths that deserve further academic investigation. In particular, the Bandongan method may provide a unique instructional framework that combines linguistic development, cultural preservation, and Islamic educational values within a single learning process. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the implementation of Bandongan-based Arabic learning and its contribution to improving students' reading skills in Islamic boarding schools(Suresman et al., 2025). Specifically, the research investigates how the Bandongan method supports students' pronunciation accuracy, reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension of Arabic texts among eighth-grade students at Islamic boarding school Al-Anwar Pacitan. The study is grounded in the assumption that traditional pesantren learning methods remain relevant when adapted to current educational needs and can provide meaningful learning experiences that strengthen both linguistic competence and Islamic educational values.

By exploring the practical application of the Bandongan method in Arabic learning, this study contributes to the broader discourse on Islamic pedagogy and Arabic language instruction. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical and practical insights regarding the integration of traditional and modern educational approaches within Islamic boarding school environments. In addition, this research offers an alternative framework for improving Arabic reading instruction while preserving the cultural identity and educational traditions of pesantren institutions(Nasution et al., 2024). Ultimately, this study seeks to demonstrate that traditional learning practices can continue to play a significant role in enhancing students' academic development, linguistic competence, and educational experiences within contemporary Islamic educational settings.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Arabic learning in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) occupies a highly significant position within the broader framework of Islamic education because Arabic functions not only as a communication tool but also as the primary medium for understanding Islamic sciences, classical scholarship, and religious teachings. In the pesantren tradition, Arabic mastery is closely associated with students' ability to access and interpret *kitab kuning*, which refers to classical Islamic texts written in Arabic, often without vowel markings (*harakat*)(Nasution et al., 2024). These texts cover various Islamic disciplines, including jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*aqidah*), Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsir*), prophetic traditions (*hadith*), and Arabic grammar (*nahwu* and *sharaf*). Consequently, students are required to develop strong reading competence, grammatical understanding, and interpretive abilities to comprehend these texts accurately and meaningfully. The ability to read Arabic fluently is therefore considered a fundamental academic and religious competency within pesantren education.

Previous studies have demonstrated that Arabic learning in pesantren differs considerably from modern classroom-based language instruction because it integrates religious values, collective learning culture, and traditional teacher-centered pedagogical practices(Radino&Mubarok, 2025). Unlike formal educational institutions that frequently prioritize communicative competence and interactive classroom participation, pesantren learning emphasizes textual understanding, repetition, discipline, and respect for scholarly authority. Traditional instructional methods such as *Bandongan*, *Sorogan*, memorization (*hafalan*), and recitation practices continue to be widely implemented because they are regarded as effective mechanisms for transmitting religious knowledge while preserving pesantren educational identity and Islamic

intellectual traditions. These methods are deeply rooted in the historical development of Islamic education in Indonesia and remain central components of daily learning activities in many Islamic boarding schools.

However, several scholars have argued that conventional learning approaches within pesantren environments often encounter challenges in adapting to contemporary educational demands, particularly in improving students' active language proficiency and communicative skills (Alkasirah et al., 2026). Traditional methods are sometimes criticized for being overly teacher-centered, limiting classroom interaction, and providing fewer opportunities for students to actively practice speaking and writing skills. In addition, the increasing influence of globalization, educational modernization, and digital technology has encouraged many educational institutions to adopt more student-centered learning approaches that emphasize interaction, collaboration, and technological integration. These educational transformations have led to ongoing debates regarding the relevance and effectiveness of traditional pesantren instructional models in contemporary Arabic language education.

Recent developments in Arabic pedagogy have increasingly emphasized communicative language teaching, digital learning media, multimedia-based instruction, and interactive classroom strategies as effective methods for enhancing language acquisition. Modern Arabic learning approaches often prioritize students' active participation, communicative competence, and real-life language use in order to develop comprehensive linguistic abilities. Several studies have shown that technology-assisted learning environments, audiovisual media, and collaborative instructional techniques positively contribute to vocabulary acquisition, speaking confidence, and student motivation in Arabic learning contexts (Zulkhairi et al., 2026). Nevertheless, despite these advancements, the pedagogical potential of traditional pesantren learning methods remains relatively underexplored within contemporary academic research. Many studies focus predominantly on modern educational innovations while giving limited attention to how traditional instructional practices continue to contribute to students' language development, especially in Islamic educational environments where classical textual learning remains dominant.

This situation indicates the need for further investigation into how traditional instructional models can still support Arabic language development within modern Islamic educational contexts. Rather than viewing traditional and modern pedagogical approaches as contradictory or mutually exclusive, several contemporary scholars argue that both can be integrated to create more balanced and culturally responsive educational frameworks (Aziz et al., 2025). In this regard, pesantren instructional traditions may provide valuable educational insights, particularly in strengthening foundational reading competencies, grammatical awareness, and textual interpretation skills that are often less emphasized in communicative learning approaches.

Among the various traditional instructional methods used in pesantren education, the Bandongan method is considered one of the oldest and most influential learning traditions in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools. In this method, teachers read and explain Arabic texts while students listen attentively, annotate important explanations, and interpret the meaning of the text under the guidance of the teacher. The instructional process emphasizes repetition, listening, concentration, pronunciation accuracy, textual interpretation, and contextual understanding of classical Islamic literature. Students generally follow the teacher's reading carefully while recording grammatical explanations, vocabulary meanings, and interpretive notes directly onto the learning text. Through continuous repetition and guided interpretation, students gradually develop the ability to read and understand Arabic texts more independently (Zarytovskaya, 2026). Several previous studies indicate that the Bandongan method contributes significantly to students' understanding of Arabic grammar and religious texts because students directly observe the teacher's pronunciation, translation, and interpretive process during learning activities. This direct exposure enables students to internalize reading patterns, grammatical structures, and vocabulary usage more effectively through observation and repeated practice. In addition, Bandongan learning fosters discipline, patience, concentration, and respect for scholarly authority, which are considered important educational values within

pesantren culture. The method also strengthens the relationship between teachers and students, as learning occurs through direct interaction and continuous intellectual guidance from experienced religious scholars.

Nevertheless, some researchers criticize the Bandongan method for its teacher-centered instructional nature, arguing that it may limit students' active classroom participation and reduce opportunities for communicative interaction. Critics suggest that students in Bandongan learning environments may become overly dependent on teacher explanations and less confident in independently expressing their understanding (Najib et al., 2026). Furthermore, the repetitive nature of the method is sometimes perceived as less engaging for students who are more familiar with interactive or technology-based learning environments. Despite these criticisms, contemporary researchers increasingly recognize that traditional instructional methods can remain relevant when integrated adaptively with modern pedagogical principles and learning innovations.

The Bandongan method provides intensive exposure to Arabic vocabulary, sentence structures, pronunciation patterns, and grammatical analysis, all of which are essential components in developing reading proficiency (V & Pettela, 2026). Through repeated engagement with Arabic texts, students gradually strengthen their reading fluency and comprehension abilities while simultaneously becoming familiar with the linguistic characteristics of classical Islamic literature. Consequently, Bandongan-based learning may still serve as an effective instructional approach for improving students' Arabic reading skills, particularly within Islamic boarding school environments where *kitab kuning* learning remains a central educational activity.

Reading skill (*maharahqira'ah*) itself is widely recognized as one of the most essential competencies in Arabic language learning because it enables students to access information, understand Islamic literature, and expand their linguistic and intellectual knowledge (Muslim et al., 2023). Reading proficiency involves multiple interrelated dimensions, including pronunciation accuracy, fluency, vocabulary mastery, grammatical understanding, and textual comprehension. In Arabic learning contexts, reading competence is especially important because many Islamic educational materials and classical scholarly references are written in Arabic. Therefore, students who possess strong reading abilities are generally better equipped to engage with Islamic intellectual traditions and academic discourse. However, many students in Islamic educational institutions continue to encounter significant difficulties in reading Arabic texts due to limited vocabulary knowledge, weak grammatical understanding, and unfamiliarity with unvowelized classical texts. Students often struggle to identify sentence structures, determine grammatical functions, and interpret the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary without teacher assistance. These challenges may reduce students' reading confidence and hinder their overall language development. Consequently, effective instructional approaches are needed to improve students' reading competence while simultaneously strengthening their motivation and confidence in Arabic learning activities.

Previous studies have found that repetitive exposure to texts, guided reading practices, teacher-assisted interpretation, and contextual vocabulary explanation significantly contribute to improving students' reading abilities (Syarif, 2025). Guided instructional methods help students gradually internalize linguistic patterns and develop stronger comprehension skills through repeated interaction with texts. Within the pesantren educational context, the Bandongan method potentially supports reading development because students continuously engage with Arabic texts through listening, annotation, observation, and guided interpretation activities. The repetitive and structured nature of Bandongan learning may strengthen students' reading fluency, grammatical understanding, and textual comprehension while simultaneously preserving traditional Islamic educational values and pesantren learning culture.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in constructivist learning theory and traditional Islamic pedagogy as the primary theoretical foundations for understanding the implementation of Bandongan-based Arabic learning in Islamic boarding schools (Bahri, 2014). Constructivist learning theory explains that knowledge is actively

constructed by learners through continuous interaction with educational experiences, social environments, and instructional activities. According to this perspective, students are not passive recipients of information but active participants who gradually build understanding through observation, interpretation, practice, and reflection. In the context of Arabic learning, constructivism emphasizes that language competence develops through repeated exposure to linguistic input, guided learning interaction, and meaningful engagement with texts and learning materials. Within the Bandongan learning method, constructivist principles are reflected in the process by which students actively construct their understanding of Arabic texts through guided listening, textual annotation, translation activities, and teacher-assisted interpretation. During Bandongan sessions, teachers read and explain Arabic texts while students listen carefully, record important explanations, and analyze the structure and meaning of the text (Saidi & Jarray, 2026). Through repetitive exposure to pronunciation patterns, vocabulary usage, and grammatical structures, students gradually develop their reading fluency and comprehension skills. This learning process allows students to internalize linguistic knowledge through practical engagement rather than relying solely on memorization or theoretical explanation.

In addition to constructivist theory, this study is also based on the principles of traditional Islamic pedagogy, which form the foundation of pesantren educational culture. Traditional Islamic pedagogy emphasizes the central role of teachers (*ustadz* or *kya*) as transmitters of knowledge, moral guidance, and intellectual authority. Within pesantren education, learning is not merely oriented toward academic achievement but also toward character formation, discipline, ethical behavior, and spiritual development. The relationship between teacher and student is therefore highly valued, and the learning process often involves respect, obedience, and collective educational engagement. The Bandongan method represents one of the classical instructional traditions in Islamic boarding schools that embodies these pedagogical principles. Through this method, teachers guide students directly in understanding Arabic texts while simultaneously transmitting religious values, scholarly traditions, and educational ethics. Students learn not only how to read and interpret Arabic texts but also how to develop patience, concentration, discipline, and respect for knowledge (Leung et al., 2026). Therefore, Bandongan learning functions as both a linguistic instructional strategy and a cultural educational process within the pesantren environment.

The integration of constructivist learning theory and traditional Islamic pedagogy provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how Bandongan-based Arabic learning contributes to students' reading development (Kreutzmann et al., 2026). Constructivist theory explains the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in reading acquisition, while traditional Islamic pedagogy explains the cultural, moral, and social dimensions of learning within pesantren institutions. Together, these theoretical perspectives suggest that Bandongan-based Arabic learning may positively influence students' reading abilities by combining cognitive engagement, repetitive linguistic exposure, collaborative interaction, and culturally rooted educational values. Furthermore, this theoretical framework supports the assumption that traditional learning methods remain relevant in contemporary Islamic education when implemented adaptively and systematically. Although modern Arabic pedagogy increasingly emphasizes communicative and technology-based learning approaches, the Bandongan method continues to provide important educational benefits, particularly in strengthening foundational reading competence and textual comprehension. Therefore, the theoretical framework of this study positions the Bandongan method as a pedagogical approach capable of integrating linguistic development, cultural preservation, and Islamic educational values within Arabic learning practices in Islamic boarding schools.

2.2. Hypothesis Development

Previous studies indicate that traditional instructional methods in pesantren contribute to students' understanding of Arabic texts and grammatical structures. The Bandongan method, in particular, exposes students to continuous reading practices and teacher-guided explanations, which may improve reading

fluency and pronunciation accuracy. Based on these findings, this study proposes that Bandungan-based Arabic learning positively influences students' reading skills. Furthermore, research on guided reading instruction demonstrates that repeated interaction with texts and direct teacher feedback can enhance students' comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Since the Bandungan method emphasizes repetitive reading and contextual interpretation of Arabic texts, it is expected to support students' understanding of kitab kuning materials and broader Arabic literacy development. In addition, previous literature suggests that traditional pesantren learning methods strengthen students' learning discipline, concentration, and engagement in collaborative educational environments (Albasha et al., 2025). Therefore, Bandungan-based learning may also contribute to students' active participation and motivation in Arabic learning activities.

Therefore, based on this relationship, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1: Bandungan-based Arabic learning positively affects students' Arabic reading fluency in Islamic boarding schools.

H2: Bandungan-based Arabic learning positively affects students' comprehension of Arabic texts in Islamic boarding schools.

H3: Bandungan-based Arabic learning positively affects students' engagement and participation in Arabic learning activities.

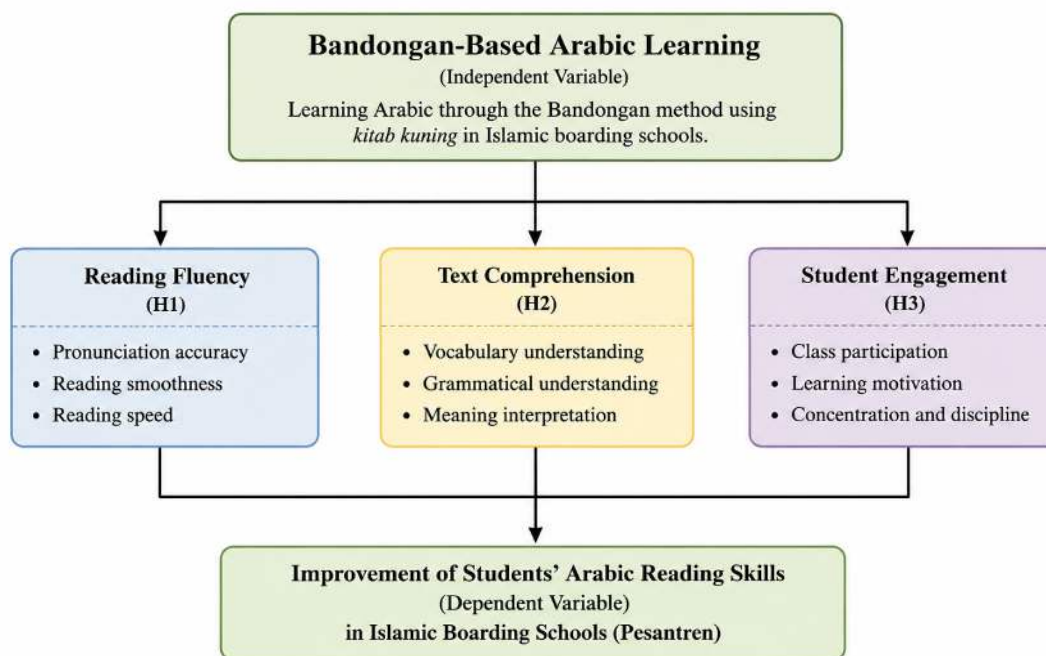


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study, which explains the relationship between Bandungan-based Arabic learning and the improvement of students' Arabic reading skills in Islamic boarding schools (Kartini et al., 2026). The framework positions Bandungan-based Arabic learning as the primary instructional approach influencing several important dimensions of students' reading development, including reading fluency, text comprehension, and student engagement during learning activities. These interconnected components collectively contribute to the enhancement of students' Arabic reading competence within the pesantren educational environment.

The first component of the framework is reading fluency, which includes pronunciation accuracy, reading speed, and the ability to recognize Arabic sentence patterns correctly. Through the Bandungan

method, students are repeatedly exposed to teacher-guided reading practices in which teachers model correct pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical structures while students listen and follow the text. This repetitive process helps students internalize Arabic linguistic patterns and gradually improve their fluency in reading classical Arabic texts. The second component is text comprehension, which refers to students' ability to understand vocabulary meanings, interpret sentence structures, and comprehend the overall meaning of Arabic texts. During Bandongan learning sessions, teachers provide explanations, translations, and contextual interpretations of the material, enabling students to connect linguistic structures with textual meaning. The annotation process carried out by students further strengthens their understanding of Arabic grammar and vocabulary, thereby supporting deeper comprehension of kitab kuning materials (Kartini et al., 2026). The third component is student engagement, which includes students' participation, concentration, motivation, and involvement during Arabic learning activities. Although the Bandongan method is traditionally teacher-centered, students remain actively engaged through listening, note-taking, textual analysis, and collaborative learning interactions. The structured and repetitive nature of the method encourages discipline, focus, and active participation within the pesantren learning environment.

These three dimensions, reading fluency, text comprehension, and student engagement, collectively contribute to the broader outcome represented at the bottom of the framework, namely the improvement of students' Arabic reading skills in Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, the conceptual framework demonstrates that Bandongan-based Arabic learning not only functions as a traditional instructional method but also serves as a pedagogical process that integrates linguistic development, educational interaction, and Islamic learning values to strengthen students' Arabic reading competence.

III. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the implementation of Bandongan-based Arabic learning and its contribution to improving students' Arabic reading skills in Islamic boarding schools. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of learning practices, student experiences, and the educational meaning of the Bandongan method within the pesantren context (Sari & Khotimah, 2026). The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Al-Anwar Pacitan, Indonesia, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants consisted of eighth-grade students (*kelas VIII*), Arabic language teachers, and pesantren administrators who were directly involved in the Arabic learning process. Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques to ensure that the informants possessed relevant knowledge and experience related to Bandongan-based instruction.

The study focused on Bandongan-based Arabic learning as the independent variable and students' Arabic reading skills as the dependent variable. Reading skills in this research included pronunciation accuracy, reading fluency, vocabulary understanding, and comprehension of Arabic texts. Student engagement during learning activities was also examined as a supporting dimension of the instructional process. The research design emphasized natural classroom observation to capture authentic learning interactions and educational practices within the pesantren environment. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis (Hanifah et al., 2024). Classroom observations were conducted during Arabic learning sessions using the Bandongan method to identify instructional procedures, teacher-student interactions, and students' reading behaviors. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers and students to explore their perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to Bandongan-based learning. In addition, documentation such as lesson materials, students' notes, attendance records, and institutional learning guidelines were analyzed to support the credibility of the findings. To ensure data validity and reliability, the study applied triangulation techniques by comparing findings from multiple data sources and methods.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved

selecting and categorizing relevant information related to Arabic reading improvement and Bandongan learning practices (Jo Cresswell Introduction, 2024). Data display was conducted through descriptive narrative presentations to facilitate interpretation of the findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring patterns, relationships, and themes emerging from the data. This analytic approach was chosen because it enables a systematic and comprehensive understanding of complex educational phenomena within natural learning settings.

The qualitative case study method was considered appropriate for this research because it allowed the researcher to investigate the pedagogical role of the Bandongan method in depth while considering the cultural and religious characteristics of Islamic boarding schools (Swain, 2018). Through this approach, the study provides contextual insights into how traditional pesantren learning practices continue to contribute to Arabic reading development in contemporary Islamic education.

Table 1. Sample Criteria

No	Criteria	Description
1	Student Participants	Eighth-grade students (<i>kelas VIII</i>) enrolled in Arabic learning classes at Islamic boarding school Al-Anwar Pacitan
2	Teacher Participants	Arabic language teachers who actively implement the Bandongan method in classroom instruction
3	Administrative Participants	Pesantren administrators are involved in curriculum supervision and Arabic learning activities
4	Educational Background	Participants who have experience in kitab kuning-based learning within the pesantren environment
5	Learning Participation	Students who regularly attend Bandongan-based Arabic learning sessions
6	Research Accessibility	Participants are willing to participate in interviews, observations, and documentation processes
7	Sampling Technique	Purposive sampling was used to select participants with relevant knowledge and experience related to Bandongan-based Arabic learning

Table 1 presents the sample criteria used in this study to ensure that the selected participants were directly relevant to the research objectives. The study focused on eighth-grade students (*kelas VIII*) at Islamic boarding school Al-Anwar Pacitan because they actively participated in Bandongan-based Arabic learning activities and possessed sufficient exposure to kitab kuning instruction. In addition to students, Arabic language teachers were selected as participants due to their central role in implementing the Bandongan method during classroom instruction. Pesantren administrators were also involved to provide broader institutional perspectives regarding curriculum implementation and learning management within the boarding school environment. The study applied purposive sampling techniques to identify participants who had relevant knowledge, experience, and active involvement in Arabic learning practices. Participants were selected based on several considerations, including regular participation in Bandongan learning sessions, familiarity with kitab kuning instruction, and willingness to contribute to the research process through interviews, observations, and documentation activities.

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1. Analysis Result

The findings of this study indicate that Bandongan-based Arabic learning has a positive contribution to the improvement of students' Arabic reading skills in Islamic boarding schools. The implementation of the

Bandongan method at Islamic boarding school Al-Anwar Pacitan demonstrated significant impacts on students' reading fluency, text comprehension, and learning engagement during Arabic instruction. Based on classroom observations, interviews, and documentation analysis, students showed gradual improvement in pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary understanding, and confidence in reading Arabic texts, particularly *kitab kuning* materials.

One of the primary findings of this study is the improvement of students' reading fluency through the Bandongan method. During the learning process, teachers consistently modeled correct pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical reading patterns while students listened, followed, and annotated the texts. This repetitive exposure enabled students to become more familiar with Arabic sentence structures and pronunciation patterns. Observation data revealed that students who regularly participated in Bandongan sessions demonstrated smoother reading performance and fewer pronunciation errors compared to their initial learning stages. Interviews with teachers also confirmed that repeated teacher-guided reading practices helped students develop better articulation and reading confidence. These findings support previous research emphasizing that guided reading and repetitive exposure are effective strategies for enhancing reading fluency in foreign language learning environments. The results also align with constructivist learning theory, which suggests that students gradually construct linguistic understanding through continuous interaction with learning experiences. Within the Bandongan method, students actively build reading competence through listening, observing, and practicing under teacher supervision.

The study further found that Bandongan-based Arabic learning improved students' comprehension of Arabic texts. Through teacher explanations and contextual interpretations of *kitab kuning*, students gained a better understanding of vocabulary meanings, grammatical structures, and sentence interpretation. The annotation process conducted during Bandongan sessions also helped students organize information and recall important concepts while reading. Interview findings showed that students experienced fewer difficulties in understanding Arabic passages after participating in intensive Bandongan learning activities. Teachers explained that the method encourages students to connect textual meanings with grammatical analysis, thereby strengthening comprehension skills. In addition, students became more capable of identifying the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary through contextual interpretation provided by teachers. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that teacher-assisted reading practices contribute significantly to reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Unlike purely communicative approaches, the Bandongan method combines listening, interpretation, and textual analysis, which supports deeper comprehension of classical Arabic texts commonly studied in pesantren education.

Another important finding of this study is the positive influence of the Bandongan method on student engagement and participation in Arabic learning activities. Classroom observations demonstrated that students were actively involved in listening, note-taking, and responding to teacher explanations during learning sessions. Although the method is traditionally teacher-centered, students remained attentive and disciplined throughout the instructional process. Interviews revealed that students perceived Bandongan learning as beneficial because it provided direct guidance from teachers and reduced anxiety when reading difficult Arabic texts. Teachers also stated that the structured nature of Bandongan sessions helped maintain classroom discipline and concentration. Furthermore, collaborative learning interactions among students strengthened motivation and created a supportive learning atmosphere within the pesantren environment. These findings suggest that traditional instructional approaches can still foster meaningful student participation when implemented effectively. The Bandongan method not only facilitates linguistic development but also reinforces educational values such as discipline, respect, and a collective learning culture within Islamic boarding schools.

4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Bandungan-based Arabic learning remains highly relevant and effective in improving students' Arabic reading skills within contemporary Islamic boarding school education. The implementation of the Bandungan method at Islamic boarding school Al-Anwar Pacitan revealed that traditional pesantren instructional practices continue to play an important role in supporting students' linguistic development, particularly in reading classical Arabic texts. Although modern educational systems increasingly emphasize communicative language teaching, technology-assisted instruction, and student-centered learning models, the results of this research indicate that traditional learning approaches still possess strong pedagogical value when implemented consistently and contextually. The Bandungan method provides students with intensive exposure to Arabic pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and text interpretation through repetitive guided reading practices led by teachers. Such learning experiences not only improve technical reading competence but also cultivate discipline, concentration, and intellectual engagement among students.

The results of this study further support previous literature suggesting that traditional pesantren educational methods remain sustainable because they are deeply rooted in Islamic educational culture and communal learning traditions. Unlike modern approaches that often prioritize oral communication and digital interaction, the Bandungan method emphasizes textual mastery, listening accuracy, and interpretive understanding, which are highly important in the study of *kitab kuning* and classical Islamic sciences. This finding strengthens the argument that educational modernization does not necessarily require the elimination of traditional instructional methods. Instead, traditional and modern pedagogical approaches can complement one another to create a more balanced and culturally responsive educational system. In this regard, the Bandungan method may serve as a bridge between preserving Islamic intellectual traditions and addressing the contemporary educational needs of students in pesantren institutions.

This study also contributes significantly to the broader discourse on Arabic language pedagogy by highlighting that the Bandungan method supports not only students' reading fluency and comprehension but also their engagement and participation during learning activities. Previous studies on Arabic instruction have frequently focused on communicative methods, multimedia learning applications, and technology-based instructional innovations. While these approaches have proven beneficial in enhancing interactive communication skills, they often provide limited attention to the role of traditional learning practices in strengthening foundational reading competencies. In contrast, the present study demonstrates that Bandungan-based learning creates a structured educational environment where students actively engage in listening, annotating, interpreting, and understanding Arabic texts under the direct supervision of teachers. This process enables students to develop gradual reading proficiency while simultaneously strengthening their grammatical awareness and vocabulary acquisition.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that student engagement during Bandungan learning activities remains relatively high despite the teacher-centered nature of the method. Classroom observations revealed that students maintained active concentration throughout learning sessions, especially during teacher explanations and textual interpretation activities. Many students perceived the Bandungan method as helpful because it reduced anxiety when dealing with difficult Arabic texts and provided direct guidance for understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and sentence structures. This finding challenges common assumptions that traditional instructional models automatically limit student participation or reduce learning motivation. Instead, the study suggests that the effectiveness of a learning method depends largely on how it is implemented, contextualized, and integrated into the students' educational culture. In the pesantren environment, Bandungan learning is not merely an instructional strategy but also part of a broader educational tradition that emphasizes respect for teachers, collaborative learning, and moral discipline.

Another important implication of this study is related to the integration of traditional and modern educational perspectives in Arabic language learning. Contemporary Arabic pedagogy often emphasizes

communicative competence and active classroom interaction as primary indicators of successful language learning. However, the findings of this research reveal that foundational reading competence, grammatical understanding, and textual interpretation remain essential components of Arabic learning, particularly in Islamic educational institutions where students engage intensively with classical religious literature. The Bandongan method contributes significantly to these foundational competencies by exposing students to authentic Arabic texts and teacher-guided analysis on a regular basis. Therefore, rather than positioning traditional and modern approaches as opposing educational paradigms, this study suggests that both approaches should be integrated to create a more comprehensive instructional framework capable of addressing multiple dimensions of language learning.

In addition, this study demonstrates that the preservation of traditional pesantren learning methods has broader cultural and educational significance. The Bandongan method not only functions as a pedagogical tool for improving Arabic reading skills but also serves as a mechanism for preserving Islamic intellectual heritage and pesantren identity. Through repetitive reading, teacher explanations, and collective learning practices, students develop closer connections with classical Islamic scholarship and traditional learning ethics. This educational process contributes to the continuity of pesantren traditions while also fostering students' spiritual, intellectual, and social development. Consequently, the findings suggest that traditional Islamic educational practices should not be viewed as outdated or incompatible with contemporary education, but rather as valuable pedagogical resources that can be adapted and strengthened within modern educational frameworks.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted within a single Islamic boarding school environment, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other pesantren institutions with different educational systems, student backgrounds, or instructional practices. Educational cultures among pesantren may vary significantly depending on institutional orientation, curriculum implementation, and regional traditions. Therefore, the findings of this study should be interpreted within the specific context of Islamic boarding school Al-Anwar Pacitan. Second, the study employed a qualitative case study design, meaning that the findings were primarily derived from participant experiences, observations, and interpretive analysis. Although triangulation techniques were used to strengthen data credibility, the study did not quantitatively measure the extent of students' reading improvement through statistical analysis. Future studies may therefore benefit from employing mixed-method or quantitative approaches to provide more measurable evidence regarding the effectiveness of Bandongan-based Arabic learning.

Future research may also expand the scope of investigation by comparing the Bandongan method with other traditional or modern Arabic instructional approaches implemented in Islamic educational institutions. Comparative studies involving multiple pesantren, formal Islamic schools, or digital learning environments could provide deeper insights into the relative strengths and weaknesses of different instructional models. Additionally, future studies may explore how technological innovations can be integrated into Bandongan learning practices without reducing the authenticity of pesantren educational traditions. Such investigations would contribute to the development of adaptive and sustainable Arabic learning models capable of addressing contemporary educational challenges while maintaining cultural and religious values.

Overall, this study confirms that Bandongan-based Arabic learning can serve as an effective instructional approach for improving students' Arabic reading skills while simultaneously preserving the educational and cultural traditions of Islamic boarding schools. The findings provide important theoretical and practical implications for Arabic language pedagogy, particularly in the context of integrating traditional Islamic educational practices with contemporary instructional needs. This research ultimately emphasizes that traditional pesantren learning methods continue to possess substantial pedagogical relevance and should be recognized as valuable components of modern Islamic education systems.

V. Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of Bandungan-based Arabic learning and its contribution to improving students' Arabic reading skills in Islamic boarding schools, particularly at Islamic boarding school Al-Anwar Pacitan. The findings demonstrate that the Bandungan method remains an effective instructional approach for enhancing students' reading fluency, pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary understanding, and comprehension of Arabic texts. Through repetitive teacher-guided reading activities, contextual interpretation, and textual annotation practices, students developed stronger reading competence and greater confidence in engaging with classical Arabic literature. In addition, the study revealed that Bandungan learning positively influences student engagement, concentration, discipline, and participation during Arabic learning activities within the pesantren environment. The results further indicate that traditional pesantren learning methods continue to possess strong pedagogical relevance despite the increasing dominance of modern language teaching approaches. Rather than being replaced entirely by contemporary instructional models, the Bandungan method demonstrates the potential to complement modern Arabic pedagogy by strengthening foundational linguistic competencies and preserving Islamic educational traditions. This study therefore confirms that integrating traditional and modern educational perspectives may create a more balanced, culturally responsive, and sustainable Arabic learning framework for Islamic educational institutions.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Arabic language pedagogy and Islamic educational studies by providing empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of traditional pesantren instructional methods in contemporary learning contexts. The findings support constructivist learning theory by demonstrating that students construct reading competence through repeated interaction, guided interpretation, and collaborative learning experiences within the Bandungan method. Furthermore, the study enriches the discourse on Islamic pedagogy by emphasizing that traditional educational practices remain relevant for developing linguistic, cognitive, and cultural competencies among students. This research also extends previous studies that primarily focused on communicative and technology-based Arabic instruction by highlighting the educational significance of culturally rooted learning traditions. The study suggests that traditional instructional approaches should not be viewed as outdated pedagogical models, but rather as adaptable educational resources capable of supporting modern learning objectives. Consequently, this research provides a conceptual foundation for future studies exploring the integration of traditional Islamic educational practices with contemporary instructional innovations.

From a managerial perspective, the findings of this study provide important implications for pesantren administrators, Arabic language teachers, and Islamic educational policymakers. Educational institutions may consider maintaining and strengthening Bandungan-based learning practices as part of their Arabic curriculum because the method has proven effective in improving students' reading competence and preserving pesantren educational identity. Teachers are encouraged to integrate traditional reading practices with interactive and student-centered learning strategies to create more engaging and balanced instructional environments. Furthermore, pesantren administrators may develop training programs and instructional guidelines that support teachers in implementing effective Bandungan learning practices adapted to contemporary educational needs. The integration of modern educational technologies, such as digital learning materials and multimedia support, may also enhance the effectiveness of Bandungan instruction without eliminating its traditional characteristics. For policymakers, this study highlights the importance of preserving traditional Islamic educational methods as valuable components of national Islamic education systems while simultaneously encouraging pedagogical innovation and instructional quality improvement. Overall, this study emphasizes that Bandungan-based Arabic learning remains a meaningful and sustainable educational approach capable of improving students' Arabic reading skills while preserving the intellectual and cultural heritage of Islamic boarding schools.

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